

Give up Ego and Attachment and Become Great

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Dear students!

Can all the birds of green colour talk like a parrot?
Can insects that crawl on the flowers become bumble bees?
Can an oversized pig become an elephant?
Can one who does not know about themselves acquire knowledge of the Self?
(Telugu Poem)

Man today considers himself as great. On the other hand, one who is devoid of humanness is not a human being at all! A real human being is one who manifests humanness. A real human being is one who practises the five human values of *sathya* (truth), *dharma* (righteousness), *santhi* (peace), *prema* (love), and *ahimsa* (nonviolence) and preaches them to others. Even if one out of these five values is deficient, it is unbecoming of a human being. Man, in fact, is very intelligent. His intelligence is unlimited and unparalleled. But it is not being reflected in his behaviour.

Parvati's firm dedication ...

Once Lord Easwara was absorbed in intense tapas (*penance*). Parvati wished to marry Him, but her parents tried to dissuade her. They started to reason with her, describing Siva's form thus:

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 cremation ground.
(Telugu Poem)

Parvati paid no heed to all this reasoning and ignored it. Lord Easwara knew her nature and Parvati knew Siva's nature. They are in fact, not different from one another. Lord Siva is *Siva-Sakthi-atmaka-swarupa* (Embodiment of Siva and Sakthi). So too is Parvati.

How can ordinary mortals understand such mystic nature of Lord Easwara and Parvati! Where there is a feeling of duality, doubt arises. A man with dual mind is half blind. In fact, there is no difference between Lord Siva and Parvati.

Meanwhile, Saraswati arrived on the scene to counsel Parvati about Lord Siva's unsuitability as her bridegroom. She explained, "Dear Parvati! Society will not accept such an odd combination. There is no compatibility between you and Lord Siva. You yourself know everything. I need not elaborate on the point further. I am sorry that knowingly you have fallen into that illusion."

Parvati replied firmly, "Oh Saraswati! I am interested only in Lord Siva and none else. I have no other interest in life except becoming the consort of Lord Siva. No one can change my decision."

Divinity pervades everything ...

Isavasyam Idam Sarvam (the entire universe is permeated by God). The power of Lord Siva permeates the entire universe. The fore-

most duty of a human being is to love *Easwaratwa* (the divinity of Lord Easwara).

Actually, the same divine power is immanent in every human body also. Just as the human body is covered with a cloth, Divinity is enveloped in maya (illusion). Hence, though *Easwaratwa* is omnipresent, it is not visible. In accordance with the maxim *Easwara Sarva Bhutanam* (God is the indweller of all beings), *Easwaratwa* permeates every living being. Parvati explained that this *Easwaratwa* transcends age, and it is in no way related to external appearance.

Parvati's woes

Mother Lakshmi also tried to dissuade Parvati from marrying Lord Siva. She explained "My dear! You are quite young and beautiful. You have great power in you. It is unbecoming that you seek to wed someone who goes begging from house to house for alms."

Parvati was very upset and she sternly replied, "My bridegroom is no beggar. In fact, He is the one who gives alms to the entire world. It is not proper for you all to indulge in this campaign of slander against Him."

Several others also were averse to the choice of Parvati. They enquired, "He is adorning Himself with snakes. How did you court such a person? Don't you know about it?"

Parvati retorted, "Snakes have poison only in their fangs. But a human being has poison in the entire body. The human's vision, hearing and actions are all full of poison. You consider such a poisonous human being as a good person. If the fangs are removed, the snake cannot harm anybody. But the human being with his two fangs of *ahamkara* (ego) and *mamakara* (attachment) is roaming about nonchalantly and causing great harm to fellow human beings and to the world around. Humans consider themselves great. They are full of poison. How can such humans be corrected?"

One with pride will not be successful in any endeavour.

He will commit sins and will be ridiculed by one and all.

His own people will abandon him.

He will lose all wealth and respect.

His pride will ruin him completely.

(Telugu Poem)

Recognise your innate nature

God is loved by one and all. Every human being lives by love alone. In fact, one who has no love in them is not a human being at all! The love that exists between God and the human being is comparable to that between a father and a son. What a great sin it is to attribute ill will to such pure and unsullied love! In fact, it is the result of evil qualities that has permeated society.

When the innate divine nature of every human being is recognised, there will be no scope for any kind of differences. All are one, be alike to everyone. We have to achieve such transformation in our lives. You study several texts. Mere reading is not enough. It will not help you in any way. The truth contained in those texts has to be realised and experienced.

Laila and Majnu were great lovers. Theirs was selfless love, which became immortal. Unable to understand the true nature of their sacred love, people attributed all sorts of motives to their love and created a lot of confusion.

The mind must be filled with pure love. One should not develop attachment to sense objects and poison one's own mind. Only then can real happiness be experienced. Every human being in this world must analyse for themselves what is to be changed and corrected and what is to be accomplished. Accordingly, one should conduct oneself. Only then will one have realised real humanness.

The Divinity called 'I' is immanent in every human being. This Divinity 'I' is not to be construed as Brahma, Vishnu, or Siva. These

are names ascribed by man to Divinity for the purpose of recognition. The names are not important. The real Divinity is 'I'. "I am I." We consider Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Siva the destroyer. God grants *darshan* (sight of a holy person) to each in the same form on which each one contemplates.

Matru Devo Bhava

Once, Lord Siva and Mother Parvati were strolling in the ethereal world. They saw, on the earth, one person cutting the branch of a tree on which he was resting. The branch was almost cut and was about to fall any moment. Parvati was very anxious. She prayed to Lord Siva, "Oh! Lord! Please save him immediately from falling on the earth below."

Easwara replied, "It is you who saw him first. Only you realised that he might fall down by cutting the branch on which he was sitting. Hence, it is your responsibility to save him."

Parvati then laid down a condition, "Swami! Normally, any person falling from a height will express his agony by uttering the words 'Amma! (Mother)' or 'Appa! (father)' If this man cries 'Amma!', I will rescue him. On the other hand, if he cries 'Appa!' You have to rescue him." Easwara agreed.

Meanwhile, the branch that was being cut finally broke. The person sitting on it fell down. Mother Parvati was ready to save him. Lord Siva was also ready. But, the person prayed to neither "Amma!" nor "Appa!" He just wailed "Ayyo!" Though Lord Siva and Mother Parvati were both waiting to rescue him, the man did not call them!

This story is a reminder to one and all that we must always remember our parents wherever we are and in whichever situation we are placed in. They are the living divinities constantly guarding and guiding us. The Upanishads exhort, *Matru Devo bhava, pitru Devo bhava, acharya Devo bhava, atithi Devo bhava* (revere your mother, father, preceptor

and guest as God). You may be highly educated. You may be an adept in all branches of knowledge in this world. Yet, to your mother you are only a child. Your mother's blessing will be always with you. The life of a son who neglects such a mother is worthless.

Only Mother Parvati has a compassionate heart to protect a man in distress. Hence, we must constantly contemplate upon that *Sakthiswarupini* (embodiment of divine energy). Lord Easwara is The Father and Mother Parvati is *Sakthiswarupini*. Easwara cannot take that much liberty and move forward to save a devotee. Only after the *Sakthi* takes a step forward does Lord Easwara follow her. Hence, one has to worship the *Sakthiswarupini* in the first instance. She is the mother, verily. That is why it has been said: *Matru Devo bhava!* It is the mother who has been given the first place. Even one's own country is compared to the mother.

We say, "India is my motherland." Everyone refers to his country as "motherland", not as "fatherland". It is common in the country of Bharat (India) that a girl after her marriage goes to her in-laws' house to live there with her husband and in-laws. The lady of the in-laws' house is referred to as "mother-in-law" in the English language. But Mother Parvati is "Mother-in-love" for the whole world.

The word "law" relates to the world, whereas "love" refers to one's heart. Hence, first and foremost develop love. Consider love as your everything. Only then will you would have led a fruitful life.

Your mother may be very simple and not worldly-wise. She may be very weak physically and intellectually. Yet, a mother is a mother. You should not neglect your mother simply because she is weak or has fallen sick.

A mother is always full of love for her children. That is why Bhakta Ramadas prayed to Mother Sita, "Oh! Mother Sita! Please represent my case to Rama and help me. When you

are engaged in happy conversation with Rama in solitude, kindly make a mention about my pitiable condition.”

Bhakta Ramadas worked as a Tahsildar under Nawab Tanisha. He spent all the revenue collected from the people in building a temple of Lord Rama, Lakshmana, and Mother Sita and decorating the idols with gold jewelry. He was imprisoned on charges of misappropriation for not depositing the money in the treasury. Unable to bear the agony in jail, he lamented, “Swami! I dedicated all the money collected by me in your service only.” In a beautiful *kirtan* (song), he sang thus:

Oh Ramachandra!
I spent ten thousand gold coins to adorn
Mother Sita with a gold necklace and
Another ten thousand sovereigns to decorate—
our brother Lakshmana with a gold belt.
That crest jewel that adorns You cost me another
ten thousand gold coins.
Unmindful of my travails, You are flaunting
the jewelry as if You have got it with Your
own money!
(Telugu Poem)

One cannot achieve anything in life unless one gets rid of ego and attachment. Anything can be achieved with humility and obedience. In all spheres of life—moral, spiritual, physical, and even political— one should conduct oneself with devotion. Only then will the task achieved shine in glory.

Women should be respected ...

When a mother leaves her physical body, her soul will still be concerned with her children and their welfare. One day, a mother approached Me and pleaded with Me, "Swami! My daughter listens to everyone, but she gives importance to only Swami's words. My daughter is obstinate from the very beginning. She does not listen to what I say. But, if You once talk to her, she will follow Your advice. She has lot of faith in You. She will not disobey Your words." Thus, several mothers

come and pray for several things on behalf of their children.

Mothers play an important role. There is no God higher than mother. Hence, never disregard your mother. Those who ignore their mother will encounter several difficulties. Women shall be respected, loved, and shown gratitude. Only then will you reach an exalted position. You may be great or highly educated, or you may be illiterate even, but you must respect your mother and give weight to her words as your foremost duty.

A mother and her son, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, used to live in a small village near Kolkata. The mother struggled to bring up her son. Since there were no lights in their house, Vidyasagar used to sit under the streetlights and study his lessons. Thus, he worked hard day and night and studied well. Finally, he attained a good position in his life. He became very famous as an orator. People used to gather in thousands to hear his lectures.

Once, Vidyasagar was traveling in a train to go to some town to give a lecture there. An I.C.S. officer was also traveling in the same compartment to go to the same town to hear his lecture. As soon as the officer alighted from the train at the station, he called for a coolie to carry his briefcase. Vidyasagar approached that officer and told him, “Sir, give me that briefcase. I will carry it for you. By the way, where have you to go?”

The I.C.S. officer replied, “I am going to the place where Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar will deliver a lecture.”

On hearing those words, Vidyasagar smiled to himself and started for the place of meeting. As soon as they reached that place, Vidyasagar handed over the briefcase to that officer and said, “Sir! I take leave of you.”

The officer offered some money to Vidyasagar for carrying his briefcase. “Look! Take this money.”

Vidyasagar replied, “Sir! I carried your briefcase as an act of service, not for money, and politely declined the offer of money.

The meeting commenced. Vidyasagar was profusely garlanded and brought on the stage with honour. The officer, on seeing Vidyasagar, recognised him as the person who carried his briefcase a few minutes ago. He felt very embarrassed. As soon as the meeting was over, he fell at Vidyasagar's feet and begged his pardon.

Humility brings greatness ...

Only humility and obedience brought great honour to Vidyasagar. Even today, you will find his life story in textbooks. Greatness is not in the education we pursue or the high academic degrees we obtain. It is humility and obedience that bring greatness to us.

There are several educated people in this world. But of what use is it? What benefit does the world derive from their education? It is only because of ego and attachment that a person is spoiled. One can become really great when he sheds these two.

During his debating tour of north India, Adi Sankara met a great scholar named Mandana Mishra. He had a wife by name Ubhayabharati. She was selected to be the arbitrator and judge to decide the winner in the debate between Adi Sankara and Mandana Mishra. She considered truth as God and was therefore eminently suited for the assignment. Sankara defeated Mandana Mishra in the debate, and he was declared the winner by Ubhayabharati. As per the conditions of the debate, Mandana Mishra had to take to sanyas (renunciation), and he did accordingly. As a dutiful wife, Ubhayabharati followed suit and also became a renunciant.

Ubhayabharati serves eye-opener ...

One day, Ubhayabharati was going along with her disciples to the river Ganga to take bath in the river. On the way, she observed a *sanyasi*

(renunciant) who was relaxing, keeping a dried bottle gourd under his head. He was using this for storing drinking water, so he was preserving it carefully. Ubhayabharati saw this *sanyasi's* attachment to the bottle gourd and said to her disciples, “Look! This man calls himself a *sanyasi*, but he is attached to a bottle gourd that he is keeping under his head as a pillow.”

The *sanyasi* heard this comment, but did not utter anything then. While Ubhayabharati and her disciples were returning from the river, he threw away the bottle gourd in front of them in order to demonstrate that he was not attached to it. Observing his action, Ubhayabharati aptly remarked, “I thought there was only one defect in him, *abhimana* (attachment). Now I realise that he has another defect also, *ahamkara* (ego). How can one with *abhimana* and *ahamkara* become a *jnani* (spiritually wise person) and *sanyasi*?”

Her comment was an eye-opener for the *sanyasi*. He expressed gratitude to her for imparting true knowledge of renunciation to him.

Emulate Karna

Diverse population must be following differing paths in the world. Lord Krishna is the one who taught the path of wisdom and established the truth that the quality of love is common to all. He forgave even people with demonic qualities, like Duryodhana and Dussasana.

Though Karna joined the evil forces, he was a man of noble qualities. Hence, Lord Krishna praised his qualities. Karna did not have even a trace of ego and attachment. He was a great warrior and a person of highest charity. One should therefore emulate his noble qualities. Every student should hear good things and put them into practice. Experience bliss and share that bliss with all. This is your foremost duty.