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Ganapathi Confers Buddhi And Siddhi

*If money is lost, one need not be worried
about it,*

For one can earn it again.

If a friend is lost, one can have another.

If wife is lost, one can marry again.

If one loses one's piece of land,

One can purchase another.

All these can be regained;

But if body is lost, one cannot get it back.

(Sanskrit Sloka)

IN this physical, transient world, everything comes and goes. Man may acquire wealth by various means, but he may lose it in no time. He may make

many friends in life, but they may leave him at one time or the other. While he can acquire all these again by some means or the other, there are no means by which he can get back his body once it is gone. Man should realize this truth and sanctify his life by cultivating human values while the body lasts.

Worldly life is temporary.

Wealth and youth are momentary.

So too are relatives and friends.

Only truth and righteousness are permanent.

(Sanskrit Sloka)

Ganapathi Is The Master Of Ganas And Sadgunas

Embodiments of Love!

Man should adhere to truth and righteousness, as these two never desert him under any circumstances; they follow him in all the births and in all the worlds. These two principles have been the mainstay of ancient culture of Bharat. The Vedas, Upanishads and the Puranas emphasise these principles: *Sathyam Vada, Dharmam Chara* (speak the truth and practise righteousness). By ignoring these twin principles, man undergoes all sorts of sufferings and miseries and in the process forgets his very divine nature. It is impossible to experience divinity without cultivating human values. Having been born as a human being,

man's foremost duty is to cultivate human values. Otherwise, his life will become meaningless. What is the purpose of human life? Is it only to eat, sleep and indulge in pleasures like birds and beasts? No. Man is born to set an ideal to the rest of the world. *Uddharatatmanatmanam* (one should work for one's own emancipation), says the *Gita*. Man should redeem his life and also help his fellow-human-beings to work for their redemption. This is the spiritual knowledge that Ganapathi imparts. The name Ganapathi has many inner meanings. Ganapathi is the master of all the *ganas* (gods) and *sadgunas* (virtues). 'Ga' stands for *buddhi* (intellect) and 'Na' for *vijnana* (wisdom). So, Ganapathi is the master of *buddhi* and *vijnana*. He is the master of *suraloka* (heaven). Ganapathi has no master above him. Being the master of all, he teaches the qualities of leadership. Ganapathi is being worshipped and extolled since Vedic times. The Vedas and the Upanishads contain hymns in praise of Ganapathi. So, Ganapathi-worship is not of recent origin; it originated in the hoary past.

One Should Follow The Nivritti Marga

Divinity shines in every man and illumines the path he ought to follow. But man is ruining his life by not paying heed to the promptings of divinity within him. He is suffering from lack of peace as he is ignoring humanness in his mad pursuit of physical and

ephemeral attainments. Acquisition of worldly education and worldly powers is not the objective that man is supposed to achieve in life. All these attainments correspond to the *Pravritti Marga* (outward path). That which is related to *Pravritti* is transient. One should follow the *Nivritti Marga* (inward path), experience the joy therefrom and share it with others.

*The body is made up of five elements
and is bound to perish one day or the
other, but the indweller has neither birth nor
death.*

*He has no attachment and no bondage.
Truly speaking, the indweller is God Himself.*

(Telugu Poem)

But man wastes his time as he considers the body as permanent and ignores the indweller. Time is the most precious gift of God, but man does not realize the value of time. He wastes three-fourths of his time in vain pursuits. How can such a person redeem his life? To sanctify the *kaya* (body) one has to make proper use of *kala* (time).

The Vedas, the Upanishads and the Puranas attach utmost value to humanness. Man studies all these scriptures. But does he understand the value of their teachings? Has he put them into practice? Mere study of sacred texts is futile unless their teachings are put into practice.

Peace And Bliss Are Within You

On this day of *Vinayaka Chaturthi*, it is the practice of the *Bharatiyas* to prepare delicacies and offer them to Vinayaka. These offerings are unique and special. *Til* (sesame) seeds, rice flour and jaggery are mixed, made into balls, cooked in steam and offered to Vinayaka. You should enquire into the purpose of making such an offering. These steam-cooked preparations are good for the eyes and are beneficial to people suffering from Asthma and Eosinophilia. These offerings are meant to improve health and confer happiness on man. They are not to be treated as mere ritualistic practices. All that is related to God has sacred inner meaning. Man, unable to understand this truth, treats everything in the worldly perspective.

Man is endowed with *pasu lakshanas* (animal qualities) as well as *Pasupathi lakshanas* (divine qualities). *Pasu lakshanas* originate from the head. Worldly education and intelligence are related to the head. The scientists make use of their intelligence to study things, which are related to the world. This corresponds to the *Pravritti Marga*. Virtues like love, compassion and forbearance, which originate from the heart, lead man to *Nivritti Marga*. Today man wants to be intelligent, not virtuous. The *Gita* declares: *Anityam Asukham Lokam Imam Prapya Bhajasva Maam* (as the world is

temporary and is full of misery, attain divinity by ceaseless contemplation on God). Give up *pravritti* and take to *nivritti*. Only then can you redeem yourself. Today we find elders teaching the children matters that are related to *pravritti*, not *nivritti*. Right from a child to a decrepit old man, everyone is interested in *pravritti*. But is there anyone who could experience peace in life by treading the path of *pravritti*? How can one attain peace? Where is peace? Keeping an atom bomb in hand, people give lectures on the need for peace. Such people may be able to reach the moon, but can never attain peace and happiness. There is no need to search for peace in the external world. All that you get in the external world is only restlessness. Peace is within you. It is your form. Try to manifest it from within.

All Are Sparks Of The Divine

Embodiments of Love!

There is no power greater than that of love. You can attain peace by cultivating love. Peace is your birthright. External peace is temporary. Man should try to attain inner peace, which alone is pure, unsullied, eternal and immortal. For this, it is necessary that man should make proper use of time. It is therefore his foremost duty to utilise time in a sacred manner. Today

man is wasting a lot of time in vain gossip and talking ill of others.

The *atmic* principle that exists in you also exists in people whom you consider as ‘others’. Understand that all are sparks of the Divine. *Isavasyam Idam Jagat* (the whole world is the manifestation of God). *Deho Devalaya Prokto Jeevo Deva Sanathana* (body is the temple and the indweller is God). As all are divine, you should love all and hate none. Do not observe differences on the basis of your likes and dislikes. Treat everyone alike. Understand that divinity is one. *Ekatma Sarvabhutantaratma* (the same *atma* is the indweller of all beings). Once you understand this truth, you will lead your life with peace and happiness.

Cultivate Purity Of Heart

Today, devotees from Bangalore have brought 750 idols of Lord Ganapathi to worship, as this year happens to be the commencement of the 75th year of Swami’s physical body. One may bring 750 idols or 7 crore idols, but Ganapathi is only one. No benefit accrues from offering worship to a number of Ganapathi idols without purity of heart. It is enough if you offer worship to one Ganapathi idol with the feeling of oneness. What is the purpose of doing *pujas* and *vratas* (austerities)? These rituals are prescribed to cultivate purity of heart. *Chittasya Shuddhaye Karmah* (the

objective of actions is to purify the heart). All the nine paths of devotion, namely, *sravanam* (listening), *kirtanam* (singing), *vishnusmaranam* (contemplating on Vishnu), *padasevanam* (serving the Lotus Feet), *archanam* (worship), *vandanam* (salutation), *dasyam* (servitude), *sneham* (friendship), *atmanivedanam* (self-surrender) are meant to confer purity of heart. Sweets like *mysore pak*, *gulab jamoon*, *burfi*, etc., vary in name and form, but the sugar present in them is the same. Likewise, the principle of love is the undercurrent of all the paths of devotion. So, spend your life with love and end your life with love. This is the true spiritual practice. You are not separate from God.

Divinity is the basis of human life. You can divinise your life by your *karma* (action). Offer salutations to *karma* before undertaking it. A driver, before taking his seat, offers salutations to the steering wheel. A dancer pays obeisance to her anklets before she wears them and starts her dance performance. A devotee pays his respects to the *Gita* before reading it. The purpose of offering prayer to karma is to see that you perform only good actions which yield good results. This is the teaching of our ancient culture. You should offer karma and its fruit to God before undertaking it. An illiterate lorry driver pays obeisance to the work he does, but not a scientist who is endowed with knowledge. Ego is the main cause for this. Such a

scientist may consider himself to be very wise, but actually he displays ignorance. Just as our shadow follows us, ignorance follows one who is bloated with ego. Human life is a combination of wisdom and ignorance. It is a big mistake to consider yourself one of wisdom. Ignorance follows you like a shadow in all that you do. In order to get rid of this ignorance, you should consider *Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagat* (whole world as the manifestation of Vishnu). There is nothing in this world which is not divine. On this basis, Thyagaraja sang, "O Rama, right from a *Cheema* (ant) to Brahma, You are present in everyone in the form of love." How can one ignore such an all-pervasive Divinity?

Consider Every Moment As Divine

Embodiments of Love!

Consider every day as a sacred day. You do not need to wait for *Vinayaka Chaturthi* or *Navaratri* to worship God. Consider every moment as divine and make proper use of it. People do bhajans without understanding their significance. Instead of focusing their attention on God, they are bothered too much about the tune and rhythm. No doubt, the tune and rhythm are also essential in bhajans. But once you fill your heart with divine love, the tune and rhythm will

automatically be taken care of. If you concentrate too much on the tune and rhythm, you will not be able to think of God.

Just as the iron ball cast in fire becomes one with it, your mind should become one with God. Water cannot be separated from milk; likewise, your mind should get merged with God. You should not think that you are separate from God. One who realizes this principle of unity is a true human being. Do not limit worship of God to festival days alone. Each and every moment should be spent in the contemplation of God. You may think, “If every moment is spent in the contemplation of God, then how is it possible to do our work?” Do not distinguish between your work and God’s work. Your work is God’s work as God and you are one. It is a mistake to think that all that you do in the prayer hall is God’s work and outside it is your work. You should not entertain such feelings of separateness. Consider your heart as the altar of God and turn your vision inward. One who understands this truth and acts accordingly is a true human being.

Love Towards God Alone Is True Love

You think that you love your family and friends, but that cannot be called love in the true sense of the term. That is only attachment. Love towards God alone is true love. If you call yourself a devotee of Swami, act according to Swami’s expectation. Do not

count the number of bags of rice and the number of saris and dhotis that you have given away in charity to the poor. You may submit such accounts to the Income Tax Department, not to God. God wants quality, not quantity. He sees the feeling behind your acts of charity.

Even a small act of charity will assume immense significance in the eyes of God, if it is done with purity of heart. One teaspoonful of cow's milk is better than barrels of donkey's milk. God is pleased even if you offer a teaspoonful of milk with love. God always observes your feelings. God's valuation is always perfect; none can match Him in this respect.

Conduct Yourself In Accordance With God's Wish

Many students worship Vinayaka to secure high marks in the examination, to attain high qualifications and great reputation. But they do not aspire for good conduct and good behaviour. They should cultivate qualities, which are dear to God. Before undertaking any task, enquire whether it is pleasing to God. You are bound to attain success if God is pleased with your actions. Do not go by your own likes and dislikes. Conduct yourself in accordance with God's wish. Eschew selfishness and self-interest. Cultivate sacredness and steadfastness. This is the teaching of Lord Ganapathi. Ganapathi confers on you *buddhi* (intellect) and *siddhi* (fulfilment). One can attain *siddhi*

only when one has good *Buddhi*. You have to love God wholeheartedly and offer Him all that you do. Then even a simple task performed by you will become significant.

In this land of Bharat, Ganapathi is highly venerated. Ganapathi worship is prevalent in all parts of India. Lord Ganesh shines in every heart. Who is Bhagawan (God)? 'Bha' means effulgence. One whose effulgence spreads everywhere is Bhagawan. Having self-effulgent God in your heart, why should you search for Him outside? Look into your heart.

Embodiments of Love! Students, Boys and Girls!

Divinity can be attained only through pure and selfless love. You may chant hundred and eight names or thousand and eight names of God. But without selfless service, it is of no use. All these are sterile activities. Service alone is fruitful.

*Penance, pilgrimage, learning of the
Sastras or endless chanting,
None of these can help in crossing the
ocean of Samsara
Without service to the pious.*

(Sanskrit Sloka)

Attain Divinity Through Selfless Service

Service to your fellow-beings is equivalent to worship of God. If you find someone in distress, try to

help him before attending to your work in the office or elsewhere.

A small example: A boy from Delhi had been listening to Swami's teachings carefully. One day, he was going to the college to appear in an examination, which was to begin at 8 a.m. On his way, he saw a beggar who stumbled as he was very sick and could not walk. He helped him to get up, took him to hospital and had him admitted there. By that time it was 10 a.m. When he noticed the time, he found that it was too late for the examination. He thought, "Well this was a test of my conduct by Swami Himself." He had no regrets that he missed the examination. He was actually happy. When he came to Me, he told Me, "Swami, one paper is gone, I will not pass this year. But next year is always there. I have no regrets for I have passed in Your test." I told him, "Don't worry, you have passed in your test also." Next month, the result was out. He secured first class.

The boy did not bother about his examination because he had done a noble act of service to a poor man. He thought that he had failed in the worldly test, but he had passed in the test of God. There are many students like this who would put service before self. When you have this attitude in your life, you will never fail. Whatever you do, do it wholeheartedly. In this way, you can experience Divinity.

Forbearance Is The Highest Virtue

There are many people who consider worship as important. They disregard work in the process. This is a big mistake. Worship is important of course. But, what is worship? Offering of various kinds of flowers to the image of God is not worship in the real sense. You should offer the flower of your heart to God. That is why I told you earlier,

*Offer to God the flowers of
non-violence and sense-control,
compassion on all creatures,
forbearance and peace, penance,
meditation and truth above all.
These are the flowers dear to the Lord.*

(Telugu Poem)

The best flower of all is forbearance. The possession of this flower led Dharmaraja ultimately to liberation. In spite of the troubles and travails that he encountered, he was successful in the end. His wife was humiliated in public. Everyone looked down upon the Pandavas. But Dharmaraja was unaffected. Whatever is bound to happen will happen. One has to bear all that comes one's way. Thinking on these lines, Dharmaraja closed his eyes and meditated on Krishna. But Bhima was boiling with anger. He was furious,

“Brother, enough of this *dharma* of yours. Now, leave it to us and see what happens.” Dharmaraja replied, “My dear Bhima, do not talk about your *dharma* and my *dharma*. *Dharma*. is one. The course of action, which satisfies the conscience is the dharma that one should follow.” Bhima said, “When our wife is being humiliated in public, how can we quietly close our eyes? I shall tear the Kauravas to pieces.” But Dharmaraja pacified him. The Pandavas had such complete trust in Dharmaraja that ultimately they won.

Do Not Lose Your Peace Under Any Circumstances

When Aswatthama killed the sons of Droupadi, Arjuna was very much agitated. He caught hold of Aswatthama, tied his hands and feet, brought him before Droupadi and told her, “Here is the villain who killed your sons. I shall cut him to pieces. You can anoint your hair with his blood.” Droupadi pacified Arjuna saying, you should not do any such thing. Why?

*The one who is full of fear and has lost all
courage,
or the one who is in deep sleep or dead
drunk
or has surrendered to you, or the one who
is a female,*

*O Arjuna, it is not proper to kill such a
person.*

(Telugu Poem)

Thus saying, she held the hand of Arjuna from killing Aswatthama. She fell at the feet of Aswatthama and said,

*It is at the feet of your father,
Dronacharya,
That my husbands have learnt all that
they know.
Being the son of Dronacharya,
Was it proper for you to kill my children?
How could you have the heart to kill
them,
Who were unarmed, young, quietly asleep,
Were not having any grudge against you,
And were not contemplating any harm to
you?*

(Telugu Poem)

Though she chided Aswatthama for his cruel act, she was calm all the while. Such an attitude of calmness often solves many difficult problems. You should not lose your peace even under the most trying circumstances. Under any provocation, you should not contemplate causing harm to anyone. Droupadi asked

Arjuna, “If you kill Aswatthama, will not his mother suffer the same pangs of sorrow as I suffer now?” In spite of that Bhima was still bent upon killing Aswatthama. So high was his anger that he said:

*This Droupadi is a stupid woman,
For she pleads for this wretch’s freedom.
She feels no anger against this murderer
of her sons.*

*This assassin Aswatthama is not a
Brahmin.*

*Do not release him but kill him.
If you do not do that, I myself will
hammer his head*

With my powerful fist, for you to see!

(Telugu Poem)

But Droupadi prevailed upon Bhima and Arjuna with her pleadings and saved Aswatthama. Such was the nobility of character of the women of those days. Women are by nature forgiving. There were many women of fortitude, forbearance and purity in this country. It is because of such great women that India still holds its head high in spirituality.

Forbearance and forgiveness are the qualities which should be fostered by all individuals. You must be able to forgive even your enemies. This day is

consecrated to Ganapathi teaches you forgiveness and love, so that you may realize divinity and enjoy bliss.

Vinayaka Chaturthi, 1-09-2000, Prasanthi Nilayam

The educational process has not received proper attention from thoughtful persons. The institutions which ought to have been temples of Saraswathi (the goddess of learning) have become temples of Lakshmi (the goddess of wealth). The ideal held before the tender, innocent, unselfish children is a lucrative job rather than a life of peace, contentment and love.

—Baba