

## Sacrifice and Selflessness are the Hallmarks of True Love

Prasanthi Nilayam

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The heart that is bereft of love is virtually the habitation of ghosts.

This is the apt description of such a heart.

Can we call blacksmith's bellows a living entity just because it takes in air and throws it out?

(Telugu poem)

### *Embodiments of Love!*

Sacrifice is the goal of love. Love does not desire anything. It does not criticise or harm anybody. It is selfless and pure. Not able to understand this principle of love, people crave love in many ways.

You should have faith that selflessness and the spirit of sacrifice are the hallmarks of true love. There is some element of selfishness and self-interest even in the love between mother and child, husband and wife, and between brothers and friends. Only God's love is without any trace of selfishness and self-interest.

### **Realise the principle of unity**

True love can bring close to you those who are distant or separated from you. It can transform a person with animal tendencies into a divine being. It can gradually change worldly and physical love into divine love.

People who wish to understand the principle of love should give up their selfishness and self-interest. They should develop purity, steadfastness, and other divine qualities to understand divine love. They should try to lead their life keeping their focus on the love of God, without paying heed to their difficulties and sufferings.

Even the principle of Brotherhood of Man does not reflect the true unity of mankind because there is a trace of selfishness and self-interest in this. Therefore, those who want to cultivate the spirit

of brotherhood should have faith in the principle of oneness.

Today, there are differences even between brothers, due to which they are leading a life full of conflicts and difficulties. Therefore, brotherhood cannot connote true love.

When you realise that the same *Atma* is present in you, in Me, and in everyone, only then can you have the experience of true love. Individuals may be different, names and forms may vary, but the *Atmic* principle is the same in all. Therefore, one should realize the principle of unity in everything.

Jewels are many but gold is one.

Cows are many but milk is one.

Beings are many but *Atma* is one.

Flowers are many but worship is one.

(Telugu poem)

We should visualise unity in everything. Only then can we understand the love principle in its fullness. We should fill our heart with true love. Those who keep evil thoughts in their heart and pretend as if they are full of love deceive themselves. One who is endowed with true love will never give it up under any circumstances, at any place, and in any of their actions.

### **True love is selfless and changeless**

Some students are full of love and purity as long as they are studying in the university and staying in the hostel. The moment they enter the outside world, many changes occur in their mind. They say that the changes are due to the influence of their company, family, and circumstances, but this is not correct. If you really have pure, selfless, and steady love in your heart, there is no question of any change in you, wherever you may go. No company can cast any evil influence on you.

Here is a small example to illustrate this. You

draw a creeper with many flowers on a piece of paper. When the wind blows, the paper will flutter but not the creeper drawn on the paper. Likewise, your mind may waver due to the influence of bad company, but your heart will remain steady when you are endowed with true love.

Nobody can change the true love that is present in your heart. Love should find place not just in your mind but in your heart. The mind is nothing but a bundle of thoughts. The love that is sustained in your mind by thoughts will be driven away by another current of thoughts. Therefore, preserve love and sacred feelings in your heart.

True love has three qualities. First, it knows no fear. Second, it does not beg anything from anyone. Third, it is love for love's sake and not for any material gain. These three qualities are the very core of love. This type of sacred love is actually true love.

Here is a small example. Once a king went to a forest to hunt. After some time, he felt tired and thirsty. He saw a small hut at a distance. He went to that hut, expecting somebody to be there. He found a sage engrossed in deep meditation. He sat there waiting patiently, since he did not want to disturb his meditation.

After a while, the sage opened his eyes and asked, "Sir, who are you? What makes you come here?"

The king replied, "I am the ruler of a kingdom. I came to the forest to hunt. Since I felt tired, I entered your hermitage to take some rest."

The sage was very happy to hear this and offered fruits and cool water to the king. The king was very pleased with the hospitality offered by the sage. At the time of his departure, the king prayed to the sage, "Swami! My kingdom is quite nearby. Kindly come to my kingdom and accept my hospitality as a token of my gratitude."

The sage, who had renounced everything, did not accept his invitation. But the king persisted, and ultimately the sage agreed just to satisfy the king.

After coming to the palace, both of them had their bath and entered the worship (*puja*) room. The king started praying, "Oh God of gods! I have become a king due to my great good fortune. But this small kingdom is not enough for me. Therefore, I want to extend my kingdom by annexing

the nearby small kingdoms. Cast Your benevolent look on me and shower Your grace."

On hearing these words of the king, the sage quietly got up and started to leave without saying anything.

"Swami! Will you go without eating anything? Kindly stay for some time," prayed the king.

The sage replied, "I did not come to beg from a beggar. You yourself are a beggar, and you are begging from God for petty gains. You are begging God to make your kingdom big. If I want anything, I will pray to the same God to whom you are praying. I don't require anything from you."

It means to say that a person who has true love does not beg anything from anybody. There is even no need to ask anything from God. He gives you what you require at the appropriate time.

Do not ask, oh mind, do not ask.

The more you ask, the more you will be neglected.

God will certainly grant you what you deserve without your asking.

Did He not grant the wish of Sabari, who never asked?

Did He not redeem Jatayu, who never asked but sacrificed his life for His cause?

(Telugu poem)

Did Sabari ask anything from Rama? Did Jatayu want any favour from Rama? No, not at all. When you call God with a pure, steady, and loving heart, He will come running to you. There is no need for you to ask anything from Him. This is the true quality and value of love for God.

Since you forget this divine principle of love and run after worldly gains, you are caught up in many difficulties and problems.

### **Leave everything to the will of God**

Begging and asking something are related to worldliness and connote the path of worldliness (*pravritti marg*). True and sacred love relates to the path of spirituality (*nivritti marg*). When you adhere to the path of spirituality, all the tendencies of worldliness will vanish on their own.

Nobody knows how many precious and valuable things there are in God's treasury. You may be

asking for glass pieces, but God may want to give you precious diamonds. You may be asking for petty things, when God would have resolved to give you something very precious. Therefore, leave everything to the Will of God. Only then will He give you what you really require.

You do not know what you really require and what you do not require. You also do not know what is good for you and what is not good for you. He will give you on His own what is good for you, what is beneficial for you, and what is ideal for you. It all depends upon His Will when and what to give.

When you offer everything to God with a steady mind and do all actions to please Him, He Himself will look after all your requirements. But people today do not have that firm faith. God is not able to fulfill their resolves because they lack faith. Faith is essential for everything.

You talk about devotion and faith. One should have faith in the principle of love. But, unfortunately, people do not have faith in their own love. Then how can they have love for God? Your love is worldly, but God's love is pure and transcendental. God's love is limitless. In order to become the recipient of God's love, gradually reduce your worldly love.

When the examinations draw near, students start praying more and more. For what do they pray? They pray for passing the examination. But this is not the correct prayer. It is like begging. Do not become a beggar. A devotee should never resort to this type of begging.

When you give up all your desires and aspire only for God, then He will give you everything. However, all may not be at that high level in the beginning itself. Therefore, you have to ask God for certain things initially. If you do not ask, even your mother will not give you food. But she is only your worldly mother.

The divine mother has no worldly relationship with you. Her relationship with you relates to spirituality (*nivriddhi*). It is natural to ask and receive in the worldly path (*pravrittis marg*). But in the spiritual path (*nivriddhi marg*), there is only the experience of bliss. Thereafter, there is nothing more to ask.

Accept what God gives you. Accept whatever He does. Do not question whether it is good or not. What you may be considering as bad may turn out to have good results.

When you suffer from malaria fever, the doctor will give you a quinine mixture, which is very bitter. The medicine may be bitter, but its effect will be good on you because it will cure your disease. Initially, you may find devotion very difficult. But you give up your resolve due to fear of difficulties.

Many noble persons underwent many difficulties and performed intense penance to attain divinity. Pleasure lies between two pains. Without pain, there can be no pleasure. You will experience real happiness only after you undergo difficulties.

Will the sugarcane give you *jaggery* on merely asking for it, without you crushing it and extracting the juice? The diamond will gain real value only after many cuttings; without cutting, it will have little value. You can prepare beautiful jewels only when you put the gold in fire and beat it with a hammer. Likewise, you can experience divine bliss only when you develop divine love without caring for criticism of others and bearing all difficulties.

### **Attain unity of thought, word, and deed**

Do not belittle the importance of God's love. It is highly sacred. It may appear to be worldly and ordinary, but in reality it is transcendental.

Every person should cultivate love for God. As I told you yesterday, the Knower, I (*Aham*), is born out of the *Atma*, the mind is born out of *Aham*, and speech is born out of the mind. Therefore, speech is the son of the mind, the mind is the son of *Aham*, and *Aham* is the son of the *Atma*. Father, son, grandson, and great grandson — all four belong to the same family of the *Atma*.

The *Atma* is immanent in all, and that is nothing but love. A person may be devoid of anything, but no one can be without *Atma*.

What is the principle of unity, which is present in all? It is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss (*Sat-Chit-Ananda*). You can also call it conscience.

You are unable to see or catch air that is all around you, but can you say there is no air merely

because you cannot see it or catch it? There is air. Similarly, you cannot deny the existence of consciousness (*chaitanya*) merely because you are unable to see it and experience it. Consciousness does exist.

The same is called ‘being’. The ‘being’ is nothing but *Sat*, which is ever present, which does not come and go. There is nothing like coming and going for *Sat*. It is a great mistake to think it comes and goes.

People say, “God came and gave me *darshan* when I was meditating.” This is a worldly feeling. Wherefrom did He come to give you *darshan*? And where did He go after giving you *darshan*? He neither came from anywhere nor went to any particular place. He was there only.

You could see Him because your heart was pure. You cannot see Him when your heart is impure. But He neither comes nor goes.

As you all know, Dhruva was a child of five years. He had no worldly knowledge. Such a young lad entered a dense forest, performed intense penance, and contemplated on God by the power of his faith and the encouragement of Sage Narada.

You should have faith in the words of your elders. Dhruva wholeheartedly put his trust in the words of Narada, who was the mentally conceived son of Brahma (Brahma’s *manasa putra*).

Dhruva’s faith itself manifested in the form of Lord Vishnu before him. Lord Vishnu asked him, “My dear! What do you want?”

Young Dhruva replied, “Oh Lord! You know where I was, how I was, and on whom I was contemplating. Having known all this, you have come to the place where I was sitting. Therefore, you also know very well what I want.”

When a young lad like Dhruva had so much knowledge, how much more knowledge should God be having? In fact, God has more knowledge than anybody else. He said, “My dear! No doubt, I knew where you were, and I also know what you want. However, I follow a certain system. I am ready to fulfill your desire only when there is harmony between your thoughts, words, and actions. While coming from your home, you told your mother that you would pray to God for the

boon of sitting on your father’s lap. You performed penance in accordance with your thoughts. Now I want to test whether your words are in harmony with your thoughts and actions.”

Dhruva replied, “Because I was beset with worldliness, I came in search of glass pieces — that was the desire to sit on my father’s lap. Now I have found a precious diamond in the form of your *darshan*. It is my great good fortune that I have found a precious diamond while I was searching for glass pieces.”

Vishnu pointed out his weakness and said, “My dear! Your thoughts and actions denote something else while your words convey a totally different thing. Your thoughts and actions are on one side while your speech is on the other. The majority lies with your thoughts and actions. Hence, go back to your kingdom and rule over it.” Saying this, Vishnu sent him back to his kingdom.

In all your endeavours, God wants unity of thought, word, and deed (*trikarana suddhi*). To say one thing and do something else is not proper.

Even after performing such intense penance and ultimately attaining *darshan* of the Lord, Dhruva could not get what he wanted. What is the reason? It was due to the lack of unity of thought, word, and deed.

### **Cast off the veil of evil qualities**

Therefore, always maintain the sacredness of your speech. Speech is born out of the mind. Vagaries of the mind make it impure. Since speech is the son of the mind, the impurity of the mind is reflected in speech, just as the son inherits the qualities of his mother. Truly speaking, the mind should have divine feelings, but it does not always happen.

The father and son can be totally different from each other. Take, for instance, Prahlada and Hiranyakasipu. Prahlada was a great devotee whereas Hiranyakasipu was totally evil-minded. A gem of a boy like Prahlada was born to such a wicked demon like Hiranyakasipu. Prahlada loved Lord Narayana, but Hiranyakasipu hated him.

Prahlada was the one who was not deluded by name and form whereas Hiranyakasipu put his faith only in name and form. You should get rid of

the feelings of attachment to name and form.

Some day or the other, you have to leave your body. Therefore, give up body attachment. What you have to give up is not wife and children and property but the evil qualities of hatred and jealousy, which cover up your humanness. When you cast off this veil of evil qualities, you can attain bliss.

You develop a cataract. It is enough to get the cataract removed; then your eyesight will be restored. You need not make any special efforts to get back your vision.

In the same way, one's heart is covered with the evil qualities of attachment, hatred, and jealousy. To gradually give up these evil qualities is real sacrifice. When you give up your evil qualities, you will easily realise your Self. This, in fact, is your right.

The individual (*manava*) comes from God (*Madhava*). In spite of the fact that you have come from God, you forget God Himself.

The clouds are born out of the sun. The same clouds cover it up, but the sun does not develop any hatred toward them because all these are passing clouds. Why should one hate the clouds, which will move away in a short while? Likewise, the clouds of evil qualities and evil feelings cover up the bright sun of love (*prema*) in the heart of a person.

In such a situation, maintain your quietude. When you keep your poise, these clouds will move away on their own. The wind that brought them will also take them away.

What people have to do is to develop love more and more in their hearts. There is no task in this world that cannot be accomplished by love. Other qualities may not help you to achieve something, but if you have love, there is nothing that you cannot achieve. In fact, you can achieve everything with love. God is love, love is God (*Prem Easwar Hai, Easwar Prem Hai*). You should understand the unity of both and develop the principle of love. Develop the feeling that the suffering that causes pain to you causes the same pain to others also.

You should also understand the truth that others also love themselves as much as you love your-

self. In every situation, put yourself in the position of others and then compare. This is self-enquiry. This is not comparison in the physical sense.

Develop the understanding that the type of feelings, difficulties, and sufferings that you have others also have. Similarly, others' love is also as pure as your love. This is what you have to compare lovingly with sacred feelings. Then there will be no room for hatred and jealousy in you.

In order to drive away the evil qualities of attachment, hatred, and jealousy, develop pure and selfless love devoid of ego. This is real devotion. All other spiritual practices like worship, soft repetition of the name, and meditation are merely steps toward controlling the wavering of your mind.

When you want to go onto the terrace of your house, you use a ladder. The ladder rests on the ground, but its upper end is supported by the wall. The support of the ground at the lower end of the ladder is faith, and the support of the wall at the upper end of the ladder is love. Therefore, with the help of both love and faith, you can reach any height.

Without these two supports, you cannot climb at all. It is impossible. You should have the support of both. You should have deep faith and sacred love. When you develop these two, there is no need to perform any spiritual practices like repetition of the name and meditation.

### **Sacrifice leads to everlasting bliss**

What is the aim of repetition of the Name and meditation? Only to attain love and faith. When you have already attained these two, where is any need left for repetition of the Name and meditation? Where is the necessity to search for something that is already with you?

Many people think that they are in search of God. Why search for God, who is everywhere? Do you search for yourself anywhere? No, no. You do not search for yourself. You would be considered a madcap to go in search of yourself.

Searching for God is like searching for yourself. God is in you, with you, around you, above you, and below you. In fact, you yourself are God. Only due to your attachment and identification with your body do you say that you are such and such.

That is not the reality.

In all the mythologies, epics, and other sacred scriptures that our ancient sages (*rishis*) have written, the question ‘who am I?’ is of utmost importance. What is the significance of asking you to know the answer to the question “who am I?” in preference to all other things to be known in this world?

When someone comes to you, you ask them, “Who are you? Where did you come from?” You ask everyone all these questions. But you never ask yourself, “Who am I, and where have I come from?” When you know who you are, you will know everything about others also.

What do you require for this? First and foremost, you require self-confidence. It is from self-confidence that you will have self-satisfaction. When you have self-satisfaction, you will undertake self-sacrifice. Only by self-sacrifice can you attain self-realisation. Therefore, self-confidence is the foundation, self-satisfaction are the walls, self-sacrifice is the roof, and self-realisation is life.

Without the foundation, there can be no walls, and without walls, you cannot have the roof. And if you don’t have a roof over your head, how can you live? Therefore, see to it that your self-confidence does not shake at all. Whatever may be the circumstances, even at the cost of your life, do not allow your self-confidence to waver.

You should develop such deep faith. When you develop faith, bliss will come to you on its own. When you attain this state of bliss, you will renounce everything. In this state, there will be no differences like mine and thine.

Sacrifice leads to immortal and everlasting bliss. But you are unable to take to the path of sacrifice. What is the reason? You are caught in the snare of ego and attachment, which take you to hell.

It is said that Yama, the lord of death, casts his noose around the neck of everyone and takes away their life. Where has Yama set up his rope factory to prepare the nooses for taking the life of all living beings? There is no such rope factory. There is no need to bring the noose from anywhere. Your ego and attachment are verily the noose that holds your neck tightly and causes your death.

### **Love for God will make you immortal**

Do not think that your joys and sorrows are given to you by God. Your thoughts are the cause of both good and bad, happiness and sorrow. No one else is responsible for them.

It is a mistake to think that this or that person is the cause of your difficulties. You yourself are responsible for everything good and bad, happiness and sorrow, praise and blame.

When anybody else is the cause of your happiness and sorrow, then you have a reason for fear. But when you understand that you yourself are the cause of everything, then there is no scope for fear.

When do you become fearless? You become fearless when you fill yourself with love. You will be fear-stricken only when there are defects in you. Therefore, give no room to defects at all.

Before performing even a small task, enquire whether it is good or bad. Develop the discrimination to distinguish between good and bad. Take time to make this enquiry. Do not make haste. Haste makes waste. Waste makes worry. Therefore, do not be in a hurry. Maintain your poise in all situations and contemplate on God.

Develop love for God. This love will make you immortal. It will remove all your sorrows and bestow bliss on you. This is the education that you have to acquire.

### **Acquire both secular and spiritual education**

You may acquire worldly and secular education, which forms the basis of your worldly life. Worldly education is meant for happiness in this world, and knowledge of Brahman (*Brahma vidya*) is for self-realisation.

Lead your life by integrating both the worldly and the spiritual education. Both are essential. They are like negative and positive charges, both of which are essential for the electric current to flow.

But people today acquire only secular education and fill their hearts with negativity. At the same time, they want positive results. This is impossible.

What is the reason? When you have filled your heart with total negativity, how can you expect

anything positive? You lose the right to have anything positive. Therefore, fill your heart with positive feelings. Then you will attain everything.

Secular education is related to the world, but knowledge of Brahman (*Brahma vidya*) is related to the Supreme Being. When you acquire it, there will be no obstacles on your path.

**Dear students!**

Many of you play football in the stadium. In the game of football, there are eleven players on one side and eleven players on the other side. There is a goal at the end of each side. The goal has two goalposts. When the ball goes through these goalposts, only then it is considered goal.

In the game of life, desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride, jealousy, etc. (*kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada, matsarya*, etc.) are on one side and truth,

righteousness, peace, love, nonviolence, etc. (*sathya, dharma, santhi, prema, ahimsa*, etc.) are on the other side. Both sides kick the ball of life. One of the poles of the goalpost is secular education and the other is spiritual education. The ball of life has to pass through these two poles. If the ball goes this side or that side, it will be considered out and not goal.

Do have secular education. Develop proficiency in that also. Making secular education as the basis, you should acquire spiritual education. Spiritual education is true education (*Adhyatma vidya vidyanam*).

Secular education is like a small river or a canal. Spiritual education is like an ocean. All rivers have to ultimately merge in the ocean. You may acquire any type of secular education, but ultimately you have to reach the ocean of divine grace.

Do not waste your life merely in the pursuit of worldly education. Make efforts with faith to develop the principle of love. Do not discard or ignore nature because nature is also the manifestation of God. God is the cause, and nature is the effect. The world is the manifestation of cause and effect. Therefore, see God in nature also. You can see Him in every atom.

— From Bhagavan's divine discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam, on 20 June 1996.