

Mother Is Your First God

*“When man emerges out of his mother’s womb
He has no garland of any kind around his neck:
Neither of pearls nor of gold, nor a necklace of
topaz*

*Or of rubies or other precious gems
There is, however, one garland carrying the
unbroken link of the consequences of the
good and bad deeds of the past lives strung
together.*

*Brahma, the creator, strings together the
consequences of his past deeds into a heavy
garland and puts it around his neck at the time
of his birth”*

(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love !

EVERY individual has four *gurus* in this world. The *Vedas* proclaim “*Mathrudevo*

bhava, Pithrudevo bhava, Acharyadevo bhava, Athithidevo bhava”, which means the mother, father, teacher and the guest are to be considered as God. Among the four, the mother is the first and the foremost *guru*. There are several inner meanings to the teachings of the mother. A true disciple is one who meticulously follows the mother’s instructions. The mother may appear to be an ordinary individual like any other, but when you delve deep into her teachings, you will realize that she is a great *guru* (teacher). But, those who are not on the spiritual path, may take all this lightly.

Three Laudable Desires Of A Noble Mother

Once, mother Eswaramma was returning from Chitravathi river with a vessel full of water. An old woman was walking along with her with great difficulty, unable to bear the burden of the vessel filled with water. Eswaramma enquired “Mother! Are you feeling difficulty in carrying the vessel full of water?” The old woman who was perspiring and unable to keep pace with her replied, “Yes, mother! I am unable to carry this vessel for such a long distance. But, I have no children to help me in this task. I myself have to carry this vessel full of water everyday”. These words of agony were imprinted on the mind of Eswaramma. After walking for some distance, she saw a small boy holding a slate and pencil in one hand and carrying a heavy load of books in a bag hanging round his neck. He was unable to walk, but he had to continue his journey to

the Bukkapatnam School. Eswaramma enquired of the boy, “My dear son! What for are these slate and pencil? Why are you carrying such a heavy load of books?” The small boy replied “Mother, I am carrying these books so that I can note down all that the teachers teach me.” Eswaramma kept all these incidents in her mind. After walking for some more distance, she came across a frail lady carrying her infant child on her shoulders proceeding towards Bukkapatnam. Eswaramma again enquired of this lady, “you appear to be frail and weak, unable to carry the child. Why should you walk such a long distance up to Bukkapatnam?” The lady replied, “Mother! What else can I do? There is no doctor in this remote village who can give some medicine for my child. He is suffering from cold and fever. I have to take him to the Bukkapatnam hospital.” This incident also made an imprint on the mind of Eswaramma.

There used to be a mother and small child in a remote village near Kolkata. As soon as the child was born, the father died. The mother somehow brought up the child with the meagre income she earned by doing some odd jobs. There was not even a lamp in the house for the boy to study during the night. He used to sit under the street lights and study. Thus, he continued his studies with great difficulty and earned a high degree. That little boy blossomed into the legendary Eswarchandra Vidyasagar.

Once, a fair was being held in Kolkata.

Eswarchandra's mother also started out to visit the fair, wearing a worn out sari. He saw her pitiable condition. While everybody else was going to the fair wearing expensive clothes, Vidyasagar could not bear the sight of his mother going to the fair wearing a worn out sari. He asked, "Mother! Why are you going to the fair wearing such a worn-out sari?" The mother replied "My dear son! I am happy with whatever I have. Please do not worry. You continue with your studies and come up in life."

A few years after this incident, Vidyasagar completed his studies. He was able to secure a good job with a decent salary. He bought some good saris for his mother with his first month's salary. Then, his mother told him, "I will not be really happy with these costly saris. If you help the poor people in our village and alleviate their suffering at least to some extent, that is enough for me." She further expressed that she had three desires. Immediately, Vidyasagar fell at her feet and prayed, "Mother! It is my duty to fulfil your desires. It is the responsibility of a son to fulfil the desires of his mother and make her happy. Please let me know what your desires are." The mother replied, "My dear son! There are several poor, uneducated and sick people in our village. Who will alleviate their suffering? I will be really happy, only when you can remove their difficulties. The children in this village have to walk long distances and go to the neighbouring village for studies. I am really moved at their pitiable condition. Should they have to undergo so many difficulties for the sake

of education? I want you to build a small school in this village itself so that these children can comfortably study here." Vidyasagar built a small school in his village as per the wishes of his mother and she was happy.

On another day, Vidyasagar found his mother sitting in a pensive mood and enquired what the reason was. She told him, "My dear son! The people of our village are suffering a lot for want of drinking water. They have to fetch the water from long distances, walking all the way. The well in our village has completely dried up. How can old ladies like me fetch water from such a long distance? If you can arrange for the digging of a well in our village, it will be a great boon for them. This is my second desire." Vidyasagar assured her, "Mother! I will certainly fulfil your desire. I will try to solve the drinking water problem in our village." Initially, he got two or three bore wells sunk in the village, but they were not of much use. The bore wells were able to supply water only during the rainy season. During summer, they used to dry up, yielding not even a drop of water. Therefore, the mother advised him to find a permanent solution for the problem. Then, Vidyasagar arranged for digging a big well and solved the problem of water scarcity permanently. His mother was happy.

Education Must Confer Humility

After sometime, Vidyasagar got a promotion in his job. His salary also increased. Then, he approached his mother and enquired, "Mother! What is your third

desire?” She replied, “My dear son! You have built a school. You have provided drinking water to the villagers. But, the mothers in our village are compelled to take their children whenever they fall sick, to the neighbouring village for treatment. I am unable to see their plight. Hence, I will be happy if you can arrange to build a small hospital in our village.” In accordance with his mother’s wish, Vidyasagar got a hospital built in his village. Thus, he fulfilled all the desires of his mother in due course.

Gradually, he reached a high position in his career due to his good behaviour. His salary also increased commensurate with the high position. In spite of that, he continued to be humble and obedient and thereby earned a good name for himself. One day, his mother called him and advised him, “My dear son! I am happy that you have attained a very high position in life. But, do not become arrogant.”

For some people,

Excessive wealth gives rise to ego which in turn paves the way for many wicked qualities. When wealth leaves you, ego also vanishes and as a result the evil qualities disappear.

(Telugu poem)

However, this was not the case with Vidyasagar. He cultivated the quality of humility along with education. He earned a good name for himself as a great orator.

Educated people in large numbers used to flock round him to hear his speeches. Once a meeting was arranged in a neighbouring town and Vidyasagar was to address the gathering. Vidyasagar started for that town. An ICS officer was travelling in the same compartment in which Vidyasagar was travelling. The officer was going to that town to hear Vidyasagar’s speech. However, he had only heard his name, but had never seen him before. As soon as the officer alighted from the train, he started shouting “Coolie! Coolie!” On seeing this, Vidyasagar approached him and enquired what luggage the officer had. The officer replied that he had only a small suitcase. Then Vidyasagar asked him, “Is it necessary for you to engage a coolie to carry this small suitcase? I will carry it for you. But, where are you going?” The officer replied, “I understand that a great scholar and orator by name Eswarchandra Vidyasagar is going to deliver a speech. I am going to attend his speech.”

Vidyasagar then took the suitcase in his hands and started walking along with the officer. Both of them reached the venue of Vidyasagar’s lecture. There, Vidyasagar handed over the suitcase to the officer. The officer then took out his purse and enquired how much money he had to pay Vidyasagar as portage charges. Vidyasagar politely refused his offer saying, “Sir! You have given me an opportunity to serve you. I don’t need anything more.” He silently walked away from that place. Considering Vidyasagar to be a madcap, the officer proceeded to the venue and sat among the

audience. The organizers of the function were waiting to garland Eswarchandra Vidyasagar on his arrival. In a few minutes Vidyasagar arrived there, dressed in very simple clothes. He was accorded a warm welcome and profusely garlanded by the organizers of the function. The officer who was observing this welcome-ceremony realized to his utter astonishment that the person who had carried his suitcase from the railway station was none other than Eswarchandra Vidyasagar himself. He felt ashamed. He reverentially offered his pranams to this great, yet humble individual, in his heart of hearts. Then Vidyasagar began his speech. He explained that humility is the foremost quality of an educated person. He said, pride and arrogance are the result of excessive wealth and consequently such a person loses the fundamental quality of human nature.

After the conclusion of the programme, the ICS officer met Vidyasagar and offered his sincere apologies for his mistake. He pleaded with Vidyasagar, “Sir, your speech was a great eye opener for me. I behaved arrogantly due to the pride that I am a highly educated person. Please excuse me.”

In course of time, Vidyasagar’s reputation as a scholar and orator spread by leaps and bounds. He continued to do great service to the people. He got several poor students educated. He provided drinking water to several villages, where there were no such facilities. His mother felt very happy that her son was

doing great service to the poor and needy. She prayed to God that every mother should be blessed with such noble children.

Humble Wishes Of A Generous Mother

Similarly, Sathya Sai has undertaken several community welfare activities in Puttaparthi like constructing residential houses for the poor, educating their children, providing drinking water to the villagers, etc., as per the wishes of His mother. What the mother expressed in those days were small desires. But, in course of time, they assumed the form of gigantic projects and created history. Mother Easwaramma was very happy at the great service rendered by Swami to the villagers. She expressed with satisfaction, “My dear son! You built houses for the poor, You solved the drinking water problem for the villagers, You provided electricity to the village which was miserable under darkness. Not only that, You have also built a school and a hospital. You have fulfilled all my desires.” She felt extremely happy that her son had undertaken and completed such great tasks. She used to tell the ladies gathering round her, “I requested Swami to build a small school in Puttaparthi village. But, Swami established a great educational institution in its place.”

Thus, the humble wishes of the mother transformed themselves ultimately into great projects providing immense benefit to the humanity at large. What the country needs today is children who follow the teachings

of their mothers. The teachings of the mothers may appear to be very simple and insignificant, but, in course of time, they provide great happiness. Easwamma's desires were very simple! She wanted drinking water to be made available to the small village of Puttaparthi. But, Swami provided drinking water to the entire district of Ananthapur. She wanted Me to build a small school. But, Sathya Sai built huge buildings and established great educational institutions. In those days, villagers used to suffer due to lack of basic medical facilities. Therefore, Mother Easwamma requested Me to build a small hospital. But, Swami built great temples of healing, the Sathya Sai Super Specialty Hospitals, one in Puttaparthi and another in Bangalore. Thus, the small wishes of the mother resulted in the establishment of world class institutions.

Embodiments of love! You need not follow anybody. It is enough, if you engage yourself in activities that would satisfy your mother. If your mother is happy and contented, that will confer great blessing on you. Whatever your mother says, obey her command willingly and sincerely. That is what is required today! Obey your mother and become recipients of her love. Then the whole world will progress. You need not undertake any other acts of merit. Sacrifice your entire life to satisfy your mother. It is only because Sathya Sai fulfilled the wishes of His mother and provided satisfaction to her, His glory has spread far and wide.

Sathya Sai has built great Hospitals that provide

expensive medical treatment absolutely free to everyone, right from the poorest of the poor to the richest. In the field of medical services, there are no institutions anywhere in the world which can be compared to Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences. In this hospital, medicines, operations, food everything is provided free of cost. Nobody is able to comprehend how we are able to provide all these things free of cost in the present day scenario of sky-rocketing costs. Unfortunately, people are not able to realize the great value of the services being rendered by our hospitals. Today, many hospitals advertise their facilities through electronic media, attract people and loot them of their hard earned money and even go to the extent of causing death to patients by negligence. This is not right. The poor people should be given free food, free education, free water and free medicine. There can be no greater service than providing all these services free of cost. I wish that all the students, past and present, should undertake such services. We are not collecting even a paisa from our students as fees. The Sathya Sai Educational institutions provide education totally free of cost. People have to spend huge amounts for acquiring higher education in other institutions. But, our students need not spend any money for their education here. I am providing totally free education from KG to PG to all the students who come here with love and great expectation. In fact, all our services are provided with loving care and free of cost.

Serve The Society With A Spirit Of Sacrifice

The Sikh student who spoke earlier, tried his best for a long time to acquire higher education. But, he could not pursue his higher studies due to paucity of funds. Hence, he took up employment on a meagre salary. Later on, he joined our college and earned his MBA degree. Now, he is contributing his services to the hostel as a grateful offering to Swami. There are several students like him, who are undertaking service activities in Swami's institutions. The boy who spoke after him hails from Delhi. He also had a great desire to pursue higher education, but had no funds. He joined our Institute and qualified himself with an MBA degree in first class. All this is free of cost. Since then, he remained here in the service of Swami. He has decided to dedicate his life to the institution which produces such boys. Thus, all the students of the Sathya Sai institutions have been cultivating broad-mindedness and the spirit of service. All our students are broad-minded. You will not find any narrow-minded students here. They are filled with love and behave among themselves like brothers. It is My endeavour to train such ideal boys and girls. It is My wish that all our students should willingly undertake free service activities to the society with a spirit of love and sacrifice.

Many of our students are working in highly paid jobs in big cities like Delhi and Agra. In fact, top companies in India are seeking the services of our students, offering them high-salaried jobs. Our students

working in these places are also undertaking service activities like providing free tuitions to poor students. Wherever they are, our students are undertaking various service activities with a spirit of sacrifice and broad-mindedness. Education is not mere bookish knowledge. Developing broad-mindedness, spirit of sacrifice, sharing one's resources willingly with fellow members of the society and making them happy-these are the true qualities of an educated person. There are several such students in Prasanthi Nilayam who are happy and contented by undertaking service to society. My main task is to prepare such boys and girls. I am providing everything that is required for them. I am even sending them abroad for higher education, if necessary.

Dr. Padmanabhan who is sitting here may be known to all of you. He qualified as a doctor at a very young age and wanted to set up a small clinic here in Bangalore. I called him and told him, "Doctor! You must acquire higher degrees in medicine. You should not stop your education with the present degree. Your family circumstances may not be conducive to pursue higher education. But, I am with you. I will provide for your higher education". One day, I called him for dinner and later sent him to Vienna for higher education in medicine. Accordingly, he went abroad and obtained higher degrees in medicine. After his return, he is now doing wonderful service in Brindavan. He is not money-minded. The great name he has acquired in Swami's service is all that matters to him. Can there be greater

wealth than a good name? He serves the poor. Even though he has undergone a heart surgery, he continues to serve the poor patients. Thus, Swami has moulded him as a loving, soft-hearted and selfless individual with a sacred heart and prompted him to serve people.

Our students, in spite of being highly qualified, are very unassuming and without ego. They subsequently take up teaching jobs in our educational institutions. It is My firm resolve to foster such noble souls.

There may be some minor ailments now and then to this body. However, they do not bother Me. They are natural to the human body. Last year, one boy was decorating the door with colour buntings, standing on an iron stool. Meanwhile, I opened the door and came out from My room. As soon as he saw Me, he became nervous and fell down from the stool. As he was falling, the iron stool got tilted and fell on Me. My hip bone was fractured. That is how it happened. It is not due to any past *karma*. I did not, however, mind My injury. Yesterday, as I was entering My room, I casually took the support of a brick projection from the wall. The brick, however, got loosened and fell down on the floor. Consequently I also fell down, landing heavily on the wrist. It was an accident. But, I had to perform My duty, come what may. Of course, accidents do happen due to past *karma*, but this incident is not of that kind. Such disruptions may happen now and then, but , no disease can ever afflict Me. I carry on My work unmindful of

such incidents.

There are seven boys here. All of them did their post graduation. They want to stay with Swami permanently, doing service here. I am looking after them. I told them, “My dear children! You must progress in your education. You need not depend on your parents for this. I will take care of all your requirements. You study well and come out with flying colours. Set an example to others.” Thus, I am making arrangements for their higher studies. I always help others and do not cause inconvenience to anybody. As for Myself, I will never be afflicted with any disease whatever. Some minor incidents may happen. But, I will carry on My work, unmindful of such incidents. Yesterday, when I fell down, there was a loud noise and people present there were very much afraid that some major accident had taken place. They thought to themselves - “What has happened to Swami! Till recently, He was not able to walk properly due to the hip fracture. Now He has sustained an injury to His hand. What a misfortune has befallen us!” But, I consoled them saying that nothing serious had happened and that they should not worry. The devotees had arranged a meeting here, in which I had to participate. I do not like to desist from performing My duty, whatever may happen to this body. Therefore, I agreed to come here. I put on My dress. The students arranged a shawl to cover My gown, so that I may not be inconvenienced with the bandaged arm. The doctors however advised Me not to move. They were right in

their advice. But, I volunteered to come down against the doctor's advice, with the help of two boys. Since I love My boys so much, they also love Me with the same intensity. They are constantly in attendance on Me and look after Me.

(As per Swami's instructions, some boys stood up. Showing them to the audience, Swami said).

These boys have come from far off places like Delhi and other cities and studied here in Brindavan and Prasanthi Nilayam. They are all staying with Me and doing great service to Me. This problem is not something that can be cured with medicines. Their love itself is working as a great medicine for Me. Their love alone is protecting Me in different ways.

(Again pointing towards a student...)

This boy did his PhD. All these boys are highly educated. Still they would like to stay back and serve Swami. There are some more boys inside Swami's residence. For example, Sathyajit and some other boys are constantly in attendance on Me like a shadow and are looking after Me. Such boys are My only property. Several people ask Me, "Swami! How much is the value of your property? Where is it located?" I tell them, "My dear! I cannot say that the value of My property is this much. My students are My property. It cannot be evaluated in terms of money. Any amount of description of the love of My boys will be insufficient." I cannot

remain for a single day without this property. They also cannot live without the loving care of Swami. These boys are setting a great example to the world by their service. *Seva* (selfless and loving service) alone confers great value on the educated. I cannot describe the amount of service they render, so lovingly. No one can adequately estimate and express in words the loving nature of our students. No one can understand their broad-mindedness. Outwardly, they appear like any other students. But, each one of them is highly educated, with double post-graduate degrees. Such boys can render great service to the world. They are serving Me in various ways.

Sravanam (listening), *kirtanam* (singing), *vishnusmaranam* (contemplating on Vishnu), *padasevanam* (serving His Lotus Feet), *vandanam* (salutation), *archanam* (worship), *dasyam* (servitude), *sneham* (friendship), and *atmanivedanam* (self-surrender) are the nine paths of devotion.

These boys are expressing their total and unconditional love towards Me through those nine paths of devotion.

The doctors advised Me bed rest. In spite of that, I decided to fulfil My commitment to My devotees. Having known My firm resolve, the boys stitched a shawl to cover My robe and brought Me down stairs. This service may appear to be a small and insignificant one. But, if you enquire into the matter deeply, you will understand that it is very difficult to get this opportunity

to serve Swami in this way. It is only because of their loving care, that I am able to come down without much inconvenience to speak to you. Is it really possible in My present condition? In fact, it is their pure love that brought Me down here. These boys have good character along with good education. The service rendered by the boys here or in the Primary School or Higher Secondary School or other institutions in Puttaparthi, is beyond description. Even little boys in these Institutions behave well. I am standing before you today to describe the good qualities of My students; otherwise, I had no intention to give a discourse. The students are doing great service to the society, as per My advice. I exhort the new entrants who join the Institution this year to cultivate noble qualities, be healthy and happy and humble like these boys and render good service to the society. I conclude My discourse with blessings to one and all.

[Easwaramma Day, 6-5-2004, Brindavan, Bangalore]