

Let life be fruitful and meaningful

*Brahmanandam Paramasukhadam
Kevalam Jnanarnurthim
Dvandvaatheetham Gaganasadrusam
Tathwamasyaadhi Lakshyam
Ekam Nithyam Vimalam Achalam
Sarvadhee Saakshibhutam
Bhaavaatheetham Trigunarahitham Sadgurum*

Embodiments of Love!

Man should cultivate noble qualities in order to understand the secrets and the inner meanings of the *Vedas*. The terms used in the *Vedas* transcend the barriers of time and space.

Consider the word *Brahmanandam*. It means eternal bliss. Such a word cannot be understood by comparison with the joy derived from materialistic pleasures (*lokaananda*). *Brahma* is derived from the root word *brihat*, meaning vastness. *Brah-*

manandam is that which is immutable. It is the true and infinite bliss. It can also be termed as *Advaitananda*, meaning the bliss that results from the experience of oneness. It can also be described as *Nirgunaananda* and *Niraakaarananda* (bliss that transcends form and attributes).

Paramasukhadam means supreme happiness. It has nothing to do with the worldly happiness and sensual pleasures. It is identical with the experience of the eternal bliss.

Kevalam means that which transcends the limitations of time, space, and circumstances.

Jnanamurthim means one of wisdom. Here, *jnana* refers to experience of oneness. It transcends body, mind, and intellect. *Advaita darshanam jnanam* (experience of non-duality is true wisdom). How can man comprehend this incomparable wisdom? The *Vedas* contain many such words suffused with sacred inner meaning. Only Divinity, which is attributeless, ancient, eternal, ever new, pure, and unsullied, can explain the inner meanings of the *Vedic* principles.

Dvandvaatheetham refers to that which transcends all dualities such as happiness and sorrow, good and bad, merit and sin, etc.

Trigunarahitham refers to that which transcends the three attributes: *sathwa* (serenity, purity), *rajas* (passion), and *thamas* (dullness, lethargy). Attributes are associated with form. So, the formless One has no attributes. The *Vedas* contain four *Mahavaakyaas*: *Prajnanam Brahma* (knowledge is *Brahman*), *Ayatma Brahma* (This *Atma* is *Brahman*), *Tath Thwam Asi* (That Thou Art) and *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am *Brahman*). The attributeless principle transcends even these four declarations.

Ekam nithyam refers to that which is eternal and without a second. The *Vedas* proclaim *Ekam eva adviteeyam Brahma*

(Divinity is one without a second). *Om ithyekaaksharam Brahma* (the single syllable *Om* is *Brahman*).

Vimalam achalam refers to that which is pure and steady. In this universe, the celestial bodies such as the sun, the moon, and the planets are constantly on the move. Modern students are aware of this —the cinema reel moves rapidly at the rate of 16 films per second, but the rate at which mind moves cannot be estimated. Such a wavering mind cannot comprehend

Divinity, which is steady, changeless, and attributeless, is the embodiment of supreme bliss and happiness. That is the reason the ancient sages and seers used to pray, “Salutations to the One who is the embodiment of supreme happiness.” The happiness related to the body and mind is no happiness at all. Inward (*nivritti*) happiness is true happiness.

Only Divinity can confer the eternal bliss

It is extremely difficult to understand the divine principle. Faith is very essential to experience divinity. Where there is faith, there is love. Where there is love, there is peace. Where there is peace, there is truth. Where there is truth, there is Divinity. Where there is Divinity, there is bliss. So, only Divinity can confer the eternal bliss.

Worldly happiness is momentary. In this context, Adi Sankara said, *Maa kuru dhana jana yauvana garyam, harathi nimeshaath kaalah sarvam* (do not be proud of youth, money, and progeny. They are but momentary). Worldly happiness is delusive and is related to the five elements and five senses. It corresponds to the outward (*pravritti*) path.

Human body is made up of five sheaths: *annamaya*, *pranamaya*, *manomaya*, *vijnanamaya*, and *anandamaya koshas*. This body is *annamaya kosha* (food sheath). It is the *pranamaya kosha* (life sheath) that makes the body move. Be-

yond the *pranamaya kosha*, there exists *manomaya kosha* (mind sheath).

Man is able to investigate only these three sheaths; he is not able to comprehend *vijnanamaya* (wisdom sheath) and *anandamaya koshas* (bliss sheath), the reason being that man is bound by the senses.

The senses cannot understand ultimate Truth

It is said, *buddhi graahyam atheendriyam*, the senses cannot understand the ultimate Truth. However intelligent one may be, one cannot understand the Truth unless one treads along the inward path. The same body exists in all three states: waking, dream, and deep sleep, but what you see in one state cannot be seen in the other, because they correspond to the outward path. You have to give up the outward path and take to inward path to understand the Truth.

When this body was seven years old, dreadful and contagious diseases like cholera and plague were rampant in this tiny hamlet of Puttaparthi. Fear-stricken, the parents would not allow their children to go out of the house. But the children, out of their love for Me, would come to Me without even telling their parents. All those children were of the age group of six to eight.

One day, nearly 12 boys gathered around Me and said in an anxious tone “Raju, we came to know that cholera and plague are rampant in our village. It seems they are dangerous and fatal. What would be our fate?”

I told them, “The body has to perish one day or the other, whatever may be the precautions you take. So, do not be afraid of death. Contemplate on God and take care that the diseases do not afflict you.”

The boys asked Me as which form of God they should

contemplate on. They were all very innocent. In those days this was a very small village with a population of 106. They had no idea as to which form of God they should worship.

How Swami drove away the diseases

I told them to light a lamp, place it in the bazaar at 6 o'clock in the evening, and do *bhajans*. They did not know what *bhajans* to sing. Then I composed a few *bhajans* for them. I told them, "We need not search for God outside. He is within us. Let us go around the village chanting the name of Ranga, donning ochre robes and anklets, playing the cymbals in our hands, and getting rid of the evil qualities of anger and desire."

In those days, after 5 o'clock in the evening, no one dared to go beyond the Sathyamma temple, because they considered it to be far off from the village and believed that the area beyond the temple limits was haunted.

I infused confidence in them, saying there are no ghosts or devils and advised them to drive away the diseases of cholera and plague by chanting the name of God. We wore anklets and walked up to the riverbed of Chithravathi playing the cymbals and singing *bhajans*. It was the divine name that eradicated diseases of cholera and plague for good within a short span of three days.

The parents brought the children to Me and expressed their gratitude for having saved them from the epidemic. They said, "Raju, we are indebted to You for having instilled courage and confidence in our children. We don't want them to attend school, instead they will come to You. Kindly impart the education necessary for their welfare."

Everyday at 6 o'clock in the evening, they would assemble at My residence, after having their dinner, for tuition. They used to address Me as "tuition master". Their parents wanted

to offer 3 *paise* per month as *guru dakshina*, which I flatly refused. The children used to come to Me every evening to learn numeric tables and alphabets. Taking this as a pretext, I used to impart value-oriented education also. I used to advise them to keep away from bad company and not to indulge in criticism and slander. Cultivate good habits and good qualities. Respect your parents and obey their commands. Since then, there was marked improvement in their behavior and outlook.

Swami's skills in composing bhajans

On moonlit nights, we used to go to the Chithravathi River at 6 o'clock in the evening and return only at 11 in the night. Few elders also would accompany us. They used to pass time by playing games like *kabaddi*, but the children were not interested in joining them. In spite of My repeated entreaties, they would not participate in any of these pastimes. They were more interested in *bhajans* and being around Me. They would request Me to lead *bhajans*. Thus we used to spend our time in Chithravathi singing *bhajans*.

The children used to plead with Me to compose new *bhajans* and tunes. They used to extol My composing capabilities. I used to ask them to express their desires, if any, but not praise Me.

One day a pharmacist by name Kotte Subbanna came to Puttaparthi from Kamalapuram. He had heard a great deal about My composing capabilities and had come to request Me to write a song that would serve as an advertisement for his new medicine. He came to Subbamma and enquired about Me. She told him, "I know Raju very well. He is the only good boy in the entire village. He is one of good character, behavior and conduct. Not merely that, He imparts good teachings to others."

One day, Subbamma invited Kotte Subbanna for lunch. During the lunch, he expressed doubts regarding My composing skills. He said it was difficult for him to believe that a tiny tot like Me could write good poetry that would sell his new medicine in the market. Consequently, I sent him away saying, better that he goes to some person whose composing skills he had faith in.

I had immense love for the children. Keshanna, Ranganna, Subbanna, and Ramanna were among the children whom I used to take to the riverbed every evening. Words are inadequate to describe their innocence, purity and love for Me. A seven year-old boy used to request Me to lie down for a while keeping My head on his lap saying, I looked very tired and needed some rest. Seeing this other children also wanted to have the privilege of keeping My head on their laps.

Then they thought of a plan so that all would get an equal chance. It was decided that each boy would take turns to keep My head on his lap for a count of one to fifty. They missed no opportunity to serve Me and I used to satisfy all of them.

Swami writes a poem for advertising medicine

One day, Kotte Subbanna came to Me again and said, “Raju, all these children are ready to obey your command. They all sing well and have sweet voice. Please write a few songs to advertise my new medicine and ask these children to go around the village singing them. I am prepared to pay remuneration for this.”

I told him, “I do not like this business of give and take. These children also do not approve of this. Anyway tell Me exactly what your medicine is. I will compose a song accordingly.”

He explained that the name of the medicine was *Bala*

Bhaskara and that it could cure many types of ailments. I composed a beautiful song in Telugu on the efficacy of the medicine:

*O children, come here, a new medicine,
Bala Bhaskara, has arrived in the market.
It is a wonderful remedy for various ailments like
Stomach ache, indigestion, malnutrition,
and swelling of legs and hands.
It is available in the shop of Kotte Subbanna.
It is a very good tonic
prepared by Pandit Sri Gopalacharya.*

Kotte Subbanna was very much pleased with the poem and got it written in big sheets of paper for advertisement. As his luck would have it, I was taken to Kamalapuram for studying 5th and 6th classes. Kotte Subbanna made maximum use of My stay in Kamalapuram for the advertisement of his medicines.

Anjenya stops Swami's pradakshina of the temple

Right from early days I have been a source of inspiration for the young children. I would exhort them to desist from hurting others and discharge their duties sincerely. During the month of *Magha*, I used to take the children to the temple of Anjaneya at 4 o'clock in the morning. Some of the children were so young that they would not get up at that early hour. So, I would carry them to the nearby pond, give them a bath, and take them to the temple. I would sit at the temple, while the children would do *pradakshina* (circumambulation).

One day they insisted that I too should join them in circumambulating the temple. I finally yielded to their pressure and started circumambulating the temple. Believe it or not,

Anjaneya himself came and stopped Me from going round the temple saying, “O Lord! It is I who should circumambulate you. You should not do this.” But the children mistook Anjaneya for an ordinary monkey. I told them that Anjaneya himself came and would not allow Me to circumambulate the temple.

After this incident, there was a great transformation in the hearts of the children. They went around the village telling people what they witnessed at the Anjaneya temple. This news reached Karnam Subbamma also.

Next day, she invited Me to her house saying, “Raju, today I have prepared *dosas*, you should come and partake of them.” In those days food items like *idli* and *dosas* were considered to be rich man’s food. I told Subbamma that it is not My nature to eat alone leaving so many other children. Then Subbama prepared *dosas* for all the children.

The need for sathwic food

The villagers had lot of reverence for Me. It is because of Sathya Sai Baba that the people of Puttaparthi started thinking of God for the first time in their lives. It gradually spread to the other villages, too. I used to exhort the villagers to refrain from partaking of non-vegetarian food, consuming liquor, and smoking. I used to stress on the need for *sathwic* food.

During the festival of *Ekadasi*, it was the practice to hold bullock cart races on the riverbed of Chithravathi. They used to whip the bullocks to make them run faster. I would tell the children to insist upon their fathers to stop whipping the bullocks. Not only now, even in those days I taught the principle of nonviolence.

Cockfights were quite common in villages those days. They used to tie small knives to the legs of cocks and make

them fight with each other till one of them died. In the process, the other cock would get injured badly. I told them that one should have competition in doing good deeds, not in such cruel acts.

One who always does good will never be put to disrepute

One day the father of this body, Pedda Venkama Raju, chided Me for interfering in the affairs of the village. He said that the elders knew better and I should not cross My limits. I told him that I could not tolerate killing or ill-treating animals.

Since he could not convince Me, he directed the mother of this body to advise Me. At the time of serving food, she would tell Me, “Sathya, you should not do things that would displease your father. If you do not listen to him, you will earn a bad name in the village.”

I argued with her saying I was doing only good and was not bothered about what others said. I emphasized that one who always does good will never be put to disrepute. Kondama Raju, the grandfather of this physical body, also supported My argument. He called the villagers and told them that what I was doing was good for the village. He too advised them to refrain from violence and gambling. He cautioned them that lack of unity would lead to unrest in the village. Because of this kind of teachings, some people developed hatred toward Me.

I had to go to Bukkapatnam by 7 a.m. to attend the school. Teachers were very affectionate toward Me. Every teacher would first ask as he entered the classroom, “Has Raju come?”

Do you realize what I was like in those days? Ours was a poor family. Like children of these days, I did not have dozens of sets of dresses. I just had one pair of shirt and shorts. As soon as I returned from school I would take off My clothes,

wash them and put them up to dry and wear a towel round My waist. This way I would make-do with one pair of dress for a whole year.

Peace is My nature; love is My very nature

When questions were put to Me at school, I would always answer well. Most other students were not good at answering questions. My fellow classmates were quite grown up —in fact, some of them were almost 25 years of age and most of them would be wearing *dhotis*. I was the youngest in the class.

One day, when I answered a question well, Mahboob Khan asked Me to slap the other dull students. I would have to climb on to the desk to reach their cheeks. I used to touch them gently on their cheeks.

The teacher then chided Me, “Have I asked you to apply turmeric on their faces? I will show how!” Saying this, he gave a few hard slaps.

As I was returning to Puttaparthi, some of the students threw Me down on the sands of the river and dragged me along by my legs. They tore off My shirt and threw Me into the slush. All through this torture I remained calm. Peace is My nature. Love is My very nature. Peace is the form of Swami. Bliss is My resolve.

After reaching the Hanuman temple I washed My clothes and put them on again. Students may well imagine My state then. If there is a tear in My shirt, there was not even a safety pin available to hold the cloth together. Nor had I any money to buy it. I had no desire to request anyone also. I do not ask for anything from anybody. This resolve I have been upholding from that day to this day.

I went to Sathyamma temple and took out a thorn from a cactus and used it as a pin to mend the tear on my shirt. If one

remains steadfast in his true resolve, anything can be achieved.

Once, Subbamma told Me, “Raju, you are becoming weak. Eat well and grow strong.” My friends would bring everything prepared in their house for Me. But I used to tell them, “See, in your houses meat or fish is cooked and eaten. Please don't bring anything from such houses.”

This way, I brought down non-vegetarianism in Puttaparthi. In the same manner I had prevented cruelty to animals in the form of cockfights and cart races and also prevented the gambling habit.

We protect truth and truth protects us

Once, some people inimical to Me set fire to the room I was sleeping in. Some 10 children of the age of 6-9 years were sleeping outside in the verandah. The miscreants had locked My room from outside and set fire to the roof. The children were shouting loudly, “Raju! Raju!”

I peeped out through the small window smilingly and said, “Don't be afraid. *Dharma eva hato hanti, dharmo rakshati rakshitah* (Righteousness, when destroyed, destroys; righteousness when protected, protects).” We protect truth and truth protects us. Have firm faith in this precept.

The children closed their eyes and chanted “Raju! Raju!” as if it were a *mantra*. Since the roof was made of hay, there was a big conflagration. Suddenly there was a cloudburst, and the fire was totally put out. The downpour was just over that small hut and nowhere else.

The joy of the children was indescribable. “Raju, Raju... What a great miracle?” They were shouting, “We cannot live without you.”

I called them in and gave them some guavas and bananas. They asked Me, wherefrom I got these fruits. I told then, “Why

do you bother? Eat what is given.” Whether it is a mansion or a wayside shelter what does it matter, it is enough if you get sleep. Likewise, it is enough if your stomach is full.

Subbamma’s love for Swami

Subbamma came to know of the episode next day. Subbamma was a great soul. Swami was her very life. She set afoot a detailed search to find the culprits. They were caught. She ordered that they should be banished from the village. The entire property of the village belonged to her. She was very wealthy. All lands belonged to her. So she ordered them to get out of her lands.

Then I caught hold of her hands. I told her, “Please don't harm them because of Me. Knowingly or unknowingly, they have committed a mistake. Please forgive them. Please don't drive them away.”

When she told them this, all those children came to Swami and carried Him over their shoulders. Subbamma, Ramanna, etc. were very proud people. They carried Me on their shoulders saying, “You must have been some great person in your earlier birth. Otherwise you cannot have such nobleness in you. Because of you, gradually this village is going to attain great fame”

Subbamma said, “Don't mistake Him for a small boy. His power is like a lightning strike, how can you understand His true nature?” From that day, she did not allow Me to go out of her house. I stayed in her house and went to school from there itself. She was a great lady. She was sixty years old then. She was always looking for Me, asking, “Is Raju there? Is Raju there?” She would sleep only after seeing Me safe. She was trying to protect Me from the wicked people in the village.

Attempt on Swami's life by poisoning food

One day, a *brahmin* lady came. She requested Subbamma to send Raju to her house for taking snacks in her house. Subbamma was not very happy at the proposition. She was suspicious and thought that there was some evil intention behind the invitation. She refused and told Me, "Raju don't go anywhere without my consent."

"Subbamma! Why do you want to thwart her desire?"

She replied, "There is some wicked purpose behind her invitation."

But I persisted and said, "I must fulfil her request."

I went there. She had made some *vadas*. They were poisoned. I ate them. Within five minutes My entire blood stream had turned blue. Subbamma came to know of this and came running looking for Me. When she found Me, I told her, "Don't worry, what they wanted, they have done. I can look after Myself." I asked Subbamma to give Me a tumbler of water with her own hands. As soon as I took that water, the blueness vanished.

Subbamma's anger had reached its limits. She said, "Such women will ruin the reputation of Puttaparthi. There is no room for such people in this village. Only righteous and good natured people should live here."

She called the mothers of Swami's companions and told them, "These children are not yours. They are all mine. They should be with Raju all the time. They should spend every moment of their life with Raju."

Till recently they were alive. You all may know Bukkapatnam Sathyanarayana, he was one of them and is still with us here. He was My classmate in the 6th class. All these children would come to Swami. It is hard to describe their unsullied af-

fection, devotion and attachment to Swami. The *Kali Yuga* has poisoned the minds of children.

Those days, when Swami stretched Himself to sleep, there was competition between them to take His head on their laps. They would say, “Raju, since you slept on my lap, there is no pain or distress in my body and there is some kind of joy filling me.” I wonder if the children of today will have the same sentiments.

I ask for nothing; I only give and give

Children's minds are now filled with unrighteous feelings. *Yad bhavam tad bhavati* (as the state of mind, so is the state of person). Children of those days were very pure and innocent. Swami resolved then to spread these qualities to the villagers for their own good. Mere *bhajan* or chanting “Rama, Govinda” is not great.

Cultivate good habits. One should develop exemplary qualities and earn a good name. Swami is happy when students acquire the reputation of good character. The children's behavior should be good right from the start. That is why I say, “Start early, drive slowly and reach safely.” If you develop sacred habits from early age you grow into an exemplary human.

Even today, those who were with Me are there as shining examples in the villages. When Swami is returning from Bangalore, all along the way they offer their salutations, saying “Swami! Swami!” with great joy. Those who have followed Me by car know how these people bring pot-fulls of water and wash the roads. They say, “Swami, you have brought water to us. We have to offer it back to You only.”

If I just ask them, “how are you?” they are transported with bliss. It is for this purpose of transformation that I have not accumulated any money, not a *paisa*. I have no property worth

even a *paisa*. My entire wealth is My students. I ask for nothing. I only give and give. There is no limit to Swami's giving. The devotees must be made happy by giving something. Swami's sole concern is the welfare of His devotees. No one needs worry about My welfare. My welfare is in My hands. Therefore, if one leads his life without departing from Truth and Righteousness, life will be fruitful and meaningful.

17 October 1999
Prasanthi Nilayam

Calming the mental agitation that surges like waves, leveling the swirls and whirls of likes, dislikes, love, hate, sorrow, joy, hope, and despair, santhi (peace) is earned and maintained without disturbance. Santhi is of the nature of the Atman. The Atman is imperishable. It does not die, like the body and mind. It is universal, it is subtle, and its very nature is knowledge. So, santhi also partakes of these characteristics.

—Baba