

Develop intense devotion

*Where the six noble qualities of uthsaha (enthusiasm),
sahasa (determination), dhairya (courage),
buddhi (intelligence), shakti (energy), and
parakrama (valour) are evident,
God' s protection and grace prevail there.*

[Sanskrit verse]

Embodiments of Love! Lord Krishna has said that *karma* (action) is responsible for man' s birth as well as death. Man is bound by action in his daily life. Right from birth to death, man spends his time in performing some activity or the other. The path of action (*karma marga*) is very dear to God. In fact, He is the very embodiment of action and He is present in every activity.

*It is Karma (action) that is responsible for birth,
sustenance, and death of every being in this world.
Karma is God for all beings.*

It is the cause of both pleasure and pain.

[Telugu Poem]

Action is the cause for everything

While *karma* (action) is responsible for pleasure, pain, birth, death, etc., *kala* (time) is also very essential for every *karma*. Without these two, man cannot live even for a moment. However, action is the cause for everything. What was the cause for King Harishchandra to become the caretaker of the cremation ground, for the separation of King Nala and his spouse Damayanti, and for the imprisonment and suffering of Sant Ramadas? It was the *karma* alone.

As is the *karma*, so is the consequence thereof. These two are inseparable and interrelated. Time acts as a link between these two. A day is one unit of time. Seven days make a week, fifteen days a fortnight, thirty days a month, and twelve months a year. Time is moreover divided into three periods: past, present, and future. Multifarious activities take place in these three periods of time.

What is time? What is space? Here are two flowers. The distance between these two flowers is space. They were buds yesterday; they blossomed today and will fade away tomorrow. A bud cannot become a flower instantly, and the flower does not fade immediately. The change takes place gradually. That which is the root cause for this change is time.

You all know that the second-hand in a clock rotates continuously, making the sound 'tick, tick, tick...' You might wonder whether it takes rest at all. Yes, it does. The time gap between two consecutive ticks is its period of rest.

This world is a combination of *kala* (time), *karma* (action) and *karana* (cause). Every action has a reaction. When your

finger gets cut with a knife, blood oozes out immediately. Here, the reaction is instantaneous. There is no time gap whatsoever. On the other hand, the food we eat takes at least two hours to be digested. Take the case of a seed. A seed sown today takes three to four days to sprout. Here the time gap between action and reaction is slightly more as compared to the previous instances. On the other extreme, we have a case where it takes years for a sapling to grow into a gigantic tree and yield fruit.

The consequence of one's actions are inevitable

Thus, the time gap between action and reaction may vary depending on the nature of action. But, know for sure that none can escape the consequences of their actions. It is impossible to say when, how, and where one will face the consequences of one's actions.

Why should one pray, meditate, contemplate on God or engage in good actions when one is anyway bound to face the consequences of one's actions? You may not be able to see the transformation that comes within you by your good actions and prayer. You may not even be able to visualise it with your mind. Yet, this transformation in you is sure to attract God's grace. The benefits derived from prayer or good actions may not be visible to the naked eye. Yet the benefits do accrue in the form of God's grace.

Take the example of a bottle of pills. You may note the date of expiration date mentioned on the bottle as the year 1994. You may also find the bottle and its contents intact even in the year 1999. But this does not mean that the pills will be effective if used today. The pills may be there, but they lose their power after the date of expiry. Likewise, the consequences of one's actions are inevitable, be they good or bad,

but divine grace will let their effects lapse.

One has to face the consequences of one's actions

Once the demon Dundubhi challenged King Vali for a duel. Vali killed Dundubhi and, in a fit of rage, threw his battered and bruised body at a distance. It so happened that the bleeding body landed on the Rishyamuka Mountain, splashing blood on sage Mathanga, who was deeply engaged in meditation there. Enraged, Mathanga cursed Vali thus: "Whoever is responsible for this reprehensible act will have his head splintered into pieces if he were to set his foot on this mountain."

That is why Sugriva, Hanuman and others chose to live on Rishyamuka Mountain when they were banished from the kingdom of Vali. They were certain that Vali would not dare to come there.

Who was responsible for all this? It was Vali himself. He could have stopped with the killing of Dundubhi. Instead, he flung the body away, driven by his anger, ego, and hatred. These three evil qualities were responsible for his ruin.

Ekapada was a great and diligent teacher. But he was a hard taskmaster, too. He would not permit his students to relax at any point of time. His wife was in the family way. The babe in the womb of his wife questioned his father, "Father, how is it that you go on teaching the students without giving them any break for rest?"

To this Ekapada replied, "Students should never be given free time, for an idle mind is a devil's workshop. It leads to many perversions."

Furious at the impudence of his son, Ekapada cursed him, "You have the audacity to question my acts! May you be born as *Ashtavakra* (one with eight bends in the body)." Ashtavakra had to blame himself for this unfortunate situation because he

questioned the propriety of the acts of his father without understanding the reasons behind them.

How to earn divine grace

King Shanthanu, father of Bhishma, wanted to marry Sathyavathi, daughter of Dasaraja. In order to fulfil the desire of his father, Bhishma approached Dasaraja and requested him to give Sathyavathi in marriage to his father. Dasaraja agreed on the condition that only the one born to Sathyavathi would be made the crown prince. Consequently, Bhishma took a vow that he would remain unmarried. He earned Divine grace by his devotion to his father.

Vinatha and Kadru were the two wives of sage Kashyap. While playing a game, they entered into a competition. The terms of the competition were that the loser and her son would serve the winner and her son for the rest of their lives. Kadru emerged victorious. As per the terms of the competition, Vinatha and her son served Kadru and her son.

One day, Kadru told Vinatha, “You are like my sister. I will make you free if you procure the *amritha bhanda* (vessel of nectar) from heaven.” Unable to bear the sufferings of his mother, Garuda undertook this stupendous task and brought *amritha bhanda* from heaven, thus freeing himself and his mother from bondage. Pleased with the devotion of Garuda, Lord Vishnu showered His grace on him by making him His vehicle.

What was the reason behind Garuda becoming the vehicle of Lord Vishnu? It was *sathsankalpa* (noble resolve) that earned him proximity to the Divine.

For every happening in this world, *kala*, *karma*, and *karana* (time, action, and cause) are essential. God acts after taking into consideration the three factors of *kala*, *karma*, and *karana*.

Such noble truths have been expounded in the ancient scriptures of Bharat. But alas! Modern students are not making any effort to understand them, let alone practice them.

Absolute faith is essential for God to manifest

Today we are celebrating the birthday of Lord Krishna. You attach importance to His body, but not to His teachings. You will be celebrating Krishna's birthday in true spirit only when you put His teachings into practice.

Mysterious are the ways of the Divine. It is difficult to comprehend how the Divine grace works. There are innumerable instances of God coming to the rescue of His devotees in times of need. Sant Kabir was a weaver by profession. One day he fell seriously ill and was unable to attend to his duties. The all-merciful Lord, in the form of Kabir, wove yarn and thus came to his rescue.

Similarly, God came in the form of a potter and helped Gora Kumbhar by making pots Himself, when he was in distress.

Sakkubai, an ardent devotee of Lord Panduranga, continuously chanted the Lord's name. One day, she could not perform her daily chores since she was running high temperature. Even under these circumstances, her husband and mother-in-law would not allow her to take rest. At this juncture, Lord Panduranga assumed the form of Sakkubai and performed all her duties.

It is indeed difficult to understand how, when, and where God would come to the rescue of His devotees. Absolute faith is essential for God to manifest.

Dasaratha had to send Rama to forest for fourteen years as a consequence of his promise to Kaikeyi. Though unused to any form of hardship, Sita had to endure the difficulties of for-

est life. But Lakshmana had no obligation to go through such an ordeal. Because of his intense devotion to Rama, he also followed Him like a shadow. He brought fruits, flowers, and tubers from the forest to serve Rama and Sita, and himself fasted. Every moment of his life, he spent in the service of Rama. He put both his body and mind in the service and worship of Rama as a *sagunopasaka*.

Bharata asked Rama to return to Ayodhya, but His efforts did not succeed since Rama refused to return. So, Bharata reconciled himself to returning, but stayed outside Ayodhya in Nandigrama. His body was in Nandigrama, but his mind was with Rama. Lakshmana worshipped Rama with body and mind, whereas Bharata's worship was purely mental since his mind was united with Rama. Since Bharata's worship was purely mental, he was a *Nirgunopasaka*.

Direct and indirect perception

In science, there are two modes of perception, direct and indirect (*pratyaksha* and *paroksha*). That which is directly perceived (conscious) is *pratyaksha*, while that which is indirectly perceived (subconscious) is *paroksha*. This difference between direct and indirect perception is similar to the relation between hypnosis and hypnotism.

What is hypnotism? A hypnotist has the ability to enter the consciousness of the object irrespective of distance or time. He can experience Divinity both with body and mind. The one who undergoes the experience with mind alone without the body is the hypnotised.

Lakshmana was well versed in this knowledge. The names of Rama and Lakshmana are inseparable. This happens naturally with no special effort as we always say Rama-Lakshmana. One hardly ever hears the combination Bharata-

Rama. Though Bharata's mind was one with Rama, his body was separated from Him by time and distance.

Hypnosis and hypnotism are not modern terms. These are found in the *Vedas*. Since people do not know these facts, they find new terms or new words for these concepts. Hypnotism is referred to in the *sastras* (scriptures) as *ateendriya shakti* (power beyond the senses). It means that one having this power can converse with one who is in deep sleep. Even the dead will come and converse with one having such power. Not only this, one can enter the mind of another sitting in front of him.

One with such powers can perceive a far away object. Hence, the term *ateendriya*. It is not the object of the senses, since it is beyond them. Our ancients possessed such powers. These powers are obtained by *karma* only. Therefore, all our actions should be pure and sacred. For this, purity of mind, heart, and thoughts is absolutely necessary. Only a person with pure body, mind, and intellect can be called a true human being.

Do not expect returns for your acts of service

There should be complete harmony in thoughts, words, and deeds of man. That is what we mean when we say, "The proper study of mankind is man." Axioms like "Work is Worship," and "Duty is God," are not of modern origin. These were the teachings of our ancient seers, though they used different terms for these.

Consider all activities as an offering to God and all work as God's work. Just as two wings are essential for a bird to soar high in the sky, and two wheels for a bicycle to move, *prema* (love) and *seva* (service) are essential for man to reach his destination. No benefit accrues from rendering service devoid

of love. Do not expect any returns for your acts of service. The satisfaction that you derive from rendering service is itself a reward.

Be like Lakshmana

Today, many people are undertaking rural development activities. They come and tell Me, “Swami, we are doing *grama seva* (service to villagers).” For whose sake are you rendering service? Is it for My sake? No. You are serving for yourself. As long as you have the feeling that you are serving others, you are an egotistic person. It is not service in the true sense of the term, as long as there is the sense of ego in you.

You think that you are worshipping Me. It is a great mistake to think so. When the same *Atma* is present in everyone, who is the worshipper and who is worshipped? In the path of spirituality, it is a mistake to think, “I am your devotee, You are my *guru*.” True wisdom lies in realising that you and I are one.

Krishna said to Arjuna: “Arjuna, you call yourself My devotee. When once you have surrendered to Me, then there is no difference between you and Me. So, there is no separate identity of devotee and God.” “*Ekatma darshanam jnanam* (visualising the one Spirit in all is true wisdom).”

Likewise, if someone were to criticise, you do not get disturbed. Remember that the same *Atmic* principle is present in both. There will be no room for misunderstanding if you realise this truth. Seeing unity in multiplicity is the principle of Brahma and viewing unity as diversity is *bhrama* (delusion). This delusion is the root cause for your suffering.

Embodiments of Love! First develop faith in yourself.

*Where there is faith, there is love.
Where there is love, there is peace.
Where there is peace, there is truth.
Where there is truth, there is God.
Where there is God, there is bliss.*

True devotion lies in having faith and attaining bliss. If you have no faith, how can you have bliss? Many devotees ask Me, "Swami, I want happiness." Where is this happiness? Can you buy it in the market? Will any company supply you bliss? No. It is very much in you. You are not able to experience it since you do not have faith in yourself.

You do not have love for God. Love is within you, but you are diverting it toward the world, not toward God. Worldly love is like passing clouds. Develop the love that is unwavering. It neither comes nor goes, it is in you always. Have unflinching faith in its existence.

Question yourself, "Do I exist?" You get the reply, "Yes, I do exist." That is the true faith. Here is a flower, here is a handkerchief, here is a tumbler. The word 'is' denotes true faith. Have faith in your existence, "I am." That is true faith.

You do not need to enquire into the nature of God or to search for Him. Have total faith in Him. What is the use of living in Prasanthi Nilayam if your mind is constantly going around the market? Like Lakshmana, whose body and mind were both engaged in the service of Rama. Bharata was physically away from Rama; yet, his mind was always with Him. Consequently, Bharata resembled Rama in all respects. You might have seen in photographs of Rama's coronation that Rama and Bharata have the same blue complexion. Bharata's mind was totally centred on Rama. Because of such intense concentration, both became one.

Similar was the case of Lakshmana, who not only served Rama physically but also contemplated on Him day in and day out. Rama's love for Lakshmana was so intense that when Lakshmana fainted on the battlefield, Rama lamented, "O Lakshmana, I cannot live without you. I may get another mother like Kausalya, a wife like Sita, but not a brother like you."

How can God lament! It was only a divine play enacted by Rama to show to the world the nobility and the greatness of Lakshmana. Such sacred love is like a powerful magnet. Such selfless, unattached love transcends action, space, time, cause, and effect.

People ask Me, "Swami, temples are built for Hanuman and Rama. Why has no one built a temple for Lakshmana?" I ask them, "You simpleton, is there a temple for Rama where Lakshmana is not there?" If you realise this fact, such a doubt will never arise.

Of what value is part-time devotion?

At the time of Krishnavatara, there were two sisters, Radha and Radhika. Radhika was a *sagunopasaka* and Radha, a *nirgunopasaka*. Radha constantly chanted the name of Krishna, while Radhika was engrossed in the physical form of Krishna. She was extremely sad because Krishna had gone away to Mathura. She gave up food and drink and said, "Krishna, in my heart I have been keeping Your lotus form fresh with my tears. Now even my tears have gone dry. How can I now preserve Your form in my heart? My heart, which is Your gift, I am now returning to You. What else is there that I can offer at Your feet? Accept my salutations and myself." She surrendered herself to Krishna.

Radha saw this. She had thought that *nirgunopasana* was

superior to *sagunopasana*, but after seeing the total surrender of Radhika, she realised the greatness of *sagunopasana*. After this, she constantly meditated on the name and form of Krishna.

You must have heard this song of Tulsidas: “*Nava Kanja Lochana Kanja Mukha Kara Kanja Pada.*” In this song, the hands feet, face, eyes, etc., of the Lord are all compared to the lotus flower. He prays for that lotus to stay in his heart forever. Both Radha and Radhika prayed to Krishna to dwell permanently in their heart.

Such intense devotion is rare these days. Today, people merely say, “Krishna, Krishna,” as they go round or pass by a temple. Of what value is such part-time devotion? They are *bhaktas* (devotees) merely for name’s sake.

You must strive to earn the great wealth of God’s love. Only then will you enjoy the experience of unity. *Sarvata Panipadam Tath Sarvathokshi Siromukham, Sarvata Sruthimalloke Sarvamavruthya Tisthati* (with hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears pervading everything, God permeates the entire universe).

Ramadas also had this experience of God’s omnipresence. Thaneesha put him in jail, but he never gave up the name of Rama. “O Rama! When all is Your form, how can I be separate from You?”

Renounce trishna (desires), attain Krishna

Devotees today have some form of divinity in their mind, but they perform rituals in a mechanical way without any consistency. All your charity and worship are of no significance to the Lord. Show your charity and wealth to the income tax department. God needs only your love. There is no tax on love. You may face any number of difficulties or hindrances. The

Lord Himself may subject you to test. You should not waver because of these. All is for your good only. Do not grieve over any loss or exult over gain. Equal-mindedness in loss and gain is true sadhana.

Some sit in *dhyana* (meditation), but their minds are in the market or in the hair dressing shop. Is this *dhyana* or *japa*? The mind should be immersed in Krishna. Instead it is filled with *trishna* (desires). What is needed is Krishna, not *trishna*. Krishna will fulfil all your *trishnas*.

Dear Devotees! Mere chanting of the Lord's name is not enough. Offer your love to God. Love is not your property. In fact, it is the property of God. Surrender to God what is His. What is the use of a long life without this offering? You have no right to offer your love to anyone other than God. When you offer all your love to God, He will look after all your needs.

There is nothing that He cannot do in this world. In city or in hamlet, in forest or in sky, on the high peak or in the deep ocean, God is everywhere. He pervades space and time. All beings are His forms. Realise this truth, transform it into practice, and enjoy the bliss. This is true devotion. Human life attains true meaning only then.

Embodiments of Love! These days, wherever we go there is unrest, ego, and conflicts. You should develop love and share it with all relatives, friends, and even enemies. Then, everything will be enveloped in love. Therefore, live in love.

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