

Attain the Sovereignty of Atmic Kingdom Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Prasanthi Nilayam
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One may have mastered the *Vedas* and *Vedangas*,
One may have the expertise to compose prose and
poetry,
But if one lacks purity of heart, one will ruin one-
self.

Never forget these words of wisdom.

(Telugu poem)

The teachings of the *Vedas* are based on the principle of dualism (*dwaitha*) and that of *Vedanta* (which is based on the latter part of the *Vedas*) on the principle of nondualism (*adwaitha*). This is what Adi Sankara preached and propagated through various examples.

The relationship that exists between *Vedanta* and the *Vedas* is the same as that exists between the body and its various limbs such as eyes, ears, nose, mouth, hands, and feet. As are the limbs to the body, so are the human beings to society. Society is a limb of mankind, mankind is a limb of nature and nature is a limb of God. When you enquire deeply into these relationships, you will find the underlying principle of nondualism in the creation.

Desire is the root cause of dualism

In the assembly of scholars at Kasi (Varanasi), scholars started indulging in argumentation due to differences of opinion on philosophical subjects. Amused at this spectacle, Sankara said, "Argumentation will lead to conflicts (*Vade vade vajrate vairam*)." Such vain argumentation will lead only to enmity; it will not bring peace. No problem can be solved by indulging in futile argumentation.

To overcome worries in life is the main problem of people. In fact, the entire life of a person is full of worries. There is not a single moment in life when a person is free from worries.

To be born is a worry, to be on the earth is a worry;
World is a cause of worry and death too;
Entire childhood is a worry and so is the old age;
Life is a worry, failure is a worry;
All actions and difficulties cause worry;
Even happiness too is a mysterious worry.
Devotion to Swami alone will put an end to all
your worries.

Oh people! Develop such devotion and love.

(Telugu poem)

It is only through love for God that you can get rid of worries in life. Love is the remedy for all problems of man. Where there is love, there can be no hatred, no jealousy, and no differences. Love has all the power to develop equality and harmony. But the *Vedas* speak of this principle of love only to a small extent.

Many *Vedic* scholars use the knowledge of the *Vedas* to fulfill their desires and not to gain the experience of Divinity. They chant the *Vedas* from dawn to dusk and propagate the teachings of the *Vedas* but do not practise them themselves.

The *Chamakam* part of "*Rudra Prasna*" deals with the fulfillment of desires. In these *mantras*, *cha mey* is repeated again and again, which means 'I want this, I want that.' Desire is the root cause of dualism. The desire for a particular thing arises because you think it is separate from you. Here there are two entities, one, the person who desires and two, the object desired.

The principle of nondualism (*adwaitha*) emphasises the unity of the person who desires and the object of desire. A person observes the principle of dualism (*dwaitha*) when they consider themselves different from the object of desire. Here is a handkerchief. You say, I want the handkerchief be-

cause handkerchief is different from you. This is dualism.

But there is also an underlying principle of nondualism in the handkerchief, which can be easily demonstrated. This is a cloth, but when you analyse deeply, you will realise that it is not a cloth but a bundle of threads. On further enquiry, you will say that these are not threads but cotton. In fact, cotton, threads, and cloth are one and the same.

Here you have to enquire into two aspects: direct experience (*pratyaksha*) and indirect experience (*paroksha*).

Even after having the direct experience of something, sometimes it is not possible to describe it in words. For example, a dumb person cannot describe the taste of the food items that they consume. Similarly, the bliss of nondualism cannot be described in words. It can only be experienced but cannot be explained to people. Here direct experience is of little consequence when it comes to explaining it to others. But, unfortunately, people give importance to only direct experience; they attach no significance to indirect evidence.

Divinity is present in all

Here is a small example. There is an ice cube. What is the basis of the ice cube? It is water. Ice cube is the direct evidence (*pratyaksha pramana*) while water is the indirect evidence (*paroksha pramana*). Without water, there can be no ice cube.

What is of primary importance —the ice cube or water? It is water, the direct (*paroksha*), which is the basis of the ice cube. In the same way, the unseen Divinity is the basis of this visible world.

But people are not able to realise this truth because they are merely chanting the *Vedic mantras* and trying to experience the teachings of the *Vedas* without actually putting them into practice. They are leading a worldly life, following the path of worldliness (*pravritti*) in this transient nature (*prakriti*).

The path of spirituality (*nivritti*) is totally opposite to worldliness (*pravritti*). *Pravritti* leads to worldliness while *nivritti* leads to Divinity.

In the face of all challenges, Sankara strived hard to propagate the principle of Divinity, which is the fundamental basis of this creation. His *guru*, Gaudapada, provided him all support and encouragement. Though Sankara was young in age, he was steadfast in his resolve to propagate nondualism (*advaita*).

If Sankara at the young age of sixteen could conduct debates with great scholars and convince them of the validity of the principle of nondualism, it was only the power of Divinity that was his driving force. Nondualism is the basis for everything.

What is meant by nondualism (*advaita*)? It is the oneness of everything.

Some vendors in the market sell sugar candy in the forms of various animals like cat, elephant, dog, etc., to attract children. Innocent children see only the form and demand, I want cat, I want elephant... Names and forms like cat and elephant are different, but the basis of all of them is sugar. When you eat any part of these animals like ears, tail, they all taste sweet. In fact, their entire form is full of sweetness.

In the same manner, Divinity pervades the entire world:

Verily all this is Brahman: (*Sarvam khalvidam Brahma*),

The entire universe is permeated by God (*Isavasyam idam sarvam*).

God is the indweller of all beings (*Iswara sarva bhutanam*).

Sankara realised this truth and propagated to the entire world. But some devotees attribute a particular name and form to God and consider their form of worship superior to other forms of God, which is the cause of all differences.

A rich man had great love and devotion for Lord Krishna. He wanted to get an idol of Krishna made of gold, perform worship and the ceremonial bath (*abhishekam*) every day, and partake of the sanctified water. He went to a goldsmith, gave him twenty gold coins, and asked him to make an idol of Krishna. He gave another twenty coins and asked him to prepare the idol of a cow to be placed behind Krishna, and a similar amount for

an idol of a peacock to be placed near the idol of Krishna. He also got a cup made of twenty gold coins for performing ceremonial bath. Every day he used to perform ceremonial bath to the Krishna idol and drink the sanctified water.

But the flow of time will not always be the same. Nobody can say when one has to undergo difficulties in one's life. Happiness and sorrow are like two pots hung on each side of a *kavadi* (a pole with a sling attached to both sides to hang pots on each side). How can anyone know what will happen in the next moment? Once the accrued merit is exhausted, one has to come to the mortal world (*Ksheene punye martyalokam vishanti*).

The financial position of the rich man became worse day by day. Since he was finding it difficult to make both ends meet, he decided to sell the gold idols to another rich man. The other rich man first weighed the cup used for the ceremonial bath and fixed its price as sixty thousand rupees, since it was made of twenty gold coins. Then he weighed the peacock, the cow, and Krishna's idol one after the other and fixed the price of each of them as sixty thousand rupees. However, the seller was not satisfied. He said, "What is this! You are putting the same price for Krishna as well as the cow, peacock, and cup. I cannot bear this. You should give more price for Krishna."

The buyer replied, "You give more value for the idol of Krishna than other objects because Krishna's form is more important for you. But what is important for me is the gold contained in each of them." He gave importance to the weight of gold and not to the form.

Likewise, we give importance to humans based on name and form without realising that the same Divinity is present in everyone in the form of five elements. The realisation of this oneness is the principle of nondualism (*adwaita*). The five elements are the same in everyone; there is no sixth element in anyone. But we are deluded because we go by the form.

Excessive desires cause disaster

Excessive desires are the cause of misery. Desires are necessary, but they should be under some limit. Most of you might have read the story of King Midas. Though he was very rich, he was obsessed

with greed. Therefore, he started praying to God from dawn to dusk with intense devotion. A devotee prays, and God grants their prayer. God appeared before him and offered to grant him any boon.

Midas said, "Oh Lord, whatever I touch should turn into gold. Please grant me this boon."

God cautioned him, "Don't ask for this boon. You won't derive any happiness from it; rather you will become the victim of so many problems and worries. Ultimately, you will ruin your life. Therefore, don't ask for this boon".

But Midas insisted, "Leave me to my fate. I want only this boon".

What can anyone do if one does not listen to sound advice?

Can anybody change what is written in the destiny of anyone?

There is no point in feeling sorry about it even for hundred years.

(Telugu poem)

God replied, "Okay, if you want to suffer your fate, you may suffer." He granted his prayer and disappeared.

Overjoyed at the boon received from God, Midas returned home. He came and sat on the mattress and kept the pillow aside. Immediately, both the mattress and the pillow turned into gold. He was happy that both the mattress and the pillow turned into gold with his touch, but he wanted to further test the efficacy of the boon he received. Therefore, he entered his garden. All the trees, flowers and the saplings turned into gold when he touched them. After some time, he felt tired and hungry. He asked a servant to bring food. When he tried to eat it, it turned into gold as he took it in his hands. He was feeling hungry but was unable to eat anything. He cried, "Alas! What will be my fate now?"

Out of desperation, he hugged his daughter who also turned into a statue of gold.

Then Midas came to his senses. He repented, "Fie on me, I am so foolish that I did not pay heed to the advice of God." Again he prayed to God wholeheartedly, with intense feelings. God manifested before him and said, "My dear! You have

fallen to this state because you did not listen to Me. What do you want now?"

Midas prayed to Him to take back the boon given to him. From that moment onward, he developed a sense of contentment with whatever he had.

Excessive desires lead to such disastrous consequences. One who follows the divine command implicitly will be blessed with all comforts and auspiciousness. That is why Sankara said:

Oh people, give up your thirst for money.
Give up all your desires by proper discrimination.
The wealth you have is nothing but the result of
your past actions.
Therefore, be contented with whatever you have.
(Telugu song)

As are your feelings, so is the result

Oh people! You may have some desires. But do not give room to greed. You must develop love to attain God. That love alone will give you everything you need. It will give you all that you require at the appropriate time and place.

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)

King Dasaratha asked Rama to pour water in his mouth in his last moments, but he was not fortunate to have Rama by his side when the end came. However, Rama poured water in the mouth of Jatayu, though Jatayu did not ask for this boon. He sanctified the life of Jatayu and granted him liberation.

Sabari chanted the Name of Rama day and night. But did she ask for anything? No. On coming to know that Rama had entered the forest, she waited for Him everyday. Since she did not know by which path Rama would come, she cleaned all the paths leading to her hermitage. Sitting under a berry tree, she thought: It seems Lord Rama has come to the forest along with Mother Sita. He may come this way and ask me, "Mother, give me some fruits to eat". She started imagining in this manner due to her intense love for Lord Rama.

She plucked some fruits, tasted each of them, and kept aside the sweetest of them for offering to Lord Rama. Lord Rama also reciprocated her feelings by showering His grace on her.

God is the embodiment of grace (*anugraha*); there is no trace of anger (*agraha*) in Him. But as the saying goes, "As are the feelings, so is the result (*Yad bhavam tad bhavati*)."
He will respond as per the feelings of the spiritual aspirant.

When you stand in front of a mirror in a posture of salutation, you will see your reflection also doing the same. If you point a finger at your reflection showing anger, your reflection will also do the same at you. Similarly, Nature is like a mirror. As is your action, so is the reaction.

Oh people, is it possible to escape the consequences of actions?
You may study the scriptures and worship your family deities,
You may go to a forest and perform intense penance,
But it is impossible to escape the consequences of your actions.
(Telugu poem)

Money makes many wrongs

God is the cause, nature is the effect. This world is nothing but the manifestation of cause and effect. Whatever you do in front of the mirror of nature will come back to you in the form of reaction, reflection, and resound.

In fact, there is only one entity. You see the object and its reflection only when there is a mirror. Without the mirror, there can be no reflection. This is the mystery of nature.

From the worldly point of view, there are three entities: yourself, your reflection, and the mirror. If you ask what is 3-1, even a first standard student will say 2. The student knows worldly mathematics well. But God does not agree to this. He says 3-1 = 1.

You may make fun of God, "What is this? God might not have attended any school. He does not know the basic principles of mathematics."

Then God says, "Oh madcap, there are three entities here: yourself, your reflection, and the mirror. Take away the mirror. What remains is only yourself, the reality."

What appears from the worldly point of view is different from the spiritual point of view. Many people say, money makes many things. But I say, money makes many wrongs. Only when you realise this truth will you be able to put money to proper use.

Realise the principle of oneness

Sankara was able to explain the principle of oneness even in day-to-day matters. This is the uniqueness of his philosophy of nondualism (*adwaita*). As I told you yesterday, pots are many, but clay is one; jewels are many, but gold is one. Similarly, God is one, but He manifests in various forms. Truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names (*Ekam sath viprah bahudha vadanti*).

People call God by many names like Allah, Jesus, Buddha, Zoroastra, Rama, Hari, and Hara, but God is one. This can be illustrated by an example in day-to-day life.

The owner of a house is addressed by his wife as 'my dear husband,' his grandson says, 'my dear grandfather,' his brother says, 'my dear brother,' his son addresses him as 'my dear father,' and his daughter-in-law says, 'my dear father-in-law.' Though the person is one, he is addressed by different people differently based on their relationship with him. This is worldly relationship.

People pray to God:

Oh Lord!
You alone are my father and mother, friend and relation, wisdom and wealth.
You are my everything.

*Twameva matacha pita twameva,
Twameva bandhuscha sakha twameva,
Twameva vidya dravinam twameva,
Twameva sarvam mama devadeva.*

(Sanskrit verse)

But Sankara did not approve of this type of prayer. When you say, "You are my father," you are different from father.

Sankara said, "It is not correct to say, 'You are my father, You are my mother,' which connotes the principle of duality. Instead, you should say, 'You are I, I am You; You and I are one.'" This shows the doctrine of nondualism.

The *Vedas* propound the same truth through the great aphorisms,

I am Brahman (*Aham Brahmasmi*),
That thou Art (*Tattwamasi*).

Experience of oneness gives bliss. That is why Sankara propagated the principle of nondualism. However, it is not that easy to experience this principle. You have to conduct proper enquiry and undergo the process of refinement (*samskara*). When you reach the ripe stage of refinement, you can easily realise the principle of oneness.

How fortunate is a person who realises the principle of oneness! In fact, there is none more fortunate in this world. That person is the king of kings and the emperor of emperors. That person is the king of the *Atmic* kingdom.

The *Atma* pervades everyone from top to toe. Only those who do not realise the presence of the immortal Self in the body aspire for the poison of worldliness. Once you taste this divine ambrosia, you will not have a taste for worldly matters. Therefore, make efforts to have the experience of the *Atma*.

That is why Sankara strived hard to propagate this principle of nondualism (*adwaita*) in villages as well as in cities, from a simpleton to a scholar.

Sankara demonstrated ideals in every aspect of his life. Before he left his house, he gave a promise to his mother. She said, "My dear, you have become a renunciant and are leaving the house. But it is my wish that you should be by my side when I leave this body."

Sankara was pure-hearted and kept his promise to his mother. In fact, whatever one says with purity of heart will become true. If one points toward a flower and says, this is not a flower, it will cease to be a flower. You should understand this truth.

Faith confers deservedness

An incident from the Mahabharata illustrates this truth. A day prior to the commencement of the Mahabharata war, Krishna took Arjuna with Him for a walk in a forest. They were discussing who would fight with whom and other such war related matters. At this time Krishna, wanted to subject Arjuna to a test. God always tests the deservedness of a person before showering His grace on

them. The reason is: Only a person of deservedness will be able to make the best use of grace conferred on them.

Since it was getting dark, Krishna said to Arjuna “Let us go back home.” Then He started His test.

Krishna pointed toward a bird perched on a tree and said, “Arjuna, see how beautiful this peacock is!” He started this conversation to see the state of Arjuna’s mind.

Arjuna replied, “Yes, Swami, the peacock is really beautiful”.

Krishna said, “Oh madcap, that is not a peacock. Don’t you see it is an eagle?”

Arjuna replied, “Yes, Swami, it is an eagle.”

Then Krishna slapped him on his back and said, “What a fool you are, Arjuna, that you are unable to make out whether it is a peacock, an eagle, or some other bird. Look carefully. It is neither a peacock nor an eagle. It is a pigeon.”

Arjuna replied, “Yes, Swami, it is a pigeon.”

Pretending to be a little angry, Krishna said, “Don’t you have any common sense? Don’t you have discrimination power? What are you thinking? You don’t seem to enquire whether it is a peacock or an eagle or a pigeon. You are blindly saying yes to whatever I say.”

Arjuna replied, “Oh Krishna, if I say it is not a peacock, You may change it into a peacock. Similarly, if I say it is not an eagle or a pigeon, You may turn it into any of them. You can do anything. Therefore, Your word is important for me. What does it matter to me whether it is a pigeon or a peacock or an eagle?”

Krishna was very happy that Arjuna had so much faith in His words. He placed His hand on Arjuna’s head and blessed him.

Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, offer obeisance to Me and worship Me.
Truly, do I promise that you will come to Me for you are dear to Me.

Manmana bhava madbhakto

*Madyajimaam namaskuru
Maam evaishyasi satyam
Te pratijane priyo asi mey.*

Krishna said to Arjuna, “Now you have become My true devotee. You have total faith in My words and, therefore, you will emerge victorious in whatever you do.” It was only after this incident that Krishna gave the knowledge of the *Bhagavad Gita* to Arjuna.

What is the use of imparting knowledge of scriptures to a person who does not have faith? At the time of Mahabharata war, Krishna was 86 years old and Arjuna was 84 years old. All those years prior to the war, Krishna never tried to impart the knowledge of *Vedanta* to Arjuna. All of a sudden, He started teaching him *Vedanta*. God showers His grace on an individual at the appropriate time, place and circumstance.

He said, “Arjuna, who are these people? You think that they are your relations. But, in fact, they are not so. You, I and they are all one and the same.”

Arjuna was utterly confused listening to this. He thought, “How can we say that all are one? In that case, where is the necessity for a war?”

Then Krishna said, “Oh madcap, there is a reason for this, which I am aware of and you are not. I am the embodiment of awareness, whereas you are in a state of ignorance.”

Without coming under the veil of forgetfulness,
Always in the waking, dream, and deep sleep states,
One should constantly be aware of the *Soham* mantra, which enables one to realise the *Atma Tattwa*.

By the grace of *Sadguru*, Oh people!
Cultivate the sense of discrimination.

(Telugu poem)

God knows the past, present, and future

Krishna added, “I know the past, present, and future, whereas you do not. That is why you are carried away by the physical relationship you have with them in the present. You do not know the past. You knew it once, but now you have forgotten.”

Arjuna asked, “Swami, You say, You, I, and they are all one. Why is it that only You are aware of this truth while I am not aware of?”

Krishna replied, “You look from a worldly point of view; I look from the point of view of spirituality (*nivrutti*) or *Atma*. I transcend the three periods of time. That is why I am omniscient while you are not.”

To illustrate this point, Krishna gave a beautiful analogy. In narrating this to you, I am changing the names so that you will understand easily. Once a man went to Kashmir. There he bought a piece of cloth, since it was available at a cheaper price. On his return from Kashmir, he gave that piece of cloth to his mother, who put it in a clothes cabinet and forgot all about it. Ten years passed. One day, the mother found this piece of cloth in the clothes cabinet while she was looking for something. She called her son and said, “Here is a piece of cloth. Get it stitched.”

Accordingly, the son got a shirt stitched from that piece of cloth and wore it on his birthday. When he bent down to pick up a sweet dish prepared by his mother, the shirt at once got torn. His mother was surprised. She said, “This is a new shirt, how come it got torn so quickly?”

The son explained, “Mother, the shirt is new, no doubt, but the cloth is of old stock, isn’t it?”

In the same manner, Krishna told Arjuna, “You have forgotten your reality, but I am always aware of it. This is the difference between you and Me.”

In the Mahabharata war, Arjuna was dejected and depressed at the death of so many young warriors, including his son Abhimanyu. He asked Krishna, “Swami, why did Abhimanyu die so young? Being his father and much older than him, I should have gone first.”

Krishna replied, “Nobody can say who will go when. None can escape death when the appointed time comes.”

The body is bound to perish, how much ever you protect and nourish it.

In the same manner, whatever is written in your destiny, good or bad, will happen even if you hide yourself in a thick forest.

(Telugu poem)

Whatever you face in this life is the result of your many past lives. For example, a young man of 25 years hits a boulder with a hammer twenty times, but the boulder does not break. Afterwards, the boulder breaks when an old man hits it only twice. The old man boasts, “This young man hit the boulder twenty times, but it did not break, but I broke it with only two strike.”

The young man said, “Oh grandfather, don’t be proud of your achievement. The boulder broke at the 22nd stroke since I had hit it earlier 20 times. Understand this.”

In the same manner, you see only the present, whereas God takes into consideration the past and the future also. This is the difference between God and man. The seed of present has come from the tree of past and is the basis for the tree of future. You see only the seed of present; you are unable to see the past and future, which are contained in the seed.

Lord Krishna said, “I am the seed of all living beings (*Beejam maam sarva bhutanam*).”

In this manner, Sankara propagated the principle of nondualism (*adwaita*) to the entire world. This nondualism has a fundamental principle as its basis. It is the unity of all creation. Many examples have been compiled in scriptures to help people understand this fundamental principle. You should also make efforts to understand it.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the *bhajan*, “*Hey Siva Sankara Namami Sankara...*”)

—Bhagavan’s divine discourse in Sai Kulwant Hall, Prasanthi Nilayam. on 8 September 1996