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## Have Steady Faith In The Atma

*The evil effects of Kali Age cannot shake the one whose heart is filled with compassion, whose speech is suffused with truth and whose body is used for serving others.*

*(Sanskrit Verse)*

### *Embodiments of Love!*

IN this world, all the beings are classified into four categories: (1) *Andaja*, that which is born out of an egg, (2) *Pindaja*, that which is born out of the mother's womb, (3) *Uthbhija*, that which is born out of the earth (4) *Swedaja*, that which is born out of sweat. Under each category, there are 21 lakh types of species. Hence, it is said that there are 84 lakh species in God's creation. The 84 lakh species are subjected to

three types of sufferings, namely *Adhibhouthika*, *Adhidaivika* and *Adhyatmika*, *Adhibhouthika* refers to the diseases that are caused by man's attachment to the physical world. It also refers to the diseases that are caused by insects like mosquitoes, flies, etc. *Adhidaivika* is related to the suffering caused by natural calamities like earthquakes, floods, and epidemics like cholera, plague, etc. *Adhyatmika* refers to the suffering that result from wrong food and bad habits. It also indicates to the suffering caused by cruel animals and wicked people. What is the remedy for these three types of sufferings? One should have strong faith in the Self. That is the panacea for all the suffering. One should strive to experience Atmic bliss for which nine paths of devotion are prescribed: *Sravanam* (listening), *Kirtanam* (singing), *Vishnusmaranam* (contemplating on Vishnu), *Padasevanam* (serving the Lotus Feet), *Archanam* (worship), *Vandanam* (salutation), *Dasyam* (servitude), *Sneham* (friendship), *Atmanivedanam* (Self surrender). Man can get rid of his afflictions by taking to any of these nine paths.

### **Faith In The Atma Is Your Dharma**

Before the commencement of the Kurukshetra War, Duryodhana and Dussasana prostrated before their mother Gandhari seeking her blessings. Gandhari, being one of pure heart, steady mind and selfless love, blessed them saying, "*Yatho Dharmah Thatho Jayaha*" (victory is where *Dharma* is). Then they went to

their preceptor Dronacharya to pay their respects. He blessed them saying, “*Yatho Dharmah Thatho Krishnah Yatho Krishna Thatho Jayaha*. Where righteousness is there Krishna is; where Krishna is, there victory is). You are born as a human being but are you following the *Dharma* that is prescribed for a human being? If so, your *Dharma* will certainly protect you.

Today man is subjected to hardships because he has forgotten the source of his origin. Fish is born in water. It cannot survive even for a while without water. It is happy only when it is in water, the place of its origin. What is the source of man’s origin? Lord Krishna declared in the *Gita*, “*Mamaivamsho Jeevaloke Jeevabhuta Sanathanaha*” (the eternal Atma in all beings is a part of My Being). From this it is evident that man is a spark of the Divine. He has originated from the principle of Atma. Having been born from the Atma, man should always contemplate on the Atma. He will become restless and face hardships if he forgets the Atma. So, never forget the Atma, the place of your origin. Have faith in the Atma. Respect it and revere it. Treat Atma as the basis of your life. This is the *Dharma* that man should adhere to. You may occupy positions of authority, you may have wealth and prosperity, but none of them can protect you. Only faith in the Self can protect you. You may involve yourself in any work you like but have unwavering faith in Atma.

When a mother goes to the river to fetch water, she leaves her child in the cradle. On her way back, she

may be conversing with other ladies while carrying a pot full of water on her head. But her mind will be constantly focused on her child. She wants to get back home as quickly as possible, lest her child should wake up and start crying. Likewise, your mind should be constantly focused on the Atma in all your activities. That should be your aim. You participated in the *bhajan* throughout the night. While doing *bhajans*, you may sing various songs with different tunes and beats but your mind should be constantly fixed on the Atma. All your actions must be done with the sole purpose to please God. Arjuna asked Lord Krishna as to how he could fight in the war if he had to constantly think of God. Krishna replied, “O simpleton, it is your body and senses that are involved in the warfare. Such being the case, you can always focus the mind on God.”

### **See No Evil, Hear No Evil, Speak No Evil**

Direct your mind on God instead of directing it on the senses. As I pointed out yesterday senses are responsible for both merit and sin. If you put them to misuse, you will incur sin. If they are used in a proper way it results in merit. Speak softly and sweetly and cultivate a good mind. Only then will you earn the respect of others. You cannot always oblige, but you can speak always obligingly. Cultivate right vision. Evil looks will put you in danger. Keechaka cast his evil looks on Draupadi, which eventually led to his death at the hands of Bhima. Do not listen to evil talk.

Kaikeyi paid heed to the evil words of Mandhara, which ultimately led to the exile of Rama, whom she had loved much more than her own son, Bharata. Today do you find any woman named Kaikeyi or Mandhara? No. Society will not respect those who indulge in evil talk and listen to evil. So, you should always speak good and listen to good words. If you happen to hear something evil do not share it with others. What is the purpose in causing unrest to others by telling them something, which has caused unrest to you. Today there are people who not only lend their ear to evil talk but also spread the same to the rest of society causing a great deal of unrest. *Paropakaraya Punyaya Papaya Parapeedanam* (one attains merit by serving others and commits sin by hurting them). Let your tongue utter such words, which will give joy to others. This is precisely what you have done the whole night. You sang the name of God, which gave joy to one and all. When you think of God, there will be no scope for criticism or talking ill of others, but there is a type of prayer in which the devotee reminds God of those who troubled Him. Once Vidura prayed to Krishna thus: “O Krishna, why don’t you come to my house? Never did I tie you to a pillar and whip you the way Sakkubai’s mother-in-law did. Never did I try to harm you the way Kamsa did. Never did I abuse you the way Sisupala did. Then why don’t you visit my house?”

You may be aware of how Sisupala hurled

abuses at Krishna in the open Court questioning the latter's credentials to receive the grand offering made by Dharmaraja at the conclusion of *Rajasuya Yaga*. He said, "O Krishna, what makes you think that you deserve this grand offering more than others in this Court? Is it because you played pranks with Gopikas as you pleased? Don't indulge in self-aggrandizement, shut up." Thus, as Sisupala had crossed his limits, Krishna took the plate in which the offering was made and hurled it at Sisupala, which in a trice beheaded him. Krishna's act was appreciated by one and all. Many people are under the impression that Krishna used His *chakra* (discus) to kill Sisupala; but in fact, it was only a plate that beheaded him. When the time is not favourable, even a stick in hand will turn into a snake. On the contrary, if your time is favourable, even if you stamp on a snake, it will remain harmless like a stick. In order to enjoy favourable time always, you must fill your heart with sacred feelings. The history of Bharat is replete with many examples that bear testimony to this truth. Such sacred history is being forgotten today and people are resorting to unrighteous means and setting bad examples. Learn the sacred lessons that the history of Bharat teaches. Cultivate sacred feelings. Let your ears listen to sacred stories. Let your tongue utter sacred words and let your hands perform meritorious deeds. You know why God has given you hands? Is it merely to feed your stomach? No. They must be used in the service of society. You know why feet are given? Not to wander in the streets

like a vagabond, but to visit sacred places.

*The evil effects of Kali Age cannot shake the one whose heart is filled with compassion, whose speech is suffused with truth and whose body is used for serving others.*

*(Sanskrit Verse)*

*Today people are prepared to listen to vain gossip but when the sacred stories of the Lord are narrated, their ears get clogged. People are never tired of going to cinemas but their eyes find it very difficult to concentrate on the beautiful form of the Lord even for a minute.*

*(Telugu Song)*

People see anything and everything with their eyes wide open, but when they visit a temple, they close their eyes while standing in front of the beautiful image of the Lord. What an irony it is! Senses can lead you to either sin or merit. It is your duty to put them on the right path and earn merit. Then God will fulfill all your wishes. You don't need to ask Him.

*Do not ask, O 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 the bird Jatayu, who never asked but sacrificed his life for His cause?*

*(Telugu Poem)*

So, first and foremost, make your heart pure. It is only purity that attracts Divinity. If the iron filings are rusted, even the most powerful magnet will not attract them. The iron filings may blame the magnet, saying it has no power. But the magnet tells them, “You may think as you please, I am not bothered. Get rid of the rust and become pure. Only then will I attract you.” In the same manner, how do you expect God to attract your mind, which is rusted with evil thoughts? See good, listen to good things, speak good and pleasant words, undertake sacred activities. If you act in this manner, without your asking God will certainly bestow His grace on you.

### **Keep Your Senses Under Check**

Yesterday evening at 6 o’clock, the most auspicious time arrived during which the emergence of the Linga took place. Why is Sivarathri considered auspicious? The reason is this. The moon has 16 *kalas* (aspects) and so too the mind. On the day of Sivarathri, 15 are merged and only one remains. If the 16th aspect is also merged, one attains Divinity. This total merger will take place only when one chants the divine name continuously and wholeheartedly. Of all the senses, the tongue is very important.

*O tongue, the knower of taste you are very sacred. Speak truth in the most pleasing manner. Chant the Divine names of Govinda, Madhava and Damodara incessantly. This is your foremost duty.*

*(Sanskrit Verse)*

The tongue is one of sacrifice. When it tastes sweet delicacies, it sends them to the stomach. But if the item is bitter, the tongue at once spits it out. Not merely that, the tongue conducts itself in the most respectful manner. It does not step out of its house (mouth) under any circumstances. It does all its work without crossing its limits. While all other senses do only one work each, the tongue alone has the capacity to do two types of work, namely, to taste and to speak. That is why one has to exercise proper control over the tongue lest it should indulge in sinful activities like talking ill of others. In times of anger, observe silence. Our ancients taught: *Talk less, work more*. The lesser you talk, the purer your heart remains.

Contemplation on God is the only means to keep the senses pure. But today people have absolutely no control over their senses. Even the animals have a reason and a season but not the modern man. He is facing limitless difficulties, as he has not kept senses under proper control. All the spiritual practices are meant to exercise control over the senses. Eat to the extent necessary. Do not overload your stomach. Divide your stomach into three equal parts. Fill one

part with food, one with water and leave the remaining empty. But today, some people overload their stomach to such an extent that they find it extremely difficult to even get up after their meals. Such people are bound to suffer from indigestion.

You may exercise control over your food but you need not set any boundaries for your love. It should be given total freedom. Love one and all. Love transcends the senses. “All are mine. The life principle that exists in me exists in everybody.” With this feeling of unity, share your love with everybody. Love alone can confer peace, which everyone aspires for.

Your *vasana* (innate tendencies) depend on the feelings you cultivate in your heart. Here is a small example. A paper has no smell by itself. If it is used for wrapping *pakodas* or dry fish or Jasmine flowers, it emits the smell of the item wrapped, good or bad. Your heart may be compared to a paper. If good feelings are packed in it, you will certainly develop good tendencies. See good, hear good, talk good, and do good. Then the evil effect of Kali will have no impact on you. Do not allow the *Kali Prabhava* (effect of Kali Age) overpower your *Swabhava* (true nature). Today practice of *dharma* is fast declining and, consequently, the water level in earth is also going down. Humanness has become scarce. There is no purity in society, no morality in politics. *Neethi* (morality) alone can sustain *manava jathi* (human race).

*Embodiments of Love!*

When you sing Bhajans, take care that the words you utter do not convey negative meanings. Here is an example. Our boys sing many Hindi *bhajans*, in which they often use the word “‘Thu’ meaning ‘you’. They sing ‘Thu’ Rama’, ‘Thu Krishna’, ‘Thu Sai’ (you are Rama, you are Krishna, you are Sai, etc.) But in Telugu, the letter ‘Thu’ conveys a derogatory meaning. You may use ‘Thu Hai’ instead of ‘Thu’. The Bhajans you sing must convey sacred meanings. You should not give scope for disrespectful words.

**Bhakta Pothana**

Yesterday Raju spoke about Pothana, a great poet and devotee of Rama. He was one with pure heart. He was the one who composed the *Bhagavata* in Telugu. He firmly believed that it was Lord Rama Himself who wrote the *Bhagavata* through him. His name Pothana has a profound inner meaning. ‘*Po*’ means ‘to drive out’ and ‘*Thana*’ means the feeling of ‘his’. So, he had driven away the feeling of ‘mine’ and thus became a great devotee.

Srinatha, the famous poet from the royal court, had given his daughter in marriage to Pothana’s son. Pothana’s family used to eke out their livelihood through farming. Once Srinatha came to see them in a palanquin. On the way, he found Pothana’s son involved in ploughing the field. In a sarcastic tone, he

asked him, “O farmer, how are you?” Pothana’s son was not upset by this sarcastic remark. In fact, he gave a fitting reply in the most loving manner thus: “Sir, it is better to take refuge in *Bhumatha* (mother Earth) and *Gomatha* (mother cow) and lead a dignified life than to seek the refuge of a king, and be subservient to him.”

Those who repose their faith in *Bhumatha* and *Gomatha* will never lack anything in life. Since times of yore, *Bharatiyas* considered *Bhumatha* and *Gomatha* as the very basis of their life. But today we find many people are giving up agriculture and migrating to towns in search of money. They watch television day in and day out and aspire for luxurious life. As more and more people are giving up agriculture and deserting villages, scarcity for food has arisen. Having given up farming, how can you expect the mother Earth to feed you? Villages are the very life breath of Indian culture. Even to day, Indian culture is sustained only in villages, not in towns. Only people of villages are aware of the greatness of Indian culture. As people have lost respect and reverence for mother Earth, we experience earthquakes and such other natural calamities causing untold destruction.

In *Bhagavatha*, there is a story of Vishnu and His consort Lakshmi involved in a game of chess.

Generally, women are more intelligent than men. Though men are also endowed with high intelligence, they can never make full use of it, as their mind always wavers. Lakshmi, being one of intelligence, was able to arrest the movement of Vishnu's elephant. Suddenly, Vishnu stood up and said, "O elephant, I will come to your rescue, don't worry." Lakshmi immediately said, "impossible", thinking that Vishnu was referring to the elephant in the game. But in fact, Vishnu's mind was on Gajendra (King of elephants), who by then had totally surrendered to Him as his desperate attempts to wriggle out of the crocodile's grasp proved futile. Gajendra, being highly egoistic had utmost faith in his physical prowess. But as he got tired, he realised that God alone could save him. He cried out, "O Lord, I have no refuge other than You. I surrender to You completely. Please forgive my sins and come to my rescue." Vishnu, being one of compassion, rushed immediately and saved Gajendra. (At this juncture, Bhagawan recited a beautiful poem composed by Pothana describing Lakshmi's plight, as she found her husband Vishnu rushing to save His devotee without telling her and without even taking any weapons with (Him.) All the compositions of Pothana are suffused with sacredness. He composed the *Bhagavata* with the sole pur-

pose of describing the glories of the Lord, not to parade his poetic skills. Unlike many ordinary poets, he was never after name and fame. Pothana's words contained the essence of the Vedas. The path shown by Pothana is the royal road to liberation.

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