

Greatness of mother's love

*No one brings any wealth with him
from his mother's womb.
He carries nothing with him
when he leaves the world.
Even a millionaire can eat only ordinary food
and cannot subsist on a diet of gold.
One may wax arrogant over one's accumulated wealth,
but nothing of it will accompany him,
And in the end the wealth may fall
into the hands of thieves or go to the State.
Realise that the only thing that is permanent
is the spirit.
What else can I convey to you?*

From ancient times, it has been the practice in Bharat (India) to revere the mother as God. From the outset, the *Vedas* have declared, "Revere the mother as God, father as God, and

preceptor as God. If they are gods, for what purpose are they gods? In the ordinary course of daily existence, they are gods for worldly purposes. For the human body, the mother, father, and preceptor are to be deemed as divine. But, for the pursuit of life, the Divine is the only God, There is another Sanskrit saying that hails God as mother, father, kinsman, friend, wealth, knowledge, and in fact the Supreme Lord of everything. This means that for the spiritual life, God is everything.

The mother and father are residents of the home. The preceptor dwells in his *ashram*. But God is the indweller of the heart.

Only God can reside in the heart. It is true that mother, father, and preceptor are divine, but they are not entitled to dwell in the heart. They have to be revered, adored, and made happy. God alone deserves to be worshipped.

*God is nearer to man than his mother,
Closer than even the father.
To give up such God is a heinous sin.
This is the truth proclaimed by Sai.*

Importance of mother's blessings

It was part of the ancient tradition that when the son wished to set out for the battlefield to secure victory or go to the forest to perform penance, he would first go to his mother and seek her blessings. Dhruva, a six-year-old child, took his mother's blessings, set out to the forest to perform penance, and realized the vision of the Divine.

Arjuna prostrated before his mother to get her blessings prior to leaving for the battlefield. The mother told him, "May victory be yours."

Duryodhana also went to his mother, prostrated before his mother, and sought her blessings for victory in the war. The mother told him, "Where there is *dharma*, there will be vic-

tory.” This was Duryodhana's mother's blessing for her son. Duryodhana then went to his preceptor and sought his blessings. The preceptor said, “Where there is Krishna, there is *dharma*. Where there is *dharma*, there will be victory.”

Therefore, victory can be ensured only where *dharma* and the Divine are present, according to the mother and the preceptor.

Mother’s blessing and divine grace are both necessary

In those days, what the mother declared proved prophetic. Whenever a mother conferred her blessings on her son, the Divine was present there to declare, “May it happen so.” Besides the mother's blessing, divine grace is also necessary.

Hence, every son should make every effort to please his mother. Without keeping his mother pleased, the son cannot achieve anything in the world. The son should have those qualities that enable him to please his mother. At the same time, the son should also strive to win the Lord's grace. Without earning God's grace, the mother's blessings alone will be of no avail.

After the end of the Kurukshetra war, Krishna went to see Gandhari, the mother of the Kauravas. Dhritrashtra, the father of the Kauravas, was also in deep sorrow. Gandhari spoke to Krishna in great anger and anguish, “Krishna, the Pandavas and Kauravas are sons of brothers. What is the reason for your animus against the Kauravas and your partiality for the Pandavas? You continually protected the Pandavas but you did not save even one of my hundred sons from death. Why this discrimination by you?”

Krishna smiled at her and replied, “In your indignation and anger, you are using words recklessly. The fault is only yours. Although you had one hundred sons, have you seen any of them? How can children not at all seen by the mother hope to get the grace of God?”

The more one strives to give joy to the mother, the more the motherland will rejoice. The mother and the motherland go together.

When Pandavas were about to leave for battle, Kunti pronounced a special blessing on them proclaiming that victory would always be on the side of those who stood for *dharma*. She said that great warriors who went to fight with valour were blessed by their mothers with a protective amulet (*raksha kavach*). In the case of the Pandavas, Kunti declared that the benediction “Sri Rama Raksha” may serve as the amulet for them on the battlefield. This shows how important a mother's blessing is for the success and welfare of the children.

It is to demonstrate to the world the importance of reverence for the parents and the need to receive their blessings that Swami also makes it a point to visit the *Samadhi* of the parents of this body twice a year. In reality, Swami has no filial love for parents as such, but Swami adheres to this practice to serve as an example to the world.

Mother Easwaramma's presence

Now it is 30 years since the mother of this body passed away. But she is continuing to move about in her physical body around Swami. Three boys sleep in Swami's room. They have also witnessed her presence. I am telling this today because the life of ideal mothers has permanent significance.

In Prasanthi Nilayam, Swami takes breakfast after *bhajan* and proceeds to His place in Poornachandra Auditorium. Early in the morning one day, mother Easwaramma was standing at the door in her usual form. I asked her, “Why did you come?”

She said, “Swami, I have come here with a prayer to You. You are omnipresent and omniscient, but You have to control one thing!”

“What is that?” Swami asked.

She said, “Devotees and students offer handkerchiefs to You. But, heeding my prayer, please do not receive handkerchiefs from everybody. The times are not good. The handkerchief may be tainted with poisonous stuff. In the usual course, You use the handkerchief to wipe Your nose and mouth. So, You may receive handkerchief only from those on whom You have confidence and trust as good devotees. Do not accept from all and sundry.”

Easwaramma’s advice to Swami

Mother's love lives on for all times, long after her passing away. Twice she appeared in the night. The boys sleeping in my room noticed her presence. Those boys had not seen her at any time. They wondered who the old lady could be. The key of the lift was in their hands and there was no staircase leading to the apartment. How did she manage to come here? When the boys asked this question, Swami woke up. I went near her and asked her why she had come again. She replied, “I cannot live without seeing You often. The moment I see You, I feel happy.” After saying so, she gave me some piece of advice, “Swami, all persons describe themselves as devotees. But no one can tell who are real devotees and who are fake. Totally dedicated devotees will be ready to carry out anything You ask them to do, but there are others who come for their own self-interest. By coming to You they get their desires fulfilled and forget You thereafter. In this matter, You should be very careful.”

Swami replied, “I shall take due care. There is no need for you to tell me.”

After hearing this, she laughed and left the room.

I am conveying to you this episode as direct testimony to the greatness of mother's love. She might have given up her body but she is always with Swami. She said, “I have performed many sacrifices for Your sake and have done many

kinds of *pujas*. I realized the proof thereof. For 40 years I was with You. My life has its fulfillment.”

Kondama Raju’s devotion

Kondama Raju was the grandfather of this body. He was also like my mother. He had two sons. The father of this body was Pedda Venkapa Raju. His younger brother was Chinna Venkapa Raju. Two sons of his deceased brother, Subba Raju and Venkatarama Raju, also lived with him.

When all four were together, the family was large and there was a desire to have division of property. At that time, this body was eight years old. Kondama Raju summoned the sons. They told him, “At this stage, you cannot live alone. So, you can stay with each of us by turn.”

He replied, “I don’t want to stay with any one of you. You can take your share of the property. Leave Sathya with me. It is enough. If Sathya is with me, everything is with me.”

From then onward, Swami was staying with Kondama Raju. He was a great devotee and lived up to 116 years. Due to his deep devotion, he recognized the truth about Me. Swami was entering His ninth year. At that time there was no one near us. He closed the door. I was then preparing food. Swami knew the art of cooking well. People from the neighborhood used to come to our house to take food prepared by Swami.

While I was in the kitchen, Kondama Raju came uttering “Sathya, Sathya” and held both My hands. He said, “These are not hands. I consider them as Your feet. I have one wish to make to You. Before I pass away, You must pour water into my mouth at the last moment of my life.”

Swami gave him this promise.

After that, he lived for 19 years. He used to visit the new *mandir* (temple) after it was opened both morning and evening. Kondama Raju was in the habit of coming early in the morning. Swami used to sleep outside the *mandir* on the sand. Ex-

pecting His grandfather, Swami would cover Himself completely, including His face. I did not want him to know that I was awake. Assuming that Swami was asleep, the grandfather would touch Swami's feet and leave. He had an embarrassing feeling that others might have a mistaken impression on seeing a 116 year old man touching the feet of a young boy. As soon as Kondama Raju left, Swami would get up.

Gopis (cowherd maids) used to sing a song, “O Krishna, can anybody wake up a person who is pretending to sleep? How can anyone open the eyes of a person who has deliberately closed his eyes?” Like that, I used to keep My eyes shut and pretend to be fast asleep. This was one of the *leelas* I used to perform.

Swami keeps up the promise given to Kondama Raju

The time for fulfilling the promise I had made to Kondama Raju was fast approaching. In those days, I used to drive the car myself. I was going to the city in Morris 200. Kondama Raju called Swami's mother Easwaramma and said, “Come here. Swami is coming. He is coming for my sake. My last moment has come. Therefore, please bring a tumbler of drinking water.”

He then asked her to put a few *tulsi* leaves in the tumbler. He asked Swami to sit on the cot. He said, “Swami, the sky may come down but You will keep Your promise. The ocean may dry up but You will not go back on Your word. To fulfil the pledge You gave 30 years ago, You have now come.”

Swami broke into laughter.

Kondama Raju said, “Don't try to deceive me through Your laughter. Take this tumbler and drink a little of the water and pour the balance into my mouth.”

Then he related a story. “Dasaratha performed *Puthrakameshti Yajna* to get four sons. Lord Narayana Himself took birth as his son. Adishesha was born as Lakshmana. The conch

and mace manifested as Bharata and Satrugna. Although he had four sons, no one was present to administer water to him at the time of his passing away. Swami, You have taken birth in my Ratnakara lineage in *Apasthamba Sutra* and *Bhardwaja Gothra*. All these are the signs of Divinity. This means that the Divine is born in my family. Now fulfil at least this prayer of mine. Do not refuse.”

Swami replied, “I have come for this very purpose.”

When I started to pour water into his mouth, he protested, saying, “You must first drink a little and then pour the remainder in my mouth.”

Swami drank a little and poured the rest in his mouth.

Kondama Raju then turned to his daughter-in-law and said, “Easwaramma, the fame and power of your son will spread all over the world. The whole world is changing. Lot of people from foreign countries will come. Be on the alert. Do not give room for the delusion that this is my son and my child. He belongs to all. Swami belongs to everyone. He is not related to one family only.” He placed his hands on Swami's feet and breathed his last.

Even he keeps coming to me from time to time. He told me, “I have no further rebirth. By my association with You, my life has been redeemed. With Your Grace, I have become immortal.”

He used to come from time to time and warn me against what was happening in the *mandir* (temple). “No one can touch You, and there can be no danger to You from any quarter. Because of my past physical association with You, I am saying this. It is more a prayer to You.” Even now, Kondama Raju and Easwaramma keep coming and talking to Me.

A divine comedy

In Prasanthi Nilayam, there was a devotee who had serious heart attack. Swami left the body to protect him and went out

of His body at 2 a.m. and did not return to the body till 3 p.m. next day. The boys who were sleeping downstairs and those sleeping in Swami's room started crying. Along with them, Chiranjeevi Rao went and brought Dr. Alreja.

The doctor has great devotion to Swami. He has been in Prasanthi Nilayam for the past 40 years. He came and examined Swami's pulse. There was no pulse at all, no movement in the body. He started weeping. He remarked that there was no sign of life in the body.

Then Chiranjeevi Rao observed that it was not unusual for Swami to go out of His body now and then and that he had seen it. He told the six boys not to speak about it to anybody. The six boys were a good lot. These boys took M.B.A. degree in Swami's institute and had training in Delhi. They did not want to leave Swami. Despite Chiranjeevi Rao's appeal, the boys could not contain their grief.

At that moment, I got up with a smile and asked what the matter was. I asked them, "What is this drama you are enacting?" They replied, "Swami, who is playing this drama? Is it You or we?"

There is a boy named Srinivas. He has passed Engineering and M.B.A. and is staying with Swami. He remarked, "It is not our drama, Swami, but it is Your drama."

Then Swami said, "Many people are waiting outside. I must go out for *darshan*."

From early morning till 3 p.m. in the afternoon I had not taken even a sip of water. They requested me to drink at least a cup of buttermilk or porridge. Swami said, "I am not used to it." Swami took His bath and went out. This kind of thing used to happen now and then. All the boys staying with Me know about it.

There are mothers who are worried when their children take to the spiritual path. They hardly realise that it is the fruit

of many past lives that accounts for children taking to the spiritual path. Mothers should rejoice over such a development rather than worry about it.

Many parents desire that after the education of their children is over, they should get married, get a good job, and achieve a high position in life. Out of their love, they want their children to achieve greatness. Swami's love is not like that; Swami wants them to achieve goodness.

What is the difference between greatness and goodness? A good man sees divinity even in a human being. A great man sees the human even in God.

Ravana was a great man who had performed great penance. He was very powerful. But seeing Rama in human form, he considered him as a mere human being. On the other hand, Rama was different. He saw the Divine in all beings. That is the mark of goodness.

It is better to earn a reputation for goodness than be known as a great man. All that you find in a great man is only selfishness. But in a good man, you find total selflessness. Therefore, all of you should strive to become good men. Revere your parents. Give them joy. Show your gratitude to them.

Students' concern for Swami

Some students prefer to stay with Swami. The students know that at Kodaikanal Satyajit made a declaration in public even when his parents were present there, "I am coming out with my doubt in the open. You must all forgive me. All sorts of officers are coming to Swami. They seek fulfillment of desires and go back. Many business people also come to Swami. They also refer to Swami about their difficulties and go back after securing relief. People with ailments come to Swami and they leave after getting cured. We students have come to Swami. Many of them benefit from the free education given by Swami and leave the Institute.

“Who is taking care of Swami? Nobody seems to be concerned about Swami’s well being. Many times Swami falls down. Once, when Swami slipped and fell down, a pillar fell on Him. Swami did not care for it. The boys were very much worried in the night. It is necessary that someone should always be with Swami. Only when one or two people sit with Him does Swami take some little food. When He goes alone for lunch, He eats very little.”

My attitude is to eat whatever the students eat. I don't want to eat separately. Swami came to Brindavan from Puttaparthi and took the students to Kodaikanal. Swami used to eat only *ragi* and groundnut chutney. At Kodaikanal all were eating together. Swami also took His meals in their midst.

If I were to take *ragi*, boys may not like it. If I want them to eat *ragi*, they are not used to it. So Swami started eating rice food which students take. Swami likes only *ragi*; because He stopped taking *ragi*, He lost 6 kg in weight during 20 days stay at Kodaikanal.

In Puttaparthi, Satyajit was in the habit of taking My weight now and then. He used to plead to Swami to get on to the weighing machine. When Swami was in Puttaparthi He weighed 108 lbs. At Kodaikanal, when weight was taken, it showed reduction by 6 kilos. Swami weighed less than 100 lbs. Satyajit said that he was greatly worried.

I told him that he should not speak about this in public.

Satyajit said, “I offer my entire life to Swami.”

Swami said that he should not say such things in public. But Satyajit spoke with courage and boldness.

At that time, Indulal Shah, Chairman of World Council and others were present. All of them congratulated Satyajit on his speech. This is a point about which no one has cared for. Indulal Shah said, “Even though I am a member of Central Trust I have not thought over this point. This is a grievous lapse on

our part. Hereafter, we will bear this in mind and act accordingly.”

God as Mother

It is clear that each devotee has his own ideals and aspirations. But those who are imbued with a feeling of reverence for their mother will always have good feelings. One day Satyajit was concerned about surgery done for his mother's fractured leg. As far as I am concerned, all persons are good. But there is something special about this lad Satyajit. He used to take Swami's permission and massage her leg every day. He wanted to do this to relieve his mother of her pain.

At Brindavan, I was lying in bed. He came and started massaging My leg. I said, “I have no pain in My leg.”

He remarked, “Swami, if You have pain You won't speak about it. You keep moving about irrespective of the pain.”

Swami then observed, “I am used to this”.

He said, “In massaging Swami's feet I am rendering service to my mother.”

He left for Puttaparthi and was staying in the hostel. He closed his eyes. He experienced that he was massaging Swami's feet. He observed, “With this experience, how can I be attached to the world?”

Swami remarked to him, “Don't speak in that way. Be silent and carry on your duty.”

He passed his M.Sc. After that he joined the M.B.A. course. I told him, “You have already got a P.G.degree. Why do you want to join M.B.A?”

He replied, I can stay with You, Swami, for two more years. That is the reason.”

In this manner, each student has his own desires. There are any number of students imbued with such feelings. Those who develop taste of maternal love adore God as mother. Many boys go out into the world and get caught up in worldly affairs

because of their actions in previous lives. Students should feel, “Having discovered God, we do not need anything else. God will take care of mother, father, and everyone else.” They should develop that firm conviction. Without that faith they can have no happiness.

At Puttaparthi, a Reddy from Nellore brought the film *Prahlada* and showed it to the students. The actors were small boys. The film showed that, while drinking poison, Prahlada was chanting the name of Narayana. His father had Prahlada thrown from a mountain top by two *rakshasas* (demons), Chanda and Amarkha. As he fell, he chanted the name of Narayana, and Narayana held Prahlada in His hands. The father wanted him to be bitten by serpents. As he chanted the name of Narayana, the serpent did not bite him. The father tried to get him crushed under the feet of an elephant. As Prahlada uttered the name of Narayana, even the elephant became Narayana and did him no harm.

All this was shown in the film; but Satyajit said, “I have experienced all this directly. I don't need to see a film. I only want Sai Narayana.” It is only because of merit done in previous life that such experiences came to a person from childhood.

The other day, I asked him to participate in *bhajans*. He said he would sit under an Asoka Tree and participate in the *bhajans*. Swami does not impose His Will on anybody. He told Satyajit, “You may do what pleases you.”

How Satyajit strictly adheres to Swami's ideals

In this manner, many students are imbued with noble feelings. Some students appear as supreme devotees as long as they are in the college, but the moment they leave the college, they go astray. Their speech and their actions are bad. Hence, I often tell them, as I did at Kodaikanal, “Cultivate good speech. Develop a good vision (*samyag drishti*). This leads to good

thoughts. Good thoughts make a person listen to what is good. By listening to good thoughts one is impelled to perform good actions. Good actions lead to liberation.”

Satyajit strictly adheres to Swami's ideals. He will not look at anybody. I asked him, “What is wrong if you see persons with good feelings or to see others.”

He replied, “I have no use for such good feelings or to see others. I want only feelings about Swami within me.”

Swami then said, “Please yourself.”

Some students are like this. All the boys who came to Kodaikanal this year were exceptionally good boys. How lucky they are cannot be described. I took care of everyone, of all their needs. If there are more such boys, the world will improve vastly. It is only when individuals improve that society can improve. When society improves, the country improves. Improvements must start with individuals. The individual, the collective, and the world together constitute the Divine.

Offer your love to mother and enjoy life

Noble mothers give birth to noble sons. Mothers should also feel lucky to have noble sons. Kondama Raju used to tell his daughter-in-law, “Easwaramma, you have no idea of your great good fortune. You are not an ordinary woman. The Lord Himself is with you. What a lucky woman you are!” Easwaramma was the daughter-in-law of Kondama Raju. Has there been any instance of a father-in-law adoring his daughter-in-law? He used to say, “Easwaramma, your name has been vindicated. Easwara's mother is Easwaramma.”

This was the way they praised Easwaramma. Kondama Raju was one of those rare persons who could perceive the Truth. Those who cannot recognize the Truth will never be able to understand it. They are like a blind man who cannot see the sun even during the day.

Those who are on the spiritual path and who have love for their mother can accomplish anything in the world. Many grown up men belittle the role of their mothers, saying that they might have done them some good in childhood. They feel proud about their job and position. But they forget to whom they owe their position.

Adi Sankara got the blessings of Mother Parvathi as a young boy of seven years while doing worship to the goddess in the absence of his father. After getting the blessings of the goddess, he achieved great distinction in mastering all the *Vedas* and scriptures within a short period.

You have to offer your heart to God because He is the Indweller of heart, while father and mother are only dwellers in home. Respect your parents with the Divine in your heart. Tasting the sweetness of your mother's love, offer your love to her and enjoy life.

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