

Have self-confidence and achieve everything

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The land, whose sons are known for name and fame across the continents,
The land, whose heroes fought invaders and conquerors to achieve freedom,
That famed land whose sons of wisdom and scholarship are the praise of the globe,
That land of saints, poets, singers, and divine songsters,
Oh sons of Bharat, go forth and uphold your heritage and be worthy of your glorious past.

(Telugu Poem)

It is not possible to describe the greatness of glory of the land of Bharat. There are many men of affluence and great leaders even today. But what is the use when they are not prepared to get rid of their greed and devote their life for the welfare of the needy. Born in this sacred land, the *Bharatiyas* (Indians) should try to sanctify their life by serving the poor and needy.

Embodiments of Love!

The doctor and the judge who spoke earlier, talked about Swami and His mission. But their talk was limited to more worldly matters than to spirituality. One may acquire all types of education, but without spiritual knowledge, all this is just a waste. People today have everything, except self-confidence. In the word "self-confidence", "self" refers to I. What is the meaning of "I"? That which cannot be seen by the physical eyes, heard by physical ears, or comprehended at the physical level is "I". It is divine, auspicious and all-pervasive in the form of consciousness (*Chaitanya Shakti*).

All the beings in the universe are the creation of God. There is nothing in this world that is not divine. People observe differences between one another. This is a great mistake. All are one. *Ekam sath viprah bahudha vadanti* (truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names). There is no second entity in this world. *Sarvatah panipadam Tat Sarvathokshi siromukham, Sarvatah sruthimalloke Sarvamavruthya tishthati* (with hands, feet, eyes, heads, mouth and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe).

There is none in this world in whom God is not present. Divinity permeates everything. Nobody has a right to say that this is divine and that is not. God is present even in difficulties, sorrow, and misery. Though we have the capacity to understand this divine power, we are unfortunately not able to use that. When we observe the natural scenario around us, we see vast land areas and a number of rivers, such as Yamuna, Ganga, Pinakini, Cauveri, Tungabhadra, Godavari, and Saraswati. In spite of having such a vast land with numerous rivers, there is scarcity of food for man. What is the reason? The reason is that humans are not making proper use of their innate power and potentiality. Instead, they are misusing their powers and wasting their intelligence. If one makes efforts in the right direction, one can achieve everything.

Have faith that everything that you see in this world is an aspect of Divinity. There is nothing else other than this. Only One exists in this world; there is no second.

We are unable to understand this truth and we suffer from many misconceptions. We are prepared to believe what others write in their books, but no one is prepared to have faith in their own self. People have all types of confidence except self-confidence. What is the use of having everything except self-confidence? If only we have self-confidence, we can achieve everything; there is nothing in this world that we cannot accomplish.

We should make efforts to recognise this principle of Atma, which is divine, auspicious, and ever new. But one today does not make efforts to know oneself. When we ask anyone who they are, they will tell the name given to them by their parents. If we put the same question to God, and God will say *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman).

Since we are unable to recognise the truth, we take to wrong path and get confused. We do not make efforts to know what we are supposed to know. On the other hand, we try to know that which is not possible for us to know by our senses. Is it possible to know Divinity, which is all-pervasive? It is impossible. Hence, whatever happens, recognise it as the Will of God.

All differences are born out of our own feelings of mine and thine. In fact, there is no difference between you and me. You and I are one (loud applause). Do not think that God exists separately in a particular place. Think that you are God. You are not the body. Body is like a water bubble. Mind is like a mad monkey. Intellect is wavering. Hence, you are neither the body nor the mind nor the intellect. You are you. You should make proper efforts to know this truth.

Tomorrow is Rama Navami. This is the day on which Sri Rama was born. There is a story about it. In the *Treta Yuga*, King Dasaratha ruled over Ayodhya. He married Kausalya, who was the daughter of the king of Kosala. After some time, she gave birth to a daughter. She was named Santha. But Dasaratha was not satisfied with the birth of a female child and wanted a male child. Therefore, he gave her to a friend, who adopted her.

Thereafter, he did not have any other issue. So he wanted to have another wife. As per the prevalent customs in those times, he had to seek the permission of the first wife before marrying another woman. Dasaratha went to Kausalya and said, "I am thinking of marrying again."

She replied, "Certainly you may do as per your wish."

After securing Kausalya's permission, he married Sumitra in the hope of getting a son. But she also did not bear him a child, and King Dasaratha became very worried.

At that time he received the information that the king of Kekaya had a beautiful daughter by name Kaikeyi. He approached the king of Kekaya and proposed that he wanted to marry his daughter, telling him he already had two wives. He always spoke the truth. *Sathyannasti paro dharmam* (There is no righteousness greater than adherence to truth). He never said anything that was untrue. He explained to the king of Kekaya everything in detail.

The king of Kekaya said, "You already have two wives and they have not borne you any children. Now you want a third wife. I can give my daughter in marriage to you on the condition that the son born to her will be the heir to your kingdom."

Dasaratha agreed to their condition. Manthara, who was the main associate of Kaikeyi, was hearing all their conversation.

Accordingly, the marriage was performed with great rejoicings. However, she also did not bear any child, even after a passage of long time. Therefore, Dasaratha decided to perform the *Putrakameshti Yajna*, as desired by his well-wishers. Sage Rishyasringa, along with his wife Santha, came to Ayodhya to perform the *Putrakameshti Yajna*.

On the eleventh day of the performance of the *yajna*, an effulgent being appeared from the fire in the sacrificial altar with a vessel containing a *payasam* (sweet pudding). Dasaratha gave the *payasam* to sage Vasishtha and asked him to distribute it equally among the three queens. Accordingly, Vasishtha distributed the *payasam* to Kausalya, Sumitra, and Kaikeyi.

Kausalya and Kaikeyi took their share of the pudding to their respective *puja* (worship) rooms. Each of them was happy thinking that her son would be the future king of Ayodhya. Kaikeyi thought Dasaratha would crown her son as per the promise made by him at the time of marriage. Kausalya thought, she being the first wife, her son had every right to become the king.

But Sumitra had no such claims. She was a paragon of virtues. Her name, "*Su-mitra*" itself, signifies that she was a good friend to one and all. She carried her bowl of pudding to the terrace and placed it on the parapet wall while drying her hair in the sun. Suddenly, an eagle swooped down and carried away the bowl and left it on the Matanga Mountain. Anjana Devi found the bowl and partook of the sacred pudding. Consequently she became pregnant and gave birth to Hanuman.

Sumitra ran down and told Kausalya and Kaikeyi about what had happened. Kausalya and Kaikeyi came to her rescue and shared their pudding with her. Kaikeyi gave half of her share to Sumitra. Kausalya did the same.

In due course, Kausalya gave birth to Rama, Kaikeyi to Bharata, and Sumitra to Lakshmana and Satrughna. Kausalya and Kaikeyi had one son each, whereas Sumitra had two sons. When we enquire into the reason, we can understand the mystery behind it.

The sons of Kausalya and Kaikeyi were happily playing in their cradles whereas Sumitra's sons were crying all the time and not taking milk. Sumitra was at a loss to know the reason for their crying and tried in vain various types of *yantras*, *mantras*, and *tantras* to make them comfortable. Ultimately, she went to Sage Vasishtha and told him about her predicament. Sage Vasishtha closed his eyes. His yogic vision enabled him to know the truth. He said to Sumitra, "As you partook of the sacred pudding given by Kausalya, you gave birth to Lakshmana who is an *amsa* (part) of Rama. Similarly, Satrughna is born out of the share of pudding given to you by Kaikeyi. So, he is a part of Bharata. Put Lakshmana by Rama's side and Satrughna by Bharata's side. Then they will rest peacefully."

Sumitra did as instructed by Vasishtha. Both Lakshmana and Satrughna stopped crying and started playing blissfully in their cradles. This was the basis of the intimate relationship between Rama and Lakshmana, Bharata and Satrughna.

Since both sons of Sumitra namely, Lakshmana and Satrughna, were always in the company of Rama and Bharata, she had nothing much to do. Time and again she would go to Kausalya and Kaikeyi to see how her sons were playing with their elder brothers. After seeing them, she would shower her love and affection on them. In this manner, all the four sons of Dasaratha grew up in an environment of love and happiness. Sumitra was very happy because she thought her son Lakshmana would serve Rama and Satrughna would serve Bharata when they grew up.

Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Satrughna grew up as young men of great valour and learning under the loving care of their parents and Guru Vasishtha. When Rama and Lakshmana went to protect the *yajna* of sage Viswamitra, he took them to the court of King Janaka to participate in the *swayamvar* of his daughter Sita. There, Rama broke the Siva bow and won Sita's hand. The marriage of Rama and Sita became the occasion of great rejoicing in Mithila.

The people of Mithila sang joyous songs, welcoming one and all to witness the marriage of Sita and Rama.

Welcome to all for Rama's wedding;
together we shall witness the joyous scene.
Many have gathered already,
decked up in all their finery.
With necklaces the ladies are adorned
with jewels pure and gleaming.
Rama shall tie the knot today to beautiful Sita.
Oh, what a fine match they make!
(Telugu Song)

The women of the kingdom came to participate in the wedding and joyfully sang blithesome songs:

Come let us go and see the marriage of Rama and Sita,
The sight shall confer great merit.
Blessed are those who see this scene.
Oh, come one and all, watch with joy the sacred marriage.
(Telugu Song)

After marriage, as they were returning to Ayodhya, they heard a deafening sound. As they wondered where the sound had come from, Sage Parasurama appeared and roared, "Who is the one who broke the bow of Siva?"

"I did it," said Rama.

"If that is so, let us see if You can break my bow." So saying, Parasurama gave his bow in the hands of Rama. Rama broke even that bow with His left hand. Seeing that, Parasurama offered his salutations to Rama and submitted his two *kalas* (splendours) to Rama, who was endowed with twelve *kalas*. Rama shone with his own twelve *kalas*, two *kalas* from his brothers and another two given by Parasurama. That is how Rama shone brilliantly with all the sixteen *kalas* of the *Virat Purusha*. With the surrender of Parasurama, Rama's power became full and complete.

In due course of time, Dasaratha realised that he was growing old and it was time to crown one of his sons as heir to his kingdom. Since Rama was the eldest of the four sons, and he had all the qualities of becoming a worthy king to the kingdom, he thought of crowning him as heir. This news was received by the subjects of the kingdom with great joy and happiness because all of them thought that Rama was most suited to assume the reigns of the kingdom.

When Manthara heard this news, she went to Kaikeyi and reminded her of the two boons granted to her by Dasaratha. She suggested to her that she should demand from Dasaratha that Bharata should be crowned as the heir to the kingdom and Rama should be sent to the forest for fourteen years. Though Kaikeyi loved Rama more than Bharata, she was influenced by the evil advice of Manthara. She removed all her ornaments and lay down in great anger in her chamber.

Dasaratha went to her chamber and asked the reason for her anger. When Kaikeyi demanded the two boons granted to her by Dasaratha earlier, he was very much distressed. But as Kaikeyi persisted with her demands, he relented and agreed to make her son Bharata the crown prince of Ayodhya. But when she put forth the second demand, asking him to send Rama to the forest for 14 years, Dasaratha was crestfallen. However Rama immediately agreed to make Bharata the heir to the kingdom and go to the forest for fourteen year to uphold the promise given by his father to Kaikeyi. But when Lakshmana heard this, he became very an-

gry. In a fit of rage, he even thought of putting Kaikeyi and Manthara to death. Rama pacified him, saying that it was their foremost duty to follow the command of their father and not do anything that would bring disrepute to their father.

Kaikeyi wanted Rama to go to the forest immediately. Lakshmana and Sita also decided to follow Rama. Lakshmana went to his mother, Sumitra, and sought her permission and blessings to serve Rama in the forest. Sumitra was very happy to hear that Lakshmana was following Rama to serve him. Lakshmana then went to his wife, Urmila. As he entered her room, she was making a painting. She was a good painter. Lakshmana asked what she was painting. She replied that she was making a painting of Rama's coronation.

On hearing this, Lakshmana told her that Rama was not going to be crowned and was going to the forest for 14 years. He also informed her that he had decided to go with Rama to the forest for 14 years. Urmila did not have an objection to it and said, "Protect Rama and Sita just as eyelids protect the eyes. They are everything for you. Consider them as your father and mother. Never be slack in serving them. Never think of me even for a moment in the forest for these fourteen years. Only Sita and Rama should be uppermost in your mind." Saying this, she offered her salutations to him.

Sita, Rama, and Lakshmana got into the chariot and proceeded to the forest. Dasaratha ran after the chariot saying, "Oh Rama! Stay for a while. Let me see your beautiful form at least for some time. Any way I cannot stop you from going."

The shock of separation for Rama was too severe for Dasaratha to bear. He did not eat anything, and he refused to drink even a drop of water. All the time he was saying, "Rama, Rama." In this way, remembering Rama every moment, he left his mortal coil. All this happened because there was a reason behind this and it was like this.

Once, a long time ago, Dasaratha went to the forest for hunting. As he reached near the bank of a stream, he heard a noise and thought that some wild animal was drinking water.

On hearing this sound, he shot an arrow at the source of the sound. That arrow hit Sravana Kumar, which proved fatal. Sravana Kumar had come to the stream to take water and quench the thirst of his old mother and father who were blind and helpless. He was the only support of his parents and carried them with him in a *kavadi* (a bamboo stick with two baskets at each end) to all places of pilgrimage. When Dasaratha realised what he had done, he was grief-stricken that he had caused the death of the only son of his old parents.

Before his death, Sravana Kumar told him to carry the water to his old parents. When Dasaratha informed his old parents about the tragic death of their son, they were drowned in inconsolable grief and cursed him that he would also die a tragic death due to the separation from his son. That is what happened to Dasaratha. Ultimately, the curse given by noble souls cannot be reversed.

After the marriage of Sita and Rama, Viswamitra left for the forest.

It is not enough if we worship Rama only on His birthday. When Rama returned to Ayodhya all the people of Ayodhya joyously welcomed Him, singing His glory and chanting His name. In Bharat, we do not find any village that does not have a temple of Rama or a person who does not know the name of Rama. Wherever we see, the name of Rama is heard everywhere. Though thousands of years have passed, Rama's name is as fresh and new today as it was in the past.

Rama is ever new. The name of Rama gives joy to everyone. Even when you ask an old woman, she will reply, "I may not be able to say any other word, but I constantly chant the

name of Rama." Not even one person would be found in a village who does not know the name of Rama.

There is no village where you do not find temples of Rama. Even if the people are not able to make a temple, they will erect a small shelter covered with a couple of sheets and install the idol of Rama in it. Even after the passage of thousands of year, the name of Rama is known everywhere and is held in high esteem by the people.

Nowadays, even in Russia people are chanting the name of Rama. In fact, the name of Rama has spread to every nook and corner of the world. The name of Rama is the crest jewel of all names. Everybody can easily chant this. Therefore, whatever task you are engaged in, you should constantly chant the name of Rama while performing the task. When you step out from your home, when you are on your way to college, you should keep chanting the name of Rama all the while. The name of Rama should become your life-breath.