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Install God on the Altar of Your Heart and Meditate on Him

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Bharat is the motherland of many noble souls who earned great name and fame in all the continents of the world.

This is the land of valorous people who vanquished the foreign rulers in the battlefield and attained independence.

This is the land that excelled in music, literature, and other fine arts.

Having been born in this great land of Bharat, oh boys and girls,

It is your sacred duty to protect its rich cultural heritage!

(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love!

We are spending nights daily ever since we are born, but not all those nights can be termed as Sivarathri. People meditate upon, sing about, and listen to the glory of the divine name and experience the divinity of Lord Siva. Since the whole night is spent in meditation and singing the glory of the divine name of Lord Siva, this night is called Sivarathri. Not only this night, whenever you spend the entire night meditating upon the divine name, that night is also Sivarathri.

Lord Siva is not a separate *Avatar*. In fact, Hari and Hara (Lord Vishnu and Lord Siva) are beyond one's contemplation. They are beyond the physical body. Many people contemplate upon them as *Avatars* with a physical body and worship them in a particular form. They develop a deep urge to visualise them in a particular form. But who is it that ascribed those forms to Divinity? Surely, they did not incarnate in those forms. Some painters, like Ravi Varma, painted them in a particular form as per their imagination based upon certain descriptions in the *Sastras* and *Puranas* That is all!

In fact, Vishnu and Siva are not limited to a physical frame. They are beyond description. They are formless and attributeless. *Nirgunam, niranjanam, sanathana nikanam, nitya, suddha, buddha, mukta, nirmala swarupinam* (God is attributeless, unsullied, final abode, eternal, pure, enlightened, free, and embodiment of sacredness).

Devotees are accustomed to contemplate upon and worship these forms also since millennia. They wish to visualise God in those forms.

God is beyond description and is not limited to a particular form. No painter, however great they may be, can ever paint the picture of God. How can a painter paint the form of God, who is formless?

However, God assumes different forms as per the wishes of devotees. Whoever wishes to visualise God in whatever form of their liking, God manifests in that form. It is for that particular moment only. It is not permanent. All forms attributed to God are only temporary. Divinity is beyond name and form.

Once Goddess Lakshmi came to Parvathi and wondered

*“Oh! Gowri! You are very young and Sambasiva is old;
He has matted locks and wears a tiger skin;
He rides a bull and is constantly on the move;
He is adorned with snakes;
How did you court Him?
Don’t you know all this?
He has no house of His own and sleeps in the burial ground.
(Telugu song)*

Parvathi was deeply disturbed by these remarks and approached Lord Siva and asked, “You don’t have a house of your own. You don’t belong to a particular caste or lineage. Further, you are ‘*arthanariswara*’ (androgynous). How then can you call yourself God?”

Lord Siva replied that God is beyond names, caste, and lineage. He then turned to Lakshmi and asked, “Oh! Mother Lakshmi! Are you aware of your own husband’s antecedents? He is constantly on the move to protect His devotees and has no time for food and sleep. If at all He settles down to take food, some devotee like Draupadi prays meanwhile, ‘Oh! Lord Krishna! I am in great trouble. Please save me.’ Immediately, He rushes to rescue her, leaving His food. Thus, He is constantly on the move to protect His devotees like Narada or Prahlada. How then did you court such a Lord who has no time even for food and rest?”

Siva then clarified that God has no name and form; He is changeless; He has neither birth nor death; neither beginning nor end; He is eternal and *Atmaswarupa* (embodiment of *Atma*). He also emphasised that it is man’s illusion to ascribe a name and form to God. The formless God manifests with a particular form and name as per the wishes of the devotees, to fulfil their aspirations.

God is formless and attributeless. It is the devotees who attribute some names, forms and attributes to God and feel satisfied. All names and forms are *anithya* and *asathya* (evanescent and false). The only eternal and true form of God is *Atma*. Everything in the world may change; but the *Atma* will never undergo a change. The entire universe is contained in the *Atma*. This is also called divine consciousness or *Aham* or *Brahman*. People misunderstand this eternal truth, ascribing several names and forms to it.

When the formless God assumes a form, it is natural for human beings to meditate and worship that form. People derive great satisfaction and experience bliss by doing so. It is alright as long as that form remains. Once that divine form ceases to exist, what will you do? The happiness and bliss derived from the worship of a particular form of God are born out of your illusion only. The physical vestures last for a particular period and then cease to exist. Divinity takes different forms later.

For example, you are now attached to this physical body. You worship this body and derive great satisfaction and bliss thereby. But, after sometime, this body may disappear like the earlier *Avatar*. Then you should not feel sad. When the divine *Atma* embodied in this physical body reaches its eternal Abode, it is a matter of joy, not sorrow.

In *Tretha Yuga* the Rama *Avatar* came. He went into exile in the forest and destroyed several demons, including the great *rakshasa* (demon) king, Ravana. Finally, having fulfilled His *Avataric* mission, He went into the Sarayu river and disappeared. The same is the case with Lord Krishna in the *Dwapara Yuga*, who left His mortal coil after having been hit by the arrow of a hunter in the forest. Thus, the physical vestures are always temporary and untrue.

The body is made up of five elements and is bound to perish sooner or later, but the indweller has neither birth nor death.

The indweller has no attachment whatsoever and is the eternal witness.

Truly speaking, the indweller who is in the form of Atma, is verily God Himself.

(Telugu poem)

Hence, never consider the physical body as permanent. Bodies appear according to the time and circumstances. Once the prescribed time is over, they just disappear. Even the experiences gained by the physical body vanish.

Considering the physical bodies as true, if you wish to have the *darshan* of Lord Krishna of *Dwapara Yuga* now, how is it possible? As long as He walked in that body, He appeared in Mathura, Brindavan, Gokul, Dwaraka, etc., and made people happy with His *darshan*, *sparshan*, and *sambhasan* (sight, contact, speech).

Take the example of an electric bulb. Each bulb has separate wattage, which remains for a limited period of time. *Avatars* are alike these electric bulbs. Over a period, God has incarnated as several *Avatar*. Be attached not to the physical form of a particular *Avatar* but to Divinity as the formless, attributeless, *Parabrahma*, which manifested as different *Avatar* in different ages.

You were born as a baby and grew up as a child, youth, and elderly person. All these different stages in life are only for a limited period, but you the individual are there in all the different stages. *Avatars* come, fulfil their mission, and disappear. You must therefore meditate upon Divinity, which is true and eternal.

There are three aspects in *sadhana* (spiritual practice): concentration, contemplation, and meditation. At the moment, you are fixing your gaze on this form; that is concentration. When this form moves away after sometime, you still look at this form with your mental eye; that is contemplation. As a result of this exercise, this form gets imprinted in your heart permanently. That is meditation. As you go on meditating thus, the form remains in your heart permanently.

At present, you are confining your *sadhana* only to concentration and contemplation. These two stages are only transitory. It is true that the first step in your *sadhana* is concentration. Concentration has to be transformed into contemplation and later into meditation. In this final stage of meditation, you will continue to visualise the form of God even if you close your eyes. The ancient *rishis* adopted this form of meditation. That is why God manifested before them whenever they wished, talked to them, and fulfilled their desires.

The *nirakara, nirguna Parabrahma* (formless, attributeless Supreme Self) is changeless and eternal. It represents the ultimate reality. It is known by different names like Rama, Krishna, and Sai. Do not make any distinction between the names, for *Parabrahma* is beyond names and forms. Install that ultimate reality on the altar of your sacred heart and constantly meditate upon it.

Some people tend to misinterpret the *sastras* and *puranas* (scriptures and ancient texts) to suit their convenience and selfish ends. A small story: Once an impostor posing as a renunciant stood before a house and begged for food saying, “*Bhavathi bhiksham dehi!*” (I am hungry, kindly give me food!).

The housewife heard his plea and came out. She told him, “Sir! Please go to the river and have a bath and come back. Meanwhile, I will keep the food ready for you.”

Then the *sanyasi* (renunciant) quoted a line from the *puranas*, ‘*Govindethi sadasnanam*’ (the constant chanting of the name of Govinda is as good as taking a bath).

The housewife immediately realised that the person standing in front of their door begging for food was not a true renunciant and replied, 'Dear Son! *Govindethi sada bhojanam*' (the constant chanting of the name of Govinda is as good as a meal). You may go.

It is said that the face is the index of mind. It reflects our inner thoughts and feelings. If the so-called renunciant in this story really believed in the glory of the divine name, he should have taken a bath before asking for food. He was a lazy person. He wanted food to satisfy his hunger but was reluctant to have a bath before the meal. Never believe in such impostors.

Some people sit silently, closing their eyes. They say they are doing meditation. That is not meditation. They may be sitting silently, but their mind may be wandering, thinking about all and sundry. Only a mind that is unwavering and firmly fixed on the higher reality can be called meditation. Meditation is the next stage to contemplation.

A small example: you may have scored first class marks in the half yearly examination, but you will not be eligible to get a degree. Only after passing the final examination will you be eligible to receive a degree. Contemplation and meditation are comparable to the half yearly and final examinations. Thus, spirituality represents a higher stage in life.

Today, people are engrossed in the pursuit of physical and worldly objects, forgetting moral and spiritual goals. How then can they attain spiritual progress? If one wishes to have a spiritual experience, one has to acquire the necessary strength to face the final examination.

To say that this is my body, my house, my property, etc. represents the physical aspect. When you say, 'this is my body' it means 'my' is separate. That is, you are separate from your body. Similarly, when you say 'my mind', 'my *buddhi*' (intellect), 'my *chitta*' (subconscious mind), etc. it means they are all separate from you. Hence, your true nature is 'I', which is separate from all that you call as 'my body, my mind, my *buddhi*', etc.

You have to sacrifice all your *karmas* (i.e. the fruits of your actions). That means, you have to perform your *karmas* (actions) with an attitude of '*Sarva karma Bhagavad preethyartham*' (all actions to be performed in a spirit of surrender to God). Then only will you become immortal.

If you wish to attain the true and eternal state, you must realise the *Atma Tathwa* (*Atmic Principle*). Only the *Upanishads* delineate on the *Atma Tathwa* extensively, not the epics like *Bhagavatha* and *Ramayana*. The same *Atma Tathwa*, that is, the supreme reality, incarnates from age to age to restore *dharma* whenever it is on the decline, as stated in the *Bhagavad Gita*:

*Yada yada hi dharmasya glanir bhavati bhārata,
abhyutthanamadharmasya tadatmanam srujamyaham.*
(Sanskrit verse)

Oh Arjuna!

Whenever there is a decline in *dharma* and rise in *adharma*,
I incarnate from age to age for the establishment of *dharma*.

Install God on the altar of your sacred heart and meditate on Him constantly. In spite of sorrow, difficulties, and calamities that you may encounter, hold on to Him firmly. They trouble your body, not you; for, you are separate from your body. The body is like a box in which the mind, intellect, *chitta* (subconscious mind), *indriyas* (senses), and *anthakarana* (inner psychosomatic fourfold instruments of mind, intellect, memory, and ego) are packed.

We cultivate qualities like anger, jealousy, envy, and pride due to our contact with the outside world. Only when we get rid of these qualities do we enjoy peace. Therefore, we have to start our *sadhana* with *sathya* (truth) and *dharma* (righteousness).

When truth and righteousness go together, *santhi* (peace) will reign. Peace brings love. Where there is peace, there hatred cannot be. When we develop hatred against someone, it means the spring of love is dried up in our heart. When there is love in our heart, we do not get angry, even if someone accuses us.

Normally, we do not care for anyone when we are angry. Many people speak ill of Me, accuse Me, and even heckle Me, but I am not disturbed. I am always happy and blissful. That is real love.

Where there is anger, hatred, and jealousy, it means that there is no love. Hence, always follow the motto of “Love All, Serve All!” The basis for following this principle is *sathya* and *dharma* (truth and righteousness). Always speak truth and follow righteousness.

As against this principle, people are now lecturing so much about *dharma* without themselves treading the path of *dharma*. *Dharma* cannot survive in such circumstances. It is said, “*Sathyanasti paro dharmah*” (there cannot be a greater *dharma* than speaking truth). *Sathya* and *dharma* are like the two hands, two legs, and two lips in a human body. It is only when the two lips work together that a human being can speak. Similarly, it is only when *Sathya* and *dharma* go together that peace reigns. Where there is no *dharma*, there love cannot be. Thus, *sathya* and *dharma* are the basis for all other values like *santhi* (peace), *prema* (love), and *ahimsa* (nonviolence).

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

Embodiments of Love!

Always meditate on the divine name —not just contemplation, but meditation. That meditation should be with love for God. Without love, your meditation will not achieve the desired result. Your love for God should be continuous through day and night. It is possible that when you pray to God to fulfill some desire and things go contrary, you may get angry and develop hatred against Him. But that has nothing to do with spirituality. Your innate nature and love for God should never undergo a change.

Continue to attach yourself to the divine name. That is real meditation. When you are in deep meditation, nothing in the external world should be visible to you even if you open your eyes.

Another aspect about which you need to be careful is your speech. Too much talk is very bad. Do not indulge in excessive talk. Try to mend your nature. Observe silence as far as possible and be quiet. Talk as much as is needed. Just answer to the point. If you talk more, you will be branded as a chatterbox. Too much talk is not good, even from the health point of view. This is very important, especially in the case of children.

You have to keep your mind steady right from the young age. What is important is not studying textbooks but steadying your mind. Textbooks you can always study—in the classroom, in the hostel, etc.

Are you all happy? (All the students in one voice replied that they are happy.)

(Bhagawan concluded His discourse with the words, “Be always happy, happy, happy!”)