

Cultivate Good Thoughts and Noble Feelings in your Heart

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Karma is responsible for birth, existence, and death. It holds sway over all stages of life as the very deity of human existence. It is responsible for joy and sorrow.

(Telugu Poem)

Karma (action) is the very life breath of a human. Every human being has to undertake *karma* keeping in mind the possible result of the *karmas*. This is the most important duty of a human being. As the *karma*, so will be the result.

One has to keep good health, not merely physical health but mental health too. Thoughts and resolutions should also be healthy. Good thoughts result in good *karmas*. When one undertakes *karmas* with evil thoughts, the result will also be bad.

Who made the bats to hang from the branches of a tree with their heads downward? Has anyone tied them upside down out of hatred? No, it is their fate. Likewise, nobody can escape from the consequences of *karma*. A human being does bad *karmas*, entertains bad thoughts, and ultimately encounters bad results. On the other hand, one who entertains good thoughts and undertakes good *karmas* enjoys good results. It is not possible to get good results by doing bad deeds.

A small example: when you write correct answers for the questions in an examination, you will get good marks, and vice versa. Undertaking bad deeds denotes animalistic tendency. One has to analyze at every stage whether one is behaving like a human being or an animal. When you indulge in bad deeds, even your neighbours will restrain you, saying, "Being born as a human, why do you behave like an animal?" Thus, one is ridiculed and punished even by a fellow human being. When you resort to evil deeds, you need not have to wait for long till God decides to punish you. The result of your evil deeds accrues to you from yourself.

By doing a bad deed, a good result cannot be achieved;
By doing a good deed, bad results will not accrue;
Having planted a lime sapling, can you obtain a mango fruit?
By planting a mango sapling, can you get a lime fruit?

(Telugu poem)

Human beings have to realise that they are born to undertake good deeds only. The word *manava* (human being) has profound meaning. It consists of three letters: 'ma' (means ignorance), na (means without), va (means to conduct). Thus, one who conducts oneself without ignorance is a *manava* (human being). Having been born as a human being, one has to conduct oneself accordingly.

When the crows caw, we chase them away by throwing a stone at them. On the other hand, when a parrot speaks small words sweetly, we hear them with joy. We are never tired

of hearing a cuckoo bird singing. What does all this signify? By our sweet words and good behaviour, we make ourselves endearing to all.

Human beings have to help their fellow human beings. "Help ever; hurt never." Even though we are aware of this maxim, we do harm to others knowingly. That is the greatest mistake. Humans have been endowed with a reasoning faculty. The mind can be employed in both good and bad ways. That is why it is said, *Manah eva manushyanam karanam bandhamokshayo* (mind is the cause for bondage and liberation of man). The mind is a gift of God to a human being. It is not the real nature of a human being to abuse, make fun of, or hurt others. Even animals are helping human beings in ever so many ways. Thus, what greatness lies in a human being helping a fellow human being? Having been born as human beings, we must conduct ourselves accordingly and love all as our brothers and sisters.

We must undertake such activities to please to God. Then only will our human birth be sanctified. God resides in all. *Daivam manusha rupena* (God incarnates in the form of a human being). When God incarnates in human form, we should obey His divine command. It is said *Jantunam nara janma durlabham* (out of all living beings, human birth is the rarest). We should not waste such a precious human birth. We will be losing our humanness by speaking untruth, causing injustice to others and undertaking bad deeds. A human being has to behave as a human being by following the principle, "see good, do good, and be good."

Some people appear to be good cast evil looks on others. That is not good.

*Manasyekamvachasyekam, karmanyekam mahatmanam,
Manasyanyath vachasyanyath, karmanyanyath duratmanam.*

Those whose thoughts, words and deeds are in perfect harmony are noble ones;
Those who lack harmony of these are wicked.)

There must be harmony between one's thoughts, words, and deeds. When there is unity between these three, there will be purity. Where there is purity, there is Divinity. Whatever others do to you, consider it as good for you. See that you do not lose your humanness under any circumstances. In fact, humanness is your most valuable property.

"Love all and serve all." Then only you can lead a healthy and happy life. Do not eat junk food or food that is prohibited. You have to partake good, *sathwic* food that is offered first to God. You don't offer all sorts of food to God, do you? *Sathwic* food that is prepared in a clean vessel with pure feelings is offered to God. The food so offered to God has to be partaken as *prasadam* (sanctified food). Good food brings good health, and from good health arises good thoughts. Unfortunately, today there is dichotomy between our thoughts, words, and deeds. We say something and do something else.

Once, a person pretending to be an ascetic came to a house and begged for food. The housewife told him, "Please go to the river, finish your bath, and come back. In the meantime, I will prepare food for you".

The 'ascetic' was by nature a lazy fellow. He told her, "Mother! For wandering mendicants like us, '*Govindethi sada snanam*' (chanting of the divine name of Govinda is equivalent to having a bath)."

The housewife was clever enough to teach him a lesson. She told him "Dear son! *Govindethi sada bhojanam* (The divine name of Govinda is verily food for you). You can go."

Evil feelings may sometimes arise in our heart. They have to be corrected by participating in *sathsanga* (good company). It is said, "Tell me your company, I shall tell you what you are." If you are in good company, you will be a good person. On the other hand, if you move

about in bad company, you will also become bad. Hence, always move in good company. If you partake of meat, indulge in smoking and drinking, and say that you are a good person, no one will agree with that statement. If you wish to be a good person, undertake good and noble activities.

As are your *karmas*, so shall be the results. Human birth is very sacred. It is the result of *sathkarmas* (good actions) performed over several past lives.

A few thousand devotees are gathered in this hall. For what purpose? To sanctify their time in the divine presence of God, to hear the divine message, and contemplate on the same. The entire hall is permeated by divine vibrations. That is why saints and sages proclaim the importance of *sathsanga*.

*Satsangatwe nissangatwam,
Nissangatwe nirmohatwam,
Nirmohatwe nischalatattwam,
Nischalatattwe jivanmukti*
(Sanskrit Verse)

Good company leads to detachment;
Detachment makes one free from delusion;
Freedom from delusion leads to steadiness of mind;
Steadiness of mind confers liberation.

We should move about in good company and cultivate good thoughts and feelings. Jealousy, anger, ego, and such other ill feelings must be shed. Gratitude is another good quality to be cultivated. A person with gratitude, wherever they are, will prosper. Some people return evil for good. They are verily demons. We must show gratitude to all those who help us, irrespective of whether the help is small or great.

We must serve all. We must greet with love even those who hate us. Then they will also respond with a loving greeting. If you address others with respect, saying, “Sir!”, they will also treat you with respect. On the other hand, if you insult them, you will get the same in return. Our entire life is filled with reaction, resound, and reflection. See good, do good, and be good. Then your birth as a human being will be sanctified. Your own good nature will protect you. That is your real support.

Lawyers, while arguing their cases in the courts, always rely upon witnesses. But we don't require someone else to testify to our good conduct. Our own mind is the witness to our good nature. If you want to earn money, do it—but by fair means and good conduct. First and foremost, your actions should be in accordance with your conscience. Self satisfaction should be the most important goal in whatever activity you undertake. Only when you achieve self satisfaction will you be able to go to the next step of self-sacrifice.

Dear students!

You must cultivate good and noble feelings right from this early age. That is true education. There is no use studying voluminous texts. I find several students always reading and reading books. We are not sure what kind of books they are reading. Read good books that will help develop your character. Do not read books that go against the basic tenets of humanness.

You are all now students. Pursuit of education is your goal. What kind of education? Education that would confer *Atma Jnana* (knowledge of the Self). Some boys read big books, and their parents feel happy thinking that their children are reading the *Ramayana* or the *Mahabharatha*. But nobody knows for sure what exactly they are reading. Some may be

reading trash novels, keeping them in between the pages of those voluminous books. Do not resort to such dubious actions, for if you do such things, your entire life will be spoiled. Society will not respect you.

First and foremost, students must control their anger, cultivate patience, and lead a peaceful life. Only by developing a calm and serene mind can you understand your lessons well. This is the age when your hearts are pure. It may not be possible for you to make everyone happy. But conduct yourself in such a manner that your actions please to God.

Everyone in this world wishes to be happy. But where does the real happiness lie? "*Hari bhajana bina sukha santhi nahi.*" True peace and happiness lie in singing *bhajans*. That is why Guru Nanak had initiated the *sadhana* (spiritual exercises) of community *bhajan* singing. If a group of people come together and sing the glory of God, at least one person's heart will be tuned to Divinity.

We find people dozing during *Sivarathri akhanda bhajan*. Some others mechanically participate in the *bhajan*, while their mind is roaming elsewhere. In spite of these undesirable things, community singing is still a better *sadhana*. At least one in this group will have their mind fixed in God while singing the *bhajan*. Community singing is pleasing to God.

Sivarathri means an auspicious night. Every day, there is a *rathri* (night). But all nights cannot equal Sivarathri. Real Sivarathri is only that where the divine name is contemplated upon and sung with devotion. That is the only auspicious night. Hence, cultivate noble feelings in your heart at least on this auspicious night.