

Glory of Vinayaka

*Conquering conceit, one becomes endearing;
 Conquering anger, one is free from regrets;
 Conquering desire, one becomes prosperous;
 Conquering greed, one becomes happy.*

Embodiments of divine Love! As long as a man is conceited and egotistic, no one will like him. Even his wedded wife and his own children, though they may appear to respect him externally, will not be happy with an arrogant man. As long as a man is filled with ego, he is unlikely to be really happy. Therefore, at the very outset, a man should get rid of his *aham-kara* (ego).

“*Krodham hithva na sochathi* (As long as a man is filled with anger, he cannot experience joy).” He is bound to be miserable. Only when man subdues anger will he be able to experience happiness. As long as one is filled with insatiable desires, one cannot feel really wealthy. The moment man gives

up desires, all riches will come to him. As long as man is greedy, he will be a stranger to happiness. When man gives up greed, he will feel endowed with all riches.

The atom and the Atma

The whole cosmos is based on the atom. Whether an object is microcosmic or as vast as the cosmos, it is based on *Atomic* power. Few can realise fully the power of the atom.

The atom is constituted of energy in all its forms. The words you speak, the objects you see, the sounds you hear, the activities you undertake —all are based on the power of the atom. Every moment of every being is based on atomic power. All experience is derived from the energy of the atom.

It has taken scientists thousands of years to discover this truth. But it was recognised by the child Prahlada a long time ago. He declared emphatically, “Do not doubt that He (the Lord) is at one place and not at another. You can find him wherever you look for Him.”

Prahlada did not conduct any experiments or explorations in space. To those pure of heart, the truth reveals itself spontaneously.

“Subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the cosmos, the *Atma* (spirit) is the atom and the atom is the *Atma*.” This truth was recognised by the child Prahlada as a student. When this truth is recognised, the whole cosmos will be seen as permeated by the Divine, as a manifestation of the Divine.

In every object there is the power of the atom. You cannot find any object or any place in which the atom is not present. All objects are composed of atoms. All forms of energy are manifestations of the atom. The whole earth is made up of atoms.

In this world, every human being is a kind of small generator of electricity. The magnetic power in him becomes electrical energy. It is because of this energy that man is able

to walk, see, hear, and do many other things. The heart in every man is like a radio station. The energy in every being is based on atomic power. There are light waves. These generate magnetic energy. Recognising the connection between matter and energy, Einstein affirmed their convertibility.

These findings of the scientists confirm the *Vedantic* view that the *Brahman* (the Divine) permeates the whole cosmos. Only the terms used are different. The scientists declare that the cosmos is constituted of atoms. The *Vedantins* declare that the cosmos is *Brahmamayam* (permeated by the Divine). What the scientists and the sages declare is the one truth, called by different names.

Ganapathi is the lord of intellect and wisdom

Take the word “Ganapathi”. *Ga* represents *buddhi* (the intellect). *Na* signifies *jnana* (wisdom). Ganapathi is the *pathi* (lord) of the intellect and wisdom. To worship the intellect and wisdom is one form of worship of Ganapathi.

Ganapathi represents the combination of much energy. Because of this, the name Ganapathi is appropriate for him. Nor is that all. He is the lord of all the *Ganas* (celestial hosts). Hence, he is hailed as Ganapathi.

He is called by another name, Vinayaka. There is no master above him; he is the master of all.

Another name for him is Vigneswara. This name means that he is the lord of every form of *aiswarya* (wealth). He is the embodiment of all forms of wealth.

When we explore the inner meanings of all the attributes associated with his name, we find that he possesses all powers. They include the all-pervading cosmic vibrations, the power that is latent in all animate and inanimate objects, and the effulgence of the all-pervading Light. He is the energy that animates every being.

There is electro-magnetic energy in every body. Nature is the embodiment of the same energy. This energy may assume different forms, but its essential character is one and the same. A lighted bulb, a fan that is revolving, and many other things working through electrical power depend on the same kind of current. The energy may manifest itself in the form of light, heat, or magnetic energy, but it proclaims the power of the Divine, which is the source of all energy.

In all human beings, humanness is present equally

The electro-magnetic energy in man expresses itself in the form of radiation. It is also called reflection of the “Inner being”. The power of sight, hearing, speech, digestion, and movement of the limbs is derived from this energy. Water also contains this energy. In fact, the entire cosmos is permeated by this divine energy.

On the basis of this, Vedanta declares, “*Sarvam khalu idam Brahma* (verily, all this is Brahman).” Recognising this, the Vedas declared, “*Sarvam Vishnumayam jagath* (The cosmos is permeated by the Divine).” Hence, there is no room for making any distinction between Ganapathi, Vishnu, Siva, Sakthi, or man.

In all human beings, humanness is present equally. It manifests itself externally in various forms. This is only the external manifestation of nature, not its internal essence. The inner aspect is present in all begins in a subtle formless substance. That is atomic energy. Several means were employed for harnessing this energy for various purposes.

On this auspicious day of Vinayaka Chaturthi, what is it that we offer to Vinayaka? All offerings to Vinayaka are free from the use of oil in their preparation. Boiled rice is made into balls, which are filled with *thil* seeds and *jaggery* (a form of sugar). They are then mixed with rice flour and cooked. In the

offering, there is no trace of any cooking oil. Hence, the offerings are called oilless edibles.

What is the significance of such preparations? It is found that oilless edibles are easily digestible. The *thil* seeds serve to keep down the bad effect of phlegm, bile, and wind in the body. The *jaggery* in the preparation is conducive to improvement of vision. All these preparations are intended to promote health and are not designed to propitiate the Divine. The energy derived from these edibles is conducive to the promotion of longevity.

Vinayaka is known for his high intelligence. The very sight of his figure gives joy to many. The form itself is extraordinary. He has a big belly, beautiful tusk, penetrating eyes, handsome ears — all these are harmoniously balances to produce an attractive form.

The reason for endowing the deity with an elephant's head

What, it may be asked, is the reason for endowing the deity with an elephant's head? The elephant is well known for its high intelligence. Among animals, it has a prodigious size. No other animal is cast in such a big mould. The elephant's foot encompasses the footprint of the lion, esteemed as the lord of the animal kingdom. In the jungle, hunters follow the footprints of the lion to trace it to its lair. But if an elephant has walked over those footprints, they are totally erased.

Moreover, the elephant is the pathfinder for human beings. In a forest covered with dense bushes, humans cannot easily find their way. But once an elephant has gone through the jungle, its trail becomes a path for others to follow.

All these traits of the elephant show that in the journey of life, one can find one's way if one has the intelligence of the elephant. Because he is endowed with the form of an elephant, Ganapath is associated with the quality of intelligence.

Primacy of Vinayaka

Once, Parvathi and Parameswara, parents of Ganapathi and Subramanya, wanted to test their intelligence. They summoned the two sons and told them to go around the world to find out which of the two would do it quicker. The elder of the two, Ganapathi, did not stir from his place. The younger son, Subramanya, mounted his peacock and set out on a round-the-world trip. With a great deal of effort, he completed the trip and was approaching his parents. Seeing him from a distance, Ganapathi circumambulated his parents and claimed himself to be the winner.

The mother, Parvathi, told Ganapathi, “Ganapathi! Here is your brother, who has gone around the world. And you have not stirred from this place. You made no effort at all. How can you claim that you have gone around the world? How can I regard you as the winner?”

Ganesha replied, “Mother! The cosmos is the combination of matter and energy —the unity of father and mother. When I go around You, I have gone around the world itself, since You are the parents of the cosmos. There is no place where You two are not present. I see Your omnipresence. By circumambulating both of You, I can claim to have gone around the cosmos.”

The moment He heard these words, Easwara was astonished at the high intelligence of His son. Ganesha had recognised the truth about His divine parents. Easwar said, “Vinayaka! You are an exemplary son for one and all. Let the world worship you first before they offer worship to me. I am not as intelligent as you are. We are your parents, but not more intelligent than you.”

Easwara declared, “I have many attributes, but not your intelligence. Hence, before offering worship to Me, let all people worship you. This is the boon I confer on you.”

Easwara is a parent who conferred such an honour of a higher status than His own on His son. Hence, Ganapathi represents no commonplace principle. He is the embodiment of all potencies. He is the abode of every kind of intelligence. The Saraswathi (goddess of wisdom) dwells in His belly. Nothing untoward can happen wherever He is present.

Ganapathi occupies the position of one who is the source of all prosperity. Moreover, when He is invoked before any undertaking, there will be no impediments to its completion.

Today, every kind of people —the wealthy, the wise, the scholars, and the common people— worship Ganapathi. Students, with a view to securing the grace of the goddess of wisdom and ensuring that there is no hindrance to their studies, place their books before the idol Ganapathi and worship Him.

Bharat and Bharati

The name of our nation, Bharat, is derived from that of Saraswathi, the goddess of all knowledge and wisdom. Some people wrongly attribute the name Bharat as one derived from the name of Bharatha, the brother of Rama. This is not so.

Among the names mentioned in the hymns in praise of Saraswathi is Bharati. With reference to music, the word *bharati* is significant. Good music has to combine *bhava* (feeling, represented by the letter *bha*), *raga* (tune, *ra*), and *thala* (rhythm, *thi*). The feeling, tune, and rhythm have to be combined to produce good music.

Every music concert begins with a song in adoration of Ganapathi, like “*Vaathaapi Ganapathim Bhaje!*” This shows that by worshipping Ganapathi, proficiency in any sphere is achieved.

Ganapathi is not only the lord of various activities but is the presiding deity for all auspicious functions. He can make even inauspicious occasions auspicious. He is always engaged in conferring boons on all. He is the river of prosperity and in-

telligence. With the grace of Ganapathi, any desire can be realised.

How to pray?

In praying to Ganapathi, you should not ask for trivial things like passing examinations or getting jobs. You should pray only, "Oh Vighneswara! Please see that there are no obstacles in what I want to accomplish. I am worshipping you for this purpose."

Today, few people understand the true spirit of the *Ganapathi Thathwa* (Principle). They are concerned with the outer forms and ignore the inner esoteric meaning.

This applies to the way many festivals are celebrated. The birthday of Rama is celebrated without understanding the qualities represented by Rama. To be real devotees of Rama, people should cultivate His qualities. To be a true devotee of Krishna, you must be ever in bliss, like Krishna. If you want to be a devotee of Sai, you must be full of love. Love all, serve all.

Sometimes, Swami may appear as if He is not showing His love. This is only an external appearance for the moment. Pots, however different they may appear, are essentially made of clay, and all golden ornaments are essentially gold in substance. Similarly, all actions of Swami are essentially filled with love. You must cultivate this kind of feeling. You must love God with full faith.

The Ganapathi Principle is pregnant with meaning. His story itself is unique. In the *Bhagavatha*, Pothana declares that the stories of the lord are extraordinary; they are sacred for all the three worlds; they confer all blessings on the listeners and are constantly contemplated upon by saints and sages. This applies to all deities.

Every aspect of the Divine is a mystery. Whatever the Lord says is full of significance. It is pregnant with sacred meaning.

Obey the Lord

Sainath, a member of the university faculty, who had spoken earlier, said that when someone wanted to leave, Swami told him, “Wait!” But he was in a hurry, bought his ticket, and left Prasanthi Nilayam.

However, he had to wait for a long time there, and even then he could not get what he wanted. If instead he had waited here, it would have been better for him.

After waiting a long time, he came back. Swami told him, “Ayya! When I told you not to go, why did you go?” There is latent meaning in whatever I say. Some persons tend to treat my words lightly.

Here, people are seated in rows. I move between them. As I move along, various people address various appeals to Me for this or that. Swami tells them, “Wait. Wait. Please sit down.” They assume that this means that they should go on sitting and waiting until everyone else has left.

I merely ask them to sit down when they get up from their places. “Wait, wait, don’t be hasty,” is all that I mean. Instead of understanding this properly, they take it to mean that they are asked to wait after all have left. They continue to sit even after the volunteers ask them to leave.

This is utter foolishness. They should understand words in their proper context and behave appropriately. They must understand the context of time, place, and circumstance and behave in the correct manner.

Devotees worship Vinayaka in different ways. They address the deity, describing his white robe, his moon-like complexion, his four arms, and his ever-smiling face and pray for the removal of all obstacles. Some misguided non-believers interpret the same hymn in a perverse manner.

The true devotee sees the Divine in everything. Ramada sang about the Lord of Bhadrachala, “Oh Rama! You are everywhere in the universe.”

The power of the Divine permeates every atom in the cosmos. How is this to be recognised? The Divine is effulgent. Devotees envisage the Divine in different ways and express their adoration in various forms.

Abhimanyu (son of Arjuna) knew how to make his way through the *Padhma Vyuha* (a military formation). But he did not know how to get out of it. The path to God lies through love. With love, you can go anywhere. Love is God. Live in love. Start the day with love, fill the day with love, spend the day with love, and end the day with love. This is the way to God.

Love begets love

How is love to be fostered? Only through love can you foster love. There is no other way. For a plant to grow, you have to use manure and water. Students should realise that to foster love of God, they have to apply the manure of faith and water of love. Only thus can the plant of devotion grow.

Never forget God. God alone is everlasting. That is the only Truth. Your parents will pass away some time or other, but God will remain forever. God is eternal.

Always adore God. In addition, love your parents and all others. Your love for God should be steady and unwavering. That love is God. It is the very form of Ganapathi. That love is present in all beings.

You are all manifestations of the Divine. Consider yourselves as divine. There is nothing wrong in that. In terms of the body, you are a human being, but spiritually, you are divine. Lead your life with the awareness “*Aham Brahmaasmi* (I am divine).”

We must think of God every moment of our lives

Rama once invited Hanuman to come near him and asked, "In what manner do you worship me?"

Hanuman replied, "Swami, from the viewpoint of the body, I am Your servant and You are my Lord. Mentally, I consider that I am a spark of Your Divinity. But in terms of the *Atma*, you are I are one. We are not two at all. Both of us are one."

People worship the Divine in three ways. But ultimately they have to realise the third stage. Bodies are different but the *Atma* (the Self) is one only. This is why the sages declared, "*Ekam Sath, viprah bahudha vadanthi* (the Absolute is One, but the wise call it by different names)."

People look upon the Vighneswara festival as some routine affair. But Vighneswara embodies all the forms and all the powers of all the deities. It is not enough to worship Ganesh once a year. We must worship Him always.

We must think of God every moment of our lives. It is in that spirit that everyone is enjoined to offer all actions as designed to please the Divine. Do what you please. Go anywhere you like. But do everything with the feeling that it is to please the Divine. Whatever you do, do it with the feeling that you are doing it for the pleasure of the Divine. Thereby, you will accomplish all your desires. You will experience bliss. See the Divine in everything

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