

Limit not the all-pervading Brahman with Names and Forms

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Is it possible to build a temple for the One who pervades the entire *Brahmanda* (cosmos)?
Can anyone give a name to the One who is present in all beings?
Is it possible to give a bath to the One who is present in all rivers?
Can anyone offer food to the One who has the entire *Brahmanda* in His stomach?
Man, out of his ignorance, is unable to know this truth.
He is under the delusion that he is *naswara* (impermanent).
In fact, he is not *naswara*, but Easwara Himself for the entire world.
(Telugu poem)

Prapancha is the name we have given to the apparent world. It is called *Prapancha* because it is constituted by the *pancha bhutas* (five elements), namely, earth, water, fire, air, and ether. *Pra* means to manifest, to blossom. Hence, *Prapancha* means the manifestation of not only the five elements, but also the five life principles, namely, *prana* (life breath, vital energy), *apana* (downward air), *vyana* (the vital air that is diffused throughout the body), *udana* (breath that moves upward from the throat), and *samana* (digestive air). They form the basis for the entire world.

The principle of *Brahmatatwa* is present in all the five elements as the undercurrent. It is eternal and immortal. The term Brahma refers to the divine principle that pervades the *pancha bhutas*, *pancha kosas* (five sheaths) and *pancha ranas* (five breaths). But man, out of ignorance, attributes a particular form to Brahma and offers his prayers. Names and

forms are transient. *Brahmatatwa* (the Brahma Principle), which is the basis of all names and forms, is the only permanent entity. Out of our ignorance and limited understanding we confine such a cosmic principle of Brahman to a tiny form and worship it. We should worship the cosmic form of the divine. *Brahmanda* (cosmos) is the very form of God. Brahman pervades the *anda*, *pinda*, and *Brahmanda* (cosmos). *Anda* is the combination of *padartha* (matter) and *prana* (life principle). *Pinda* is that which is born out of the mother's womb. Ultimately, they become one with the *Brahmanda*.

Embodiments of Love!

Love is the basis for *Brahmanda* (cosmos). Without *prema* (love), there is neither *prakriti* (nature) nor *prapancha* (world). The world is sustained by the principle of love, which is uniformly present in the five elements. You may worship divinity in a number of ways, but all your worship will prove futile if you forget the principle of love.

The five elements are responsible for the sustenance of human life and the world at large. Everything will come to a standstill even if any one of the five elements is missing. We hear sound with our ears. We see the world with our eyes. In this manner, we are able to experience the world through the five senses. They prove the existence of the world. Man has forgotten the divine principle of love and is striving to attain *ananda* (bliss) through mean and worldly pursuits. It is said, *Jantu-*

nam nara janma durlabham (out of all living beings, human birth is the rarest). In fact, human being is essentially divine.

Dharma (righteousness), *artha* (wealth), *kama* (desire), and *moksha* (liberation) are prescribed as the four goals of human life. But man today has given up *dharma* and *moksha*. He is running after *artha* and *kama* (wealth and desire).

God has created this world. Your wife, children, friends, and foes are all created by God. It is not enough if you maintain a good relationship with your wife, children, and friends. You must be able to see God in all. That is your primary duty. Your wife, children, friends, and even foes are all the very embodiments of Brahman.

Even God had to fight the enemies sometimes. However, in spite of their animosity toward God, they ultimately merged in Him owing to His grace. In this world, there is no place where God does not exist. He is present everywhere.

Sarvatah panipadam tat sarvathokshi siromukham,
sarvatah sruthimalloke sarvamavruthya tishthati.

With hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears
pervading everything,
He permeates the entire universe.

The people around you may not be able to see what you do, but He is watching you. Others may not hear what you speak, but He is listening to you. He is the eternal witness. Unfortunately, you are unable to realise this truth.

Some people argue, "How can you say that God is present everywhere when we do not actually see Him? How is it possible for Him to hear our prayers?" In fact, sound is the very form of God. There is no place where there is no sound. He can hear everything since sound is His own form.

Light pervades the entire world. God can see everything in this world because the very light is His vision. Hence, never be under the mistaken notion that God does not know what is happening. Do not doubt or deny His existence just because He is not visible to the naked eye. How does *sankalpa* (will) originate in your *hridaya* (heart)? It happens as per the Will of God. There may be ups and downs from the worldly point of view, but divine principle always remains steady.

The *loka* (world) and *Lokeshya* (God) are inseparable. The creation and the creator are one. There is an intimate and inseparable relationship between the two. *Atma* is the name given to the principle of divinity. It has no specific form. It pervades the entire world in the form of *sankalpa* (will). It is a grave error to attribute a particular name and form to the *Atma*. It is essential that we understand the oneness of *Atma* and experience the same. Everything is divine. *Sarvam khalvidam Brahma* (verily, all this is Brahman).

Because you are unable to comprehend the divine principle in totality, you confine God to a specific name and form such as Rama, Krishna, Vishnu, etc., and worship Him. A potter makes the idols of Rama, Krishna, etc. However, it is only the clay that takes the forms of various deities. The same clay is moulded into various forms.

Jewels are many but gold is one.
Cows are many but milk is one.
Beings are many but breath is one.
(Telugu poem)

Because you are unable to understand the principle of unity, you are deluded by the apparent diversity.

Embodiments of Love!

No one can describe God as having this form or that form. He permeates the entire universe. Without name there can be no form and vice versa. The principle of Divinity is represented by a name and a form. Every object

and every being in this *prapancha* (world) is the manifestation of divine love. Hence, do not see the world merely from the physical point of view. Consider the world as the very form of God and the manifestation of divine love. Because of your limited understanding, you confine such an all pervading divine principle to a name and a form.

Yad bhavam tad bhavati (as is the feeling, so is the result). God responds according to your feelings toward Him. If you have *purna bhakti* (unwavering devotion) and love God with all your heart, He will confer on you *purna ananda* (supreme bliss). God transcends the dualities of birth and death, happiness and sorrow. You may think that even God has pain and suffering. But from God's point of view, pain does not exist at all! It is an aspect of Divinity. Bliss also is an aspect of Divinity. God is beyond pleasure and pain, merit and sin. Happiness and sorrow are of your own making. Pleasure is an interval between two pains.

Do not consider God as a separate entity. Unfortunately, people are unable to understand the principle of Divinity and hence indulge in all types of imaginations. God is one. The Veda declares, *Ekam sath viprah bahudha vadanti* (truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names). However, when the situation demands, divine incarnations appear on earth and play a role in the cosmic drama. When Droupadi was humiliated by Duryodhana and Dussasana in the royal court, Bhima was seething with anger. He wanted to crush them to pulp. But, even under such circumstances, God did not kill them.

It is most essential that you understand that everything happens as per His will. Whatever happens is for your own good. With such firm conviction, you should accept pleasure and pain, good and bad, with equanimity. It may be difficult for you to bear misfortunes. You should pray to God to grant you the necessary strength to bear them. You may have difficul-

ties today, but tomorrow it will be different. Difficulties are like passing clouds. They will certainly give way to happiness.

Man always strives for happiness. How can he attain it? True happiness lies in union with God. In fact, God is beyond happiness and sorrow. Whatever you may do, He says, *Tathastu* (So shall it be). He showers His blessings on you saying, "Let it be for your own good." You will be free from sorrow once you understand the *Bhagavadtwa* (nature of Divinity). If you are undergoing difficulties, do not get disheartened. Have faith that God is making you go through the ordeal for your own good. Happiness and sorrow coexist. You cannot attain happiness without undergoing difficulties.

Embodiments of Love!

Do not attribute multiplicity to Divinity. Consider everyone as the embodiment of Divinity. Install such sacred feeling firmly in your heart. Treat even the person who hates you as your own. Having attained human birth, you should be able to withstand pain and suffering with courage and fortitude. Be convinced that they are good for you.

All that God has created is good. In God's creation, everything is good and sacred. There is nothing that will cause sorrow and misery. In fact, misery arises out of man's delusion. The delusion is because of his identification with the form.

What is the meaning of the term *manava*? *Ma* means *maya* (delusion), *na* means without, and *va* means *varthinchuta* (to conduct oneself). Therefore, *manava* is one who conducts himself without *maya*. If you fall a victim to *maya*, you will never be able to understand *marmamu* (reality). In fact, *maya* is man's own making. It arises out of his imagination.

However much one may try, it is not possible to know God in totality. Once, mother Kunti said to Krishna, "Oh Krishna! Though You are verily God, sometimes we are deluded to

think that You are also a human being like us.” Saint Thyagaraja also echoed the same feelings in the following verse:

Oh Lord!
You answered the prayers of Droupadi and
saved her from humiliation.
You made ugly-looking Kubja beautiful.
You protected the Pandavas.
Is it possible to estimate Your glory and splendour?
You are beyond all description and human
comprehension.
Krishna, it is not possible for even Brahma to
describe Your glory.
(Telugu song)

Good and bad lie in your mind; they are not outside. Hence, correct your feelings in the first instance. Get rid of all animal qualities so that humanness can blossom in you. If you notice even a trace of hatred in yourself, drive it away at once. Having attained human birth, it is shameful on your part to have evil qualities like hatred. Do not fall a prey to infatuation.

Be attracted only toward God and none else. You love your son because you consider him to be your reflection. In fact, the one who loves you, the one who hates you, the one who criticises you —all are your own reflections. At one time, one may be angry, and later the anger may give way to love. People are carried away by the vagaries of the mind. Being deluded by the names and forms, they are unable to know the transient nature of the world. Truly speaking, you have neither friends nor enemies. It is only your love or hatred that is reflected from outside. God does not give you happiness or sorrow; they are of your own making. They originate from you.

Embodiments of Love!

God is present everywhere in the form of five elements. Everyone is endowed with five elements, and everyone is an embodiment of love. All are one. There is no second entity.

Wherever you see, there are five elements. You do not find a sixth element anywhere.

The principle of love present in you represents *Easwaratwa* and *Brahmatatwa* (Brahma Principle). It is merely *bhrama* (delusion) to think that Brahma is separate from you. Everything is Brahman. Everything is the manifestation of *Atma* and *ananda* (bliss). That is why God is extolled as *Nityanandam*, *Paramasukhadam* *Kevalam* *Jnanamurtim* (God is the embodiment of eternal bliss, He is wisdom absolute). Even the *karma* (action) that you perform is the manifestation of Brahma. When you perform your actions with such divine feelings, they will yield good results.

Never criticise God. Never deny Him. Everything is the manifestation of Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswara. All are divine. This is what you have to learn on this auspicious day of Sivarathri. There is nothing other than Divinity in this world. The principle of Divinity present in a grain of sand and in a big laddu (a sweet) is one and same. Once you realise this truth, you become Brahma verily.

You do not need to search for Brahma elsewhere. You are Brahma, you are Vishnu, you are Siva, you are the very embodiment of the Divine Trinity. It is only your feeling that assumes the form of Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswara.

You are subjected to unrest and suffering because of your dualistic feeling. You perceive unity as diversity, instead of visualising unity in diversity.

Number one is the basis for all other numbers. Likewise, names and forms vary, but all are essentially one. There is no second person. Other than Divinity, there is no second entity in this world. Many spiritual aspirants and yogis have made concerted efforts to understand the principle of Divinity. They ultimately realised, *Ekam sath viprah bahudha vadanti* (truth is one, but the wise refer to it

by various names). Since you have not understood this truth, you are deluded by the apparent duality.

You should understand spiritual mathematics in order to know that Divinity is one. It is most essential that you understand this principle of oneness and conduct yourself accordingly. When you understand this oneness, you will experience Divinity. You will realise that the individual is not different from God.

When you put a zero after the numeral 1 it becomes 10; put one more zero, and it becomes 100. In this manner, if you go on adding zeros, the value also increases to 1000, 10,000, and so on and so forth. Zeros gain value only when they are positioned next to the numeral one. “I”, “my wife”, “my children”, “my property”, etc. —all these are like zeros. They have value only when they are associated with God, who is like the numeral one.

The entire world is like a zero. It has emerged from the Hero, God. It is because of your delusion that you mistake zero for Hero. As long as you are immersed in delusion, you will never be able to realise divinity. Delusion gives rise to doubts, which will rob you of your bliss. They will poison your mind and put you to danger. Hence, never entertain doubts with regard to Divinity. Strengthen your faith in God.

A car can run smoothly only when there is air in all four tyres. Even if one tyre is punctured, it may lead to accident. The human body is like a car. Mind is the steering wheel. *Dharma* (righteousness), *artha* (wealth), *kama* (desire), and *moksha* (liberation) are its four tyres. They should be filled with the air of faith. Even if one tyre is punctured, your life will be put to danger. Your mind should be steady and under control. Only then can you reach the goal of life, i.e. *moksha*.

Embodiments of Love!

The entire world is pervaded by the five elements. You should maintain perfect balance and harmony among them. When you are riding a cycle, if you do not maintain proper balance, you will fall down. Likewise, you can lead the life of a true human being only when you have proper balance of mind. If you lack proper balance of mind, your humanness will be ruined.

It is said, *Jantunam nara janma durlabham* (out of all living beings, human birth is the rarest). Having been blessed with such precious human birth, what a shame it is if you behave like an animal! You should live like a human being.

Keep your mind under control. This is My message to you on this holy night of Sivarathri. Understand that you are born as a human being, not as an insect or a worm. You are neither an animal nor a bird nor a beast. You should understand the meaning of the term *manava*. *Ma* means not, and *nava* means new. You are not here for the first time. You are not new to this earth. You have gone through a number of births before attaining this human birth.

Give up all your old and mean qualities and start your life afresh. Human life is highly sacred and mysterious. Only God can unravel its mystery. Visweswara (the Lord of the universe) permeates the entire *viswa* (universe). He transcends all description. He is present in you in the form of *Atma*.

There is only one path for the realisation of *Atma*. Give up the feeling of “mine”. You say, “This is mine and that is mine.” Once you get rid of such worldly attachment, you will develop purity, steadiness, and selflessness. You will be free from suffering, worries, and anxiety. Ultimately, you will attain *moksha* (liberation). Having attained *manavatwa* (humanness), you should make efforts to rise to the level of *Madhavatwa* (Divinity). That is

your goal. What is the use if you remain in *manavatwa* forever? You should develop *sanmathi* (pure mind) to rise to the level of Divine.

Unity confers purity, which will in turn lead to Divinity. Hence, all of you must stand united. You belong to the human race. You belong to one family. Hence, you must conduct yourself like brothers and sisters. Absence of such spirit of unity will diminish purity and take you away from Divinity.

Embodiments of Love!

Being students of Sathya Sai College, you must set an example to others with your spirit of unity. You deserve to be called Sai devotees only when you develop unity. Love God with all your heart. Love for God will transform your heart. It will drive away hatred and other evil qualities. You can achieve anything through love.

(Bhagawan sang the *bhajan* “*Prema muditha manase kaho*” and continued His discourse.)

Embodiments of Love!

Since time immemorial, the divine name of Rama has been protecting devotees and leading them on the right path. One can very well imagine the divine potency of Rama's name, since it has remained etched in the hearts of people through all the ages. This in itself is a mystery. Thousands of years have passed since the advent of Rama. Yet, His name remains ever fresh and ever new. One may be on the top of the mountain or in a village or in a city, everyone derives immense delight in singing the name of Rama. *Ramayathi ithi Ramah* (that which delights is the principle of Rama).

Once in the court of Krishnadevaraya, there was a debate in which the eight scholars of the royal court popularly known as the *Ashta Diggajas* participated. Krishna-devaraya wanted to know who among them was the best. He wanted them to frame a meaningful sen-

tence consisting of five letters, each letter having the same meaning in five different languages. “Whoever comes out with an answer to this question by seven tomorrow morning will be suitably rewarded,” he added.

Since his house was far away, Tenali Ramakrishna decided to spend the night in his brother-in-law's house. When he was provided with a comfortable bed for the night, Ramakrishna refused to sleep on it. He said, “I have to think of an answer to a question put by the king by tomorrow morning. A bed like this is certain to put me to sleep in no time. So, provide a cot for me in the cow shed.”

As he was lying on the cot, at one o'clock in the night, one of the cows in the shed gave birth to a calf. Ramakrishna called out to inform his brother-in-law about this. His brother-in-law wanted to know which cow had given birth, since he had given different names to his cows, like Parvati, Lakshmi, and Saraswati. He asked Ramakrishna, “*Ye aav ra bava* (which cow is that, Oh brother-in-law).”

When Ramakrishna heard this, his joy knew no bounds, since he had found an answer to the king's question. So, he too repeated the phrase again and again. His brother-in-law thought that Ramakrishna was behaving in this strange manner due to lack of sleep.

The next morning, Ramakrishna went to the royal court and found that no one else had a solution to the question. All others were convinced it was not possible to frame such a sentence. “*Ye aav ra ba va*” is the answer, he said. Everyone was intrigued. Then he explained, *Ye* in Marati, *Aav* in Hindi, *Ra* in Telugu, *Ba* in Kannada, and *Va* in Tamil convey the same meaning, i.e. *come*. Five languages are represented in this sentence.

Students!

The words you utter sometimes convey different meanings. Hence, be very careful while speaking. Develop virtues and lead an ideal life. Only then will Swami be pleased with

you. If you make Me happy with your ideal conduct, I will confer much more happiness on you. Your happiness is My happiness. Wherever you go, earn a good name for yourself. Your character is very important for Me. Hence, make every effort to mould your character and be an ideal to others. This is the message I would like to give you on this auspicious day of Sivarathri. The day on which you experience eternal bliss is Sivarathri for Me.

Once, Thyagaraja performed a musical concert at Thanjavur. Many eminent musicians and scholars were present in the concert hall. In the beginning of the programme, Thyagaraja offered salutations to all of them through his famous composition, *Endaro Mahanubhavalu, Andariki Vandanamulu* (there are many great souls who have had the divine experience; I prostrate before all of them). Everyone was blissful listening to his melodious singing. He demonstrated by his example that one should pay respects to everyone in the assembly before addressing them since there was divinity in all of them.

Many years ago, in Prasanthi Nilayam, a scholar was invited to address a congregation. While commencing his speech, he addressed the audience thus: “Brothers and Sisters except one!” Then he explained that his wife was also present among the audience. Even while addressing a congregation he was remembering his wife. One should not observe such differences while addressing a public gathering. One should offer his salutations to one and all.

Embodiments of Love!

I shower My blessings on all of you on this holy night of Sivarathri. Sing the Divine Name throughout the night. To the extent possible, spend the night in contemplation of God. Only then can you experience divine bliss. You can even witness the manifestation of divine effulgence. Sing the Divine Name

wholeheartedly. You may sing any name, but you should understand its inner meaning.

For example, *Digambara* is one of the names of Lord Siva. *Digambara*, in common parlance, refers to the one who is naked. But if you enquire into the inner meaning, you will know that *Digambara* is the One who has *dikkulu* (four sides —east, west, north, and south— as His *ambara* (vesture)). There is a possibility that people misunderstand this word and think that Siva does not wear anything on His body. Hence, it is better that you do not use this word in *bhajans*.