

Make Faith The Basis Of Your Life

Prasanthi Nilayam

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People have become blind in this world because they have lost their eyes of faith.

They deny the existence of God because they cannot see Him.

God may not exist for them but He does exist for us.

(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Since ancient times, people have been wasting their valuable time in debating the existence and nonexistence of God.

Even if the sun is shining, a blind person cannot see it. Similarly, one cannot see the world if one closes one's eyes. Does it mean that the sun does not exist or the world does not exist? No. The sun does exist, but one without eyes cannot see it. Likewise, the world also exists, but one who closes their eyes cannot see it. The defect lies in your vision and not in the creation.

Faith is essential for all human endeavours

Faith is the very life of a person. One cannot perform even a small task without faith. How can one achieve success in any endeavour if one does not make any effort with faith? In fact, one cannot take even ten steps forward if one lacks faith. In this vast world, faith is very essential even for performing small tasks.

Not only in matters relating to God, faith is very important in all fields of human endeavour. Faith is most essential for success in all fields —worldly, ethical, moral, spiritual or scientific

Faith is the basis of your love for your mother, father, husband, wife, etc. One will not have love even for one's mother if one doesn't have the faith that she is the mother. Similarly, the husband won't love his wife if he doesn't believe that she

is his wife. A mother cannot love her own children if she does not have faith that they are her children.

One can experience the all-pervading principle of love and derive bliss therefrom only when one has faith. Without faith, one cannot experience love and derive bliss. It is not possible to live in this world without faith.

Today, many people in this world have no faith in God. Many others pretend that they have no faith even if they have it. Others have faith in God but don't publicly express it for the sake of political gain or public acclaim. They question, "If God exists, why can't we see Him?" Do you believe all that you see and deny everything that you cannot see?

This morning, an M.B.A. student asked a question, "Swami tells us that we should love all. Why should we do that?"

I put a counter question to him, "You are asking Me why should you love all. I am asking you, why should you hate anyone?"

Whatever your reason for hating others, the same is the reason for loving them. Love and hatred are like an object and its image. Where there is hatred, there is love. Where there is the feeling of absence, the truth of presence is also there.

Here is a small example. Is Sai Baba present on the stage or not? If you say He is present, what is the basis of your saying that? You see His form and say that He is present.

Suppose, I go inside after giving this discourse. If somebody then asks you, "Is Sai Baba there on the stage?" you say, "He is not there." What does this mean? This means that Sai Baba is there but He is not present on the stage. If Sai Baba doesn't exist,

then the question of His being present or absent does not arise at all.

In the same way, people deny or accept the existence of God because He is there (loud applause). It is only because God does exist that people deny His existence. If really there is no God, how can the word 'God' exist?

Just now, Anil Kumar said, 'There is God.' The first part of the sentence is 'there is', which denotes the truth about God's existence. When we say 'there is', then the next question is who is there? It is God.

Some people say, 'There is no God.' The first part of this sentence is also 'There is,' which denotes the truth about the existence of God; 'no God' is only the next part of the sentence. Even this negative sentence, 'There is no God,' begins with the positive assertion 'There is.'

Atheists say, "God is nowhere." This sentence consists of three words, the first part of which is 'God is.' If you break the word 'nowhere', nowhere becomes 'now here' (loud applause). Merely by joining 'w' with 'no', the negative sentence changes into positive.

Those who believe in God say, "God is now here," and those who don't believe in God say, "God is nowhere." Faith, or the lack of it, is the basis of both statements.

Faith is like the two eyes. Similarly, the scriptures (*sastras*) are the eyes (*netras*) of humanity. *Srishti* (creation) exists because people have *drishti* (vision). As is the *drishti*, so is the *srishti*. One has to view this creation from the vision of the scriptures.

There is an intimate relationship between the eye (*netra*) and the scripture (*sastra*). The scriptures describes what the eye sees and the eye sees what the scriptures describe.

Three steps to God-realisation

As the scriptures say, there are three steps to God-realisation that a spiritual aspirant should undertake: to know, to see, and to experience (*jnatum*, *drashtum*, and *praveshtum*).

First, you hear from someone that a particular item is available in the market. That is to know. Listening is the first step.

Then you go to the market and see the particular item. That is to see.

However, merely by hearing about it or by seeing it, your hunger will not be satiated. Your hunger will be satisfied only when you partake of it. That is to experience.

These three steps correspond to listening, contemplation, and practice (*sravanam*, *mananam*, and *nididhyasanam*). The first step is listening to the spiritual truth. Thereafter, one should contemplate upon that. And then ultimately put it into practice. These are the three very important steps on the spiritual path.

In every field, listening (*sravanam*) is the most important first step. Even in the nine paths of devotion, listening is the first step:

listening (*sravanam*),
singing (*kirtanam*),
contemplating on Vishnu (*Vishnusmaranam*),
serving His lotus feet (*Padasevanam*),
salutation (*vandanam*),
worship (*archanam*),
servitude (*dasyam*),
friendship (*sneham*),
self-surrender (*atmanivedanam*).

You begin with listening and gradually reach the stage of total surrender (*atmanivedanam*), which marks the completion of the journey.

That is full, this is full.
When the full is taken out of the full,
What remains is again the full

Poornamada poornamidam,
Poornat poornamudachyate,
Poornasya poornamadaya,
Poornamevavashishyate.

The completion of the journey marks full circle. If you leave the journey in the middle, then it is incomplete, like a semi-circle. When you complete the full circle, you reach the point from which you began.

But if the journey is incomplete, it is like the letter C of the English alphabet; it begins at one point and ends at another. There is a wide gap between

the beginning and end points. This wide gap denotes doubt.

Doubt is like a deep valley that is impossible to cross. Therefore, get rid of doubt and endeavour to complete the journey.

Your learning of the alphabet is complete only when you start from A and reach Z. But if you start from A and reach only up to S or any other letter in the middle, your learning is incomplete. Once you start the journey, continue till you reach the goal.

Likewise, the spiritual journey begins with faith and ends in bliss. On the nine-fold path of devotion, you begin with listening and end with self-surrender.

Many people who come to Prasanthi Nilayam go back to their villages and tell others, "We saw Sathya Sai Baba in Prasanthi Nilayam," and describe what they saw in Prasanthi Nilayam. Only after hearing all this are others motivated to come here. Unless and until they hear something about Prasanthi Nilayam, people do not book their tickets to come here. Hence, listening (*sravanam*) is the first step for all human endeavours.

Divinity can only be experienced

For all spiritual endeavours, faith is the first step. Without faith, life has no meaning. Everyone should make faith the basis of their life. But some people lack faith. Why worry about them? It is their fate. Don't enter into argumentation with them. Leave them to their fate.

For those who say yes, He will say yes.
For those who say no, He will say no.
It is only your tongue that says yes and no.
For Sai, everything is yes, yes, yes.

(Telugu poem)

The yes or no that your tongue utters are related to you. God has nothing to do with them. The same tongue that says 'no' also utters 'yes'. The same tongue utters both. Which would you believe? Would you believe 'yes' or would you believe 'no'?

As Jayadeva said, one should make sacred use of the tongue.

Oh tongue, the knower of taste!

You are very sacred.

Speak the truth in the most pleasing manner.

Chant the divine names Govinda, Madhava, Damodara incessantly.

This is your foremost duty.

(Sanskrit verse)

It is the tongue that enables us to chant the divine names Govinda, Damodara, and Madhava. These sacred names of God dance on the tongue. The tongue is like a stage on which all types of characters in the form of dolls come and perform their dance. The king comes, the queen comes, the soldier comes, and also the peon. Similarly, there comes Rama and also Ravana.

Therefore, the tongue is the stage for all the good and bad one speaks, and all types of characters perform their dances on it. The tongue is only a witness and has nothing to do with the dance.

A dumb person cannot speak. When they eat a sweet dish, they can experience its sweetness but cannot express it in words.

Likewise, Divinity can only be experienced and cannot be described. If somebody asks you to describe it, the only answer is silence. Don't waste your time and energy in unnecessary argumentation. Argumentation leads to enmity (*Vaade vaade varjathe vairam*). It does not develop love. Therefore, develop faith in God.

It is utter foolishness to proffer arguments about the nonexistence of God. Why do you say that He doesn't exist? You say God doesn't exist because He cannot be seen.

Suppose, there is a man who is two metres tall, is fair-complexioned, is bald, and weighs sixty kg. These are all only his physical attributes, which you can see. Do the physical features alone convey the truth about that man? The real truth about the man is what you are not able to see with your physical eyes. These are his good or bad qualities like compassion, love, sympathy, hatred, forbearance, etc.

Since you are not able to see these qualities, can you say that they are not there? It is an act of foolishness to say what you do not see does not exist. These qualities, which you are not able to see, determine his humanness or the lack of it.

God permeates the entire universe

Oh soul (*jiva*)!
Understand the mystery of this puppet show.
It is your unseen qualities that make you experience the results of your actions.

(Telugu song)

The physical body that you see is not responsible for your happiness or sorrow. Your unseen qualities are the cause of your happiness or sorrow. Therefore, it is foolishness to put your faith in all that you see.

There is air all around you but you cannot see it. Can you say air does not exist? Can anybody live without air? Air does exist, but it cannot be seen.

The same truth was taught by Sage Uddalaka to his son Swetaketu. Swetaketu asked, "Oh father! Where is God? The *Vedas* and the scriptures say that He is all-pervasive."

Uddalaka said to his son, "My dear! This truth cannot be explained in words. You can know it only by undertaking spiritual exercises and by the grace of guru and God. Let me illustrate this with an example."

Uddalaka asked his son to bring a tumbler of water and a little salt. He then told him to mix salt in the water and stir it. When Swetaketu did as instructed by his father, the salt got completely dissolved in water. The salt that he had brought in hand was now nowhere to be seen. The eyes that had seen the salt earlier were not able to see it now. Does it mean the salt has disappeared altogether? No. The salt is there but it has got dissolved and totally mixed with water.

Similarly, God exists. He permeates everything in this universe in such a way that He cannot be seen by the physical eyes. However, He can be seen by the eye of wisdom. When you bring the salt, you can see it with your physical eyes. But when it gets dissolved in water, you have to experience its presence with the eye of wisdom. Therefore, it is foolishness to ask for direct evidence of God's presence. You have to take into consideration the indirect evidence.

In this way, Uddalaka explained the principle of all-pervasiveness of God.

Fire is bound to exist where there is smoke. Without fire, there can be no smoke. Similarly,

without God, there can be no world. How can there be life without God? It is impossible, totally impossible.

Everything happens as per God's Will. Here is a small example. When a cow gives birth to a calf, it licks the calf's body with its tongue and makes it clean. As soon as the cow cleans the calf's body, the calf stands up on its legs and goes to the cow's udder to drink milk. Who has shown the udder to the calf and made it understand that milk is available at the udder? It is all predetermined by God.

Without understanding such subtle truths, people foolishly argue that there is no God. When you do not know what is the next thought that will arise in your mind, how can you understand God? Since people don't listen to good teachings, foolishness is on the rise.

Oh man!
Listen to words of good advice,
But do not pay heed to good advice and indulge in foolish acts.

Not knowing how to get rid of your desires, you have become their slave.

Get rid of your desires and give up hatred.
Take refuge in Sai and pray to Him.

(Telugu song)

Do not doubt the existence of God

People are unable to get rid of their cravings (*vasanas*). What are these cravings? These are the impressions of the actions of their past lives. When I tell you something about your past life, you will not believe it. How am I concerned whether you believe it or not? Whether you believe it or not, your past life does cast an influence on your present life.

Everybody has a past, present, and future. Without a past, how can there be a present?

The seed of present has come from the tree of the past. It is from this seed of present that the tree of future will grow. Therefore, past and future are like trees whereas present is like a seed. A gigantic tree is hidden in a tiny seed.

The *Vedas* declare, Brahman is subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the vastest (*Anoraneeyan mahato maheeyan*). God is smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest. Though He is not

visible to the physical eye, you can experience Him.

This is a rose, which you can see. But its fragrance cannot be seen; it can only be experienced. Fragrance has no form, but the flower that gives the fragrance has a form.

Similarly, love has no form, but the mother who gives you love has a form. Love, bliss, fragrance—all these have no form, but the objects that give them have a form. It is the form that is the source of the formless attribute. Therefore, it is foolish to ask for direct evidence of God's existence.

Many things are beyond the realm of direct evidence. Here is a small example. Can you see your own eyes? How can you say that you have eyes when you cannot see them? Only when you have a mirror in front of you can you see your eyes.

You say, "my mind". What is the form of the mind? Can you see your mind? If you cannot see it, how can you believe that you have a mind? In the same way, you cannot see God, but it is foolishness to doubt His existence. Though He is not visible, He is the basis of the entire universe.

You see a gigantic tree. But it was not visible when it was in the form of a tiny seed.

Though air is all-pervasive, you cannot see it. Similarly, God is everywhere but is not visible to the physical eye. God is all-pervasive. He is present in the form of air and all the five elements.

God is described as embodiment of sound, mobility and immobility, light, speech, eternal bliss, perfection, delusion, and wealth (*sabda brahmayi, characharamayi, jyotirmayi, vangmayi, nityanandamayi, paratparamayi, mayamayi, and sreemayi*).

Sound cannot be seen, it can only be heard. Form can only be seen; it cannot be heard. The tongue can only speak but cannot see. In this manner, every element is endowed with a particular power.

Speaking truth is easier than telling lies

Blood is present in all parts of the body. When doctors perform blood tests, they take a sample of blood from one part of the body and find out if there is any malady in it. There is no need for them to take blood from every part of the body for

this purpose. Though blood is the same in all the limbs of the body, each limb has a specific function to perform.

Can you know the taste of *laddu* (a sweet) by merely holding it in your hand? No. You can know its taste only when you place it on your tongue. When the same blood is present in the hands and also in the tongue, then why can't hands know the taste of the *laddu*? Only the tongue is endowed with the power of taste.

Similarly, though God is all-pervasive, one can experience the power of Divinity depending upon one's capability. God does exist, there is no doubt about it. Without God, there can be no world. If you deny the existence of God, it means you deny your own existence.

Your *Atma* is your God. You should have faith in your Self and faith in God. If you lack faith in God, it means you lack faith in yourself. If you don't have faith in yourself, then how can you have faith in God? First of all, have faith in yourself. That is self-confidence. Faith is very important for a person. It is the very life-breath. If you lack the life-breath of faith, then you are no better than a corpse.

As long as there is life-breath in the body, it is auspicious (*sivam*). Once the life-breath goes out, the body becomes a corpse (*savam*). Therefore, one's life-breath is *sivam* and the body devoid of it is *savam*.

You see the idol of Siva made by a sculptor and imagine Siva is the one with the Ganga flowing from his matted locks. No. Your life-breath is Siva. Every being is endowed with life-breath.

God is the indweller of all beings (*Easwara sarva bhutanam*). Easwara (God) is present in all beings in the form of life-breath. God is all-pervasive. It is possible to experience Him.

The boy who spoke earlier talked about the *Vedic* teaching "speak truth, practise righteousness (*sathyam vada, dharmam chara*)." He said, it was not easy to put it into practice. It is a great mistake. There is nothing easier than that.

It is very easy to report events as they happen. For example, when you say that Swami today came at 4 o'clock and started His discourse early, it is

true. How easy it is to report any matter as it is! It does not require any planning.

But if you have to speak untruth, you have to do a lot of scheming so that people may believe it. In order to speak untruth, you have to resort to nasty tricks. How difficult it is to tell a lie, whereas speaking truth is so very easy! It is a mistake to think otherwise.

You think speaking truth is difficult because you are habituated to speaking untruth. Since you have developed this bad habit of telling lies, you are unable to recognise the importance of truth. This weakness is prevalent everywhere and afflicts everyone in this world. Here is a small example.

Suppose, somebody dies in a house in your neighbourhood, and you go there to offer your condolences to the family. In such a situation, suppose you tell them the truth: “What is this? Birth and death are natural for everyone; one who is born is sure to die.” Then the people in the house will be very angry with you, thinking what a stone-hearted person you are!

But instead, suppose you say, “How did he die? Which doctor treated him? What medicine was he using? How long was he in hospital?” Then they will be satisfied that you have sympathised with them and shared their grief.

But this satisfaction is only temporary. The truth is: where there is birth, there has to be death. Whoever is born is bound to die.

You would have seen that the return date is always mentioned on railway compartments. After reaching the destination, the compartment has to return by the due date. This body is also like a railway compartment. Although the return date is not seen on it, it has surely to return by the stipulated date. When it is sure that the body has to return by a certain date, then why should you worry about it? Why should you feel sad?

You are worried because you have made a habit of worrying. Mistaken thinking is the cause of this worry.

You don't have faith in the truth of your reality. Faith is truth, truth is faith. Faith leads to truth; truth leads to peace; peace leads to happiness. Happiness is heaven, sorrow is hell. Therefore, never give room to sorrow.

Face all situations with faith. With faith, you can achieve anything. Without faith, you can achieve nothing. Therefore, develop faith. You can develop faith only by contemplating on God.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the *bhajan*, “Govinda Hare Gopala Hare Hey Gopi Gopa Bala ...”.)

—From Bhagavan's divine discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam, on 7 July 1996.