

12. Sathya and Dharma: The Hallmarks Of Humanity

*Without Truth, Righteousness, Love, and Peace
The efficacy of all charity is nil.*

*Without Truth, Righteousness, Love, and Peace
The fruit of all positions is nil.*

*For the eternal heritage that is standing today,
These four qualities are the foundations.*

*What more can I say to you,
Students endowed with virtuous qualities?*

*Is it possible to decide that this is good and that is
bad in this Creation?*

*Both that and this have been made by the same
God.*

Who has realised this principle today?

Students,

In the world today, you find only clashes and agitations. Feelings of equality and brotherhood are totally absent. Starting from the individual right up to the country, agitation, clashes, and feelings of diversity are rampant. Clash between individuals, agitation between houses, fights between families, villages, differences of opinions between districts, conflicting ideas between states —these have become the order of the day. What is the cause for this? It is the craze for power and position, evil desires, and selfishness that have caused this unrest in the world today. Added to this is the slackening of the strength of the governing bodies and their neglect of Truth and Righteousness, which

has caused the Government to neglect its responsibilities. In turn, this has led to much unrest, agitation, lawlessness, and chaos.

People have said that God, who is the Embodiment of Truth and Righteousness, is present everywhere. They call Him Omnipotent and Omniscient. They neither understand the meaning of these words nor make efforts to experience the meaning of these words. Of what use is it to keep pots of nectar outside, without sipping even a couple of drops? In the world today, several people are talking about God, who is the Embodiment of Truth and Righteousness. How many of them have witnessed this Truth? How many have practised Righteousness? Have they experienced at least a little of it? Has any attempt been made to bring to experience at least a minute fraction of the Sacred Truth? Without first understanding and experiencing them, merely lecturing about them is contrary to spiritual practices.

Great saints like Goparaja, Thyagaraja, and Ramadasa and many others aspired to have the grace of the Lord and enjoy Bliss. To this end, they involved themselves in various kinds of *sadhanas* (spiritual practices). They never desired any position or power of authority. They firmly believed that God's grace would grant them everything that they needed. They believed that God's love was their only property. It is the effect of the age of *Kali* that, unfortunately, today's devotees are mainly after pelf, position, and power and, in the process, have brought ruin upon themselves. They believe only in their own welfare and care not for the

benefit of others. The protector is God alone. No power or position can offer any kind of protection. Discarding such a protection and relying upon other mundane means to live is a perversion.

Brahma Sutra—the thread of God

Man is spending thousands of lakhs on petty comforts and joys. However, not even a fraction of the amount goes into righteous acts, charity, or saintly purposes. When the lady of the house asks for some money to buy some flowers and incense sticks for the worship, you hesitate to spend money for this. Further, questions are asked as to what are the benefits of all these rituals! You enjoy so many comforts and pleasures. What happiness have these actually given you? These worldly, temporal, and mundane pleasures are all transitory. Charity, righteousness, and sacrifice are the qualities that are Divine.

Human life is a long garland. One end of the garland is birth and the other end is death. In between these ends are the flowers of clashes, agitations, doubts, lack of self-confidence, and other such qualities, which are threaded together. The effect of these flowers in between is predominant. People look at, and believe, only in these negative qualities of restiveness, lawlessness, and atrocities but do not recognise the underlying truth: without the thread, these flowers cannot be strung together. That thread is the *Brahma Sutra*—the law of Brahman. It is the very thread of Brahman. Woven about this thread are the flowers called obstacles, pleasures, sorrows, abuses, accusations, gains, and the like.

Why have so many types and colours of flowers been strung together? Only when the flowers are of various hues and types does the garland become beautiful. What is it that lends beauty to life? Difficulties lend one kind of charm; sorrows lend another kind of attractiveness. Obstacles add their own beauty to life. Joy is another source of beauty for life. All these can be compared to the flowers that lend beauty to the garland. When man develops this kind of equanimity, he can be said to have assimilated the essence of education. However, today man does not spot the defects within himself, but he is eager to spot the faults in others.

One time, a village woman was traveling in a train that was crossing the river Krishna. The beliefs of the villagers are very sacred. If the culture of India is surviving to some extent, it is only in the villages. The presence of culture in the towns and cities is almost negligible. When the train was passing over the river Krishna, she prayerfully offered two coins to the river and threw them below. An Indian youth was seated by her side. He saw her action and at once derided her by saying, "In our country, there is much poverty. Why are you foolishly wasting money by throwing it into the river? What is the benefit? Though she was a villager she was not short of intelligence. For that matter, the wisdom and acumen possessed by the village folks is absent amongst town dwellers. These villagers have a lot of common sense. Modern education, on the other hand, makes people living in the towns lose common sense.

This young man, after berating the village woman, took out a cigarette and started to smoke. The woman then said, "Son! I gave away just two coins as my sincere and devoted offering to God. In my lifetime, it is only once in a while that I get to travel like this. When once in a lifetime I have thrown away just two coins, you have called it a great waste. Have you realised how much money are you wasting and burning away by smoking so many cigarettes every day? What is the benefit of smoking? You are exposing yourself to cancer, lung infections, and TB. You have failed to recognise such a monumental mistake in you. Instead, you are finding insignificant faults in me. First set right your own faults, correct your actions and seek your own welfare. It is not the mark of true education to criticise and ridicule others." In this way, the village woman, taught a valuable lesson to the young man.

The Hidden Treasure

The Divinity hidden in man is immense, but no one is making any effort to understand this. At one time, in order to make Pothana rise high in Society, Srinadha came to him with a suggestion. He said, "Brother-in-law, you are wasting your valuable poetry by offering it to Rama. You are committing a major mistake by doing so. Is Rama providing you with food, shelter and clothing? Is He looking after your general welfare? Is He protecting your family? Far from it! Hence, offer your poems to the king. The king will shower upon you a torrent of gold. Your family can live happily."

Pothana replied, “Brother-in-law, you are mistaken. The protector is Rama and not the king. How long will the kings survive? For how long can they foster you? My real mother is this Mother Earth. By placing my faith on this Mother and constantly chanting Rama’s name, I shall sanctify my life. It is futile to offer this sacred story of Rama to the kings and feed on the crumbs thrown at me. I would rather believe in Mother Earth to protect me and my family. My poetry is the embodiment of Saraswathi—the goddess of learning. Saraswathi must be offered to Brahma alone and not to mere mortals. How inappropriate it is to offer such a holy text to these wicked kings! I cannot condescend to do such a thing.”

Srinadha became furious on hearing these words and conveyed all this to the king. The selfish king became livid with anger. It has been appropriately said that a king is one who is full of *rajoguna* (emotional aspect). He dispatched some soldiers to burn down Pothana’s house. The entire house was soon aflame. Pothana was meditating on Rama in front of the sacred *Bhagavatha*. He prayed, “Lord! You are my Mother, You are my Father. You are my Well Wisher and Trusted Friend. You are the essence of education and all wealth, You are my everything.” Soon, the entire house was burnt down. But the *Bhagavatha* and the prayer room were both safe!

Those who sincerely believe in God will never suffer any want. People are only uttering God’s name with their lips and not their hearts. This too, with only worldly desires in mind. Instead of praying with the

lips, it is much better to work and render service with the hands. The same was conveyed by Hanuman to Vibhishana. He said, “Vibhishana, you are indulging in only purifying your word. You must aim at purifying your mind. That should be the aim of all actions. All our actions must be performed with the aim of purifying the mind.”

Today, man is only running after education, position, and power and not making any effort to learn the essence of all learning, namely, the education of the Self. Money may come and go in this world. Neither money nor secular education are permanent.

*One may proclaim proudly that he has plenty of
wealth,
But there is not even a bit of happiness on this
earth.
One may strut about proudly that he is highly
educated,
But there is not even a bit of peace on this earth
It is only the virtuous one with character
That finds a place on this earth.*

Only the virtuous ones will find a place to stay. One might wonder and ask how come so many people are seen living in this world. They are not all virtuous, and yet all seem to have a place. The space they have is external. Worldly space is their dominion. A virtuous one, on the other hand, has space within the heart of God. We must make efforts to secure a place in the heart of the Lord. Ancient Indians understood this, and they lived with such sacred, spiritual ideals that they

could provide peace and prosperity to the world. Present day intellectuals are no match to the educated ones of those days. In the olden days, the educated ones offered their learning to God. Today, we are selling our learning and education for wealth. It is not money, but the mind that is important. The mind must be kept under control and humbly offered to God.

All is Brahman

Today, people quite often ask about the relationship between the external world and Brahman. Actually, both are the same! This world is the effect while God or Brahman is the cause. In this world, there is nothing except Brahman. Here is an example. You have planted a seed in the soil and it has sprouted into a sapling. Soon it grows into a tree, with branches and leaves. In the tree are flowers and fruits. Where have these flowers, fruits, branches, and leaves come from? They are all born out of the small seed. It is the seed that became the branches. It is the seed that became the tree. It is the seed that has become the fruits and flowers. You are hence seeing the same seed in various forms and sizes. That is why it has been said in the *Bhagavad Gita*: “*Bijam maam, sarva bhuta naam*” (I am the seed, I am also the various shapes originating from the seed.)

The mud is one, pots may be many.

Milk is one, cows may be many.

Gold is one, ornaments may be many.

God is one, His forms are many.

Everything is God alone. Only the bodies are different; their names and forms vary. This truth must be understood by everyone who has ventured into the path of spirituality. Unfortunately, today all the educated ones hanker after money and give prime importance to money alone in their lives. Wealth is essential no doubt. Without money, one cannot live long in this world. However, the desire for money must be well within limits. Money must be spent in tasks that would be of some benefit to others. If it is simply stashed away, money will be just like the stones buried in the ground. Do not hide it. There are several valuable stones embedded in the ground without our knowledge. Of what use are they to us? They must be dug out, polished, and brought into the world if they are to have some value and use. They must be put to good use. Similarly, if the precious stone of humanness is not taken out and put to good use, it would become rotten and useless.

*When wealth increases, pride grows.
When pride grows, bad qualities grow.
If wealth is limited, pride is controlled.
If pride is controlled, the bad qualities
would leave.*

O man! You must remember and understand this truth. Wealth is essential. However, remember to use it for charity, righteous acts, and welfare of the world and learn to sacrifice. This great spirit of sacrifice is also seen in the *Ramayana*. Rama gave up everything. The *Vedas* have declared, "Neither by actions, nor by progeny, nor by wealth but by sacrifice alone can

one attain immortality.” This is why the Kingdom of Rama earned such an everlasting fame. Rama gave up His royal robes and was prepared to go away to the forests. He gave away in charity a number of cows. He was prepared to give Himself away if need be. It is because of this quality of sacrifice that the Principle of Rama has become immortal. He did not take anything with Him and even gave away His footwear. That is an ideal example for *vairagya*, or renunciation, that is born of total sacrifice.

Feelings depend on possessions

There is a tendency to confuse renunciation with totally giving up everything. Renunciation actually means attaining a state of perfect equanimity. People may criticise you or they may praise you; take them both with a sense of equanimity. One may try to harm you while another may try to do you a good turn; treat both situations with equanimity. In one business venture, a loss might be incurred, while a profit might be made in another; treat them both alike. Equanimity is the hallmark of *yoga*. That provides true safety and security for our lives. To the extent possible, one must make efforts to protect and foster those who have none to help them. If this sense of sacrifice has to be developed, divine feelings must first be developed within. All other feelings are useless if divine feelings are absent in the heart.

Feelings depend on our possessions, be it arms or wealth. Sita once told Rama, “Lord, these animals living in the forest have done You no harm. Is it not a great sin to harm these creatures when they have not

disturbed You in any way? The *rakshasas* (demons) are moving about in the Dandaka forest. None of them have crossed Your path. Then why have You taken upon Yourself to harm them? These thoughts of killing and harming them are fostered in You because of the weapons You carry. If You put these weapons away, such thoughts would also not occur. In You are present Truth and Righteousness, but there is also the quality of violence that appears to negate the good qualities. Keep violence at a distance. You will then become an embodiment of non-violence.”

Sita illustrated this point with a good example. Indra once saw a sage meditating. He wanted to test if the mendicant was in deep meditation or was just pretending superficially. He transformed himself into a soldier and appeared before the sage with a huge, sharp sword. He said, “O sage, I am going on an urgent mission. This sword is highly valuable. I propose to leave it in your custody. I shall collect it upon my return. Please keep it safe until then.” The sage agreed and gave his word to guard the sword. From that moment, his entire mind was only on the sword. He had to take the sword along with him wherever he went. This was because he had given his word to protect it. However, because he had the sword with him, certain violent thoughts started invading his mind. Gradually, the good effect of all his penance was diminished. What is the reason? It is the effect of the object.

Cultivate virtues, not vices

Hence, when the weapons of bad qualities are with you, wherever you may be, these will always

prompt only bad feeling and thoughts. Fill your heart with the good quality of the Lord's name. Wherever you may be, you must remain a paragon of good virtues. You must indulge only in good actions and tread only the right path. These are the important qualities of man. You must cultivate tolerance and develop selfless love. These two are the essence of education.

*Without Truth, Righteousness, Love, and Peace,
The effect of all education is a big void.*

Secular education is needed no doubt. It is for that purpose that this Institution has been established. But your education must also be directed towards helping the needy. It must be utilised for the prosperity of the world. It must be put to good use for the welfare of the Society. This is not to say that one must neglect oneself. The senses that have been given to you must be utilised not merely for selfish but also selfless purposes. It is only when man lives with both the feelings of the selfish and the selfless that he deserves to be called a man. The *Ramayana* has propounded truth and righteousness throughout its chapters. When these two qualities are absent, one loses the right to be called a man. When fire loses its capacity to burn, it is called a piece of coal; nobody would call it fire anymore. Fire, when touched, burns. Coal, on the other hand, will only make you dirty. Fire becomes coal when it has lost the faculty of burning, and it blackens.

When the values of truth and righteousness disappear, a kind of dirt begins to form within. The main cause for man's heart to become maligned and soiled is

the destruction of his natural qualities. Humanity or humanness is the confluence of the mind, speech and body. The same is also termed *trikaranasuddhi*. It may also be looked at by saying “The proper study of mankind is man.” Without the unity of the three, he cannot be called as man. You must, therefore, develop the unity of the thought, word, and deed. If you do so, honour and glory will come searching for you not only in your house, but also in society, in the country and wherever else you may go.

God must acknowledge your devotion

You need not go in search of Truth. Be pure, and truth will come searching for you. Righteousness also need not be looked for. Going in search of it is a sign of weakness. They must come searching for us. That is strength. God must come searching for you. If you go looking for God, it is a mark of foolishness. This is because God is present everywhere. If He is present at some particular spot, one may carry out an investigation to ascertain if He is there or not. How do you search for the Omnipresent God? Annie Besant once remarked, “Today, devotees are all on the lookout for God. This is not true devotion. It is God Himself who must come looking for His devotee. Making God do that is real devotion.” There is no point in proclaiming yourself to be a devotee of Rama or Sai. It is God who must declare you to be His devotee. This point has been well illustrated in the *Bhagavad Gita*. You may consider yourself to be My devotee. That is not proper. From God must come the reply, “You are mine.” You have posted a registered letter to your friend. Your friend must send the acknowledgement that he has re-

ceived your letter. That acknowledgement is the sign that your letter has reached your friend. Similarly, if you wish to ascertain that your prayers have reached God, you must make God declare that you are His devotee. Only then can you know that your prayers have reached Him.

Do you know what types of letters are being posted by the educated people today? They write very good letters. But, they do not write the address. Neither is there the “from” address, nor is there the “to” address. The letter itself is written in flowery language and flowing style. What is the use of that letter? Similarly, you must be aware of at least the “from” address—the place of your origin. If not, you must know at least the “to” address—where you will be going eventually. You are aware of neither of the addresses. The exercise is then futile.

*Birth again, death again;
In between, sojourn in countless wombs.
Life is an endless saga of misery;
O God! Show mercy and save me!*

This endless process is for one who knows not both the addresses. In your youth, the mind is subjected to all kinds of bumps and jumps. You must realise that this stage of youth is transient. It has not come with you during your birth and it will not remain with you at the time of death. Sage Sankara declared:

*Mother, teacher, progeny, family and the
pride of youth*

These are all destroyed in a trice by time.

What is this pride of youth? Your entire life passes away in such a short span. Why then be so arrogant and proud about this transient phase? Why this ego? When ego is destroyed, happiness develops in you. God has a very good name: Madhusudhana. It means one who has killed the demon called Madhu. Who is this Madhu? Madhu means sweet like honey. What is sweet for man today? Ego and pride! You will not find anybody in this world who is free from desire and ego. Man wants to become famous and wealthy overnight. Man desires things that have no meaning. God is one who destroys that sweet ego. Hence, He is called Madhusudhana. The names of Gods have tremendous inner significance associated with them. No one is reading the sacred texts. Instead, people hanker after stupid books and novels. Consequently, their lives also become nonsensical.

*What is the use of having studied so much?
Who can erase the scroll on one's forehead?
When evil thoughts and feelings enter the head,
Wisdom becomes dry and useless.*

God is your true friend

Students must primarily foster and develop good ideas. Reduce excess talk. Do not enter into friendship overly. What is this friendship? Who is the true friend? These worldly friends are not the real friends. As long as you are rolling in wealth, position, and power, they swarm over you, saying, "hello! hello." As long as there is money in the pocket, they say,

“Come on, let’s go to the cinema.” As you gradually lose your money, power, and position, you will find that there is none to even say good-bye to you! They will try their best to avoid you. These are not your friends. God alone is your real friend. Wherever you may go, He is the friend who will never leave you.

*You may be in the forests or the skies;
You may be in the city or the village;
You may be on the hill or on the plateau below;
To those who see no direction to their life,
God is the only succour.*

Your earthly friends will desert you when all is lost. As long as there is water in the pond, the frogs croak. The instant the water dries up, there will not be even one frog left there. Earthly friendship and relations are all like that. You are experiencing it daily. How many such friendships have you developed in your life? Where are all those friends today? As long as you are in the college for two or three years, they will move about with you, saying “hello!” After the college studies are over, they disperse in various directions. One friend is in the east and one is in the west. If they want to meet, north and south block the path in between! That is not the type of friendship to be developed. Certainly, you must speak well to all and move about with them amiably. But do not become attached and excessively friendly. You cannot always oblige, but you can always speak obligingly.

Do not develop hatred; at the same time, excessive friendship must also be avoided. Be as close as is

required and no more. Friendship must be within limits. Friendship beyond limits must be with God alone for He will not let go at any time.

*All the relations will come only to the doorstep;
The Lord's name is your only saviour that will
never leave you.*

Wherever you may go, the Lord is always behind you. No friend on earth will ever be able to keep up with you like that. The *Ramayana* gives an illustration. In the battlefield, Lakshmana fainted. Rama then began to lament, "Oh Lakshmana! One may be able to find a wife like Sita and a mother like Kausalya. But it is impossible to find a brother like you! I do not want to live without you. I also would like to embrace death. Jambavan, Sugriva, Angada, and Hanuman —you may all return to Kishkindha. If Lakshmana does not regain consciousness, I shall drown Myself in the ocean." Such a bond of friendship exists only between the soul and God.

The Vice-chancellor said that Rama is God and Lakshmana is the human soul. Lakshmana is divine as well. All are divine. There is nobody human. What is divinity? Effulgence is divinity. God resides in everybody in the form of this Effulgence. Love is the sacred ingredient that brings out this Effulgence. God is the very Embodiment of this Love.

