

Chant the Name of God and Experience Divinity

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Neither by penance nor by pilgrimage nor by
study of scriptures nor by chanting can one
cross the ocean of life.

One can achieve it only by serving the pious.
(Sanskrit Verse)

Scientific advancements in ancient India

One need not resort to penance in order to realise God. One need not undertake pilgrimages either for liberation. How then can one cross the ocean of mundane worldly life? By serving pious people, it is said.

Who has to serve? All have to serve. Everyone is a servant in this world. The child is the servant of the mother; the mother is the servant of the child. The husband is the servant of his wife; the wife is his servant. The teacher is the servant of the students; the students are servants of the teacher. The government is the servant of its people; the people are servants of the government. Right from a king to a farmer, all are servants only.

Looking at one's wealth, one may consider oneself a master. But there is one and only one master. That is God. All others are servants only.

Service: the royal road to fulfillment in life

Once an old friend of a king came to meet him. The king was glad to see his old friend and chatted with him affectionately. This man was very old and carried a stick with him for support. The king asked his friend as to how he was leading his life. His friend replied that in old age one needed some support, and the stick was his support. The old man asked the king whether he was serving his people well, to which the king reacted that he was a king and could never be a servant.

The old man wished to teach the king a practical lesson. So, he dropped his stick to salute the king. Since he could not bend down to pick up the stick, the king at once bowed down, picked up the stick, and gave it to his friend. Then the old man said, "You say you are not a servant, but right now you served me. So, you are my servant."

All have to serve one another at some point of time. To say that one is not a servant is ignorance. The spirit of service is present in everybody, but it varies from person to person depending on the state of their mind.

Rain water gets absorbed in sand, but it becomes sweet when it falls on clay.

However, when a rain drop falls in an oyster, it becomes a pearl and shines brilliantly.

Similarly, service shines in a person depending on their deservedness.

(Telugu Poem)

There is no specific time for doing service. One may need to perform service anywhere, at any time, to anybody. The attitude of service cannot be acquired through the study of scriptures. Service is the royal road to fulfillment in life.

Once, an angel was studying a book of the Bible called *Revelation*. St. John went to the angel and asked him, "Oh angel, what are you studying?"

The angel replied, "I am studying the book of *Revelation*. You too should read this book. But it is not enough to merely read this book. You must eat, chew, and digest it." Then the angel disappeared.

St. John did not understand the meaning of those words. He wondered how he was going to eat, chew, and digest those pages of the book. He thought it over again and again.

What is meant by eating the book? To understand the contents completely from beginning to end is eating, to contemplate is chewing, and to practise is digesting. It is only practice that gives you satisfaction and strength.

Today, people study scriptures, but not even one sentence of the book enters their heart. Isn't it a waste of time?

St. John digested the contents of the book and started contemplating on its teachings. He spent his life in the service of God. In the Indian (*Bharathiya*) culture, it is said: The knower of Brahman becomes verily Brahman (*Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati*). If we contemplate on God we become God. In the course of time, St. John's face started the radiating divine effulgence of an angel.

In Indian culture, there is the story of Valmiki, who used to rob and harm people. When he met seven great sages, he began to chant Rama's name constantly on their advice. He was so intent on this spiritual discipline that anthills formed on his body. Even then he did not stop chanting Rama's name. Ultimately, the radiance of Rama began to appear on his face, and he merged in Rama.

The effulgence of Hari radiated on the face of Prahlada, because he was all the time chanting the sacred name of Hari.

You will become one with the divine form on which you contemplate, and the radiance will be reflected on your face. This is the truth. Such a person will always be in bliss, and their face will radiate happiness. Due to the constant chanting of God's name and due to His proximity, you will gain the wealth of Divinity.

When black charcoal comes in contact with fire, it also becomes red like fire. *Satsang* means proximity with God. You can find fulfillment in life by developing proximity with God and through performing service. Service to God means service to the world. Wherever it is required, do service to others. But do all actions to please God. This is the primary duty of humanity.

What does nature teach us? Nature works relentlessly. It doesn't rest even for a moment. The earth rotates on its axis at the speed of 1,000 miles per hour. We must think of its implication.

Due to this rotation, we get days and nights. People in the world labour all day and get rest at night. Similarly, all beings on earth find rest at night due to this rotation. Even animals, birds, worms, and insects rest at night.

The earth revolves round the sun at a speed of 66,000 miles per hour. As a result of this, we have seasons. Due to the seasons, we have rain; because of rain, we have crops; because of crops, we have food. The earth does relentless work to provide us food. The earth is always engaged in action.

People, who are born out of earth, should emulate it and do service. Otherwise, how can they be called children of mother earth? A person, being a child of the earth, must prove themselves worthy by engaging in selfless service.

Ships are guided by a lighthouse. Every divine thought is like a lighthouse to human.

Krishna always used to address Arjuna as Partha. Even though Arjuna had several names, Krishna always chose to call him as Partha. Our original name is Partha, because we are born of earth. Partha also means one who has a pure heart. Arjuna had a pure heart. That is why he was called Partha.

A mother's heart is very pure. People may create pollution, but the earth remains ever pure. In case earth takes a rest, all life will come to a standstill.

The scriptures say: Of all living beings, human birth is the rarest (*Jantunam nara janma durlabham*). People are not different from other animals with regard to sleep, food, and procreation. How then are they better than animals?

A person has the power to discriminate between what is permanent and what is impermanent. This is also known as Constant Integrated Awareness. In the absence of this faculty, one is an animal indeed. Only humans have this power.

But people today have forgotten his power. This power is God's gift to humanity. What you receive from God, you should offer it back to Him. You may be engaged in service to fellow people, but you should offer all your powers to God.

Attain God's grace by total surrender

Lakshmana always followed Rama. He had a wife, mother, kingdom, and also many responsibilities. But he could not live without Rama. So he sacrificed everything, saying, "Rama, You are everything to me. You are my only refuge. I can't live without You. Wife and children are temporary, like passing clouds that come and go. You were there before my birth, and You will be there even after my death".

Truth remains unchanged in the three periods of time: past, present, and future (*Trikalabadhyam Sathyam*). Truth is God.

One day in the forest, Rama pretended to be tired. Sitting on a stone, He said, "Lakshmana, please build a hut."

Lakshmana asked, "Where shall I build the hut, Lord?"

Rama replied, "Wherever you like."

Lakshmana was in tears and started lamenting, "What sin have I committed?"

Sita was surprised and asked, "What did Rama say to disturb you and bring on these tears?"

Lakshmana said, "Do I have any liking of my own? I have surrendered totally to Rama. If Rama says I have my own likes and dislikes, then it means my surrender to Him is not total. This is what has caused pain to me."

Rama was testing Lakshmana to demonstrate to the world the purity of his heart. Depending on the purity of heart, divine feelings originate in a person. This sacred history of Bharat (India) demonstrates ideal lives.

Even Arjuna had ego, and he spoke to Krishna harshly before the battle. He said to Krishna,

Will the narrow-minded Kauravas give up all differences and make friendship with us?
Can the north and south poles meet together?
Instead of wasting time, why don't You tell them that we are ready for the battle?
Giving good counsel to the wicked people is like throwing jasmine flowers into fire.
Let us stop all this talk of peace.

(Telugu poem)

But on the battlefield, the same Arjuna complained, "How can I kill my own kith and kin? Take me back home, I cannot fight this battle."

It was at this point of time that Krishna imparted the teachings of the *Bhagavad Gita* to Arjuna. From the first to the last verse of the first chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, Arjuna kept complaining and lamenting, and Krishna did not utter a single word.

When Arjuna stopped, Krishna asked, "Has your entire stock exhausted? Now I will tell you what you have to do; listen."

After listening to the words of Krishna, Arjuna said, "I shall do whatever You command me to do (*Karishye vachanam tava*)."

First, Arjuna considered himself a great hero unrivalled in archery. But ultimately he became a servant. Only then did Krishna take complete responsibility for guiding and protecting him.

When a crocodile caught hold of Gajendra (the elephant king), at first, Gajendra fought with the crocodile for a long time, depending all the time on his own strength. Later, he took the support of a tree, but even that was of no use. In water, the crocodile's power went on increasing, and the elephant became helpless. He then realised that only God could save him. He prayed:

Oh Lord, I am exhausted.
My strength is failing me.
I know not any refuge other than You.
Oh Lord! Please come and protect me.

(Telugu poem)

Only then did God take notice of his prayer.

As long as you depend upon your strength, education, and wealth, God remains only as a witness. But when you offer everything to God and surrender to Him, He will take care of you. You need not do any service to God other than reposing total faith and trust in Him.

You may do a great deal of spiritual discipline (*sadhana*), but God does not want *sadhana*. What is *sadhana*? *Sa + dhana* is *Sadhana*. *Sa* means *Sarvesha* (God) and *dhana* means wealth. So, *sadhana* means wealth of God.

Divine power is real power. You must aspire to attain that power. When you have divine power,

your face will shine with radiance. You may possess a lot of wealth and power, but in the absence of divine feelings in your heart, you will have a castor oil face. When you keep on thinking of God, His radiance will reflect on your face.

When you know God, you become God

Prahlada was a small boy. He was subjected to great ordeals. He was made to drink deadly poison and sit on a pit of fire; he was thrown before wild elephants and poisonous serpents. In spite of all this, he still continued to chant, “*Om Namō Narayanaya.*”

When the minions of the king hurled their javelins at him, Prahlada would not wince or utter a cry, but only prayed to Vishnu calling Him,
“Oh *Pannagasaayi!* (Oh Lord, resting on the serpent couch!).
Oh *Danujabhanjana* (slayer of demons).”
Never did he shed a tear of sorrow, nor was he fear-stricken.

(Telugu poem)

What is the meaning of this? The serpent, the elephant, the fire and the poison — everything became Narayana (God). Prahlada also became God. One who knows God becomes God. We get the form of whatever we contemplate on.

A mud pot is nothing but mud. Vessels made of gold are basically gold only, and nothing else. We have emerged from God. Therefore, all of us are God only. Due to our body consciousness, we get into all kinds of troubles.

What is this body?
It is a perishable leather bag with nine holes but not like a resplendent diamond.
No fragrance but only foul smell emanates from it every moment.
It is made up of flesh, blood, bones, and fecal matter.
Should we develop attachment with this body?

(Telugu poem)

Our attachment should be with the eternal and essential God in it. One day or other, the body has to collapse; it will be burnt and reduced to ashes. Do your duty while you are alive. Never give up your duty. Whatever you may do, think of God all the time. You cannot achieve anything unless God wills it.

Not even a blade of grass will move without divine will,
Why to say this or that?
God pervades everything from an ant to Brahma.
People who do not realise this truth get carried away by their pride of intelligence and knowledge.
But no one, however great they may be, knows what lies ahead for them in future.

(Telugu poem)

When people achieve success, they attribute it to their capability; if they meet with failure, they attribute it to God’s will. You can know the truth only when you recognise that everything happens by the will of God, and whatever happens is good for you.

Today, spiritual aspirants and devotees don’t have this kind of faith. It is because of their part-time devotion. You should become full-time devotees. From dawn to dusk, do your duty with a firm conviction that all duties belong to God. Do your duty with love. Only then will you attain perfection. God does not want you to give up anything.

When you can sing, think that it is God’s grace. God loves music. Therefore, singing devotional songs is also a service to society. If you are doing some work, consider it as worship.

A true devotee never blames God

Sometimes, even staunch devotees lose patience. Some devotees blame God for not showering His grace on them despite their intense devotion. Thyagaraja was a great singer, who chanted Rama’s name incessantly. Once, when he encountered formidable difficulties, he became disgusted and started criticising Rama, “Rama, I think of You every moment; then why are You giving me all these troubles? It is not right for You to do this. Either I do not have perfect devotion or You do not have the power to help me.”

The next moment, Thyagaraja realised his mistake and began singing a song extolling the greatness of Rama’s power:

But for the power of Rama, could a mere monkey cross the mighty ocean?
Would Lakshmi Devi, the goddess of wealth, become His consort?
Would Lakshmana worship Him?

Would the intelligent Bharatha offer his salutations to Him?
But for the mighty power of Rama, would all this happen?
Indeed, Rama's power is beyond all description.
(Telugu song)

Thyagaraja said, "Rama! In fact, I am a foolish person. You have immense, immeasurable, infinite, immortal power. I could not recognise Your power."

In this world, there are three types of people who blame God. The first type are those who lack faith in God. The second type are those who blame Him when their desires are not fulfilled. The third type blame God for their insurmountable difficulties. Sometimes, devotees criticise God due to unbearable pressure of troubles, but there is no hatred in their criticism. Real devotees will never blame God.

In whatever activity you are involved in society, do it with a spirit of service. There is no one in the world who is not a servant. You become God only when you serve others. Leaders of today lack this sense of service.

All the people in the world are bound by action. People in the world are bound by action (*Karma-nubandheeni manushya loke*). The purpose of our birth as a human being is to help others.

Embodiments of divine love!

Remember that you are the children of the earth. Be like Partha and obey the command of God. Krishna said to Arjuna:

Get up, Dhananjaya.
Destiny is all-powerful; justice always wins; selfishness will end in ruin.
This is the nature of *yuga dharma*.
Know the truth (of what is to come).
Dhritarashtra may be the father of a hundred sons,
but there will not be even one to perform the last rites for him.
That is how fate works.

(Telugu poem)

Arjuna then said with resolve, "Lord, I shall obey Thy command."

The command of God is always beneficial for us. Obey the command of God and participate in social service, social welfare, contemplation on

God, meditation, and worship. If people do such activities, the nation will prosper.

Social service is service to God. Serve others and worship God. Worship and service should go hand in hand.

Today, all five elements are polluted. Air, water, earth are all polluted. There are horrendous sounds all over, and everything is polluted. Constant contemplation on God alone will eliminate this pollution.

Embodiments of love!

Chant the Name of God and experience Divinity.

(Bhagavan concluded His divine discourse with the *bhajan*, "*Bhava Bhaya Harana, Vandita Charana....*")

—Bhagavan's discourse in Sai Sruthi, Kodaikanal on 30 April 1997.