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Experience The Sweetness Of Rama's Name

This motherland of Bharat has given birth to many noble souls who attained great name and fame in all the continents of the world. Many sages and seers of Bharat have been sanctifying their time by propagating Rama *tathwa* (principle of Rama) since ancient times. The *Ramayana* belongs to *Treta Yuga*. Though thousands of years have passed, yet the *Ramayana* is being read with reverence in every village and every hamlet.

Do As You Say

People, young and old, chant the sacred name of Rama even now with great devotion. They may forget any other name, but not the *Rama nama* (name). Be he a millionaire or a pauper, everyone takes refuge in the divine name of Rama in times of difficulty. In Bharat, it is hard to find anyone who does not contemplate upon or chant the name of Rama. Many sages in the past did penance and undertook several kinds of vows to spread the glory of *Rama nama* in the world. However, Rama never wished or told anybody to chant His name or contemplate upon it. He, in fact, declared that all were the embodiments of divinity.

The foremost teaching of Rama was that one should follow *sathya*. Taking *sathya* as the basis, one should sustain and promote *dharma* (righteousness). *Dharma* is not confined to any particular place or country; it is present in all. It is born out of *sathya* (truth). In fact, *dharma* cannot exist without *sathya*. What is *dharma*? *Dharayati iti dharma* (that which sustains is *dharma*). Some people wrongly limit *dharma* to mere feeding of the poor or acts of charity. *Dharma* should flow from one's own heart. Then, it should be put into practice. Do as you say. That is man's foremost duty. There should be perfect harmony between one's words and actions. On the other hand, if one says one thing and does something contrary to it, it connotes *adharma* (unrighteousness). Moreover, one should carefully analyse and weigh the pros and cons before saying something. *Manasyekam vachasyekam, karmanyekam mahatmanam* (Those whose thoughts, words and deeds are in perfect harmony are noble ones). You say that you are a human being. But, you are entitled to be called a human being only when your thoughts, words and deeds are in harmony. Rama achieved unity of thought, word and deed. In contrast, Ravana's thoughts, words and deeds were at variance with each other. *Manasyanyath vachasyanyath, karmanyanyath duratmanam* (Those who lack harmony of thoughts, words and deeds are wicked).

Develop Your Innate Qualities

There has naturally been a conflict between *sathya* (truth) and *asathya* (untruth), *Dharma* (righteousness) and *Adharma* (unrighteous-ness). Rama scrupulously followed *sathya*, whereas

Ravana resorted to *asathya*. There is no *dharma* greater than adherence to *sathya*. Hence, we should adhere to truth even in trivial matters. We should never resort to untruth to escape from a difficult situation.

The creation emerges from truth and merges into truth.
Is there a place in the cosmos where truth does not exist?
Visualise this pure and unsullied truth.
(Telugu poem)

In fact, truth is the foundation of the entire creation. If for any reason this foundation is disturbed, the whole world will collapse. What is the reason for all the trials and tribulations of man today? It is because man has forgotten truth. He is facing humiliation and disrepute because he is indulging in injustice and falsehood. Hence, one should not resort to untruth under any circumstances. One should speak only truth. *Sathya* is a small term. But it connotes *Sat* (changeless divinity). Since we try to change this changeless truth, we undergo changes and distortions.

Dear Students!

You are all young. If you follow truth right from this young age, you will surely become an ideal to the entire country. What is truth? God's word is truth. Hence, when you speak with the feeling *sarvam Bhagavad pretyartham* (everything is to please God), then everything will become truth. Every thought and feeling emanating from man is a reflection of his inner truth. Unfortunately, it gets converted into falsehood by the improper use of the tongue. The tongue is one of the five senses. These senses are the cause of changes in us. They are responsible for the sin or merit that we earn.

The *panchabhutas* (five elements) pervade the entire universe, right from the earth to sky. There is no sixth element other than these five elements in the universe. The same five elements are found in every human being in a subtle form. One has to realise this truth and conduct oneself accordingly. *sathya* (truth), *dharma* (righteousness), *santhi* (peace) *prema* (love) and *ahimsa* (nonviolence) that are present within you have to be nurtured and developed. *Sathya* is the path. *Dharma* follows it. *Prema* is the experience. It is only then that *ahimsa* manifests. *Himsa* (violence) is not limited to harming or hurting others; acting contrary to one's words is also *himsa*. There can be no greater *ahimsa* than using our tongue in a sacred manner.

Santhi (peace) is not to be found somewhere else. It is very much within us. There are many distasteful qualities present within us. It is for us to make good use of these qualities. You may ask, "Why does not God change our nature?" No, God does not at all interfere; He is a witness of everything. It is not for God to tell you what is good and what is bad. Your own thoughts and feelings tell you what is good and what is bad. If you eat a cucumber,

you will get the belch of a cucumber. Hence, what is there in you will be reflected outside. Whatever bad you see in others, it is nothing but the reflection of your own thoughts. Some people are constantly immersed in worldly thoughts. Such people can never be happy. Only those attain the state of bliss whose mind is steady, without any thoughts. Some people consider themselves very intelligent and keep enquiring deeply into their accumulated bookish knowledge. This type of pedantry is like allergy. Once this allergy starts spreading, their energy is sapped. Unfortunately, today we are developing allergy, not energy. Do not keep deliberating upon whether something is good for you or not. Everything is good. Whatever happens, consider that it is good for you. When you develop such an attitude, everything will turn out to be good for you.

Embodiments Of Love!

Love all. Hate none. Do not misunderstand others. Some people develop misunderstanding even about God! It is the worst of sins. Hence, do not entertain such misconceptions. If by any reason such thoughts enter your mind, consider them as your enemies and drive them away. Be loving and cheerful always. It is only love that protects and sustains you. You are yourself the embodiment of love. Where there is love, there hatred cannot enter.

Embodiments Of Love!

Human body is a miniature world. It is constituted by *panchabhutas* (five elements), *panchendriyas* (five senses) and *pancha pranas* (five life-breaths) which, in turn, are born out of truth, are sustained by truth and ultimately merge in truth. Hence, one should follow truth earnestly. Since people distort truth, they lose their purity. The main reason for the impurity of one's heart is one's tendency to distort truth. Hence, if one wishes to maintain purity and sacredness of one's heart, one has to speak truth. If you are wedded to truth, whatever you say will come right.

Some people complain, "Swami! Though we are treading the path of truth, untruth still troubles us. What could be the reason for our predicament?" The question can be answered by a simple example. While the pure and crystal clear Ganga river flows, some streams and rivulets formed by the rain water join it during its course, thereby polluting the river. However, one has to be careful not to allow any impurities to join the pure and unsullied truth of one's heart. It is because of the weakness of our senses that various impurities enter our heart and pollute it. These impurities are the six inner enemies of man. The purity of nectar can be destroyed even by an atom of impurity. Once a music director composed a song:

I am aware, You are like the moon
In the distant sky;
Yet my mind tries to grab You;
I don't know why.

(Telugu song)

In fact, where is the moon? Not in the distant sky. Our mind itself is the moon. We are unable to gain control over the mind because of these six inner enemies coming in our way. Is it not a fact that even the bright light of the moon on a full moon night is not visible if the clouds come in its way? The moment the clouds move away, the moon is visible. Similarly, you have to do constant *namasmarana* in order to drive away the clouds of these six inner enemies.

Follow The Ideals Set By Rama

Today we are celebrating *Sri Rama Navami*. On this sacred day, we should resolve to follow the teachings of Rama. *Sathya and dharma* are the two main teachings of Rama. Do not consider yourself as a mere human being. Develop full faith that you are none other than Rama! People often say, "Only my *Atmarama* knows it!" Thus, our *atma* itself is the embodiment of Lord Rama! The *Atma* has no specific form. The same *Atma* that pervades the entire universe took a form and incarnated as Rama. Similarly, *dharma* took the form of Lakshmana who constantly followed Rama. Lakshmana considered Rama as his very life-breath. Rama was everything for him.

During the exile of Rama, Lakshmana and Sita, once Lakshmana ventured into a particular part of the forest. Soon he was beset with evil thoughts. As soon as he returned, he told Rama, "Oh! Rama! Why are we undergoing all these troubles? Why should the innocent mother Sita be put to these ordeals? Come! Let us go back to Ayodhya, this very moment." Sita was surprised at the sudden change in the attitude of Lakshmana. Since Rama knew everything, He called Lakshmana to His side smilingly and made him sit near Him. Immediately, Lakshmana realised his fault. With great agony, he enquired from Rama, "Dear brother! How come these evil thoughts entered my mind? Never before such a thing had happened to me." Rama then explained, "Dear brother! This is not your fault. This is the region of a demon. Hence, all evil thoughts entered your mind." Tell me your company, I shall tell you what you are. As is your company, so are your thoughts. Hence, keep yourself away from bad company. Join the company of good and noble souls. Then, you will get good thoughts. As are your thoughts, so shall be the result. *Yad bhavam tad bhavati* (as are the feelings, so is the result).

When Kausalya was shedding tears after Rama left for the forest, Sumitra tried to comfort her, saying, "Dear sister! Why do you cry? Is it because Rama is going to the forest? No, no. You are mistaken that Rama would live in the forest, while we would enjoy royal comforts in Ayodhya. In fact, wherever Rama lives is Ayodhya and the rest is nothing but a forest. We should lead our life with equanimity, remaining equal-minded in happiness and sorrow. Happiness and sorrow come one after the other. We should not be affected by them. We should neither be elated by happiness nor depressed by sorrow. Can there be a human being in this world without happiness and sorrow? Rama is, in fact, omniscient and omnipotent. No harm can ever befall Him from wild animals or demons in the forest."

Kausalya was also worried about Sita since she was accompanying Rama to the forest. Rama had tried to dissuade her from going to the forest, saying, "Sita! The forest is full of thorny bushes and wild animals. You will be put to a lot of difficulties in the forest." Sita then reasoned with Rama, "Oh! Rama! You are the protector of the entire world. Can You not protect Your own wife from the wild animals? You are omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. I am sure that none of these wild animals can cause any harm to me when You are with me. I have no such fear." Rama felt very happy to hear these words of Sita.

When Sita was abducted by Ravana, both Rama and Lakshmana became very much worried about her. Seething with anger over Ravana's mean act, Lakshmana approached his elder brother Rama and said, "Dear brother! Give me Your permission. I will reduce all these wicked demons to ashes." Rama counselled patience and said, "Lakshmana! We don't need to do any such thing. The demons will destroy themselves on their own. In fact, they will become victims of their own evil qualities." Subsequently, Ravana was killed by Rama and His army of *vanaras*. Rama then explained to Lakshmana thus: "Lakshmana! People behave in a particular way and reap the consequences of their actions, depending upon their *prarabdha* (destiny) and their qualities. We need not be too much concerned with that. As long as one is attached to worldly objects and thinks in terms of mine and thine, one will be afflicted by sorrow. Hence, one has to treat the worldly objects with the attitude, "these are not mine; all these are the property of the Divine,"

All acts should be performed to please God. If one develops ego with thoughts of 'I' and 'mine', one is sure to perish. You say 'this is mine' and 'that is mine'. In fact, what really belongs to you - the body, the mind, the intellect or the senses? You say 'this is my body', 'this is my mind', 'this is my intellect', etc. But, none of these belongs to you truly. The body which you consider as belonging to you will leave you in a moment, even without your knowledge. Similarly, the mind roams about like a monkey. Is it possible to restrain this mad monkey? Do not say, 'I am this or that'. Say, 'I am I'. This is your correct description. The correct answer to the question 'Who are you?' is 'I am I'. Rama did not criticise or harm anyone. Then, who will have hatred towards Him? Good acts of Rama brought good results to Him. Thus, when we do good to others, there is no possibility for us to undergo sorrows and difficulties. If we still feel we are put to difficulties, the fault lies with us. God is not responsible for our sorrows and difficulties; it is the waywardness of our senses that is responsible for them. So, we should control our senses. If we are able to control our senses, everything else will come under our control. That is the essence of the teachings of Rama. The Ramayana is not merely the story of Rama. In fact, it is the story of every human being.

Sweetness Of Ramanama Never Diminishes

We blame God for our problems and difficulties. But God loves one and all equally. He has no hatred toward anyone. He is always cheerful and smiling. A smiling countenance is the natural quality of a divine being. Where there is a smile, there

can be no hatred at all! People with such divine attributes do not get disturbed under any circumstances. Hence, be always smiling and cheerful. Never put on a 'castor-oil face'. Some students are very much worried about examinations; they want them to be delayed or postponed. However, the sooner you write the examinations and pass them, the quicker will you move onto the higher class. Instead of examination worry, you should make hurry to go to the higher class. There is no worry in this hurry.

Come! Oh, devotees! Come!
 Take the sweet of *Ramanama*.
 Do not buy and eat other sweets Out of ignorance.
 They will spoil your health.
 By mixing the wheat flour of
 The essence of the *Vedas*
 With the milk of *Vedic* declarations,
 Adding the sugar of *Subuddhi* (virtues)
 And the ghee of *Nibaddhi* (truth),
 Removing the dirt of *Abaddhamu* (falsehood),
 Our ancient *Rishis* have prepared this most delicious sweet of *Ramanama*.
 (Telugu song)

Your health will be spoiled by eating all kinds of sweets sold in the marketplace. Those sweets may be tasty, but are harmful to you. Instead, take the sweet of *Ramanama* that has been prepared by our great *Rishis*. It has a wonderful effect on your mind. It can never become stale or spoiled. The more you eat this sweet of *Ramanama*, the more joy will you derive from it. It is sweeter than sugar and tastier than curd.

The divine name of Rama is full of sweetness and it remains sweet forever. There have been many incarnations of God on earth. But the divine name of Rama has remained eternal. Since ancient times, *Ramanama* has remained as the *taraka mantra* (mantra that liberates) for one and all. Right from children to elders, everyone can derive the bliss of chanting *Ramanama*. Age is no obstacle in experiencing the sweetness of *Ramanama*. There is immense sweetness in this name. We should never give up such a sweet, nectarous and blissful *Ramanama* even for a second. Unfortunately, today people are neglecting the chanting of *Ramanama*. It is their misfortune.

Lead An Ideal And Exemplary Life

When Mirabai was asked to leave the Krishna temple in the palace by the Maharana, she was full of anxiety, thinking, "How can I leave my dear Lord Krishna and go away!" But her unflinching faith in Krishna developed the firm conviction in her, "Krishna Himself would come along with me." She prayed to Lord Krishna, "Oh, Lord! I obtained the precious pearl of Divine Name after a great effort. Please bless me that I do not lose this invaluable

pearl.” Chanting the name of Krishna incessantly, she reached Dwaraka. However, she found the doors of the temple closed. Unable to bear the agony of separation from her dear Lord Krishna any more, she banged her head against the doors of the temple. Lo! and behold! The doors of the temple opened and Lord Krishna appeared before her. After having *Darshan* of her dear Lord, Mirabai merged in Him.

We have to broaden our heart. This does not refer to the physical heart. If the physical heart is enlarged, it requires surgery by the doctors. Broadening one's heart implies the quality of large-heartedness. Some people sit here stretching their legs and occupying a lot of space. Instead, if people sit closely, some more devotees can be accommodated. We can help each other by caring and sharing.

Dear Students!

The summer vacation has started. From tomorrow onwards, you will be going home to spend your vacation with your parents. Spend your time happily with your parents. Contemplating upon the happy time you have spent here learning many sacred teachings, make your parents also happy. If you are happy, they will also be happy. Never make your parents unhappy by your conduct. Your parents occupy an important place in your life. It is your foremost duty to make them happy. It is not enough if you look after your own comfort and welfare. First and foremost, the parents are to be made happy. Life is not confined to *khana* (food), *peena* (drink), *sona* (sleep) and *marna* (death). We are not born to eat and roam about and enjoy comforts. We are born to serve our parents and make them happy. If you make your parents happy now, your children would make you happy in future. Lead an ideal and exemplary life. Only then will your life be sanctified and the education acquired by you in Sri Sathya Sai educational institutions will become meaningful. I wish that all of you should earn name and fame as the students of this great institution.

- Rama Navami 7-4-2006, Prasanthi Nilayam