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Sanctify Your Life By Sacred Actions

*A person having ego and pomp
Will not be loved by anybody,
Not even by his own wife and children.
Only when he gives up these evil qualities,
He will be loved by one and all.
Anger is one of the main causes of man's misery.
A man filled with anger can never experience
Happiness in his life;
He will always be drowned in misery.
So long as one is filled with desires,
One can never attain peace.
A greedy man can never be happy.
Therefore, ego, anger, desire and greed
Are mainly responsible for man's
Misery, anxiety and restlessness.*

(Sanskrit Verse)

WHEN the New Year begins, people start speculating as to what the New Year has in store for them and also for the world at large. The future of the world depends on the actions of man, not on the New Year. Actions depend on the mind, the mind on thoughts. As are the thoughts, so is the action. Hence, for the world to be peaceful and prosperous, man should foster truthful thoughts. The world will enjoy safety, security and peace only through men of truthful thoughts.

Actions Determine Your Future

Karmanubandheeni Manushya Loke (Human society is bound by action). It is action alone that is responsible for creation, sustenance and dissolution. Merit and sin, pleasure and pain are contained in action. But man, unable to understand this truth, acts according to his own whims and fancies. He performs evil deeds wilfully and feels happy while doing so without realizing the truth that consequently he will have to face mountains of misery. Man is bound to face the consequences of his actions, be they good or bad, small or big. It is most essential for man to understand this truth and act accordingly. Before undertaking any action, enquire whether it is good or bad, right or wrong. Do not act in haste. Haste makes waste, waste makes worry. So, do not be in a hurry.

The Upanishads taught *Thasmai Namaha karmane* (one should offer salutations to the action before undertaking it). One should pay one's respects to the presiding deity of action so that one may perform only sacred actions, which are beneficial to one and all. This is one of the major principles of the culture of Bharat. For example, we find dancers paying their obeisance to the anklets before they tie them and start their performance. Likewise, various instrumentalists offer their salutations to the respective instruments they play at the beginning of their programme. The sum and substance of this is that man should pay his respects to the work he undertakes and do it in such a manner so as to sanctify his life.

Essential Qualities Of A True Human Being

Since ancient times, the culture of Bharat has attached utmost importance to the principle of action. It is rather easy to do evil deeds, but it is very difficult to face their consequences. Do not be under the false impression that you can perform an evil deed and be done with it; remember that you will have to face the consequences for the rest of your life. Having been born as human being and having known Divinity, sanctify your life by undertaking sacred actions. Life devoid of sacred actions is useless. A true human being is one who adheres to *sathya* (truth), *Dharma* (righ-

teousness) and *thyaga* (sacrifice). Truth is *neethi* (morality), righteousness is *reethi* (procedure) and sacrifice leads to *khyathi* (fame). All these three constitute *manava jathi* (human race). Today man has strayed away from this three-fold path of truth, righteousness and sacrifice. As a result, humanness is on the decline. It makes one really wonder whether a true human being exists in this world at all! It is said, “The proper study of mankind is man.” A true human being is one who has harmony in thought, word and deed.

*Manasyekam Vachasyekam
Karmanyekam Mahatmanam
Manasyanyath Vachasyanyath
Karmanyanyath Duratmanam*

(Those whose thoughts, words and deeds are in complete harmony are noble ones; those who lack harmony of these are wicked). Man does not want to be called wicked, but he lacks harmony in his thoughts, words and deeds.

Human Body Is The Temple Of God

Embodiments of Love!

Human life is the noblest and the most sacred. It is divine in nature. Where is God? You are God yourself. *Deho Devalaya Proktho, Jeevo deva Sana-thana* (body is the temple and the indweller is God).

Understanding this truth is the goal of all spiritual pursuits. In this temple of body, God is installed in the form of *Atma*. This principle of *atma* is described as *nirgunam, niranjanam, sanathana nikanam, nithya, shuddha, buddha, mukta, nirmala swarupinam* (attributeless, pure, final abode, eternal, unsullied, enlightened, free and embodiment of sacredness). Having such divine principle in you, why do you go in search of divinity elsewhere? There are 6000 million temples in this world, which means every human body is a temple of God. Divine consciousness exists in each and every human body.

The Vedas declare: *Easwara Sarva Bhutanam* (God is the indweller of all beings). But, unfortunately, people are unable to realize this truth. Have the firm conviction that every human body is the temple of God. Do not hate or hurt anybody. One who has realized the truth that God exists in all is a true devotee. How can you call yourself a devotee if you hurt others' feelings and indulge in criticism and slander? Criticising others amounts to criticising God Himself. Human body, being the temple of God, is highly sacred. It has to be respected and revered. Do not get carried away by the outward looks of the 'temple'. Direct your vision on God (the *Atma*) installed in the 'temple' and experience the bliss derived therefrom. Make proper use of the body by undertaking sacred actions.

Emperor Asoka And The King Of Magadha

The life of Emperor Asoka bears ample testimony to this. He used to undertake various social welfare activities with the money collected from his subordinate kings in the form of taxes. Without collecting taxes, it is very difficult to run a kingdom. The same thing holds good even today. How can the government provide comforts to the people unless it collects taxes from them? It is foolishness to expect the government not to levy taxes and yet expect it to provide comforts and conveniences. Once on his birthday, all the subordinate kings of Emperor Asoka, except the ruler of Magadha, brought taxes and filled his treasury. On being questioned by the emperor, the king of Magadha replied, “O king, this year my kingdom suffered from severe drought. Consequently, people did not have water to drink and were afflicted with terrible diseases. I had to spend a lot of money to rehabilitate the drought-affected people. I made arrangements for the supply of drinking water. I also got many hospitals constructed to treat the sick. Not merely that. I established schools at various places for the education of children. All my revenue was spent on these social welfare activities. As a result, I am not able to pay tax this time.” Emperor Asoka was immensely pleased with his reply. He made him sit by his side and said, “O king of Magadha, your ideal is worth-emulating.

Pure drinking water, good medical and educational facilities are very essential for the welfare of citizens. So, in this regard, I will extend to you all my cooperation.” Asoka was one of truth and sacrifice. His name, A-soka, itself implies that he was one without *soka* (grief). The king of Magadha won his heart by his public welfare schemes.

Education is related to the head, medical care is related to the heart and water is very essential for the sustenance of life. He is a noble one who provides all these facilities to the people. Such a person is equal to God Himself. This was the ideal taught by Emperor Asoka. He earned name and fame by his spirit of sacrifice and sacred actions.

Good actions are very important. One who undertakes sacred actions excels everyone. That is why I often exhort you to undertake service activities. You are born and brought up in the society. You owe your education, wealth and happiness to the society. Then is it not your bounden duty to show gratitude to the society? You can express your gratitude to the society by undertaking service activities. Serve one and all because God is present in everybody.

Keep Control Over Your Food And Habits

Embodiments of Love!

Do not waste time speculating over what would happen in this New year. If your actions are good, your

future is bound to be good. The future of the nation depends on your actions. God is a witness. He neither protects you nor punishes you. In fact, it is you who protect or punish yourself. Whatever you utter, be it good or bad, God always blesses you saying, "So shall it be." God blesses everybody. Each one is responsible for his pleasure or pain.

Today the world is in utter chaos. Humanness is becoming extinct. Human being does not merely mean the physical body consisting of five senses. True human being is one who makes proper use of the five senses without giving scope to evil qualities like lust, anger, greed, infatuation, pride and jealousy. One should not fall prey to them. Foster the noble qualities that originate from the heart.

Embodiments of Love!

Wherefrom do the evil qualities like lust, greed, etc., arise? They arise out of the food you consume. So, keep control over your food and habits. Take only *sathwic* food. Then you will get only sacred thoughts. God has gifted you with many noble qualities. They are innate in you. But you are neglecting them. Reading, writing, taking up jobs, earning money, building mansions, etc., originate from the head and are related to the *pravritti marga* (outward path). These are all acquired by you with some effort. But you do not need to make any special effort to acquire the noble qualities like compassion, love, forbearance, etc., as

they are latent in you. Head is the source of bad thoughts and heart of noble thoughts.

Follow The Heart, Not The Head

Embodiments of Love!

Follow the heart, do not follow the head, lest you should be caught up in the mire of worldly life. Head puts you in many dangers. If you follow the head, you may lose your head itself! Turn your vision inward. Follow the heart, which is the source of all noble qualities like truth, righteousness, peace, love and non-violence. Here we find many bulbs glowing in this Hall. How? Current flows through the wire, enters the bulb and gives us light. Likewise, when the current of truth flows through the wire of righteousness and enters the bulb of peace, we get the light of love. A true human being is the perfect combination of these five human values. These are, in fact, the very life-principle of man, without which he is just like a corpse. But, unfortunately, these are missing in the modern man.

Embodiments of Love!

It is said, “*Janthoonam Narajanma Durlabham*” (Human birth is the rarest among all living beings). You cannot buy or borrow it. Human life is God’s gift. Make proper use of it by rendering service to the society. Do not indulge in slander. Slander is the worst of sins. We find some people

indulging in slander always. It is nothing but the result of their innumerable sins acquired over past lives. *Hasthasya Bhushanam Danam, Sathyam Kanthasya Bhushanam, Srotrasya Bhushanam Sastram* (charity is the true ornament of the hand, truth is the true ornament of the neck and listening to the sacred texts is the true ornament of the ears). Hands have been given to undertake sacred actions, not to fight with others. Why has God given you ears? You listen to vain gossip with rapt attention, but when it comes to listening to the glories of the Lord, your ears get clogged. Recognize the truth that ears are meant to listen to the glories of the Lord. Why has God given you eyes? You are never tired of watching cinema shows one after the other, but your eyes find it difficult to concentrate on the divine form even for a minute.

Today we find even small children wearing spectacles because most of the time their eyes are glued to T.V. sets. Consequently, they have cataract even before attaining the middle age. My body is 75 years old, but there is no trace of cataract. My vision is perfect because I have never seen cinema till this day. You should try to see the reality, i.e., divinity and not the unreality of the cinema and the world.

Do not take pride in your youth and physical beauty.

Very soon you are going to become a decrepit old man.

*Your body will become weak, legs will stagger,
 Vision will get blurred, hair will turn grey
 And there will be wrinkles all over your face.
 Then children will laugh at you
 And make fun of you calling you an old monkey.
 Realise the truth that you are no better
 Than a leather puppet.*

(Telugu Poem)

Bliss Is My Form

Modern youth are highly egoistic. They get carried away by their senses and are enamoured of physical beauty. Consequently, they forget humanness, misuse the body wasting a lot of energy. Is it for this purpose that God has given the human body? No. Serve the society, help the poor and the needy. When you involve yourself in such sacred activities, your body will remain young for any length of time. Many foreigners often ask Me, “Swami, how come you look so young and energetic even at the age of 75?” I tell them that the three Ps in Me are responsible for this. They are purity, patience and perseverance. If you develop these three virtues, you too will remain young and energetic always.

Beauty is not related to the body, it originates from character and purity. Do not indulge in slander and jealousy. Do not censure anybody. If you find a mistake in others, try to correct them lovingly.

Spirituality does not mean giving up everything and leading the life of a recluse. One should always be cheerful and have good thoughts. Never put on a castor-oil face. Let your face be with a smile always. Happiness is union with God. One who is in constant communion with God will always be cheerful and blissful. One should be cheerful even in the face of adversities. Believe it or not, no one has as many problems as I have. When one's desires are fulfilled, one praises Me or else blames Me. But praise and blame are confined to one's own lips. They do not affect Me. I am always blissful. The letters SSS stand for Sri Sathya Sai. Everything is contained in this name.

*Sai says 'Yes' to those who say yes
And 'No' to those who say no.
Yes and no correspond to your mouth,
But for Sai everything is 'Yes, Yes, Yes'.*

(Telugu Poem)

If one voices one's criticism loudly, it will be lost in thin air; if one criticizes within, it goes to one's own self. Either way it does not reach Me. I am always filled with bliss. Bliss is My form. I am beyond pleasure and pain. Only those who have body attachment are elated by pleasure or depressed by pain. But I am absolutely not conscious of the body. You are

always conscious of the world and are related to it. That which is related to the *atma* is consciousness. I am Absolute Consciousness. In fact, all are the embodiments of consciousness; so, all are divine. Once you realize this truth, you will never take to wrong path.

Bookish Knowledge Is Not Enough

Students!

You are young and this is your golden age. Do not misuse it. There are three important things which one has to bear in mind. The first, once it comes will not go away, i.e., wisdom. The second, once it goes will not come back, i.e., ignorance and the third, it neither comes nor goes, i.e., the principle of Brahman. Your faith also should be such that it should be steady, it should not come and go. But the faith of modern students keeps vacillating. Such faith is no faith at all.

Students!

What you are trying to acquire is only bookish knowledge, which constitutes only one-fourth of the total knowledge. The remaining three parts of the knowledge consist of putting all that you study into practice. You will become a truly educated person and a complete human being only when your bookish knowledge is transformed into practical knowledge. Practical knowledge is your true strength. Try to

acquire it. Only then will your education find fulfilment and you will earn a good name.

In this New Year, develop new and sacred feelings and make everybody happy. Do not strive for money; strive for love. Once you develop love, there will be no scope for evil qualities like anger, jealousy, etc. If your thoughts and actions are good, your future is bound to be good. Then the whole country, nay, the whole world will prosper. Pray for the peace and prosperity of the entire world. Peace can be attained only through practice of human values.

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