

Illuminate Your Intellect To Realise God

Prasanthi Nilayam

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Sankranthi is extolled by poets as conferring on people a subdued sun and a cool breeze, with a nip in it. Birds welcome it with joyous song; goddess earth wears a sari of green, dotted with red and yellow flowers.

Both human and animal are happy that their exertions have been rewarded with a harvest; they can look forward to a few weeks of sport and pastime, recouping, and ruminating. It is a time of bliss (*ananda*) for people, bliss both inner and outer. It is green, both in the outer world and in the inner.

Inner illumination is more important

This day marks a new phase in the march of the sun. This is called the northward journey (*uttarayana*) because the sun swings toward the north from this day. For the next six months, the sun moves northward by degrees. So, it is called, northward (*uttara*) journey (*ayana*).

The sun is the inspirer and invigorator of intelligence. Bhishma waited for this so that he might travel beyond death with an illumined intellect, aware of his identity with the Supreme.

The northern direction is associated in Indian scriptures with auspiciousness, so these six months are considered especially suitable for spiritual practice (*sadhana*) and for ceremonial rituals.

But I must tell you that you should be concerned more with the sun in your inner firmament than in outer space. More than external light and energy, you should be concerned with inner illumination. What is spiritual practice that will direct the inner sun Godward? God is hidden and obstructed by the clouds of egoism. Getting rid of egoism is the spiritual discipline to be practised.

Practise the spiritual discipline of relieving distress of others

Learn a lesson from the tree. When it is heavy with fruit, it does not raise its head aloft in pride; it bends low, stoops, as if it does not want to take any credit for its accomplishment and as if it wants to help you to pluck its fruit.

Learn a lesson from birds. They feed those who cannot fly far. They help and serve each other with no thought of reward.

How much more alert must humans be, then, with their superior skills and faculties? Service is the best cure for egoism, so engage in it to relieve pain and grief of others to the extent that you can.

In the *Ramayana*, apes brought huge rocks and threw them into the sea to build a passage across for Rama and His army. A tiny squirrel also helped, as far as it could; it rolled on the sands on the seashore, ran toward the heap piled as part of the passage, and whisked the sand from its fur by a vigorous shake, adding only a pinch of material to the quantity heaped by the giant apes.

Rama saw the squirrel and appreciated its devotion. He took it fondly on His palm, stroked its back tenderly and blessed it. That was ample reward for it. The squirrel race has since acquired three lines on its back, indicating that sign of gratification and grace.

Try to assuage, as far as you can, the distress of others. This is the best spiritual practice for an aspirant.

Humanity walks on the two legs of righteousness (*dharma*) and God (Brahma), in this world and the other (*iha* and *para*). People totally engrossed in this world are choosing to walk all their life with a handicap, hopping only on one leg. That is fraught

with trouble, for they may fall any moment and break their shin. And they do!

Equal attention to both —to goodness in this world and to godliness for the life after death— are essential for a happy journey through life. One should exercise vigilance while taking a step with either foot.

Control the tendency to yield to the senses

You have to put the right foot forward, the Brahman step, when you enter the region of realisation. The senses have to be conquered by then. ‘Go’ means ‘senses’ and ‘go-pi’ means a person who has subdued the senses as a result of surrender to *Go-pala*, the master of the ‘go’ (senses).

Krishna once told Arjuna that he could enter the region where the cowherd boys and maidens (*gopas* and *gopis*) lived (the *vrajamandala*) only after mastering his emotions and impulses and controlling his tendency to yield to the senses.

One day, Narada happened to land on the sands of the Yamuna river bed in the *vrajamandala*. He was surprised at the deep silence that pervaded the place. The water flowed without a murmur; not a wave splashed —not a single twig, leaf, or petal moved, lest it should disturb the calm. Even the insects seemed to be aware of the need to respect the silence and remained still with their wings at rest. There was no hum, hiss, hoot, caw, coo, flop, flick or flutter. The groves on the banks were as pictures on canvas.

There, Narada saw a woman, shining as a star, lost in meditation. He was amazed at the halo of splendour around her crown. He wondered whether he could reach that depth of experience any time in his life.

His presence awakened her, and when addressed, she revealed her identity. She said, she was the goddess of the Science of Awareness of Reality (*Brahma-Vidya*), the truth that spiritual wisdom (*jnana*) reveals!

Narada’s amazement was doubled by this revelation. “What need do you have to meditate? Why this intense meditation, which has silenced all nature around you? What are you meditating on?” he asked.

She declared, “I crave the supreme joy of contemplating on the Lotus Feet of Krishna; I meditate on them, making myself a cowherd maid (*gopi*) who has surrendered to Him.”

Such is the sweetness that is derivable through that contemplation, that devotion.

Only a human can grasp Divinity

The devotee is content with the vision of a part. He tastes the sugar, grain by grain; he finds no joy in becoming sugar or merging in the mountain of sugar himself.

No one can see the entire region of the sky, for there is no sky at all when you examine it. The devotee’s sky is limited by the devotee’s horizon.

From each point of observation, there is a different horizon, but no one can see beyond it. Limit the sky and enjoy its vastness and beauty. That is what the devotee does.

As long as you are embodied, you can picture only an embodied Divine. Uma’s father, the monarch of the Himalayas, is said to have prayed to Siva, “Vouchsafe to me the vision of a fraction of your Universal Self! How can I cognise through my senses and limited intelligence the limitless?”

One can picture God only as having human form.

Krishna says in the *Gita*, “I am the eagle among the birds, the lion among the beasts, the banyan among the trees.” That is to say, the birds picture God as a bird that can fly highest, whose eyes are sharpest, whose wings can hold out longest.

God in human form (*Daivam manusha rupena*) — that is the only way in which a human can grasp Divinity. Here and now, it is only as human that God can be felt and experienced.

God is not to be spoken of as coming down or going up, since He is everywhere. He is available for your becoming aware of Him through beauty, truth, goodness, strength, love, or any one of the divine attributes.

Pray to sun for bright intelligence

On this holy day, resolve to spend each hour in contemplation of the glory of God. Do so at least as a duty, for the exaltation that that contempla-

tion brings will unconsciously encourage you to continue it with greater zest.

The sun is turning Godward, as the mythological story says. The sun is the postman; it will carry your letters, if correctly addressed and stamped (with the stamp of sincerity), to God and bring back His grace.

Put your yearning in the envelope of resolution, and hand it over every day to the sun. Do not write asking for a house or a son or gold. Ask for bright intelligence in order to realise the majesty of God. Ask for steadfastness in His service, in His adoration.

—From Bhagavan's divine discourse in Prasanthi Nilayam on 13 January 1968.