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Ananya Bhakthi

From the moment you wake up in the morning till the time you go to sleep at night, your time is spent in eating and drinking alone. Your efforts are directed only towards mundane gains. Forgetful of the Lotus-eyed Lord, what joy can you get in life?

Santhe or peace is a divine attribute. It is the sweet delight of the *Atma*. It is the prized possession of the *Paramahansa* or the one who has attained the summit of immaculate discrimination. Peace cannot reign in the malice-ridden hearts of selfish people. It can be attained only by those who, with patience, perseverance and forbearance follow the sacred path of spirituality.

Effort is required for achieving results both in the world of mundane affairs and in the spiritual realm.

Sadhana or steady, systematic, and sustained effort alone can confer peace of mind and inner tranquillity. However, the path of *sadhana* does present obstacles to the seeker who will have to overcome them by his perseverance. *Na sukhaat labhyate sukham*—pleasure cannot be the source for further pleasure. There is no joy without sorrow, no pleasure without pain, and no gain without loss. Therefore, abiding joy and everlasting bliss, conferred by the absolute peace and tranquillity of the mind, can be attained only through sincere and painstaking *sadhana*.

“Ask and ye shall be given; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened”, says the Bible. These words contain the eclectic essence of all religions. People who claim today that they are asking, seeking and knocking at the door must realise that they are merely asking nature, seeking ephemeral pleasures and knocking at the gates of hell. Such being the case, they cannot expect God to answer, find the path of *moksha* or have the gates of Heaven opened for them. How can *Paramatma* be expected to answer the prayer addressed to *Prakruthi*?

*Ananyaschintayantomaam yejanah paryupasate
Tesham nityabhiyukthanaam yogakshemam
vahamyaham.*

I bear the burden of the welfare and well-being of those who worship Me, and Me alone, with steadfast devotion and are attached to Me at all times.

Thus has the concept of *ananya bhakthi* been fully and vividly explained in the *Bhagavad Gita* by Krishna. *Ananya bhakthi* is one-pointed devotion to God, involving total surrender. One should not fragment his mind and offer just one bit of it to God. The mind in its entirety must be immersed in the Almighty. Once, Uddhava advised the gopis thus, “Ignorant as you are of the *Sastras*, the *Puranas*, and the *Vedas*, you should follow the path of the adepts in *yoga* to attain communion with God.” Niraja, one of the gopikas, answered, “We have only one mind, not many; that mind has gone away to Mathura along with Krishna. Devoid of a mind, we are unable to understand you!”

A person with a fragmented mind cannot attain *ananya bhakthi*. A disintegrated mind is an obstacle to spiritual progress. Concentration on God with a fragmented mind is an exercise in futility. Single-minded devotion is the easiest path to salvation. In fact, the *ananya bhaktha* becomes a *jivanmukta* (one liberated during life).

Understanding the essence of *prakruthi* enables one to understand the meaning and mystery of life. Life has seven supreme values namely, *keerthi* (reputation), *sampada* (prosperity), *vaak* (eloquence), *buddhi sakthi* (power of discrimination), *medha sakthi* (suprasensory intelligence), *dhairya* (courage), and *sahana* (forbearance). In order to imbibe the essence of divinity, man should gain mastery over the powers associated with these values of life.

The doer of virtuous deeds commands respect and reputation. Thus, one should engage himself in the performance of action that will benefit all. God’s Grace is the greatest wealth. To consider the amassing of money, gold or other material objects as symbols of wealth and social prestige is incorrect. The goal of life, instead, should be the acquisition of the divine wealth of God’s Grace.

Real eloquence consists in the exercise of restraint over speech. Excessive talking, use of abusive and obscene language and losing of one’s temper while speaking are some of the blunders that the tongue is bound to commit if it is engaged in constant chatter. The tongue is really meant for chanting the various divinely potent names of the Lord like Govinda, Damodara, and Madhava.

Of the five sensory organs, the tongue is the most important. It has a dual role to play, unlike the eye, the ear, the nose and the skin, which have only the single functions of seeing, hearing, smelling, and touching respectively. The tongue has not only the capacity to taste but also the power of speech. The tongue has tremendous alertness and forbearance as is shown by its survival in the midst of thirty-six sharp teeth which may inadvertently bite it at any time. Besides, it displays enormous self-respect and does not leave its abode, the mouth, even under the most difficult circumstances! The wound caused by a slip of the foot may be healed by

medication; on the other hand, the damage caused by a slip of the tongue may be irreparable. That is why the tongue must be carefully controlled at all times.

Aum Bhur Bhuva Suvah

Tat Savitur Varenyam

Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi

Dhiyo Yo Nah Prachodhayat.

So runs the sacred *Gayatri Manthra*, an invocation addressed to the Sun for the improvement of the faculty of *buddhi* or intellect. The darkness of ignorance is dispelled by the incandescence of the *buddhi* which shines its light like the glorious sun. “Among the faculties, I am the *buddhi*”, proclaims Krishna in the *Vibhuthi Yoga* of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Medha sakthi, which is also essential for the spiritual regeneration of man, should be carefully distinguished from *buddhi sakthi*. *Buddhi* is the power of discrimination exercised over the sensations and perceptions pertaining to the five sensory organs of sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. *Medha sakthi* is associated with suprasensory experiences, extrasensory perceptions, intuition and spirituality. It transcends the sensations and perceptions provided by the phenomenal world.

Man should be courageous. Lack of courage leads to doubts, despair, dejection and depression. A person with a faultless and blemishless character shall never

behave like a frightened, trembling sheep. Therefore, developing intellectual integrity and strength of conviction, man should proceed ahead and conquer the evils and temptations of the world.

Forbearance, the paragon of virtues, makes a man remain unruffled by the vicissitudes of life. Neither elated by a happy turn of events nor dejected on the occurrence of a tragedy, a man with fortitude is unperturbed by the ups and downs in the endless drama of life. Such a person endowed with inner tranquillity and peace of mind is the *sthithaprajna* portrayed in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

In the Buddha’s times, there was a particular village headman who despised the holy man and his teachings. Once, he heard that Buddha and his disciples were coming to his village. The tyrannical headman ordered all the villagers to shut the doors of their houses and refrain from giving alms to them. While the villagers followed his order, the headman himself stood near the entrance to his own house. Arriving with his followers, Buddha went to the headman’s house to ask for alms—“*Bhavati bhikshaam dehi*”, he said. The latter lost his temper and hurled abuse upon abuse at Buddha in the most uncivil language. Just as he was about to hit the sage, Buddha smiled and said, “I have a doubt. Suppose you give me alms that I do not accept. What will you do then?” The haughty headman answered, “I will take them back.” Hearing this, Buddha asked in the most polite

manner, “You have offered me insult and calumny. I do not accept them; you must, therefore, take them back.” The headman became silent and hung his head in shame and remorse.

A little forbearance and patience on our part will make the abusive epithets of our enemies boomerang on themselves just as a registered letter goes back to its sender if it is returned unaccepted by the addressee.

The aforementioned seven qualities are essential for the development of *ananya bhakthi* and must be cultivated by all *sadhakas*. Krishna told Arjuna, “I am in you and you are in Me. I will be in your vision and you will be in My vision if the barriers between us are broken and spiritual proximity attained. The essence of *ananya bhakthi* is the discovery of your self in Myself and Myself in yourself. You and I are One.”

Isavasyam idam sarvam—all this is inhabited by God. Every person is a sanctuary of the divine *Atma*. Therefore, if you hurt others, you will hurt Easwara who resides in them.