

Develop Faith and Self-Confidence to Gain Self-realisation

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Prasanthi Nilayam
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*By what power of love does the earth rotate without an axle?
By what power of love do the stars remain in the sky without falling to the ground?
By what power of love do the oceans stay in their limits without submerging the earth?
By what power of love does the wind god blow cool breezes in all the worlds?
That mighty power of love is verily the Atmic power.
That power of love is most wonderful, infinite, unique, and all pervasive.
The entire creation is saturated with love.*

(Telugu Poem)

Call it *Prema* (Love) or *Sathyam* (Truth) or *Aham* (I) — all are God's different names only! The *Vedas* declare "*Aham Brahmasmi!*" (I am *Brahman*). If God were to reveal His name, He would say "*Aham Brahmasmi!*" (I am *Brahman*). That is His true name.

*The entire creation is from Truth,
Into Truth the entire creation merges.
Is there a place in the Universe
Where truth is not present?
The whole Universe is a manifestation of pure consciousness.
Know this reality.*

(Telugu poem)

God is the source and sustenance of all activities in this world. The entire Universe moves according to His Divine will and command. Shivraj Patil made an in-depth study of the *Bhagavad Gita* for some months and grasped the essence of the *Gita*. Finally, he wrote a commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita* in English. Several people write several books, but the *Gita* commentary written by Shivraj Patil is a unique work. Whenever he had an occasion to meet Swami, he used to show Him his work, to check whether the interpretations given in the book were correct. In fact, the essence of the *Bhagavad Gita* is contained in this small book. The *Gita* made a deep imprint on his mind, and he beautifully recorded those impressions in his book.

Today is Guru Purnima. What does it signify? People think that it is a day on which they offer some money to a *guru*, a mendicant, a *yogi*, or a great person and obtain a *mantra* from him. It is not correct.

*Gurur-Brahma Gurur-Vishnu Gurur Devo Maheswara,
Guru Sakshat Param Brahma Thasmai Sri Gurave Namaha.
Guru is Brahma, Guru is Vishnu, Guru is Maheswara.
Guru is verily the supreme Brahman. So, salutations to the Guru.*

Who is a guru? The *sloka* (verse) mentioned above states that a guru is verily Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the sustainer), and Maheswara (the destroyer). These are the different facets of God, so guru means God, verily.

Purnima is the day on which the spotlessly clean and unblemished moon sheds his cool and steady light on the world. Whatever is said or taught with a pure heart is God's own word. People celebrate Guru Purnima as a *Guru puja* day, the day on which they worship their guru and offer some money or presents in return for some *mantra* or other sacred words taught to them by him. In fact, one's own heart is one's guru. Whatever comes from the depth of one's own heart is the real teaching of guru (*guru vakya*).

You all know the story of Ekalavya. He approached Dronacharya and prayed to teach archery. "Dronacharya turned down his request, saying that the sacred skills of archery must be taught to a valiant hero and not to a wandering tribal youth engaged in hunting animals. Ekalavya, however, considered Dronacharya as his guru and installed him in his heart. Even though Dronacharya did not give any instructions to him, he went and made a clay image of his guru and started worshipping it daily. He learnt all the skills of archery, constantly contemplating on Dronacharya as his guru. He became an expert archer in no time.

One day, the Kaurava and Pandava boys were playing, near a well. Dronacharya happened to pass that way along with his wife and son, Aswatthama. Observing that the young boys were going round and round the well making a big noise, Dronacharya went near them and enquired, "My dear boys, what are you searching for?" The boys said that they were playing with a ball and it had fallen into the well. Dronacharya took an arrow from his quiver and shot it into the well. It went straight and stuck to the ball. Next, he released some more arrows one after the other and, with the help of the chain of arrows, pulled the ball out.

The boys were wonderstruck at Dronacharya's skill and reported the matter to their parents. Then Dronacharya was called to the royal court by Bhishmacharya and was made the guru of Pandava and the Kaurava boys to teach them archery.

One day, the Pandavas, along with their Guru Dronacharya, were going on a hunting expedition in a forest. They had taken some hunting dogs also along with them. One of the dogs started barking. Immediately, an arrow released by someone from somewhere came like a bullet and stuck to the mouth of the dog. When they started searching for the person who shot that arrow, they came across Ekalavya, who confessed to shooting that arrow.

Arjuna then realised that Ekalavya employed the technique of *sabdabhedhi* (shooting an arrow at a target, sensing the direction from which the sound was coming). Arjuna became jealous at Ekalavya's extraordinary skill in archery, particularly his ability to use the technique of *sabdabhedhi*. Ekalavya prostrated before Dronacharya, whom he had considered as his guru. Arjuna, seething with anger and jealousy, looked at Dronacharya and said, "You had promised me that you would not teach this technique of *sabdabhedhi* to anyone except me. I implicitly believed your words."

Dronacharya replied, "I am not Ekalavya's guru, nor did I teach this technique to him. You can ascertain the fact if you wish, from him."

Ekalavya was questioned. He replied, "It is true that Dronacharya refused to teach me archery. But, constantly contemplating on him, as my guru, I learnt archery including the *sabdabhedhi* technique".

Ekalavya's reply fanned the flames of jealousy in Arjuna. He wished that there should be none in the world who could excel him in the skills of archery. He wanted to subdue Ekalavya somehow and make him powerless. He therefore prompted Guru Dronacharya to ask for *Guru Dakshina* (an offering to the guru made by a disciple as a token of his gratitude for teaching skills) from Ekalavya.

Bowing to the wishes of Arjuna, Dronacharya asked Ekalavya, “What *Guru Dakshina* would you offer to me?”

Arjuna then made a subtle suggestion to Dronacharya saying, “Ekalavya informed just now that he had learnt the skills from you, treating you as his guru. Hence, it must be you again who should frustrate his efforts to excel in archery.”

Dronacharya then asked for an unusual ‘*Guru Dakshina*’ from his ‘disciple’ Ekalavya, that is, the right thumb of Ekalavya should be offered to him.

Immediately, Ekalavya cut off his right thumb and offered it to Dronacharya as his *Guru Dakshina*.

As he has offered his right thumb to his guru, he could no longer wield a bow in his hand. Thus, Ekalavya’s skill of archery was contained and Arjuna’s ego satisfied.

(Telugu poem)

Arjuna felt very happy, for he knew now that none could excel him in archery, particularly in the technique of *sabdabhedhi*. Right from that moment, Ekalavya never touched his bow and arrow. He did not at all feel sad for losing his skills in archery. On the other hand, he felt extremely happy that he could fulfill the wishes of his guru. Thus, a great archer was permanently incapacitated due to the jealousy of another great archer. Arjuna moved about freely with puffed-up ego that he was invincible.

It is possible that sometimes the subtle meanings of some *sloka* (verses) of great texts like the *Bhagavad Gita* may be revealed to one by one’s own inner voice coming from the heart. In fact, that is the real teaching. Shivraj Patil, by his deep devotion, could tap that inner source and translate the *Gita* into other languages. That is why his *Bhagavad Gita* translation has turned out to be a great work.

The *Atmatathwa* (*Atma* Principle) can be realised if only one could shed the feeling of ‘I’ and ‘Mine’. Today, many people make efforts to realise *Atmatathwa*. But their efforts do not succeed since they are unable to get rid of the feeling of ‘I’ and ‘Mine’. In fact, they are the obstacles to self-realisation. First and foremost, one has to remove the feeling of ‘I’ (ego). Then realisation will dawn on you. The religious symbol of Christianity also denotes this cutting off of ego (†). The ego-centric assertion of ‘I’ is the root cause for all sorrows, unrest, and difficulties. One has to realise this truth.

The feeling of ‘mine’ has also to be shed. When a teacher develops a feeling “these are all my disciples”, ego will raise its head there also. Hence, the feeling of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ has to be removed. Then only can the *Atmatathwa* be realised.

Shivraj Patil has been coming to Swami since the last thirty years. He first had the *darshan* of Swami in the house of S.B. Chavan. Thereafter, they both used to visit Swami, together. Thereby, he developed intense devotion to Swami. In the meanwhile, Shivraj Patil became a Minister in the Government of Maharashtra. Thereafter, he moved to Delhi and became a Minister in the Central Government. He also held the position of Speaker of the Lok Sabha in Delhi. Thus, he came up in life with the grace of Swami and his own hard work and sincerity. He never aspired for any positions in life. Even when Swami enquired from him what he wanted, he used to evade a reply. He earned a very good name as a Minister in Government. They used to repose lot of confidence in him.

One has to develop faith and self-confidence. Self-confidence leads to self-satisfaction and self-sacrifice and ultimately to self-realisation. The *Bhagavad Gita* is a very sacred text. It is verily the breath of God. One has to develop faith first. Even a demon worships God, but

their actions are demonic. One can have peace only when one develops faith in God and dedicates all his actions to God.

You may study any number of books and sacred texts. You may even lecture on them. But, that is of no use. Whatever you put into practice, only that will become part of you.

There are three steps to self-realisation, namely self-confidence, self-satisfaction and self-sacrifice. When these three go together, there will be *puṇathwa* (fullness). That is *Purnima* (full-moon day) when the moon will be spotless, shedding cool light on the world.

It is only when there is perfect accord between thought, word, and deed does it become truth. Simply giving expression to one's thoughts and lecturing on principles without putting them into practice will amount to empty rhetoric. It will amount to falsehood. Such a person will not become a full individual. Shivraj Patil is not such a person. He experienced truth and gave expression to his thoughts in the form of a book. That is why his book earned reputation, giving him great satisfaction.

I expect all students to relate to their teachers what they have learnt from them. Mere book reading is of no use. There must be close interaction between the teachers and the students. Such an interaction would be like the positive and negative coming together. Students have to develop intimate relationship with their parents. They must love their parents and obey their command. Then only will they succeed in life.

The last *sloka* (verse) in the *Bhagavad Gita* reads

*Yathra Yogeshwara Krishno Yathra Partho Dhanurdharah
Tathra Srirvijayo Bhutir Dhruva Neetirmathir Mama.*

(Where there is Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, and
where there is Arjuna, armed with mighty bow come together,
there lie wealth, victory, glory and everlasting morality.)

The essence of the *Bhagavad Gita* is contained in this one *sloka*.

Today, Shivraj Patil has brought out this beautiful and nectarous message for the benefit of one and all through his *Bhagavad Gita* translation. It is our good fortune to come across such noble works. People write several books on several subjects, but books like this are rare.

We see students going to the library and reading books stacked there. Some of them develop interest for spiritual books, while some others read novels. Some boys keep novels in between their text books or spiritual books and read them with absorbing interest. This is nothing but cheating others as well as themselves. It is not good. That is why we thoughtfully avoided stacking such books in our library.

I am sure our boys are not interested in such trash. Their hearts are pure and sacred. Our boys are generally good and well behaved. But, due to the age, there will be some distractions now and then. They are like passing clouds. Students should develop enough mental strength to keep themselves away from such distractions.

I wish that our students would also write some good books on academic topics and spiritual subjects.

(Swami called an ex-student by name Gowri Shankar, who is presently working as a faculty member in the Dept. of Physics in the Sri Sathya Sai University, and introduced him to the audience). This boy has been invited to Hungary to present a paper in an international conference being held there by the Institute of Nuclear Science. All his expenses for travel and stay in Hungary will be borne by the Institute. This boy is well behaved and highly educated. I wish that all our students get such opportunities of being invited by other institu-

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tions/universities in India and abroad. I will be very happy to see you participating in such activities. I am sure your parents will also be happy.

Whatever you have read and learnt must be shared with all. Today you have witnessed the release of a book written by Shivraj Patil containing his impressions and commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita*. No doubt, his book will be of interest to one and all.

Two of our students from the Anantapur campus secured very good marks in English and Physics respectively. They have been invited to America, all expenses paid. Such academic excellence brings credit to our Institute. I am happy.