

Unity In Diversity - The Fundamental Truth

Life in the world is impermanent. So are youth and wealth. Wife and children are also not permanent. Only truth and good name are permanent.

(Sanskrit verse)

IN this world everything is bound to change, be it happiness or sorrow, peace or restlessness.

Man is unable to understand his true nature. He identifies himself with the body which is transient. He is not merely a *vyashti jeevi* (individual), he is a *samashti jeevi* (social being). He does not want to lead a lonely life. The *Purusha Sukta* declares: *Sahasra seersha purusha sahasraksha sahasra pad* (God has a thousand heads, eyes and feet). Man is unable to realise that he is *samashti swarupa* (cosmic form). He is under the delusion that he is a *vyashti swarupa* and thereby subjects himself to suffering.

Give Up Negative Qualities

The main principle of the culture of Bharat is to understand and experience unity in diversity. But, man today visualises diversity in unity. He has forgotten the principle of equality and, consequently, becomes restless. Unity in diversity is the fundamental truth that one has to recognise. Since time immemorial, the Bharatiyas have been making concerted efforts to understand this truth and experience it.

Nobody has been able to understand the inner meaning of the Vedic teachings. However, a little knowledge can be gained by going through the sacred texts and listening to the teachings of scholars. In ancient times, even the demons used to study the Vedas. However, they could not comprehend the truth contained in the Vedas and hence led a life of untruth. Demons like Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakasipu were highly learned and well-versed in various disciplines of knowledge. They could reach up to the moon, the sun, and even the stars and could understand their functioning. But they could not comprehend the latent positive principle in their own self, as their mind was filled with negative thoughts. The demon Narakasura belonged to the same category. He had mighty power and knowledge, but they proved futile because of his negative qualities. One may be highly devoted, one may have mastered the Vedas, but all these will be of little consequence if one doesn't give up negative qualities.

Saint Thyagaraja was an ardent devotee of the Lord. In one of his compositions, he extolled the Lord thus: "*Oh*

Krishna! You are beyond all description and human comprehension. Is it possible to estimate Your glory and splendour? I have been waiting for Your grace. Oh Lord! Listen to my prayer and redeem me. You are the one who brought back to life the dead son of Your Guru, Sandeepani. You are the one who humbled the serpent Kaliya, freed Vasudeva and Devaki and saved Droupadi from humiliation. You fulfilled Kuchela's desires; You made ugly-looking Kubja beautiful. You protected the Pandavas and saved the 16,000 Gopikas. You are beyond all description and human comprehension. Krishna, it is not possible for even Brahma to describe Your glory. I have been praying for Your grace."

(Telugu Song)

Chaitanya's Message To Mankind

Once Chaitanya Mahaprabhu sought his mother's permission to go and pursue his studies. Then his mother said, "My dear one, there are various types of education in this world, but they are meant only for a living and not for life. Only the *adhyatmika vidya* (spiritual education) is true education. It is immortal and has no limitations. It is changeless in all the three periods of time. Make efforts to acquire such education." From that day onwards, Chaitanya went about propagating the efficacy of chanting the divine name in each street and in every village. He chanted the name of Lord Krishna at all times and under all circumstances. His message to mankind was simple, yet profound.

*There is no charity greater than feeding the
 hungry,
 There are no greater gods than parents,
 There is no greater Japa (chanting) or Thapa
 (penance) than adherence to truth,
 There is no greater Dharma than compassion,
 There is no greater gain than the company of
 the good,
 There is no enemy greater than anger,
 There is no disease like being a debtor,
 There is no wealth greater than good reputation,
 Bad reputation is death itself,
 There is no ornament better than the chanting of
 God's Name. (Telugu poem)*

Man should give up enmity and develop amiable relation with his fellow-beings. This is the most essential education that he has to acquire. It is a sign of delusion and a demonic trait to develop hatred towards others and lead a life of selfishness. Why does *Purusha Suktam* declare *sahasra seersha Purusha ...?* It means that God is not a separate entity. He is *samashti swarupa* (the cosmic form). He is present in all beings. When God is so close to him, why does man suffer from delusion and face hardships in life? God is permanently installed on the altar of human heart. He is all-pervasive. Man can certainly see Him, touch Him and also speak to Him. But, he lacks such determination and yearning for God. Hence, he suffers.

Chaitanya prayed to Lord Narayana thus: “Oh Lord, You are all-pervasive. You are the master of all beings. You control the entire universe. You are the very life principle. I do not aspire to attain Vaikunta or Kailasa, or Swarga (heaven) nor do I crave for liberation. Bless me with love so that I can love You.” When Chaitanya prayed in this manner, an ethereal voice said, “*Tathastu*” (so shall it be). The worldly education one may be well-versed in and the immense power one may be endowed with, are bound to disappear with the passage of time. Love alone is immortal. Hence, one should consider love as one’s very life. Chaitanya prayed to Krishna to bless him with such eternal love. Kailasa, Vaikunta and Swarga are like branch offices of God. Chaitanya was not interested in attaining them. He recognised that *hridaya* (heart) is the correct address of God. He prayed, “Oh Lord, I know that You are installed on the altar of my heart. Kindly, bless me with such experience.”

The Significance Of Deepavali

Lord Krishna, accompanied by Sathyabhama, went to wage a battle with the demon Narakasura. A fierce battle ensued and the demon died at the hands of Sathyabhama. Being the all-powerful one, Krishna could have killed Narakasura without Sathyabhama’s help. Then why did He take her help? Narakasura, being a wicked demon, did not deserve to even die at the hands of Krishna. As he had subjected thousands of women to untold suffering, Krishna

decided that he should be killed by a woman. Narakasura had imprisoned thousands of princesses who were great devotees of the Lord. They were the very embodiments of love and contemplated on Him incessantly. After slaying Narakasura, Krishna granted them freedom. It is in this context that Saint Thyagaraja extolled the Lord saying, “You have protected the sixteen thousand Gopikas.”

It is always dangerous to be in the company of the wicked. Hence, it is said, *Tyaja durjana samsargam; Bhaja sadhu samagamam; Kuru punyam ahorathram* (give up bad company; join the company of the noble and perform meritorious deeds day and night). One should resolve to follow such sacred path and propagate the principle of love to one and all.

What is the inner significance of the slaying of Narakasura? ‘*Narah*’ means the immortal atmic principle. When the qualities of an *asura* (demon) enter *nara* (man), he becomes Narakasura. In such a person, you find only bad qualities and evil feelings. He does not join the company of the noble. He does not make efforts to reach God. He makes friendship with only wicked people. Such a mentality is the consequence of evil deeds over a number of births. Today man is under the delusion that he is highly educated. In fact, it is not *vidya* (education), but only *avidya* (ignorance) that he has acquired. How can one be called educated if one does not have a good conduct and does not join good company? Ravana had acquired all types of knowledge as Rama. But unlike Rama, he joined bad com-

pany, entertained bad thoughts and indulged in wicked deeds. Hence, people revere Rama and censure Ravana. One is revered or ridiculed on the basis of one's conduct. One should not lead a self-centred life. Wherever a good activity is taking place, wherever a prayer meeting is held, take part in them. But there are some people who participate in bhajans and do not join good company. What is the use of such a life? In this context, Sage Purandaradasa said,

“In spite of having eyes, people have become blind as they are not interested in seeing your auspicious form. In spite of having ears, people have become deaf as they are not interested in listening to Your nectareous words. Though they are in the company of God, they aspire to lead a worldly life.” (Telugu Poem)

Man should understand the truth that God is present in all beings and conduct himself accordingly. That is his primary duty. He should not only contemplate on divinity but also sing His glory. There was a grand celebration in the kingdom of Narakasura when he was slain. So long as he was alive, the hearts of people were engulfed in darkness. When he was ultimately killed, there was joyous celebration all around. With his death, the darkness of ignorance and hatred was dispelled. People symbolically celebrated the occasion by lighting lamps. Just as bats find their way into a house engulfed in darkness, so wicked qualities enter the heart filled with darkness of ignorance. Only bats like to live in darkness, not human beings. You should not live like bats, in darkness of ignorance.

Some people appear to be of *sathwic* (pious) nature externally, but they are full of wicked qualities. You should beware of them.

Sathsangatwe Nissangatwam, Nissangatwe Nirmohatwam, Nirmohatwe Nischalatattwam, Nischalatattwe Jivanmukti

(Good company leads to detachment, detachment makes one free from delusion, freedom from delusion leads to steadiness of mind and steadiness of mind confers liberation.) (Sanskrit sloka)

You should not be in bad company even for a moment. In olden days, people distanced themselves from demons and demonic behaviour. Hiranyakasipu tried his best to stop his son Prahlada from chanting the divine name of Lord Narayana. But Prahlada was always immersed in the contemplation of the Lord. Prahlada was dear to Lord Narayana, whereas his father Hiranyakasipu was dear to demons. He was an emperor. What sort of an emperor was he? He was an emperor of wicked qualities and evil deeds. Follow the ideal set by Prahlada and sanctify your time in the contemplation of the Lord. In the present day world, demonic activities are on the rise. One cannot stand such sights, nor can one bear to hear about them. Why should you give scope to such ghastly events? Install God in your heart. It is said, *Easwara sarva bhutanam* (God is the indweller of all beings). Develop such firm faith. *Yad bhavam tad bhavathi* (as you think so you become).

Dear Students!

Today is the day on which Naraka, the demon was killed. What does this event signify? It signifies killing the demon in man. ‘*Nara*’ means man and ‘*asura*’ means demon. This demon is present in every human being. It is not necessary to acquire great *astras* and *sastras* (weapons) to kill this demon. Man is called ‘*nara*’ because there is *atma* in him. That *atma* is the embodiment of love. It is possible to kill demons only through love. Therefore, realise the *atma tathwa* and develop love. This is true *bhakti* (devotion).

Embodiments of Divine Atma!

We are celebrating such a sacred event of killing the demon Narakasura as a festival by preparing so many delicious dishes and feasting on them. But, we are not making any effort to understand the inner meaning of this sacred event. In order to understand the sanctity of this great event, we must join *satsanga* (good company). You should not lead a life of selfishness. That is the life of a *vyashti* (individual). That is a wasteful life. It is only in *samashti* (community) life, can you realise divinity. You must lead a happy life by identifying yourself with *samashti* (society). In fact, *samashti* is the embodiment of divinity. The Vedas have also advocated this community life by proclaiming “*Sahasra seersha Purusha ...*”. What is the purpose of human life? To eat, drink and roam about? No. No. The birds, beasts and animals also do that. That is not what is expected of a human being. The human values inherent in

us must be given expression to. They have to be propagated. They must become part and parcel of our daily life and reflect in our behaviour. If they are merely propagated without being reflected in our behaviour, it becomes a futile exercise. Therefore, we must realise the inner meaning of the various festivals and act accordingly.

The human birth is most sacred. It is said, “*Janthunam narajanma durlabham* (out of all the living beings, human birth is the rarest). The word ‘*manava*’ (human being) also means one who is sacred. Why are we resorting to debasing such a sacred human being? Man today advocates several good and sacred things, but, when it comes to practice, he backs out. That is the result of his past sins. When a conflict arises between precept and practice, man should stand up to the situation with courage and make an effort to tread the sacred path. You will, in your day-to-day life, encounter several people with bad qualities and bad behaviour. Do not join their company. Offer them a *namaskar* (salutation) and move away. Even Saint Thyagaraja prayed, “Oh Rama! For those who have faith in you, I offer my salutations.” He offered salutations to both the good and evil people. A question may arise here, as to why we should offer our salutations to the evil people. We salute the good people, not to lose their company. We also salute the evil people with a request that they move away from us. We must join the company of good people, cultivate good qualities and lead a good life, thus sanctifying our life.

Faith Should Be Consistent

History is replete with the stories of several demons with evil qualities. Kamsa was one such demon, who was a contemporary of Lord Krishna. He was forewarned by an ethereal voice that the child born to his sister would kill him. Thereupon, he grew angry and pulled his sister Devaki out of the chariot and tried to kill her, then and there. But, her husband, Vasudeva prevented the situation by assuring Kamsa that he would see that no harm is done to him. He also reasoned with Kamsa, “How could you believe the words that the eighth offspring of Devaki would kill you? Even if you believe those words, it is not time yet. Please wait till the eighth child is born to Devaki. Why do you attempt to kill the just married Devaki now itself? Please do not commit such a sin.” On hearing Vasudeva’s advice, wisdom dawned on Kamsa to a certain extent. He waited till the eighth child was born to his sister, Devaki, somehow. But, he was not having peace of mind during that period. Meanwhile, he killed several newborn babies both of Devaki as well as others in his kingdom. He did not believe the divine voice that he had danger to his life only from the eighth child to be born to Devaki. That was the degree of his faith in divinity! His was a ‘demonic faith’. It is not correct to develop faith in one aspect of God and lose in another. Your faith must always be steady and total in all respects. A small example.

Some ten years ago, a gentleman came here and proclaimed that Sri Sathya Sai Baba was God. Not only that,

he also proclaimed and propagated that not only Sri Sathya Sai Baba, but every living being was permeated by divinity. After some time, when some of his desires could not be fulfilled, he propagated that Baba was not God. The same individual proclaimed at one time that Baba was God and at another time that He was not God. How should we believe such a person with a double tongue? This type of double-speaking is a demonic quality.

For those who say 'yes', I say 'yes'. For those who say 'no', I say 'no'. 'Yes' and 'no' are related to you, but for Sai, everything is 'yes', 'yes', 'yes'. (Telugu poem)

For Me, all are good. There are no bad people. Those who develop negative feelings without enquiring into the good and bad of things in this objective world, will only spoil their own life. So far as I am concerned, I love everybody. All are equally dear to Me. Some people may have some doubts. But, they must be made to see reason with a proper explanation and counselling. As far as possible, you should not give room for doubts; for, so long as doubts persist, you will not have peace of mind. Cultivate love. When your heart is filled with love, everything is love only. There will be no scope for hatred at all. Where there is no hatred, there will be no anger. When there is no anger, there will be no scope for violence. Hence,

*“Where there is faith, there will be truth;
Where there is truth, there will be peace;
Where there is peace, there will be bliss;
Where there is bliss, there will be God.”*

First and foremost, cultivate faith. Further, there should be harmony between your thoughts, words and deeds. Where there is no harmony between these three, your behaviour would be demonic. A true *vyakti* (individual) is one who is pure in thought, word and deed and who maintains perfect harmony between these three. Who is a *vyakti*? One who has manifested his latent *sakti* (power) in all aspects. You must develop such a *sakti*. You speak of developing energy, but you are becoming allergic to noble thoughts. What happiness do you derive out of such behaviour? All your *sankalpas* (resolutions) are becoming a futile exercise.

Cultivate Love

Dear Students!

First and foremost, develop love. It is easier to cultivate love than all other qualities. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu prayed to Lord Krishna, “I do not want Vaikuntha or Kailasa. I want only your *prema*. Please give me a small place in your *prema samrajya* (kingdom of Love). I will be satisfied with that.” There is nothing in this world which cannot be achieved with love. What is *Narakasura Vadha*? It is destroying evil qualities and demonic nature in man with the weapon of Love.

You must develop good thoughts, good feelings and good behaviour. It is only for this purpose the human birth is given. Man is born not for eating and roaming about. Even the birds, beasts and animals do the same. Human

birth is noble, sacred and sanctified. Therefore, every human being must make an effort to free himself from the demonic qualities. Only then human beings will become the embodiments of divinity. Divinity expresses itself through such human beings. You should never give scope for any demonic deeds. Always cultivate good feelings, good thoughts and good behaviour. Do not be carried away by others' opinions – either good or bad. Develop your own line of thinking, based on your conscience. Develop self-confidence. *“Where there is self-confidence, there will be self-satisfaction. Where there is self-satisfaction, there will be self-sacrifice. And , through self-sacrifice comes self-realisation.”* Self-confidence is the foundation for the building; it remains below the surface of the earth. Self-satisfaction represents the walls; self-sacrifice, the roof and self-realisation, the life. Without the foundation of self-confidence, self-realisation cannot be achieved. Therefore, build up your self-confidence slowly. In this process, *“start early, drive slowly and reach your goal of self-realisation safely.”*

Today, several people wish “Good morning, good night”, etc., when they come across somebody. This is not our culture. This is an alien culture. Instead, if you say ‘*namaskar*’, how happy you as well as the other person will feel? Today, even to say ‘*namaskar*’ has become burdensome for people who consider themselves modern. What is this ‘Good morning’ and ‘Good evening’? Even a rustic is able to say ‘*namaskar*’. If you delve into the scientific

truth, there is nothing like morning and evening or sunrise and sunset. All these changes are happening due to the earth rotating around itself. At least from today, children! respect your parents. Love your parents. Enjoy the love of your parents. It is only those who experience the love of their parents will have a bright future. Those who make their mothers feel sad, will lead a life of difficulties and suffering. Therefore, never cause any pain to your parents under any circumstances. Make them happy. Only then you will feel happy and, in turn, your children will make you happy. Give happiness and take happiness. Happiness is not a one-way traffic, it is a two-way process of give and take. Speak good words. Develop *samyak drishti* (sacred vision). Lead a life of purity. Make your life sanctified.

Deepavali, 4-11-2002, Prasanthi Nilayam.

