

Royal Path to Divinity

*Run away from bad company;
Join good company.
Perform meritorious deeds day and night.*

Embodiments of Love! Since times immemorial, Bharat (India) has been the treasure house of spirituality and has been radiating peace and serenity to all the other countries. But, today, people do not understand even the sacredness, significance, and uniqueness of the human body. Many people are under the false impression that the body is meant to eat drink, sleep, and make merry. You can understand the purpose behind God gifting you this body only when you understand the sacredness and mystery of human birth. The primary goal of man is to recognise the Truth in daily life.

Every man has a body. It not only acts as an instrument but also sets ideals in every respect. What are the ideals? It inhales the life-sustaining oxygen and exhales the poisonous carbon

dioxide. It partakes of delicious items and excretes foul smelling faecal matter. What is the inner significance of this activity? Man has to accept those things that are beneficial to the society and the country and discard those which are maleficent to the interests of the society and the nation at large. Thus, the body demonstrates that man has to take in noble and sacred feelings and leave out the unsacred and worldly thoughts.

Life is a combination of body, mind, and Atma

Unfortunately, today, man takes in unholy and unsacred thoughts discarding pure and sacred feelings. What is truth and what is untruth? What is permanent and what is temporary? What is good and what is bad? Man does not undertake such an enquiry today. He is using his power of discrimination for wrong purposes. He is accepting bad and giving up good. Do you prefer a rotten fruit to a luscious one or inhaling carbon dioxide and exhaling oxygen? No. If you do that, you will not only spoil your health, you will put your life also to risk. Man should achieve physical health, mental satisfaction, and *Atmic* bliss. Man's life is a combination of the body, mind and *Atma*. The body performs actions, the mind enquires, and the *Atma* remains a witness. These three are essential for the human life to blossom. But no one is trying to understand this mystery.

Nature also shows the truthful and right path. If you do not breathe out the air that you breathe in, your health will be spoilt. Likewise, if you do not excrete the body waste, your health will suffer. The lesson one has to learn from this is that one must accept good and give up bad. *Tyaja durjana samsar-gam* (discard bad company). Bad company does not mean the company of bad people alone. Even bad thoughts constitute

bad company. You should not only discard bad company, but give up bad thoughts also.

However, one does not become a noble soul by just giving up bad company and bad thoughts; one has to join good company and also cultivate good thoughts. One can have good thoughts only by constant contemplation on God. *Kuru punyam ahorathram* (perform good deeds day and night). At all times, at all places and under all circumstances, man has to contemplate on God and involve himself in His work. *Bhaja sadhu samagamam* (join good company). You will get sacred feelings only when you are in good company.

Undertake sadhana right from childhood

Right from an early age, you should develop devotion to God. It will be of immense help in old age if you undertake spiritual *sadhana* right from your childhood. It is impossible to think of God in your old age if you squander your precious time in worldly matters in the early stages of your life. The divine feelings that you develop from your childhood are your true treasure. Thoughts based on Truth (*sathya sankalpas*) are your true wealth. But, you are giving up such sacred wealth and are hankering after the transient and ephemeral wealth. Start early, drive slowly and reach safely. It is impossible to remember God and contemplate on Him in old age unless you think of Him right from your childhood. It is easy to remember Him in your old age only when you practice contemplating on Him in your childhood.

*When the messengers of death
start dragging you away,
When the relatives make hurry to shift you
outside the house saying there is no hope,*

*And when the wife and children
start weeping and wailing bitterly,
Is it possible to think of God at that moment*

[Telugu Poem]

Turn senses Godward from early age

I keep telling the students often that the childhood of man is like a tender banana leaf. At this age, this ‘banana leaf’ is very pure, attractive, and lively. This ‘leaf’, containing the delicacies of five senses (sound, touch, form, taste, and smell), should be offered to God. But, due to the impact of the *Kali* age, man is offering these five types of ‘delicacies’ to the six demons: *kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada*, and *matsarya* (lust, anger, greed, attachment, pride, and jealousy). After the demons eat away the delicacies, spoiling the leaf in the process, man is offering the leftover unsacred food to God in old age. Is it proper to offer to God the remains of the food eaten by the demons?

If man cannot recognise the uniqueness of humanness, what is use of taking the human birth? *Janthoonam nara janma durlabham* (among all beings, human birth is the rarest and noblest). Having got such a sacred human birth man should turn his senses Godward from his early age. From early age, man should contemplate on God and win divine grace.

*In old age, when you cannot see properly,
When there are wrinkles on your face,
When your hair turns grey,
When children start making fun of you,
calling you a decrepit monkemy, and*

*When your limbs start shivering,
How do you expect to think of God?*
[Telugu Poem]

Those that start thinking of God only in old age have no sense of shame.

Today man is wasting his youth by misusing his senses. He is seeing and listening to unsacred things and indulging in talking ill of others. In the early age, the five senses are like five delicacies. Your life will be sanctified, only when you offer them to God. Otherwise, it is better to be deaf, dumb, and blind! For what purpose are the eyes given to you? Is it to see anything and everything? No. Eyes are given in order to see God. The eye, which is not even an inch in size, is able to see the stars millions of miles away. Such a powerful and sacred eye is being used for seeing unholy things? Why don't you use your eyes for seeing the omnipresent God and the beautiful panorama of nature and having the *darshan* of holy men?

Peddalu or Gaddalu?

Today the so-called *peddalu* (elders) are discouraging the young from taking to spiritual path. They say one can start contemplating on God after retirement. Can such people be called *peddalu*? No. They are *gaddalu* (hawks)! They neither think of God nor allow their children to do so. Actually, some elders are spoiling the lives of their children. They are trying to make their children tread the wrong path as though they had benefited immensely by doing the same earlier. *Tyaja durjana samsargam*, give up the company of such evil-minded elders, even if they happen to be your parents.

This was the ideal set by Bharata in the *Ramayana*. Rama, being the eldest, was the legal heir to the throne of Ayodhya,

but Kaikeyi sent Him to the forest, as she wanted her son Bharata to become the king. When Bharata came to know of this, he became very furious. He even did not like to look at his mother and set off to the forest immediately to bring back Rama.

Disassociate yourselves from wicked persons

Hiranyakasipu could not tolerate to hear his son, Prahlada, chant the name of Lord Narayana. He would at once close his ears whenever Prahlada uttered *Om Namō Narayanaya*. He even tried to kill him as he continued to chant the name of Lord Narayana against his wishes. Ultimately, Prahlada disassociated himself from his father as he was a *durjana* (wicked person).

Sukracharya warned Emperor Bali that the Vamana was none other than Lord Vishnu Himself and that it would be disastrous for Bali to make the gift sought from him by Vamana. Bali reacted to the preceptor's warning, saying that there was no greater sin than going back on one's word. He had given his word to the Lord Himself. Is it not a sin on the part of Sukracharya to ask him to break his promise? That is why Bali told Sukracharya, "You are not my preceptor; you are my enemy." So saying, he forsook Sukracharya and fulfilled his promise to Vamana.

Mira all the time thought of only *Giridhara* (Lord Krishna) and chanted His name. Her eyes were filled with the form of Krishna, and her mind was filled with the thoughts of Krishna. But her husband thought that she was crossing her limits in the name of devotion to Krishna. So, one day, he threw her out of the Krishna temple for the sake of false worldly honour. Then she wrote a letter to Tulsidas seeking his advice as to what she

should do, whether to give up Krishna, the eternal companion, or to forsake her husband.

Tulsidas sent a reply saying, “Mother, God is the greatest of all and the path leading to God is the noblest of all. Husband is like a passing cloud, but God is always with you, even before your birth and after your death. *Trikalabhadbyam sathyam* (Truth transcends all the three periods of time). How can you give up God, who is the Embodiment of Truth? Husband entered your life in the middle and will go away in the middle. You may serve him as long as he is alive. But, when he himself discards you, there is nothing wrong in leaving him for the sake of God.”

It is not proper to expect the wife to suffer at the hands of a wicked husband. If the wife commits a mistake, the husband may punish her. But, it is a sin to punish a woman who is absolutely faultless. Mira prayed,

*Krishna, I went deep into the ocean of Samsara
and caught hold of the pearl of Your divine name.
How can I allow it to slip away from my hand? I
will safeguard this 'pearl' even at the cost of my
life.*

[Tamil Verse]

Better die rather than lead an untruthful life

Worldly life is *pravritti marga* (outward path) and spiritual life is *nivritti marga* (inward path). It is a great mistake to give up God and His name for the sake of worldly gains. You need not be afraid of anybody when your conscience is clear. Truth and sacrifice are like your two eyes. *Sathyam nasti paro dharma* (there is no greater *dharma* than adhering to truth). But in this Age of Kali, people are giving up truth and right-

eousness. Better to die than to lead an untruthful life. It is better to live like a swan for a few minutes than to lead the life of a crow for a hundred years.

Education is for serving society

Today, students are becoming highly educated, acquiring degrees and occupying positions of authority. They think they are great intellectuals. What is the use of education and intelligence if they are misused? Why study and die ultimately. Study to be immortal. Bookish knowledge may feed your stomach but will not help you attain Divinity. You should experience the bliss of your life after offering everything to God. The *Vedas* declare: *Sarva karma Bhagavad preethyartham* (whatever you do, do it with a desire to please God).

It is enough if you have God with you. Lord Krishna declared in the *Bhagavad Gita*, *Sarva dharman parityaja maam ekam saranam vraja* (give up all the worldly *dharmas* and surrender only to Me). All the worldly *dharmas* are burdensome. They are like ten thousand naya paisas. A hundred rupee note is equal to ten thousand naya paisas. It is rather difficult to bundle up ten thousand naya paisas and carry them with you. So, offer all the ten thousand 'naya paisas' to God. He will give you a 'hundred rupee note', which is light in weight and also safe and secure. The former refers to quantity and the latter to quality. You should look for quality, not for quantity. One teaspoon of cow's milk is better than barrels of donkey's milk.

This country, Bharat, is the land of sacrifice, the land of love and the land of *yoga*. If you do not have love for your motherland, you are as good as a living corpse. The modern students are neglecting their motherland and are going abroad

in search of greener pastures. You may go abroad, but never give up motherland. It is foolish to give up the motherland and get enticed by foreign countries.

Once, Vivekananda had gone to London and America. While returning to India, the American journalists asked him what he thought of his motherland, Bharat. He said, "I have a great regard and love for my country. I respect even the dust, the air and the environment of Bharat. I offer myself completely to the service of my motherland." He who has no love for his motherland, mother tongue and religion is no better than a living corpse.

Only good and bad follow you when you die

Today, people waste their time and energy in amassing wealth. They do not realise that one day or the other they will have to leave everything and go.

*Many great kings like Harischandra, Nala, and
Mandatha ruled over this land
But now, where are they?
Is Sri Rama, who built a great bridge across the
mighty ocean, alive today?
Many kings have come and gone, but none could
take even a fistful of
Earth when they left the immortal coil.*

[Telugu Poem]

If the people could take even a fistful of mud with them when they die, there would have been rationing of mud also! No one can take anything. Only good and bad follow you.

Rama and Ravana were equally well versed in thirty-six forms of knowledge. But Valmiki called Ravana a foolish one

and Rama a noble one. Why did Valmiki say so? Did he receive any favour from Rama? No. Here, Rama and Ravana can be compared to a cuckoo and a crow respectively.

*The crow did not steal anybody's property but the
people hate the very sight of a crow.
The cuckoo did not do any favour to anybody, but
still it is loved by one and all.
One is respected if one's speech is good.*

[Telugu Poem]

Though both look alike, people eulogise the cuckoo and criticise the crow. They throw stones at the crow when it caws, but feel joyous listening to the mellifluous singing of the cuckoo. Similarly, though Rama and Ravana were equally well-versed in all forms of knowledge, Rama set an ideal by practising what He learnt, whereas Ravana suffered from 'indigestion', since he merely acquired knowledge without practising it.

Only God is your true property

Education is for life, not for money. Every educated young man should serve society. Youth is very precious; let it not be wasted. Start early, drive slowly, reach safely. You must resolve to work for the welfare of the society even if your parents at first oppose you. Never mind if they do not give you a share in their property. Only God is your true property. Do not aspire for temporary and ephemeral wealth. Enter the path of truth and lead a sacred life. That will make your parents also happy. If parents are not happy when the son leads a sacred life, then they are no parents at all. Such parents are fit to be called demons.

Today is the holy festival of Vishnu. All the Indian festivals are sacred and demonstrate great ideals. The Keralites celebrate their festivals Onam and Vishnu in the most sacred way. With each festival one should cultivate divine feelings. When you contemplate on God with all sincerity and devotion, you become God yourself. This is what the *Vedanta* says: *Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavathi* (the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman himself.) You will become what you think. Ratnakara, a highway robber, was transformed into a great sage, Valmiki, because he thought of Rama continuously with a pure mind. His face shone with the divine effulgence of Rama. Even the young Prahlada's face reflected the divine radiance of Lord Narayana as he contemplated on Him continuously. He had no sense of fear; he always put on a smiling face in the face of adversity. All the time he was chanting the name of the Lord.

How can anyone, who steadfastly chants the divine name, be afraid of anything? Fear and grief will overpower those who forget the Lord and get immersed in worldly life. You will become divine if you contemplate on the Divine continuously. God is not somewhere else, He is within you.

What is true happiness?

Embodiments of Love! Every festival in India is suffused with divinity. On each festival day, people go to temples and offer their prayers to the Almighty. This is a positive trait. Forgetting God and always thinking of the world is a negative quality. Today, we find elaborate arrangements and gala celebrations in marriage functions. One is filled with joy when one gets married, but one does not realise that the happiness of married life is but momentary. Even dogs and foxes experience

this happiness. This is not true happiness. Thyagaraja said, “O mind, tell me what gives the real happiness, is it *nidhi* (wealth) or the *Eswara Sannidhi* (divine proximity)?” Consider *sannidhi* (proximity) as your *pennidhi* (great treasure). Then your life will be full of joy and bliss. Only devotees can understand this joy and bliss.

Without peace, man is just pieces

A true devotee always keeps singing the name of the Lord. Radha and Mira were always deeply immersed in Nama-sankirtan. They had broad feelings and broad mind. Broad mind is life, narrow mind is death. Mind can be broadened only through divine contemplation. Peace is a precious jewel, without peace man is just pieces. So attain peace and bliss by contemplating on the divine. Divine contemplation is possible only for the fortunate. They wear the crown of peace. The unfortunate ones can never contemplate on the divine and can never attain peace. You may get fed up of eating *laddus* and other sweets, but you will never get fed up of chanting the divine name. The more you chant, the more you will feel like chanting.

Embodiments of Love! Today injustice, unrighteousness, and falsehood are on the rise because faith in God is on the decline. The nation can attain peace only when people think of God. God is always with you, in you, around you, behind you, above you and below you. Today some people are prepared to give up God for the sake of worldly relations. But how long will the relations last? This body is only a doll, which may perish at any moment of time. Bliss cannot be attained as long as one has body attachment. This body is *Sivam* (auspicious) as

long as there is the divine breath of life in it. It becomes *savam* (corpse) once it loses the divine breath.

When man is born, he cries asking the question, “*Koham, Koham* (who am I).” What is the use of living if he has the same question on his lips at the time of death too? At the time of death, man should be able to declare cheerfully, “*Soham, Soham* (I am God).” Realising one’s own divinity is the purpose of life.

Man is never satisfied. He is greedy for more and more wealth. There should be a limit to greed for wealth. What man has to earn is divine grace. No matter what he earns, he cannot take a single pie with him when he leaves the body. Alexander conquered many nations and became a mighty emperor. But, when the hour of death approached, no doctor could save him. Before passing away, he summoned his ministers and told them to keep his empty hands raised above when his body was taken for the final journey through the streets so that the people would understand that even a great and mighty emperor like Alexander, who achieved so much in life, had to go empty-handed.

Only sacrifice will lead to immortality

Alexander wanted to conquer the entire world. Today also, we find one country trying to overpower the other. People are becoming power crazy. People who have greed for power can never be good leaders. In fact, they are the persons who destroy the nation. Many ministers, prime ministers, kings, and emperors have come and gone. But everybody was concerned only about their position and power. Fie upon such leaders, who had no concern for the welfare of the nation! Such leaders

are not human beings; they are demons. Leaders should have a sense of sacrifice. Only sacrifice will lead to immortality.

Students! After you complete your education, do not confine yourself to your jobs alone. Work for the welfare of society. The culture of Bharat says: *Sathyam vada, dharmam chara* (speak the truth and follow righteousness). Uphold these principles even at the cost of your life. Help the poor and the downtrodden. Have the national interest foremost in your mind. Your welfare depends on the welfare of the nation. Creation (*srushti*) emerged from the Creator (*Parameshti*); society (*samashti*) emerged from the creation. From society emerged the individual (*vyashti*). There is no individual without society. So, the *vyashti* should serve the *samashti*, then serve the *srushti* and ultimately merge in *Parameshti*. This is the royal path to Divinity.

Contemplate on God till your last breath

I am not perturbed by criticism. What I am teaching you is good, only good and nothing but good. If you follow these teachings, you are bound to attain your goal. Take to the right path right from your young age; otherwise you are bound to repent in your old age. Cultivate sacred thoughts and offer them to God right from the young age. Knowingly or unknowingly you might have committed some mistakes. There is no point in worrying about the past. At least now, wake up from your slumber, think of God and sanctify your life.

Divinity is the goal of life. You can attain divinity by following the path of truth, righteousness and love. Give up body attachment and develop divine feelings. Body is weak, made up of five elements and is bound to perish some time or the other. People say that the life span of a human being is hun-

dred years, but you cannot take it for granted. No one can predict when death will occur. It may occur either in childhood or in youth, or in middle age or in old age. Death is certain. So, try to know yourself while you are alive. Contemplate on God till your last breath. That is your primary duty.

Discharge your other duties also such as taking care of your family and children, but consider even that as God's work and treat all your family members as divine. All actions should be undertaken for the pleasure of God. Many people undertake *japa* and *dhyana* only after their retirement. Their hand turns the rosary, mouth utters 'Ram, Ram, Ram,' but the mind wanders in the market, goes to the club and starts playing cards as they might have indulged in all this earlier in life. What is the use of such a *japa*? So, it is better to take to the spiritual path right from childhood. It is a great fortune and merit to take to the spiritual path from childhood.

Sanctifying your heart is true pudding

Embodiments of Love! Today the people of Kerala are celebrating the festival of Vishnu. The inner significance of Vishnu is to cultivate sacredness. It does not end with preparing *payasam* (pudding) and partaking of it. Sanctifying your heart is true pudding. You will be celebrating Vishnu in the true spirit only when you make efforts to purify your heart.

You may not undertake any *sadhana* (spiritual exercise), but never forget the Principle of Love. Never be afraid of troubles; sanctify your life with love. Love everyone. Where love is, there God is. Love is God. God is love. All the time we should think of God and contemplate on Him.

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