

Love of God with service to society

*Without charitable disposition
Not following the principles of righteous conduct,
Devoid of compassion and love,
Man is ruining himself.*
[Telugu Poem]

Embodiments of Love! In this wide world amongst the vast humanity, we find three types of people: *pushti jivas*, *samashti jivas*, and *pravaha jivas*.

The first type, *pushti jivas*, are those who, because of meritorious deeds in past lives enjoy the grace of the Divine, though they do not engage themselves now in auspicious rites, study of scriptures, contact with saints, undertaking pilgrimages, etc. The merit of past lives makes them always happy in the company of the Divine. They dance in delight, experiencing divine benediction. Just as you don't need firewood after the

cooking is finished, these people don't need any spiritual *sadhanas* (spiritual exercises), since they have already attained the goal of all *sadhanas*. You may not find this type of person doing any spiritual exercises. Be they are leading a true life and experience *Brahmananda*, *Nityananda*, *Advaitananda*, and *Paramananda*. There is no need for such a person to undertake any spiritual pursuit.

The second type, *samashti jivas*, read a lot of scriptural texts and are keen on earning name and fame as scholars. Since they become proud of their scholarship, they do not make themselves fit to be recipients of divine grace. When they go on reading till the end of their lives, where is the time for practising the ideals? They may participate in seminars and meet noble souls, but they are far away from God's grace because they have no time to think of God and enshrine him in their hearts. This is the plight of this second type of person, the *samashti jivas*.

Pravaha person has no chance of realising the Divine

The third type, classified as *pravaha jivas*, are always engaged in mundane activities in pursuit of physical comforts and worldly pleasures. They do not think of God and think that they are capable of achieving whatever they want. At least, wicked people think of God in difficult situations. The *pravaha* persons have no chance of realising the Divine at all. They are born again and again. They have no chance of liberation. Some may have good feelings latent in them. But they don't join *sat-sang* and don't adhere to good conduct and righteous action, though some may be conscious of the Divine residing in their heart. There is a small story to exemplify some exceptional cases of this type of person.

There was a family of wife and husband, of whom the wife was very devoted to God and was always in thought of the Divine. She worried that her husband never uttered the name of

God, even once. She believed in the truth that uttering the name of God was the best way to get liberation and it was a boat to cross the ocean of life. She was praying to God, entreating Him to show mercy on her and make her husband utter God's name. She even questioned the Lord as to whether it was her misfortune to have such a husband, and as Compassionate One, could He not transform her husband into a devotee like her?

The same night when she was contemplating on such entreaties to God, she heard her husband suddenly utter, "Rama, Rama," in his sleep. Her joy knew no bounds when she heard her husband utter Rama's name, which he had never done before. She thought her prayer to God was answered.

She got up earlier than usual in the morning and decorated the entrance to her house with *rangoli* and arranged for *Mangala Vadya* to be played. When the husband got up, he was surprised to see the decorations and hear the auspicious music, and he was wondering whether it was a festival day. When he asked his wife the cause for these extraordinary arrangements made by her, she said that all along he had never uttered God's name, but the previous night he said "Rama, Rama," in his sleep. So, she was profoundly happy and decided to celebrate this event in a befitting manner.

On hearing this, the husband got perplexed and exclaimed, "Have I let out the Lord enshrined in my heart so carefully all along? What a pity!" So saying, he breathed his last.

Start sadhana at an early age

In this way, *pravaha* persons may not be uttering God's name or doing external worship, but they may have the thought of God enshrined in their heart. Some among the modern youth are singing *bhajans* and participating in *nagarsankirthan*. Looking at this, some elders are questioning, "Why should these youth take up this sort of activity in this age? They

should do this only after they retire from service, in their old age.” This is totally wrong. Remembering God and chanting His name should be done without break always, at all places and in all situations — *Sarvada Sarvakaleshu Sarvatra Harichinthanam*. There is no restriction of time or place for chanting the divine name.

You cannot say when, where, and how the end will come and the mortal coil will have to be cast off. You will not be able to chant the name at that moment.

(Swami sang a song to convey that it was impossible to think of God when the messengers of death were tightening their noose around your neck, the body was taken out, and the wives and relatives were crying. Only the good deeds that you have done previously would come to your rescue. So, you should start doing meritorious deeds from the early part of your life.)

There was a priest in a temple who, by virtue of his long experience, used to hold the *Arathi* in one hand and ring the bell with the other hand. When he passed away, a new priest succeeded him. But this priest could not do both things simultaneously. If one hand was handling the bell to ring, the other hand could not wave the *Arthi*. If *Arthi* was done properly, the bell could not be made to ring. This was due to lack of practice. So, the practice of chanting of God’s name should be started from an early age.

Undertake love of God and service to society

You may be aware of the way a soldier in the army has to take training in all aspects before he can be fit to take part in active service at the front. Anyone joining the armed forces, whether a *dhobi*, cook, or *sepoy*, has to qualify compulsorily in two things. One is handling a rifle and the other is marching drill. Whatever may be one’s avocation in the army, one should have to undergo these two parts of the training.

Similarly, in the spiritual field, one should compulsorily undertake two things, namely, love of God and service to society. These are the two prime components of divine life. They help in the realisation of the Divine.

You have to take up the practice at an early age so that you can have the realisation before you leave the world. You do not know when the end will come. You should be prepared for it at all times. The photographer asks you to be ready when he snaps your picture, and he gives you time to ready yourself. But the divine cameraman will not give you any notice. You should always be ready to meet the situation.

If you engage yourself in *bhajan* and *daivachintanam* — *keerthanam* and *smaranam*—you will not be caught unawares. Suppose you have a master who has an Alsatian dog at the gate and he himself is at the first floor. There are two ways of reaching him. One way is to befriend the dog and enter the house; the other way is to call out to the master from the ground in a loud voice so that he will come out and allow you to come in by controlling the dog. *Maya* (illusion) is the dog. God is the master. You either control the *maya* or chant His name and sing His glory so that He will come down. You have to treasure Him in our heart, since the heart is His altar.

God is Hridayanivasa

Draupadi prayed to Krishna when she was humiliated in Duryodhana's court. She said, "Oh, *Dwaraka Vasa*, *Brindavan Sanchara*, help me!" She could not get a response, and she became tired. Finally, she pleaded in a faint voice, "Oh *Hridayanivasa* (Resident of my heart)! Will you not come to my rescue?" Immediately, Krishna saved her from her trouble.

On a later occasion, she asked Krishna why He took such a long time to respond when she was in distress and prayed to Him sincerely. Krishna responded, "You said, *Dwaraka Vasa*, *Brindavan Sanchara*, etc. I had to respect your words, so I had

to go from your heart all the way to Dwaraka and Brindavan, which are so far away, and I don't have a plane to go fast. When you said, *Hridayanivasa*, where I am actually residing, I came to your help instantaneously.

So, everyone should install the Divine in the heart in full faith. It is not correct to think that He is only in a mosque, church, or temple. The seat of God is the devotee's heart. That is why the *Gita* says, "*Pasyanapicha na pasyathi* (though he sees, yet he is not conscious of God in the heart).

Everything you see outside is a reflection of the inner being. "*Sarvathah Panipadam thath Sarvathokshi Siromukham.*" All feet, hands, eyes, heads are all His. What does this mean? It means that He is in every being.

God manifests according to your feeling

One devotee was asking God, "You say You are in me, above me, below me. How is that You are not protecting me?"

God answers, "I am always in you, around you. Don't look for Me externally."

The devotee asked, "Are You behind me really?"

Replied the Lord, "My shadow is your body."

When the devotee turned around to see whether God behind, he could not see Him. He asked, "Are You speaking the truth? I don't find You."

God replied, "When you turn back, I too have to turn back, So, you could not see Me. You have not understood the Truth."

Suppose you stand before a chair; the chair is in front of you. If you turn around, the chair is at your back. God manifests according to your *bhava* (feeling). When you pray, "Can't you hear my prayers?", you visualise Him hearing with His ears. When you pray, "Can't You see my suffering?", you see only His eyes. When you pray, "Why don't you stay with me?", you hear His footsteps. You have to maintain perfect silence.

Listen to the sound of “Om” from within

The ancient seers spent their time in listening to the voice of God, which is *Pranava*. Even now, you can experience this. Close your ears gently. You will hear the sound *Om* from within.

God proclaims, “Oh devotee, you are seeing with physical eyes and listening with physical ears. Be in utter silence. You can listen to the footsteps of God.” Such holy paths have been shown by great devotees. One who doesn’t understand this is in ignorance.

Surdas, a great devotee of Krsihna, once went after a woman and followed her to her home. Her husband chastised him, saying, “Why have you been given eyes? Is it for this unholy pursuit of another man’s wife? Why don’t you concentrate on God?”

Immediately, Surdas got enlightened and pierced his eyes with thorns of a lime tree close by. He proceeded to Dwaraka to Krishna’s temple. On his way, he was about to fall into a well. Krsihna came in the form of a cowherd boy and caught hold of his hand and asked him, “Where are you going?”

Surdas said, “I am going to Dwarka.”

Krishna said, “I will show you the way and lead you.”

Next day, they rested in a wayside hut. Krishna wanted to go, but Surdas wouldn’t leave him. Surdas put his hand over the boy while sleeping and asked the boy to put his hand on him. *Sparshanam papanasam*. Because of this divine touch, he was released from all his sins.

Then Krishna told Surdas, “I am Krishna, to whom you always pray. I played this drama to show you My form.” He touched Surdas’s eyes, and Surdas got back his sight, beheld the divine form, and got into blissful ecstasy. When Krishna asked him to retain his vision, Surdas said, “I have seen You; I don’t want to see anything else with these eyes. I don’t want

my sight. Many people have eyes. Have they seen you? Many have ears; they are not fortunate to hear your melodious music. I want only *jnanachaksus* (eyes of knowledge).

Krishna kept His hand on the head of Surdas, and Surdas merged with the Divine.

No one can know when God will bless! You must consider everything as God's gift and take with pleasure. There was a king who cut his finger, and the minister said, "It is for good." The king got annoyed and ordered the minister to be sent to prison. The minister accepted it with a smile, saying, "It is also for my good." Later on, it was proved true because, when the king went alone to a forest for hunting, he was caught by tribals to be given for sacrifice. Because the king's body was not perfect, with a portion of a finger absent, he was saved. Later, the minister said that if was not in prison, he would have accompanied the king and could have been sacrificed.

Whatever God does is for the good of the devotees. He is selfless. When you have the wish-fulfilling tree in your backyard, why do you go in search of fruits? Pure thoughts of love should flow from you to God. Then, love of God will flow to you. When you post a registered letter to another person, the proof of this letter having reached the addressee is the acknowledgement slip you get. The proof of sincerity of your love will be the flow of God's grace to you.

With intense longing for God's grace, you must wait patiently, chanting His name ceaselessly. You will surely perceive God's form manifesting before you.

22 April 1998
Kodaikanal