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Attain God's Grace Through Sacrifice And Love

I am neither merit nor sin, neither happiness nor misery. I am none of these either--places of pilgrimage, scriptures or Yajnas (sacrifices). I am not the food, the consumer of food or the process of eating. I am the Atman, the very embodiment of Divinity. I am Siva Himself.

(Sanskrit verse)

Embodiments of Love!

IN this world, there is nothing like merit or sin, happiness or sorrow. Mantras, *yajnas* and *yagas* are mere rituals. God alone pervades everything. You are the very form of the Divine. True humanness lies in understanding the significance of truth and righteousness and putting them into practice. Truth is referred to as *neeti* (morality), righteousness relates to *reeti* (pro-

cedure) and sacrifice confers *khyati* (reputation). *Manavajathi* (human race) is the combination of *Neeti*, *Reeti* and *Khyati*. Unfortunately, these three are not found in the present day world.

First Step Toward Nirvana Is Samyak Drishti

Siddhartha, who came to be known as Gautama Buddha, undertook various spiritual practices in order to realise his true Self. He studied the *Vedas* and sacred texts. He met many elderly wise men and tried to know the truth from them. But none of these practices could show him the path to *Nirvana*. Ultimately, he realised that *Nirvana* lay in making use of the five senses of speech, touch, vision, taste and smell in a sacred manner. He understood that *japa*, *dhyana*, *yoga*, *yajna*, etc., were mere physical activities. These spiritual practices are needed for those who are attached to the body. One who is attached to the Self need not undertake any of these practices. Buddha taught that *Nirvana* could be attained only by cultivating *Samyak Drishti* (sacred vision), *Samyak Vak* (sacred speech), *Samyak Sravanam* (Sacred listening), *Samyak Bhavam* (sacred feeling) and *Samyak Kriya* (sacred action). Today man is polluting his mind because of his evil vision. Once the mind is polluted, how can he expect to attain *Nirvana*? So, first of all he should develop sacred vision. See no evil; see what is good. Man is subjected to hardships because of his unsacred vision. Evil vision is

sure to lead to sinful acts. In fact, it destroys his humanness itself.

Buddha undertook various types of spiritual practices, but ultimately left all of them. He could realise the truth only by renouncing everything and by recognising unity in the plurality of the world. He could know the ultimate truth by sacrifice. This is what the *Vedas* say: *Na Karmana Na Prajaya Dhanena Thyagenaikena Amrutatthwamanasu* (immortality is not attained through action, progeny or wealth, but only by sacrifice). This immortality is true *Nirvana*. *Samyak drishti* is the first step toward *Nirvana*. Consider all that you see as divine. Let your vision be suffused with love. Vision filled with love is the hallmark of a true human being. All are one, be alike to everyone. You can understand unity in diversity only when you develop sacred vision. *Samyak drishti* makes you realise the presence of divinity in all. The *Vedas* declare, “*Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanthi*” (truth is one, but scholars refer to it by many names). See the world with the vision of truth. All are one; all are essentially divine. Give up multiplicity to attain unity. The *Vedanta* declares that the Atmic principle is the underlying unity in diversity. Bulbs are many but the same current flows in all of them. Likewise, the Atmic principle exists in all. Man’s inability to understand this principle of unity is the cause of his ignorance. True humanness lies in understanding unity in multi-

plicity. You have to develop *Samyak Drishti* in order to develop unity. This was Buddha's first teaching.

Fill Your Heart With Love

Next, he stressed the need for *Samyak Vak* (sacred speech). *Anudvegakaram Vakyam Sathyam Priya-hitham Cha Yat* (one should speak only those words, which cause no annoyance to others and which are truthful, agreeable and wholesome). Whatever you speak should not cause any disturbance to others. It should be truthful as well as pleasing. *You cannot always oblige but you can speak always obligingly.* Sacred speech is the manifestation of divinity. God exists in the form of *Sabda Brahmam* (sound principle). Divinity is represented in eight forms, namely, *Sabda Brahmamayi, Characharamayi, Jyothirmayi, Vaangmayi, Nityanandamayi, Paratparamayi, Mayamayi* and *Srimayi* (God is the embodiment of sound, mobility and immobility, light, speech, eternal bliss, supreme majesty, delusion and wealth). Under any circumstances, do not let your speech be tainted by harshness. Never become agitated. When you understand that all are one, there will be no chance to get agitated. All bodies are like mirrors, showing you your own reflection in them. How can you be angry with your own reflection? You should speak with love. There is no divinity greater than love. When you fill your heart with love, your thoughts, vision, words and deeds will be suffused with love. Because you are not filling your

heart with love, many evil qualities are finding their way into it and destroying your very humanness.

How can you attain God's grace? Here is a small example. You toiled hard, earned money and deposited it in a bank for safety and security. No doubt that money belongs to you, but the Bank Manager will not give it to you on your mere asking for it. There are certain rules and regulations for the withdrawal of money from the bank. You can withdraw the money only when you sign the cheque and surrender it to the Bank Manager. Likewise, you have deposited the 'money' of meritorious deeds with God, the Divine Bank Manager. Affix the signature of love on the cheque of sacrifice and surrender it to Him. Only then will He confer the wealth of His grace on you. This is the royal path to attain peace and purity; it leads ultimately to Nirvana. Though God is the embodiment of sacrifice and the money belongs to you, there is a proper procedure to get it. God is the Manager of the Bank of Love. You have deposited your money in His bank. In order to withdraw money from this bank, you have to submit the cheque of sacrifice with the signature of love. Love is God; live in love. Anything may happen; your love for God should not change. Only through such love can you follow the path of sacrifice and withdraw 'money' from the Divine Bank. Here 'money' does not mean currency notes. It is the 'money' of grace, wisdom and righteousness.

Control Your Senses To Attain Purity Of Heart

Having undertaken various types of spiritual practices for a long time, Buddha felt sad that he had wasted a lot of time without attaining the desired result. He realised that one could attain divinity only by making proper use of the five senses. God has given the five senses equally to all, be they rich or poor. You can see the manifestation of God only when you use your senses in a sacred way. Today man misuses the senses for the sake of comforts and worldly happiness. He uses the God-given faculty of speech to criticise and hurt others. Speak lovingly, softly and sweetly. That is known as *samyak vak*.

Along with *samyak drishti* and *samyak vak*, you should also have *samyak sravanam* (sacred listening). Why has God given ears? Is it to listen to vain gossip? Ears should listen to only those things that are related to the Atmic principle. Only the vibrations of the soul should percolate through the ears. Never listen to anything unsacred or evil. Your ultimate goal is to realise the innate Atmic principle, which is the same in all. There are no differences whatsoever. The Atma that is present in you is present in everybody. It is attributeless. In order to realise this Atmic principle, you should fill your heart with love. The heart is like a vessel. Fill it with the qualities of truth, love and sacrifice. Then you don't need to ask for peace; it will automatically manifest from within. In fact, love, truth,

etc., are within you. You should manifest them from within. You cannot acquire them from outside.

Everything is the reflection of the inner being. Your innate nature is always pure. You pollute it because you follow the worldly path and fill your heart with worldly feelings. The heart is always pure, steady and selfless. It gets polluted mainly due to unsacred vision, unsacred listening and unsacred speech. You can maintain its purity only when you use the five senses in a responsible and sacred manner. *Hridaya* (heart) is that which is full of *daya* (compassion). Just as one God is worshipped in many forms and names, the Atma has various names like *sathya*, *dharma*, *prema*. You have to make efforts to understand and experience unity in diversity. Buddha could experience bliss only after understanding this principle of unity. He sacrificed all sensual pleasures. He understood that all that we experience through the senses is useless and leads to bondage. He realised that misuse of the senses destroys the very humanness itself. He left his house and family and renounced the world. Ultimately, he realised Atmic unity and attained the state of Nirvana.

When Buddha was about to leave his mortal coil, his cousin Ananda was by his side. Ananda started shedding tears. Then Buddha said to him, “You are born to experience Ananda (bliss). It is possible only when you make proper use of your senses.”

Brahmanandam, Parama Sukhadam, Kevalam Jnanamurtim, Dwandwateetam, Gagana Sadrisham, Tattwamasyadi Lakshyam, Ekam, Nityam, Vimalam, Achalam, Sarvadhee Sakshibhutam... (God is the embodiment of supreme bliss, He is wisdom absolute, the One without a second, beyond the pair of opposites, expansive and pervasive like the sky, the goal indicated by the *Mahavakya* “*Tattwamasi*” eternal, pure, unchanging and the witness of all functions of the intellect). Instead of experiencing such eternal bliss, modern man is getting carried away by sensual pleasures. What is the use of being born as a human being if you get carried away by sensual pleasures like dogs and monkeys? A monkey also experiences the same type of sensual pleasure that you indulge in. Then why should you be born as a human being at all? Do not behave like a monkey. You belong to mankind. Have kindness and compassion. You are born to experience eternal bliss, not to indulge in fleeting pleasures.

At the time of birth, every human being cries, “Alas! I am born in this world again. I have become distant from Ananda due to my separation from God”. What is the use of human birth if man cries at the time of both birth and death? First of all, man should understand the purpose of life. What is it that he has achieved during the course of his life if he cries at birth, and also at death? Having been born crying, man

should leave the world smiling. It is possible only when he puts his senses to proper use in the course of his life. What is death? It is just the change of dress. Death is the dress of life. Body is like a dress. After death, you change over to another dress.

Every man aspires to attain Nirvana (liberation). What is the effort that he is putting in? He has deposited the merits accrued over the past lives with God. God even gives 'interest' over the 'principal amount'. All that you need to do is to submit the cheque of sacrifice with the signature of love. Sacrifice bereft of love is useless. Only when these two come together can man attain the desired result.

God is showering His love and grace on everyone, but the unfortunate ones are unable to receive them. Why? Their feelings do not match with God's feelings. They do not understand God's Will. God is the embodiment of love and the ocean of compassion. But you are unable to receive God's love and compassion because you have filled your mind with worldly feelings. If you want to receive something sacred, give up all that is unsacred. If the head is empty, it can be filled with anything. But if the head is already stuffed with worldly desires, how is it possible to fill it with sacred feelings? First and foremost, empty your head of all worldly feelings. Only then can it be filled with divine love. For this, you have to cultivate *Thyaga* (sacrifice). That is true Yoga.

Today people are taking to meaningless practices in the name of Yoga. They are distorting the meaning of Yoga. What is Yoga? *Yoga Chitta Vritti Nirodha* (Controlling the vagaries of the mind is Yoga). Without controlling the mind, if you merely perform physical exercise, it amounts to *Roga* (disease). Fill your mind with love. You become sacred when your mind becomes sacred. *Yad Bhavam Tad Bhavati* (as you think so you become). What is the spiritual practice required to purify the heart? It is neither *japa* nor *dhyana* nor *yoga*. Yoga does not mean controlling your breathing process. You should inhale good feelings, which are like oxygen, and exhale bad feelings, which are like poisonous carbon dioxide. ‘Oxygen’ emanates from the heart and ‘carbon dioxide’ from the head. Head is the source of all poisonous feelings. Control them and inhale the nectarous feelings that emanate from the heart.

God Is The Indweller Of All Beings

You aspire to see God, talk to Him and touch Him. None can describe the bliss that one experiences when one has the *Darshan*, *Sparshan* and *Sambashan* (sight, touch and talk) of God. In fact, you see God in the form of people all around you. Your vision becomes sanctified only when you develop the feeling that all are the embodiments of God. Everything in this creation is sacred. All that you see is only the manifestation of God. You see God in the form of the

world, yet you feel that you have not seen Him. God has no specific form or dwelling place. He is the eternal witness and is present in all forms. You can progress on the spiritual path only when you have such a feeling. Do not confine God to the form of Vishnu or Krishna that you find in Ravi Varma's paintings. They are all pictures born out of the painter's imagination. In reality, God has no form. He is the Cosmic Being. *Easwara Sarva Bhutanam* (God is the indweller of all beings). *Isavasyam idam Sarvam* (the entire universe is permeated by God). *Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma* (verily all this is Brahman).

You can achieve anything with sense control. Today man has become weak because he lacks sense control. Instead of ascending to *Daivatwam* (Divinity) he has degenerated to the state of *Deenatwam* (helplessness). He gets angry even at the slightest provocation and becomes miserable at the smallest problem. Then, how can he expect to experience Divinity? He should treat pleasure and pain alike. You are happy when you beget a son and become sorrowful when he dies. Who is born and who has died? What is marriage? Marriage is a like a mirage. Can a mirage ever quench your thirst? Prior to marriage, who is wife and who is husband? Prior to birth, who is mother and who is child? Today man is developing undue attachment toward his family. "*Matha Nasthi, Pitha Nasthi, Nasthi Bandhu Sahodara, Artham Nasthi, Griham Nasthi,*

Thasmath Jagrata Jagrata.” (Parents, friends, relatives, house and wealth are all temporary. Be aware of this truth). Worldly relationships are passing clouds. They come and go, but morality comes and grows. Do your duty sincerely. *Duty is God; Work is worship.* Never differentiate between work and worship.

Embodiments of Love!

You have to recognise these three – first is that which once comes, then never goes; the second, once goes, then never comes back; the third, neither comes nor goes. The first is *jnana* (wisdom), the second is *ajnana* (ignorance) and the third is the principle of the Atma. Atma is steady and eternal; it never changes. The knowledge of the Atma is nectarean. All your worldly knowledge is useless without the knowledge of the Self. All that you read in *pusthaka* (book) comes from *masthaka* (head). But the knowledge of the Self cannot be found either in *pusthaka* or *masthaka*. It originates from the heart. First of all, control your mind. Mind is like a mad monkey. It is nothing but a conglomeration of thoughts. The nature of the mind is determined by the nature of thoughts. So, have pure thoughts and thence pure mind.

What Is Nirvana?

Today man aspires to attain *mukti* (liberation). What is *mukti*? It is not the attainment of a heavenly abode. *Mukti* means freedom from suffering. You need

to have *mukti* at three levels - body, mind and soul. For example, you are hungry. When you eat food, your hunger is satiated. This is also a kind of *mukti*. You are suffering from a disease. You take a medicine and get cured. This is also *mukti*. All this is related to the body. At the mental level, *mukti* means controlling the vagaries of the mind. But true liberation lies in understanding the principle of the Atma, which neither comes nor goes. This is termed as Nirvana.

One should have *Daiva Preeti*, *Papa Bheeti* and *Sangha Neeti* (Love for God, fear of sin and morality in society). That is true Nirvana. Be away from sin. Understand that *Daiva Sannidhi* (proximity to the Divine) is true *Pennidhi* (wealth). But ignorant people are unable to understand the Divine principle. They feel that they can experience God through meditation. What is meditation? It is a way of life. While you are walking on the road or driving a car, if your vision is not focused on the road, you may meet with an accident. Concentration is necessary in all aspects of life. But concentration does not become meditation. One should go beyond concentration which means the mind should become still. You should be free from thoughts. That is true meditation.

One-pointed Devotion Of The Gopikas

The Gopikas followed the same path and their minds were constantly fixed on Krishna. The Gopikas

used to go to Yashoda's house to light their lamps. They had the belief that their families would be sanctified if they brought light from Yashoda's house, which was blessed with the advent of Krishna. Once a newly wed Gopika named Suguna went to Yashoda's house to light her lamp. As she was doing so, she had the vision of Krishna in the flame. She was so lost in the enchanting form of Krishna that she had no awareness of her hand getting burnt. Yashoda smelt that something was burning and came running to the spot. She immediately pulled Suguna's hand out of the flame. She was astonished that though her hand was getting burnt, Suguna did not feel any pain and was in a world of her own. When she was asked to explain her strange behaviour, Suguna revealed that she had the vision of Krishna in the flame and forgot herself completely. Hearing Suguna's words, all the Gopikas became ecstatic and started singing:

*“Our Suguna saw Krishna at the residence
of Nanda. He appeared to her in the flame”.*

(Telugu Song)

What does this mean? When you have one-pointed devotion towards the Lord, you see Him everywhere. When your thoughts, vision and words are sacred, you are verily God yourself. Then, you don't need to search for God. God Himself will come searching for you. God is everywhere; one need not search

for Him. In fact, God Himself is in search of a good man. One who is a recipient of God's love is a good man. Such a good man is a Godman. One should become a good man and a Godman. There lies the fulfillment of human life.

Embodiments of Love!

The Principle of love in you is highly sacred. But because of delusion, you are polluting it, and thereby diminishing your value. I want to give a small example before I close. Gold in its pure form is brilliant and highly valuable, but when you add metals like silver, copper, brass, etc., to it, its shine as well as value diminishes. Likewise, man is like pure gold, but as he is associating himself with worldly desires, he has lost his value as well as effulgence. When you develop the human values of *sathya*, *dharma*, *santhi*, *prema* and *ahimsa*, you will attain exalted position and people will respect you wherever you go.

Embodiments of Love!

Do not pollute your mind with worldly desires. You have attained this human birth as a result of meritorious deeds done in past lives. Do not misuse it. Human life is highly valuable. Keep up its value by practising human values. This was the teaching of

Buddha. People aspire to attain Nirvana. In order to attain Nirvana, one should have a pure heart. True Nirvana lies in having love for God, fear of sin and morality in society. Animals do not know what sin is. So, they do not have fear of sin. But you should have fear of sin, as you are aware of what it is. You should have control over your senses.

Recapitulate all that you have heard and experienced here. Charge your spiritual batteries by joining good company. Only then will you progress in life and become ideal.

Buddha Purnima, 7 May 2001, Brindavan