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Know Thyself

*Neither merit nor sin, nor comfort nor misery,
nor incantations, nor places of pilgrimage, nor
scriptures nor sacrifice, nor food nor eating
nor eater. I (the Atman) am the very personi-
fication of Chidananda. I am Siva Himself.*

(Sanskrit Verse)

Embodiments of Love!

RIGHT from the beginning, the Vedas have taught the principles of equality to mankind. It says that you are neither sin nor merit, neither happiness nor misery. You are neither *Yajna* nor charity. You are neither the ritual offering nor the process of worship. You are neither a man nor an animal. Then who are you? You are the embodiment of Siva (auspiciousness). Since man has not understood the fundamental principle of creation, he goes by name and form and distinguishes among birds, animals, human beings, etc.

One should not repose faith in name and form. Name and form correspond to *Pravritti* (outward path). One should take to the path of *Nivritti* (inward path) and understand the fundamental principle of creation. (At this juncture Swami created a lemon). This is a lemon. We call it lemon on the basis of its form and taste. These reflect *Pravritti* aspect and not *Nivritti*. In fact, it is nothing but a combination of cells, molecules and atoms and in each of these cells there is immanent potentiality of the whole lemon. The cells have neither beginning nor end. These cells are of immense power. This immense potentiality is related to the *akasa* (space). This *Akasa* is related to the pure consciousness. Even the lemon is a representation of pure consciousness. The person who eats the lemon is also a personification of consciousness. Everything that IS, is consciousness itself. Name and form are conditioned by *Pravritti* (outward path) and are not related to the internal path, namely, *Nivritti*.

Every Object Is Pervaded By Consciousness

Every man uses the terms 'I' and 'mine'. This handkerchief, tumbler, car, house, etc., are all related to the expression 'mine' and not to the *Atmatathwa* 'I'. Thus, 'mine' relates to *Pravritti* while the Atma is related to *Nivritti*. The term 'I' (Atman) is constant, unchanging and eternal. This 'I' term is Constant Integrated Awareness. 'I' is the embodiment of consciousness. As this principle is immanent in every

person, everybody is the personification of consciousness. We have therefore to recognise the fundamental principle or *mooladhara*. There are three aspects to it. They are *pravikriti*, *paryanakruti*, and *pariprasna*, *Pravikriti* means surrendering one's own self. Secondly, one has to surrender all that one considers me and mine. Thirdly, one must constantly be enquiring about this *Atmatathwa* from one who has realized it. To recognise that I am not the body, the mind or the intellect or any of these things that are manifest in the external world is the import of *Pari-prasna*. The *Vedas* from ancient times have been teaching these eternal truths.

First of all, you must enquire into the nature of the Self. The cells are made of atoms, which have no beginning or end. Atoms and molecules are manifestations of the Divine principle. Wherefrom did this Divine power manifest? It arises from *akasa* (space). *Sarvathah Pani-padam Tat Sarvathokshi Siromukham Sarvathah Sruthimalloke Sarvamavruthya Thishtathi* (with hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe). Consciousness is all-pervasive. Wherever it falls, it occupies the object therein. Object occupies space and space is pervaded by Consciousness and hence all objects are also pervaded by Consciousness. There are two aspects to this: being and manifesting. This manifestation (*Bhathi*-effulgence) is the Atmic principle.

This Atmic principle is consciousness itself. It is this effulgence that is variously called *Atma*, *Paramatma*, *Paramajyoti*, etc. It is from this effulgence that the various objects of the world manifest. The Vedas call this manifestation as Atma (I). This is not created by anybody. It is Self – manifest. There is an eternal principle of ‘I’ present inside the individual. The feeling of ‘mine’ is relating to external objects. ‘I’ is the *Atman* and ‘mine’ is *maya* (illusion). The changeless principle is immanent in all objects of the world. But man falls into error due to his *vasanas* (innate tendencies) and *abhyasas* (habits). Man creates for himself manifold relationships like my son, my brother, etc. The body consciousness is the cause for these bonds. Who is the mother and who is the child before birth? Who is the husband and who is the wife before marriage? All these are transient relationships created by man and they are as impermanent as passing clouds. Getting lost in these transient relationships, man falls into delusion (*bhrama*). When you are in deep sleep, you are not even aware of your own body. In *samadhi*, similarly, the *sadhaka* does not feel his body. It is believed by some that what is perceived by the senses only is real. Actually, none of it is real. The Atma alone appears as reflection, reaction and resound. None of these is yourself. The Atmic principle alone is your Self. Nobody else can create your inner reality nor can anyone deny it. This ‘I’ is the true eternal principle. *Nirgu-*

nam, Niranjanam, Sanathana Niketanam, Nithya, Suddha, Buddha, Muktha, Nirmala Swarupinam (Attributeless, pure, final abode, eternal, unsullied, enlightened, free and embodiment of sacredness). This Atmic principle is the very personification of Divinity; hence the expression *Easwara Sarvabhutanam* (God is the indweller in all beings). It is this principle of universal divinity that is asserted by great scholars. For instance, all of you know the story of Adi Sankara and the Brahmin who was learning Panini's Grammar whom Sankara admonished to concentrate on Govinda Nama (*Bhaja Govindam, etc.*). In our daily life, we give different names to different persons and objects. If you just call, 'hey boy', who will come? But if you call, 'hey Rama', the boy named Rama will immediately respond. You are not born with any name. Names are imposed. Even the very body that you possess is not you. By constant repetition of 'I' in relation to the body, you have fallen into the illusion of body consciousness. Whenever you are able to apply the expression 'my' to any object, from your handkerchief to the various limbs, it implies that 'you' are different from the object denoted by the expression 'mine'. Then who are you? To recognise this, Vedanta has given various expositions. If you find the true differentiation between 'me' and 'mine' in its true implication, the relationships in the entire world become clear. The sense of possession 'mine' is entirely separated

from your true self. Your self transcends all these. That is why the *Veda* makes the assertion, *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman). It does not say, Brahma is mine. It says, I am the very personification of Brahman. So, one should try to recognise this principle of 'I'.

Understand the Fundamental Principle

Embodiments of Love!

Firstly, this confusion arises because of the distinction of 'I' and 'mine' and consequent neglect of the principles of the cell, molecule, atom, etc. This lemon is an agglomeration of atoms and not a lemon *per se*. For our convenience we have given it the name lemon, not for the sake of understanding the basic reality of atoms and molecules. What is knowledge? *Advaita Darshanam Jnanam* (perception of the One without a second is supreme knowledge). This is a body with various systems of blood, food, etc., in it. It is alive only so long as all these systems are functional. It becomes a dead body, the moment these systems stop functioning. The body is dead but the cells and atoms are still there. Atoms get back to atoms. Hence, it is necessary, first of all, to recognise the principle of *mooladhara*. What is the basis for water? When hydrogen and oxygen combine, we get water and we can drink it. But can we drink hydrogen or oxygen, when we are thirsty? For convenience, we postulate such variety. But all this variety is mere *mithya* (relative reality). What is *Mithya*? It is neither truth nor

untruth but an appearances of the non-existent as real. Such appearances are temporary and transient and change their form after some time. Truth is unchanging. *Trikala Badhyam Sathyam* (that which is unchanging in the past, present and future) alone is truth.

Man today resorts to many evil ways for the sake of power and pelf. But how long do they last? They come and go. *Ma Kuru Dhana Jana Yauvana Garvam, Harathi Nimeshath Kalah Sarvam* (Do not be proud of your wealth, progeny and youth; all will be destroyed in due course). Presuming such a transient world as true, you waste your life in such pursuits. You are born so that you may fulfill the purpose of your life. *Sareeramadhyam Khalu Dharma Sadhanam* (the body is solely intended for the pursuit of righteousness). What is your *dharma*? Does everything that pleases you constitute *dharma*? Not at all. True adherence to your conscience is righteousness proper. You abandon the dictates of your conscience and become a victim of delusion. You see your reflection in a mirror, but is the image real? In fact, it suffers from lateral inversion. How can such erroneous images become true? In the same manner, the entire external world is a reflection of your inner reality. Your inner reality should be the basis. When you have a firm grip on the principle of *mooladhara*, all external delusions and illusions vanish. From birth to death, man neglects his inner fundamental basis (*mooladhara*) and

dissipates his life and energy on the objects of the external world. This is not the purpose of life. You must realise the truth of your inner source and ultimately attain it. You must experience the life of truth. Being born, growing, eating and indulging in other mundane activities and dying is not the purpose of your birth. However, these days such concerns have increased manifold. Because of this man has not increased his stature for several ages.

The Good Will Remain Unaffected

The name of this New Year is Vrusha. Lots of people are making all kinds of predictions of the events in the coming year. What is bound to happen will happen. Carry on doing what you have to do. During all this, your mind should be centred on your original source (*mooladhara*). If you neglect this, all your efforts are useless. As a consequence of this only, humanity is faced with so many distressing and calamitous events. One should not say unpleasant things, but I am obliged to say some unpleasant things. The coming year is likely to face far more difficulties, than the past year, in fact a lot more. The political arena is likely to face greater problems. There are likely to be more earthquakes. What is the cause? It is the consequence of man's wrong actions. The good or bad events of the world are a consequence of the activities of mankind. There is conflict even between brothers; and in the field of politics human values have been forsaken. It is

not in any one country but all over the globe.

Vrusha is the name of this New Year. In Kerala, this is known as Vishu. According to Indian calendar there are 60 years, after which the cycle repeats. To name a few, Prabhava, Vibhava, Shukla, Pramodhuta, Prajotpathi, Angirasa, Srimukha, Bhava, Yuva, Datha, etc. These are the names of the children of Narada. He begot these children when he became Narada. As he had desired that the names of his children should remain eternally, the years have been named thus.

One is bound to experience the reflection, reaction and resound of one's own actions, but none can predict when, where and how. One thing is certain, the good will never be put to suffering and no danger can befall them.

In Gujarat, there lived a well-to-do businessman named Patel, who was also a great devotee. He had all comforts and conveniences at his disposal. He used to perform regular Puja (worship) every day. One day one of his friends asked him, "Patel, you have got everything that one could ask for in life. Then what for are you worshipping God?" Patel replied, "I don't worship God for wealth and prosperity. I only ask Him for peace and bliss which He alone can confer, as He is the embodiment of Supreme Bliss and Peace." This is true devotion. Peace and bliss cannot be obtained elsewhere except from God. *Happiness is union with*

God. No matter however you try, you cannot attain peace from the external world. Many overseas devotees say, “I want peace.” I tell them, “You are the embodiment of peace. What you get outside is only pieces. The peace you aspire for is within you.” You are truth, peace, love, nonviolence, and you are verily God. When you have such a firm conviction, there will be no scope for misery, you will always be blissful. Do not think that God is separate from you. Have full faith that ‘I am God’.

Hanuman’s Devotion

Once Lord Rama asked Hanuman, “How do you contemplate on Me?” “At the physical level, You are my Master and I am Your servant. At the mental level, I am a spark of thy Divine Self. At the Atmic level, You and I are one”, said Hanuman. Pleased with Hanuman’s reply, Lord Rama presented him with a pearl necklace, which was given to mother Sita by her father, king Janaka, at the time of her marriage. Hanuman held this very valuable necklace in his hand, began to remove all the pearls one by one from the necklace, and kept it near his ear for some time and then after biting each one of them, threw them away. Sita was surprised to see Hanuman behaving thus. She thought that Hanuman had not given up his monkey traits. Rama knew the intention behind this act of Hanuman. But in order to make Sita understand this, He asked, “Hanuman, why are you biting and throwing

away such precious pearls?” “O Lord, I am examining whether I could listen to Your name in the pearls. Since I couldn’t hear, I am throwing them away. The pearl is no better than a stone if there is no Rama Nama in it. I want only You.” Listening to this statement of Hanuman, Rama offered Himself by embracing Hanuman. The inner meaning of this is Rama is where Hanuman is and vice-versa. Hanuman is one who realised the unity of the individual and God. Consequently, Hanuman was always in a state of bliss. Hanuman is given various appellations such as *Santhudu*, *Gunavanthudu*, *Balavanthudu* (one of peace, virtues and strength). He derived his strength from the Divine name of Lord Rama. Many people confine the Divine Name only to the lips but Hanuman chanted the name of Rama from the depth of his heart.

Poison will remain poison even if it is put in a precious vessel studded with diamonds, pearls, emeralds, etc. The divine ambrosia will not lose its taste even if it is put in a brass vessel. Likewise, it is the purity of heart, not the external appearance that matters. Purity of heart is the purpose behind chanting God’s name. Chanting of God’s name should originate from the heart, not from the lips.

Let Society’s Welfare Be Your Aim

When you give away something in charity, think that you are offering it to God Himself. That is

true charity. Some people give money to the priest and ask him to perform worship on their behalf. Will your hunger be appeased if someone else eats? Likewise, how can you get the benefit of worship performed by the priest? Any good activity should be undertaken by the concerned person himself in order to derive the benefit therefrom. Today people are unable to understand the secret of Divinity. In fact, you are divinity personified. But you consider yourself to be the body, which is ephemeral. The *Bhagavadgita* says, '*Anityam Asukham Lokam Imam Prapya Bhajasva Maam*'. Having reached this world, which is temporary and full of misery, contemplate on Me (God).

This body is a den of dirt, disease-prone and cannot cross the ocean of Samsara. O mind, do not be under the delusion that body is permanent. Instead take refuge at the Divine Lotus Feet.

(Telugu Poem)

So long as one is alive, one can aspire to lead a happy and healthy life. Healthy body leads to healthy mind. So, take proper care of your body and always contemplate on the selfless, pure, steady Atmic principle. You are a member of the society. Your welfare depends on the welfare of the society. So, aspire for the well being of one and all. *Lokassamastha Sukhino Bhavantu* (May all the worlds be happy!) Eschew

narrow-mindedness; cultivate broad feelings in order to experience bliss.

Embodiments of Love!

This New Year brings with it some good results also. The New Year Day is not celebrated merely to partake of delicious dishes. You have to imbibe sacred feelings and resolve to lead a fruitful life. The good and bad of the world depend on your conduct, which in turn depends on your thoughts. So, develop good thoughts. Only then will you be able to lead a noble life. Set an ideal to your fellowmen. Give them happiness. Show compassion towards them. Talk to them lovingly. All this is possible only when you acquire Divine love. So, strive to become the recipient of Divine love. Chant His Name wholeheartedly.

Ugadi Day, 26.3.2001, Prasanthi Nilayam

