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Your True Nature Is Bliss Realise It

The sun appears serene and peaceful. The days have become shorter. The sweet festival of Sankranti has come filling our homes with the newly harvested grain.

(Telugu poem)

S*ankranti* is the most important of all festivals. Practically, every day is a festival day for humanity. But, people out of their ignorance have earmarked a few days as festival days and the rest as ordinary days. Many celebrate this festival without actually knowing its significance. On this day in this part of the world, people pay their respects to cows and bulls. Bulls are decorated daintily with a variety of ornaments and clothes and taken round the streets. They are called *gangireddhulu* (sacred bulls). Not merely this; a symbolic marriage is performed between the cows and the bulls. The person who takes round the decorated bull is called *Gangireddudasu*. He wears a special dress on this occasion. The very sight of *Gangireddudasu* fascinates children. The elder brother lovingly calls the younger brother to go along with him to see the sacred

bull and its master.

“Oh my dear brother, here comes the Gangired-dudasu. Come, let us go and see him. He wears a silver medallion and a waist belt. He carries a decorated staff and wears special marks on his forehead. He brings with him the richly caparisoned sacred cow and bull and performs their marriage. Let us see the marriage ceremony and offer our gifts”

(Telugu poem)

He brings with him a cow and a bull and calls them Sita and Rama, respectively. They are trained in such a way that they respond to his questions according to the movement of the stick in his hand. He asks the cow, “Oh Sita! Do you like Rama?” As per the training given, the cow shakes its head in disapproval. Then he asks the bull, “Oh Rama! Do you like Sita?” The bull also answers in the negative. In this manner, both of them disapprove initially and later on agree for the marriage. Then the *Gangireddudasu* performs the symbolic marriage of Sita and Rama.

The Message Of Sankranti

The festival of *Sankranti* bestows immense joy even on animals and birds. It is a very important festival for farmers. This is the day he brings home the newly harvested crop and enjoys the fruits of his hard

labour. Thus, right from a farmer to the king, everyone celebrates this festival joyfully. Names may vary, but this festival is celebrated by one and all irrespective of religion and nationality. It marks the beginning of the sacred time of *Uttarayana* (sun’s movement toward North). It confers bliss on one and all.

Everyone aspires to attain bliss. In fact, that is the very purpose of human life. Life has no meaning if one cannot experience bliss. Bliss is your goal.

Nityanandam, Parama Sukhadam, Kevalam Jnanamurtim, Dwandwateetam, Gagana Sadrisham, Tattwamasyadi Lakshyam, Ekam, Nityam, Vimalam, Achalam, Sarvadhee Ekam, Nityam, Vimalam, Achalam, Sarvadhee Sakshibhutam, Bhavateetam, Trigunarahitam (God is the embodiment of eternal bliss, He is wisdom absolute, the One without a second, beyond the pair of opposites, expansive and pervasive like the sky, the goal indicated by the *mahavakya Tattwamasi*, the eternal, pure, unchanging, the witness of all functions of the intellect, beyond all mental conditions and the three *gunas* of *satwa, rajas* and *tamas*).

In accordance with the tradition, the newly married sons-in-law visit their in-laws’ house to celebrate this festival.

*As Sankranti is the festival of festivals,
Oh newly married bridegroom, visit your in-law’s
house,
Come, spend your time in fun and frolic with your*

*brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law,
The entire household and the neighbourhood will
welcome you with love and affection.*

(Telugu song)

Even those who have not visited their in-laws' house for a number of years will be eager to go for *Sankranti* festival. The in-laws extend all hospitality to the son-in-law and make efforts to please him. They even go to the extent of borrowing money in order to give him new clothes and serve him delicious food. The entire household spends their time blissfully. But, today that spirit of *Sankranti* celebrations is not noticed anywhere. The son-in-law instead of giving joy to his in-laws, quarrels over petty matters with them.

Sankranti confers joy on human beings, birds and animals alike. Not only *Bharatiyas*, even the people of other countries celebrate this festival, but with different names. This is the season when cool winds blow and the farmer brings home the harvested crop. He spends his time in a relaxed manner free from all worries and anxieties. There is a saying in Telugu: "One who is free from '*chintha*' (worry) will be able to sleep peacefully even in a '*santha*' (market place).

Everyone should make efforts to overcome worries and enjoy everlasting happiness. This is the message of *Sankranti*. People may interpret it in their own way, but few understand its true significance. Amongst the variety

of festivals, the womenfolk accord a special place to this festival. The happiness that one enjoys during this season is unique.

Man makes various efforts to experience happiness. You can find few in this world who do not want to be happy. But one must understand that happiness cannot be acquired from outside. It originates from the heart. Heart is the source of bliss. The happiness we enjoy in the external world is only a reaction, reflection and resound of the happiness within. Very few understand this truth. The apparent joy that one experiences today is artificial and temporary. Only the happiness that springs from the heart is permanent.

Happiness Should Manifest From Within

Students!

Behave so as not to cause hindrance to anyone. Festivals are meant to experience happiness and share it with others. Happiness cannot be purchased in a market nor can it be acquired by worldly means. It should manifest from within. It is not the nature of *Bharatiyas* to hurt the feelings of others for their own pleasure. One should respect others' feelings and act appropriately. One should share his happiness with his fellowmen. You should welcome the arrival of the bounteous month of Pushya and celebrate *Sankranti* in the true spirit by manifesting your inner joy and sharing it with others. The word '*Kranti*' means change. It signifies a change

from misery to happiness, from restlessness to peace and from pain to pleasure. *Sankranti* bestows joy on everyone equally. That is why everyone eagerly awaits the arrival of *Sankranti* with enthusiasm. Even birds and animals are happy with the arrival of *Sankranti*. When the farmer brings home the harvested grain, birds partake of them and express their joy by chirping merrily. The neighbours congratulate the farmer for the rich harvest he reaped as a result of his hard labour. *Students!*

It is most essential that you understand the significance of every festival and celebrate them in the true spirit. As we do not go deep into their significance, we are unable to enjoy true happiness. One should be prepared to sacrifice his body to have the experience of eternal bliss. Body is a combination of five elements and the mind is merely a bundle of thoughts. One should neither be attached to the body nor follow the vagaries of the mind. Drive away the evil qualities of *kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada* and *matsarya* (desire, anger, greed, infatuation, pride and jealousy) and manifest your inner peace and bliss. Instead of developing peace and bliss, man is destroying them. He is giving scope to unrest even in trivial matters. Neither *asanthi* (unrest) nor *prasanthi* (supreme peace) are acquired from outside. People say, "I want peace." Where is peace? Is it present outside? If peace were to be found outside, people would have bought it by spending any amount of money. But outside, we find only pieces! The real peace is within.

Whether you boil it hard or dilute it with water, milk remains white. White symbolises purity. In the constant manner of milk, your heart should always remain pure, bright and peaceful in spite of trials and tribulations. We should subdue sorrow, keep the evil qualities of anger, hatred and jealousy under check and manifest our innate bliss. When your desires are not fulfilled, you become angry. Hence, desires are the root cause of anger and they should be controlled in the first instance.

Embodiments of Love!

Everlasting bliss is the goal of everyone. You should derive happiness even from what seem to be troubles. One need not search for happiness elsewhere. It is always with you and in you. You are unable to experience it as you have not understood the true meaning of happiness. You are under the illusion that happiness lies in money, wealth and material comforts. Once you have the taste of true happiness, you will not crave for worldly possessions. True happiness springs forth from the depths of one's heart. When milk is boiled in a vessel, its level starts rising gradually. The milk level subsides when you sprinkle a few drops of water over it. It is because of its association with water that milk loses its value. Likewise, man loses his value when he associates himself with bad company. One will always be blissful if one is in good company. Before making friendship with an individual, one should enquire into his character.

You may or may not be aware; I am always in a state of bliss. I have no worries or difficulties whatsoever. Some people ask, “Swami, do you have any worries?” I do not know what worry is. I have never experienced it. I am always blissful. You should always think of bliss. Then you will see bliss everywhere. The experience of bliss is sweeter than sugar, tastier than curd, sweeter indeed than honey. People feel sad when they are faced with difficulties and at the bereavement of their near and dear ones. But at no point of time do I feel sorry about such happenings. They come and go like passing clouds. Happiness and sorrow follow one another. When you contemplate on bliss, there will be no room for sorrow.

Embodiments of Love!

There is love in each one of you, but you are directing it on worldly relationships. You have not tasted true love. Love God wholeheartedly. That is true love. People may come and people may go, but God neither comes nor goes. He is always present. When you are engulfed in sorrow, think of happiness. You will certainly experience happiness.

Bliss Is Our Essential Nature

Bliss is very much immanent in the human being. Wherever we are, whatever be the position we occupy, our essential nature is bliss. People ask Me sometimes “Swami! Did You ever experience sorrow?”

I am amused at this question. In fact, why should I experience sorrow? Should I feel sorry about the body? Not necessary. This body is always healthy and active. The nature of the human mind is fickle. The body is like a water bubble; mind is like a mad monkey. Don't follow the mind; don't rely on the body since it is like a water bubble. After all, why should one feel sorry about the body and mind which are transient? In fact, bliss is our essential nature which is permanent.

Embodiments of Love!

Cultivate love that will help you to experience bliss. “Start the day with Love; fill the day with Love; end the day with Love that is the way to God.” If you can achieve this, you will not be disturbed by sorrows and difficulties. The heart is the seat of bliss. True bliss flows from a pure and loving heart. Try to experience such bliss. All other forms of happiness are momentary.

Embodiments of Love!

Children are always happy and cheerful. They do not have any inhibitions. When somebody smiles at them, they will also smile innocently. They experience bliss that is the inherent nature of all human beings. There is a difference between happiness and bliss. In common parlance, “happiness” is momentary. It comes and goes. Bliss is something that wells up from within. It emerges from the heart, as a result of one's union with God. If one feels separate from God, one cannot experience bliss.

Embodiments of Love!

You have to experience such bliss in abundance in the days to come. Let me remind you once again that neither age nor position nor for that matter anything in this physical environment can bring about such bliss. It is only a pure and loving heart that is the source of bliss. The holy festival of *Sankranti* signifies change or transformation of the heart. It is experiencing bliss arising out of the realisation of the changeless, Eternal Principle. Divinity is the only principle that is changeless. God is ever blissful. In fact, He is the embodiment of bliss. For example, this is a white cloth. It is only when this cloth is dipped in or painted with colour, it acquires some colour. Similarly, your essential nature is bliss. If you are experiencing sorrow, it is because you have immersed yourself in sorrow. Wherever you are, you must always be happy and blissful. For example, people wish me “Swami! Happy Birthday!” I would like to ask one question in this context. Is there real happiness in celebrating a birthday? I am always happy. Then, where is the question of celebrating a particular day in a year as “Happy Birthday”. This is only an expression in borrowed words. In fact, bliss is our true nature. We camouflage our true nature with artificial expressions and feel satisfied as though it is real bliss. This is not the correct approach.

Be Blissful By Keeping Desires At Bay*Embodiments of Love!*

You are full of Love. In fact, your hearts are overflowing with Love. But, you are preventing your love from flowing and expressing itself outwardly. Otherwise, love has no barriers or hurdles at all! Constantly contemplate on God. Then you will always be happy physically, mentally and spiritually. Unfortunately, nowadays you are losing such a divine quality of bliss due to various desires. If you can keep these desires away from you, you will always be blissful. For example, this is a white cloth. Whiteness is its nature. But it acquires dirt because of constant usage. Similarly, your heart is always pure, bright and blissful. But it gets polluted because of desires. Therefore, cultivate Love and keep your heart always pure. Then you will be blissful every moment of your life. But, you have forgotten your innate nature of bliss and are always immersed in sorrow and unhappiness. When someone enquires, “How are you?” you reply “so, so”. This is not the the correct way. We must reply, “I am happy”. It is possible that we may encounter some ups and downs in life. But, they should not affect our essential nature, which is bliss. Did you observe Me carefully? How blissful I am! Not only now, I am always blissful and overflowing with bliss. In fact, you can also experience such bliss in My presence. However, if you approach Me with an evil mind, evil thoughts and desires, you cannot experience this bliss. These are human weaknesses. You must, therefore, try to correct them.

Dear Students!

You should never feel dejected. Supposing you fail in an examination sometime, you should not feel dejected. Reconcile yourself that perhaps you did not write the examination well and therefore you have failed. But never get depressed and dejected that you have failed in the examination. Similarly, you enquire into yourself the reason for your sorrow. You will yourself realise that your own thoughts are responsible for the present situation. Hence, correct them. You will be happy once again. Sorrows and difficulties are like passing clouds. You should never attach importance to them. You must always be happy and cheerful. Peace and happiness are your qualities. In fact, your true nature is bliss.

Man's Evil Deeds Cause Calamities

Embodiments of Love!

Today is the holy festival of *Sankranti*. In fact, this year is particularly important than the previous year. Last month several people suffered untold misery and suffering on account of a *Tsunami*. It is only man's evil deeds that are responsible for such a calamity. I, therefore, advise you not to indulge in wrong actions and evil deeds. It is possible that more troubles may occur during this year, compared to last year. However, we must move forward unmindful of those troubles. These are all passing clouds and you need not be perturbed by these occurrences. Be bold and courageous to face them. The calamity of *Tsunami* that occurred last month was in fact, man-made. It was not Divine Will at all! But, man feels that all such

calamities are thrust upon man by God. Never! God always provides happiness to man. He has no anger or hatred. His nature is love. The question arises why these sorrows and difficulties in the world? Strictly speaking, happiness will not have any value without sorrow. Man cannot experience happiness without undergoing some difficulty or the other. Both happiness and sorrow are intertwined. One cannot exist without the other.

*Pleasure and pain, good and bad co-exist,
none can separate them. You cannot find
pleasure or pain, good or bad to the
exclusion of the other. Pleasure results
when difficulties fructify.*

(Telugu poem)

God does not cause pain to any living being in His creation. All sorrows and difficulties are man-made only. God is the protector of all living beings. He provides peace and happiness to one and all. *Lokah samastah sukhino bhavantu* (May all people of the world be happy). This is the Will of God. How then can God cause sorrow to a human being? Unable to understand His divine will, you accuse God of causing sorrow. If you can fathom the divine will, you will realise that everything is for your good only. We are all embodiments of bliss. Day in and day out you experience that bliss and share it with others. Then only it will increase.

Embodiments of Love!

This *Sankranti* is *prema Sankranti* and *ananda Sankranti*. Hence, welcome this *Sankranti* festival. Welcome God who is the embodiment of bliss. God is not satisfied with the appellations like “*Karunanidhi*” (the treasure house of compassion) and “*Premaswarupa*” (embodiment of love). God is always blissful. You should not pray to God to fulfil your umpteen desires. Just pray “Oh! God! Share Your bliss with me. Make me blissful!” Never deride God as “*nirdaya*” (one without compassion). Whatever God does is for our own good. Even the sorrows and difficulties we experience are for our own good. They are preludes to happiness and bliss. If you cultivate such positive outlook, you will always be blissful. Share your happiness with all. Contrary to this, man today is keeping happiness to himself and distributing sorrow to others. This is not what we should do. “Suppress your sorrow and manifest inner joy” this is the spiritual *sadhana* one has to undertake. When you encounter any difficulty or sorrow or restlessness, do not mind them at all. Ignore them. You are always embodiments of bliss. If you constantly contemplate on this reality, nothing will bother you.

Embodiments of Love!

May this festival of *Sankranti*, which is a symbol of change, bring about a transformation in your heart and provide bliss to one and all, so that you may always lead a happy, prosperous and cheerful life. In fact, the very name of a human being is *anandamaya* (full of bliss).

Manavatva (humanness) is meant for rising to the level of *daivatva* (divinity).

Students!

All your dramas and playlets that you have enacted here are good. If you analyse properly, where does the bad lie? It lies in your mind. Do not think bad and share your bad thoughts with others. Bliss is the real food for a human being. One should always be hungry to partake of that food of bliss. Let your faith in God be firm and unshakable. It is only God’s love that is eternal. If you can secure that love, all other forms of happiness will automatically come to you. good only.

(*Sankranti, 14-1-2005, Prasanthi Nilayam*)