

THE MOVING TEMPLE

This body is a valueless iron safe;
 Like the precious jewels kept in an iron safe,
 There is the Divine inside the body.
 This Sai's word is the path of Truth.

What you call God is not in some far off place,
 That God is in your very body;
 What you call sin is not in a distant country
 It is there in the very actions that you perform.

Embodiments of the Divine Atma!

Although the human body is worthless in itself and is impermanent, it has to be carefully looked after, because it enshrines the divine *Atma*. This is man's primary duty. Without a healthy and strong body, man will fall an easy victim to numerous ailments. Body is verily the foundation for human life. That is why the ancient Romans, who were aware of this truth and who were the pioneers of modern civilisation in the West, used to carefully undertake various measures for the proper upkeep and development of the body.

The body is a world in itself. It is not merely the outer form. It is the collective assemblage of many organs and limbs. Each organ has its own beauty, which has to be fostered. A weak and unhealthy body is incapable of any resolute action. Pure, noble, and sublime ideas can emanate only from a strong and healthy body. All religions are agreed on this point. Although the body is impermanent, special care should be taken to maintain it properly because it provides residence for the eternal *Atma*. The divine spirit illumines the body although the latter is composed of flesh, blood, faeces, urine, and other foul-smelling and impure things. *Atma* does not grow with the body, nor does it decay along with the body. The *Atma* principle is not subject to growth or decay. It is ever pure, precious and immutable.

Even if a big and brilliant diamond is found in a garbage heap, it does not lose its lustre or value. Just because a good variety of pumpkin is grown in a thorny fence, there will be no change in its taste or cooking quality. Even though the peahen's egg is hatched under the warmth of the ordinary hen or fowl, the young peacock that emerges will not lose its beautiful plumage. So also, the splendour and effulgence of the selfless, stainless, eternal *Atmic* Principle will in no way be diminished although it is associated with the human body which is full of impurities.

What is the reason for people, professing different faiths, being agreed on the need to nourish the health and happiness of the body? It is because all of them regard the body as the temple of the Lord within. Therefore it is man's primary duty not to neglect this holy temple called the body, but to take utmost care for its proper maintenance and for using it for the discharge of one's duties and obligations in life. Persons who do not recognise this truth subject the body to various ordeals in the name of worship, religious vows, fasting, and penance. Thereby they are missing the goal of recognising the eternal *Atmic* Principle. By hitting the anthill, can you kill the snake inside it? By subjecting the body to tor-

ture, can you realise the *Atma*? By giving up good food and water, can you attain liberation? Self-realisation is possible only through knowing your own real nature.

Therefore, the first step in the quest for Self-knowledge is to understand the nature of man. Whatever the number of lives one might have had, the body one has now assumed is new. This shows that Divinity is inherent in man. The discovery of this Divinity, or real Self of man, calls for appropriate enquiry leading to the perception of the Real. When one perceives his real Self through prolonged contemplation on the Self, he becomes a *drashta* (seer). The ultimate aim of *bhakthi* (devotion) is to become such a *drashta* and to experience the world with this spiritual perspective or background. Without this attainment, man remains a human being in form only, with no realisation of his true Self. The Sanskrit word *manava*, used to designate man, means “not new”, because his reality is the *Atma*, which is ancient and eternal. Another meaning of the word *manava* is “*ma*” (*ajnana*, ignorance), “*na*” (without); “*va*” (conducting oneself). In other words, he alone deserves the name of *manava* (man) who conducts himself without ignorance. Can all green birds speak like a parrot? Can every insect found on a flower be called a bee? Can a donkey become a tiger by merely putting on the skin of a tiger? Just because a pig has grown huge like an elephant, can it be called an elephant? Likewise can every one that has the human form be considered a real man? He alone can be rightly called a man, who has harmonised his thoughts, words, and deeds.

The body is like a water bubble, which emerges from water, stays on water for a while, and merges back in water. So also the bubble called “*nara*” (man) has emerged from the water called “Narayana” (God) and merges back in Him. Only when we recognise this divine origin of the human being will we take care to maintain and use the human body in an appropriate manner. Although the body is a mere instrument, its use has to be regulated according to prescribed standards and limits. Every object in the world is governed by certain regulations. It has rightly been said that we cannot achieve any success or progress without observing such discipline. The body too is governed by certain regulations. We should develop purity in our thoughts, feelings, looks, and actions. If, on the other hand, one uses one’s senses and limbs in impure ways, one’s nature would degenerate from human to demoniac.

Our life can be compared to a business enterprise. The body’s normal temperature is 98°, if the temperature goes up to even 99°, it is a symptom of disease. Our blood pressure too is 120/80mm, if it becomes more or less it is considered as disease. Even our eyeball can see light only within a particular range. Any deviation from the range will result in damage to the retina. Similarly our ears can hear sound within a given range; beyond that limit, the eardrums will be damaged. Thus our body may be called a limited company. Hence we should observe these limits while making use of the body. Whether in the food we eat, or water we drink, or the words we speak and hear, in fact in all our living habits, moderation should be observed as the keynote. Exceeding the limits will entail danger. Excessive eating or talking results in mental aberration, while moderate eating or talking is conducive to pleasantness in life. Therefore the body should always be used in such a manner only that confers happiness on man’s life.

Man’s knowledge can be classified into five categories. The type of knowledge that is most widely prevalent nowadays is book knowledge. We are wasting our entire lives for acquiring such book knowledge, which is merely superficial. On account of this, general knowledge and common sense have become conspicuous by their absence. These two, namely, general knowledge and common sense, cannot be gained from books, but only

from various experiences in actual day-to-day living, especially through service to society. The fourth one is discriminative knowledge. This type of knowledge is nowadays being used perversely for selfish ends. This is not the right use of discrimination. What is wanted is the kind of discrimination which keeps in view not the selfish individual good but the collective good of the society at large. Young people should particularly avoid justifying the wrong use of their discrimination for self-interest. They should develop what may be called “fundamental discrimination”, which is equally applicable to all people, irrespective of the country to which they belong. Unlike in the case of ordinary arithmetic, $3-1 = 1$ according to the spiritual arithmetic. You may argue that this equation is incorrect, but I firmly assert that it is correct. Why? Because it is based not on selfish worldly calculation but on selfless *Atmic* calculation, which aims at universal welfare. Of the three entities God, *maya*, and the Universe, God is the object, *maya* is the mirror, and the Universe is God’s reflection. If the mirror be removed, there will be no *maya* and Universe. Then only God remains. Therefore, $3-1 = 1$. People are not in a position to understand such things because they lack the fifth type of knowledge viz. practical knowledge. This practical knowledge is highly essential for man; but it is woefully lacking today, because every individual thinks that it is enough to take care of oneself only. He should realise that he is a part of society and that he should be equally concerned about the welfare of the society as a whole. There is no difference at all between the sun and his rays, or between the sea and its waves. Likewise, there is no difference whatsoever between God and Love, because God is the source of Love. Similar is the relationship between the body and the *Atma*, which are interdependent and intimately associated with each other.

Although the body is transient, it should be properly cared for until *Atma* is realised. Not recognising this truth, many persons neglect the body and expose themselves to the onslaught of many diseases. Even for achieving the four *purusharthas* (goals of human life) viz. *dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, and *moksha*, bodily health is highly essential. Man today is subject to more maladies caused by mental worries than by consuming bad food. What is the shape of worry? It is only a mentally created fear. There should be a limit to speculation, anxiety and worries. Otherwise they will lead to mental troubles and derangement. A study of university students showed that 80 to 90 percent of the students in several universities were suffering from one or the other kind of mental disorders. Students should see that, in this most precious stage of their lives, they do not become a prey to physical or mental ill-health. They should keep their minds away from unnecessary thoughts and worries and also avoid excessive reading, playing, singing, and sleeping, etc., because excessive indulgence in any of such activities will have an adverse effect on the body.

Moreover, you have been told, off and on, about the programme of “Ceiling on Desires”, which has four important components. The first one is: “Don’t waste food.” Why? Because food is God. Food is indispensable for human life, since the body cannot survive without food. The second one is: “Don’t waste money.” The misuse of money is an evil. Today’s youth especially are wasting money in a number of ways. This will lead to bad habits, loss of peace of mind, and the ruining of your life itself. Our country is today facing grave economic problems, so indiscriminate spending of money for selfish purposes should strictly be eschewed in the interest of the society at large. The spirit of cooperation has to be promoted. National unity and integrity should be safeguarded.

A balance has to be maintained between individual interests and national interests. Everything in life depends on maintaining the proper balance, whether it be walking, sitting, cycling or driving a car. Today this balance has been lost because of excessive knowledge and its misuse. If knowledge is to be put to right use, it should be transformed into skill. However, instead of skill, young people in particular are killing knowledge. You are wasting knowledge and energy in seeing, hearing, talking, thinking etc., in wrong manner and in excessive measure. Therefore the third item in the “Ceiling on Desires”, says: “Don’t waste energy.” A small illustration in this connection. You have turned the radio to a particular station. Whether the volume is kept high or low, whether you listen or not, so many units of electrical energy will be wasted. Likewise your body is a radio. You are constantly engaged in thinking as well as talking in a loud or low tone, talking to others or to yourself, talking while awake and even while asleep. Due to such continuous talking day and night, how much of energy is being wasted, thereby causing allergy in your lives. Every action involves the use of energy. If the energy in the body is properly utilised, then balance will be maintained and the body will be in good shape.

The fourth dictum of the “Ceiling on Desires” is: “Don’t waste time.” Students, only when the body is strong, healthy, and happy can you enjoy the proper state of balance in life. Man’s life is wasted in brooding over the past and worrying about the future. What is the root cause of man’s sorrow and sickness? Not being content with what he has, and hankering after what he does not have, man forfeits peace of mind. There is no need to think about what is past or about what is in store in the future. Of what avail is it to think of the past, *which* is irrevocable, or to worry about the future, *which* is uncertain? It is a sheer waste of time. Past is past, future is future. You can do nothing about either. What is most important is the present. This is not ordinary present. It is Omnipresent. The result of the past and the result of the future are both present in the present. You are reaping in the present what you had sown in the past. And what you are sowing in the present you will reap in the future. Thus, both the past and the future are contained in the present only. So, make the best use of the present. Give up all sorts of worry and lead ideal lives leading to immortality and fulfillment of the purpose of human life.

Students! Don’t underestimate the value of the body. Everything in this world is impermanent; on that account, are we neglecting such things? So, even though the body is transient, you should take good care of it so long as it lasts, because it is a moving temple of God. Develop self-confidence instead of confidence in the world. Self-confidence may be compared to the foundation for the edifice of life, self-satisfaction is like the walls, self-sacrifice is the roof, and Self-realisation is the happiness of living in the mansion of human body. Therefore, with self-confidence, you can accomplish anything and secure joy. You will be able to face and surmount any difficulties in life.

What do you mean by Self? Self is of two kinds. One is the single lettered “I”. The other is the three-lettered “eye”, which stands for the body. The single-lettered “I” refers to the *Atma*, which is present in all. There may be some people who may not have the three-lettered “eye” or even if it is there, it may be covered by cataract or suffer from other defects or diseases. But the single lettered “I” exists equally in all persons irrespective of whether one is a *bhogi* (hedonist or pleasure-seeker), *rogi* (diseased person), *yogi* (realised person), *viragi* (the renunciate or monk), or *byragi* (mendicant).

Whenever a number of people are called severally by their names, each of them will respond saying “I”. Although their names and forms are different, the “I” in all of them is one and the same. That is why the *Vedas* have declared, “*Ekam Sath vipra bahudha*

vadanti,” which means: “Truth or existence is one, but the sages call it by various names.” You should, therefore, try to experience the unity underlying the diversity in the universe. It is because you see the diversity, ignoring the unity, that there is so much restlessness and lack of peace in the world. For instance, nations are many but earth is one; stars are many but sky is one, beings are many but breath is one. Therefore, if man remembers this unity in diversity, there will be no room for differences, quarrels or wars in the world.

Students, you are now in the most precious period of your life. You should never give room for any differences and discrimination in your thoughts, words, or deeds. Such unhealthy ideas arise from an unhealthy body. Each of you can judge for yourself whether you are strong and healthy or weak and unhealthy, based on the nature of ideas that arise in you. That is why it is said “*Yat bhavam tat bhavati* (As you think, so you become.)” Just as you take care of the iron safe for the sake of the valuable jewels inside, so too you should take care of your body for the sake of the precious *Atma* in it. You should eat to live but not live to eat. If you have self-confidence, the required food will come walking to you, as it were. You need not go in search of food. That is why it is said in the *Bhagavatha* that one who seeks the *Atma* is a *gopi* (devotee) while one who seeks food is a *papi* (sinner). It is a pity that having got the invaluable human birth, people are running after *anna* (food) instead of seeking the *Atma*. *Vedanta* has been exhorting man to find out who he really is. Instead of using the mirror of your intellect for looking at your Self, you are placing the mirror in front of others to see them. That is why you are not able to see yourself.

Develop self-confidence, which will lead you to bliss. Never give room for worries and anxieties. Gain sufficient strength of the body and mind to face boldly the difficulties, losses, and sorrows that may confront you in life. This will be facilitated if you practise the four F’s taught in our educational system viz., “Follow the Master (your conscience),” “Face the Devil,” “Fight till the end,” and “Finish the game.” What is the inner meaning of the first three letters of the alphabet, A, B, C in the English language? They mean Always Be Careful. The same dictum is given by the *Upanishad* by exhorting a man to “arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached.”

However long you may live, whatever scientific knowledge you may acquire, whatever position you may occupy, some time or other you have to know the Truth about yourself. Start knowing it from now itself. You should be on the alert all the time, because you can never know when the Lord’s Grace, His Love and Benediction will be showered on you, at what time and at what place and in what circumstances. Unlike in the case of worldly matters, you cannot understand what is happening in the spiritual domain or what the Divine plans are. Therefore, if you go on discharging your duties and obligations in the proper manner with enthusiasm and joy, that itself will confer bliss on you. Don’t worry about the future. Don’t brood over the past. All are passing clouds only. In this world, there is nothing permanent whether persons, objects or other things. The very name *jagat* (universe) means “coming and going.” Knowing this truth, why should you worry at all? So give no scope whatsoever for any kind of worry. Only then can man be entitled to become divine.

It is only man that is endowed with the capacity to discover his Divinity. In this context, food habits play an important role. Out of 84,000,000 living beings on earth, 83,999,999 species of creatures like insects, birds, animals, and beasts, etc., live on what is provided by God in nature, and hence they do not generally suffer from any diseases.

Man is the sole exception in this regard. By becoming a slave to his palate, he relishes only cooked and spicy foods of various kinds, without realising to what extent such foods are curtailing his own longevity.

Besides this, it is significant to note that those who live on vegetarian food are less prone to diseases whereas non-vegetarians are subject to more diseases. Why? Because animal food is incompatible with the needs of the human body. Doctors speak about proteins being present in non-vegetarian food, but the fact is that there are better quality proteins in food articles like vegetables, pulses, milk, curd, etc. Non-vegetarian food not only affects man's body but also has deleterious effect on his mind.

Food, Head, God—these three are interrelated. By consuming animal food, animal tendencies are aroused. As is your food, so are your thoughts. Men today are behaving in a manner worse than that of wild animals in the forest. They have become cruel, pitiless, and hard-hearted. There is no sympathy or understanding even between man and man. The main reason for this condition lies in the kind of food that is consumed. Students, be careful about the food you eat. See that it is conducive to your health and happiness. Our ancestors used to take food twice a day and our ancient sages used to eat only once a day. They declared that the man who eats only once is a *yogi*, the one who eats twice a day is a *bhogi* (enjoyer), and he who eats thrice a day is a *rogi* (sick man). Today, people go on consuming food at all times, not to speak of drinks and snacks in between. How then can they escape from indigestion and other diseases? Man needs food that supplies him energy equivalent to about one calorie per minute. Young people should be satisfied with 2,000 calories of food per day. For healthy life, man needs only 1,500 calories per day. But nowadays, the food intake has increased up to 5,000 calories. As a result, people suffer from indigestion and sleeplessness. Loss of sleep gives rise to many ailments. Don't worry about sleep. If you go to bed without any worry, you will get sound sleep automatically.

Observe moderation in your intake of food as well as in other living habits, to keep your body in good shape and to perform your duties properly. However, do not develop undue attachment to the body. The two feelings of "I" and "mine" are solely responsible for all the problems and evils prevailing in society. You should try to minimize, if not eliminate altogether, the feelings of "doership" and enjoyership". Then only will you be able to lead ideal lives.

We suffer from ill health due to psychological reasons also. If you examine your pulse, blood pressure, temperature, etc., with feeling or fear that you are unwell, you will get abnormal readings. If you have the apprehension that you will not get good sleep, it will happen accordingly. So, always try to have a positive outlook and self-confidence that your health is all right. Our ancients wished to live long for the sake of a Godly life and therefore tried to preserve the health of their bodies as well as minds accordingly. Today, one is called an old man at the age of sixty or seventy. But in olden days, people were considered young even at the age of 80, 90 or 100. Students, you might have read in the Mahabharata that at the time of the *Kurukshetra* war, Krishna and Arjuna were 86 years and 84 years old respectively. But they were in youthful condition and participated in the war with vigour, vitality, and valour. Who was the Commander-in-chief of the Kaurava army? It was the 116 year old Bhishma. If it were to be today, a 116 year old man would be confined to his cot, with his body shaking all over and needing others' help even for getting up from bed. But Bhishma fought fiercely for nine days. How do you account for this? It was because of their mental strength, nourishing food, and above

all Self-confidence (confidence in the real Self, *Atma*). Today such spiritual strength is totally lacking among the people. Self-confidence is constantly going up and down. Their minds are unsteady and subject to jumps and bumps from moment to moment. If their wishes are fulfilled, they will install ten pictures of God instead of one in their shrine room. In case their desires are not complied with, they will remove even the one picture that they used to worship previously. This is an indication of the waywardness of their mind. This is not the right attitude.

You may worship a picture as God, but not God as a picture. If your mind wavers from moment to moment, how can there be steadiness or stability in life? Every one must endeavour to develop the courage to face the vicissitudes of life, joys or sorrows, gains or losses, with equanimity.

Today, many who profess themselves to be believers in God. But because these so-called believers do not conduct themselves properly, many are becoming atheists. Talking about *bhakti* (devotion), they resort to *bhukthi* (hedonism). This is no genuine devotion. A devotee should be ready to gladly accept anything as God's gift. Can you get sugar by merely requesting the sugar cane, instead of crushing it to extract the juice from it? Even if it is the best kind of diamond, will it shine in all its effulgence unless it is subjected to cutting and polishing? Similarly, it is only when man undergoes trials and tribulations, hardships, losses and sorrows that his real worth will shine forth. *Bhakti* (devotion) is the nectar obtained as a result of churning the essences of many *Upanishads* and Scriptures. Real devotion is that which is buttressed by firm faith and is steadfast and unchanging under all circumstances. Only then does one deserve to get the fruits of real *bhakti* (devotion).

Embodiments of Divine Love!

Although you may have body-consciousness, your lives should be guided by the *Atmic* awareness. The body, the senses, the mind, the intellect and the *Atma* are to be considered as your five-breaths (*pancha pranas*). Once you have understood the mysteries or subtleties of each of them you need no other spiritual discipline. Truth is everything. Without realising this, what is the use of troubling yourselves with all sorts of *sadhanas* (spiritual practices)? I am explaining to you, during this summer course, about the subtle truths relating to the five vital constituents of your personality, in compliance with the request of your Vice-Chancellor. You speak about meditation. What do you do in meditation? You are merely sitting in a comfortable posture, with your eyes closed. But your mind is wandering in the barber's shop, or washerman's laundry or in the bazaar (market place). Instead of engaging yourself in such futile exercises, you had better enter into the society and undertake selfless service. Without understanding what real meditation is, your attempts at meditation will result only in sound sleep. First of all, try to understand the nature of the mind. Then only will you be able to control it. Once, an old woman came to me and complained that her mind was giving her endless trouble by its restless wanderings. Then I asked her, "Where is that mind which is troubling you? Show it to me and I shall destroy it." She replied "Swami, I don't know where it is." I told her, "If you do not know where the mind is, how do you say it is troubling you? Is it the mind that is troubling you or are you troubling yourself." So without understanding anything about the mind, to blame it is meaningless and to sit in meditation is sheer idleness. You must, therefore, have a thorough understanding of the nature of the mind as well as the senses. Everything in the world has some useful secrets to reveal. God does not create anything without a purpose. All things are purposeful, meaningful, blissful, and valuable. But we

are not making any effort to understand their mysteries. Hence I hope and bless that during this fortnight you will understand thoroughly the nature and the role of the body, the senses, the mind, the intellect, and the *Atma* so that you may blossom forth as ideal students endowed with purity and equanimity.