

The path of Nirvana

There is no place without 'God, and there is no form without the Divine.

Whether one is in a forest or in a town, on a mountain top or in a valley, wherever one may be, one is not helpless.

[Telugu Poem]

Embodiments of Love!

Men today strive in various ways to acquire knowledge of the Self (*Atma Jnana*). But this is not true knowledge. It may well be called ignorance. Whatever one's scholarship or one's spiritual practices or one's quest for gurus, one cannot acquire spiritual wisdom without understanding one's true nature.

Men today cannot understand their humanness; how can they recognize their divinity? Only after comprehending his humanness can a man recognize his divinity. Recognizing this truth, Buddha embarked on his spiritual quest. He studied all

the extant scriptures of different faiths. He met many holy men. He visited numerous holy shrines. All these exercises gave him no satisfaction. What was the reason? All external, physical and ephemeral activities are valueless.

Your vision must be pure and sacred

The first requisite is purity in the use of the five senses of perception given to man. Buddha declared that men should cultivate at the outset *samyag-drishti* (the right vision). This means that the eyes should not be misused for looking at all sorts of things. Your vision must be pure and sacred. See no evil; see what is good. A sacred vision is that which looks only at divine and sacred objects. Your vision must originate from the heart. Bad thoughts and bad feelings pollute the vision.

Man today has lost the fear of sin, the love of God and observance of social morality. This accounts for all the ills of society today.

Pure vision leads to pure thoughts. Pure thoughts result in pure actions. Purity in action is essential for human existence. Purity in thoughts and purity in speech must lead to purity in deeds. This is the triple purity hailed by the sages. When this purity is manifest, human life gets redeemed. The principle of "Help ever, hurt never" becomes the governing principle of daily life.

Pure vision naturally begets Purity in speech by the refinement of the heart. Pure words must come out of the depth of the heart, which is a fountain of compassion. Constant examination of the purity of one's vision, speech and action is a spiritual exercise. It is this that helps to refine the heart.

Once, Buddha had an encounter with Ananda, the son of his stepmother. Buddha had attained the state of *Nirvana* (Self-Realization). Watching Buddha in this state, Ananda burst into tears. Buddha was about to give up body. Ananda was in grief

over the thought. "What will happen to us? What is our future?"

Buddha summoned Ananda to come near him and said: "Ananda! This is not a time for grief. I am about to achieve *Nirvana*. You should also seek *Nirvana*. Looking at the dead, the living lament over death. But who are the dead? Death awaits the living in due course. Where there is birth, there is also death.

*Only the Divine is free from birth and death.
He is eternal, with no beginning, middle or end.
He is the Eternal Witness.*

[Telugu poem].

Except for the Divine, birth and death are natural to all human beings. Why then do you weep? You also must strive to achieve liberation."

Sanctify the senses

Man today is ignoring the state of his heart. He abuses the five senses without regard to the consequences.

The result is he is a prey to all kinds of sufferings. If the five senses are used properly man will experience only what is good. All rituals and spiritual exercises are of no avail if the five senses are not used properly.

Moreover, men must seek what is permanent in life and not cling to what is transient and perishable. The body is impermanent. The *Atma* is eternal. People should realize the infinite divine potencies in man. The Divine is present in man as conscience, which is a spark of the Cosmic Conscience. The conscience transcends the five senses. When the senses are sanctified, the conscience manifests its divinity. It can then experience its oneness with the Universal Consciousness.

This was the path pursued by Buddha. He began with control of the senses.. He was filled with pure and sacred feelings; with a pure heart, he achieved *Nirvana*. Purity of the heart is more important than all rituals and penances. Develop a vision that will broaden your heart and enable you to help others and not hurt them. Dedicate all actions to God. *Thyaga* (sacrifice) is real *yoga* (oneness with the Divine). To enjoy things (*bhoga*) without sharing with others is a disease (*roga*). The *Vedas* have declared that immortality can be attained only through sacrifice and not by any other means.

Good speech is as essential as good vision. Avoid all kinds of gossip. Keep your speech confined to what is godly and sacred. Engage yourself in service to others. Pay no attention to other people's defects and faults.

Listen to pure and sacred words. People misuse their ears listening to scandal and gossip. This evil tendency should be eliminated by listening to the glories of God. Such listening (*sravanam*) has been accorded a primary place among the nine paths of devotion.

Purify your heart

What is it that you should observe on this New Year day? Many such days have come and gone. But how far has there been a transformation in the heart? Many years have come and gone. But your hearts remain unchanged. The first task is to purify the heart. You should not be content with celebrating the New Year as a festive occasion. To enjoy a feast you do not need a New Year. The New Year should be marked not by a feast but by the awakening of new and pure thoughts in the heart. Of what use is it to be concerned only about eating from dawn to dusk?

What is the purpose of life? It is not eating, sleeping and dying. You must control the senses and use them for sacred

purposes. The power of the senses is derived from the Divine. The small human eye enables to look at stars billions of miles away. Where from is this power got? It is from the Divine within you. Hence, everyone should always think of God, whatever one may do. Then, one will be free from bad thoughts. Man must manifest his humanness by transcending the animal nature.

Realize your inherent divinity. Regard the whole world as your field of action. You have come as a pilgrim to this world of action- Ensure that your pilgrimage proceeds on right lines.

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The most beneficial thing that can happen to a person is that he should draw God's love to himself. His love for God is of less importance, because it is an imperfect mixture of divine and worldly love. The most important action whereby to gain God's love is Rightousness.

—Baba