

# Elders are a Source of Wisdom and Strength Revere and Respect Them

## *Embodiments of Love!*

The elderly couples who participated in the “*Bheema Ratha Shanthi*” celebrations held today have experienced inexplicable joy and bliss. In this context, you must understand the underlying meaning in naming this ceremony as “*Bheema Ratha Shanthi*”. It does not mean that all these couples must be physically strong and courageous like Bheema, the *Mahabharata* hero. Bheema was the son of Vayu (air), which is all-pervasive. The wind by nature is a very strong and powerful element, which can uproot even a mighty tree.

There are certain traditional rules for the performance of this *Bheema Ratha Shanthi*. But there is no age restriction as such for this ceremony. By God's grace, everyone has *Sath Sankalpa* (good thoughts). Normally, married couples celebrate the *Shastyabdha Poorthi* ceremony when the husband attains the age of sixty years, hoping to lead a peaceful and happy married life. They also celebrate when the husband attains the age of 70 years. Generally, people believe 70 years of age as the deadline in the life-span of an individual. But, there are other milestones like 80, 90 and 100 years also to be crossed in life. When an individual crosses these important milestones in his married life these blissful occasions are named and celebrated as “*Bheema Ratha Shanthi*”. Unable to understand and appreciate the importance of these holy occasions, the children in this Kali Age are sending their parents away when they cross 60 years in life, under the mistaken notion that they should not lead a married life and they are fit only to be *Sanyasis* (renunciants). This is a serious mistake. On the other hand, children should take greater care of their parents when they attain sixty years of age and beyond. Generally, children are under the impression that people beyond the age of 70 years are useless and a burden to the family as well as to the society. But, the truth is otherwise. In fact, the enthusiasm, encouragement and mental strength increase after a person crosses 70 years. It is only after 70 years that the mental faculties and *Atmic* strength express themselves in full measure. Prior to that, they also behave like

other human beings. They will not specially strive to set an example to others. The mental faculties, divine force and the will power in a person will manifest fully after 70 years and prompt him to set a new goal in life. As a result, such elderly persons will be contemplating upon and exploring the secrets of life. The divine force latent in these elderly persons is beyond the reach of the youth. It manifests in ever-so-many ways in their actions. Today, we find several youngsters talking ill of their parents and making fun of them. This is a grave mistake. Instead, if one can analyse carefully their actions, every action of theirs will prove to be purposeful and divine in nature. If the youth of today wish to receive proper training to face the challenges in life, they must live with their parents and constantly observe the noble qualities that manifest in the actions of their parents. In fact, no one can match their systematic life and strict discipline. The blossoming of their intellect and the divine qualities in them will herald a new and meaningful life for humanity. You just observe their life closely and you will be thrilled at the changes it can bring about in your own life.

## *Embodiments of Love!*

These days, we are ignoring these elders, considering them to be not useful to society. This is not correct. In fact, the strength and energy latent in these elders are not to be found in the youth. When you wish to undertake any new activity, it will become fruitful only when you take the guidance of the elders and walk in their footsteps.

Nowadays, a human being is unable to recognise the qualities of a fellow human being. The term “*Manava*” (human being) means a person who can make the quality of humanness blossom. People generally tend to describe the physical strength of body, whenever a mention is made of Bheema, the younger brother of Dharmaraja, the Pandava King. But, that is not the real strength.

The real strength of elders lies in their wisdom and noble thoughts. The ideals set by these elders for the younger generation are most valuable. Unable to understand their value, people ignore them as useless folk. Today, a lot of value

is attached to the retired scientists. None can match their intelligence and passion for new inventions. But, their services are not made use of properly for the benefit of society and they are being wasted. The world can benefit a lot from these elderly people. There is immense power in these elders that can be harnessed for the good of society. Today, we are making an effort to reveal the strength and great spiritual power latent in the ancient Rishis. These elderly people reflect those great ideals. Hence, we should not neglect them. Every thought that emanates from these elders is noble and most valuable. The youth cannot produce even a minute fraction of thoughts and ideas in comparison. Hence, we must nourish and nurture these valuable assets and take good care of them.

Unfortunately, nowadays the younger generation grudges even to provide one square meal a day to their elders. They think it is an avoidable expenditure. Do not by any means let this happen. Even if you put them on a sustenance diet, they will maintain the dignity and reputation of your family as if they are well fed. The concern and enthusiasm displayed by these elders in bringing up the children in a proper way is not found in others unrelated. In the ancient times, kings and nobles made use of the great wisdom of the Rishis by seeking their advice regularly. Even to this day, the great treatises on spiritual and temporal matters compiled by the great Rishis of yore are an authority to the younger generation. Unfortunately, they are not able to understand the great truths expounded in those treatises. It is Swami's advise that from now on we must popularise this great ancient tradition of *Bheema Ratha Shanthi*. It has great significance and value for the coming generations. The ritual of *Bheema Ratha Shanthi* signifies nourishing and nurturing the quality of humanness by undertaking spiritually powerful and noble activities.

During the Mahabharata war, after the gruesome massacre of the young Pandava children, Arjuna tracked down Aswatthama, the perpetrator of the atrocity and dragged him before Droupadi. Instead of cursing the evil doer and pronouncing the punishment for him, she fell at the feet of Aswatthama, the son of her husbands' most revered Guru and said:

*"It is at the feet of your father Dronacharya that my husbands have*

*learnt all that they know. Being the son of Dronacharya, was it proper on your part to kill my children? How could you have the heart to kill them, who were unarmed, young, quietly asleep, were not having any grudge against you and were not contemplating any harm to you?"* (Telugu poem)

When Droupadi was praying like this, Bheema could not bear to see this. Exploding in anger, he roared:

*This Droupadi is a stupid woman, for she pleads for this wretch's freedom. She feels no anger against this murderer of her sons.*

(Telugu poem)

Meanwhile, Arjuna was seething with anger and was about to kill Aswatthama. Droupadi fell at his feet and reasoned with him thus:

*Arjuna! Will my sons be revived by killing Aswathama? His mother too would experience the same kind of sorrow that I am undergoing now at the loss of my sons. Having studied the Vedas and Sastras, how is it that you are not able to maintain your tranquillity?* (Telugu poem)

Droupadi further pleaded with Arjuna to forgive Aswatthama for his heinous act. Arjuna replied, "You are preventing me from keeping up my vow." To this, Droupadi said, "Tonsuring his head and removing the crown jewel from his head is equivalent to killing him." As per Droupadi's advice and as a token of punishment, Arjuna took the crown jewel from the head of Aswatthama and shaved off the hair with his sword.

In ancient times, the Rishis were not shaving off their hair, since the hair was considered very sacred and powerful, spiritually. This body (pointing to Himself) is nearly 80 years old. Still, the hair on My head remains very strong and powerful to this day. I will tell you more about the power of the hair on My head, later. Once, Droupadi was alone as her husbands had gone out. She took out one strand of hair from her head and dropped it in the water, chanting some Mantras. That single hair with the potency of Mantras could bind all the hills around. Later on, a number of yogis assembled together and enquired as to how a single hair could bind all the hills around. They concluded that it was the strength of the hair of Droupadi, and her will power that could perform this stupendous task. It is difficult to comprehend such latent divine phenomenon. Unfortunately, today man is unable to

realise his innate divinity. Man, who is heir to the humanness is forgetting the very quality of his humanness. He is cultivating demonic qualities.

*Dear students!*

You have to avoid acquiring such demonic nature and allow your natural humanness to blossom. Develop humanness and from there rise to the level of divinity. Always remember three things unity, purity and divinity. Unity implies the oneness of human race. When there is such unity in humanity, divinity manifests.

Once, I went on a countrywide tour. During that tour I went to the river Sindhu along with a saintly person. Linguists know that some people pronounce Sindhu as Hindu. I stayed in Goa in the Raj Bhavan when Nakul Sen was the Lt. Governor of that State. His wife's name was Indu. I slept in the front hall of the Raj Bhavan. Nakul Sen and his wife slept in their bedroom. There was a window in their bedroom from where they could see what was happening in the front hall. After I slept, Nakul Sen's wife saw through the window a brilliant light emerging from My body. Unable to bear the effulgence of that brilliant light, she tried to wake up her husband. Nakul Sen would not like to be disturbed at that hour. He admonished her not to disturb him and to sleep peacefully. But, she insisted that her husband should wake up and witness that brilliant light emanating from Swami. At last, Nakul Sen woke up and had the divine darshan of that effulgence.

In the early years of the advent of this *Avatar*, a great devotee by name Karnam Subbamma used to serve Swami. Her devotion to Swami was unparalleled. In those days, caste differences were widely prevalent and observed strictly in Puttaparthi. Especially, the Brahmins used to keep distance from the Harijans. Since, Subbamma was an orthodox Brahmin, she used to meticulously observe these practices. One day, I informed Subbamma that I would be visiting the *Harijanwada*. Subbamma felt very unhappy and tried to dissuade Me from going to that place saying, "Oh! Swami! Why should You visit that place?" I asked her, "Why should I not go? Why should I not eat the food offered by the Harijans? I will certainly go there." So saying, I started for the *Harijanwada*. However, as she was a great devotee of Swami

and was very much attached to Him, she followed. The people living in the *Harijanwada* were very poor. They had no chairs or mattresses to make Me seated comfortably. They spread an old dhoti on the floor and requested Me to sit on that. In the meantime, I felt drowsy and fell asleep. Thereafter, a big sound emanated from My navel, as though the roof over the building was being blown off. The people in the house trembled in fear, on hearing that big sound. All of them ran helter-skelter. Thus, the Divine power manifests from the bodies of the Avatars, saints and yogis in many different ways.

Long ago, when I went to some African countries on tour, the devotees there presented Me with a comb made of iron. However, I had no necessity for it. I do not use a comb. If ever I put the brush on My hair, it will get stuck. My hair is so thick and strong. Even if one wants to pull out one hair, it is not possible. This is the nature of the hair of divine personalities. Not only Myself, every individual has certain divine powers, which he should try to nurture. Today, the youth are not making any effort to protect the God-given power. They are frittering away the divine power in ever so many ways. They waste a lot of power daily with the result they lose their energy and become prematurely old. Especially, the head is the seat of all power. Hence, one has to carefully protect the head.

*Embodiments of Divine Atma!*

You are all men and women of noble qualities and strong in body and mind. But, unfortunately, you are frittering away your energies in vain pursuits. You become weak by wasting your energy. When I clench My fist not even ten persons can prise it open. Even at the physical level the Divine power is immeasurable and beyond description. All of you should try to realise this innate Divinity in you, not for the sake of the physical strength, but to enjoy the divine bliss.

*Embodiments of Love!*

The divine power latent in a human being has no limits. Whether it is fine arts like music or any other human endeavour, when it is suffused with divine power, it reaches great heights. Hence, sanctify that divine power by dedicating all your efforts to God.