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Cultivate Satwic Qualities Right from Childhood

by
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Childhood passes in trivial play with other children.
Youth passes in amorous sport,
Middle age absorbs time and effort in amassing wealth,
Come dotage, time crawls in futile longing for worldly desires,
yet there is no time for contemplation of God.
Thus is wasted the precious heritage of human birth,
deeply entangled in the net of karma.
(Telugu poem)

Why waste your time in idleness?
Time wasted is life wasted;
Arise, awake, it is not too late,
Think of the future, at least now.
(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love! Dear Students!

If you spend your time thus, if you fritter away your time and energy in vain pursuits thus, what for is your human birth? What will happen to you in future? Did you ever ponder over this? Time is the measure for human life. Time is the most precious aspect in human life. Don't waste time. "Time wasted is life wasted." You have to seriously question yourself whether it is sensible to waste your time thus. If you waste your precious time in this young age, when will you be able to sanctify your life?

Man has to perform karma in this karmabhumi (field of activity) right from birth to death. In fact, the human birth has been given to us to perform karma. Therefore, we are engaged in performing various karmas, continuously. But, very few make any effort to ask themselves whether the karmas performed are sathkarmas (good deeds) or not.

One has to strive to sanctify one's time, right from childhood. We partake of a variety of items as food to sustain the human body. But none is making an enquiry whether the food one partakes of is proper and healthy, whether it is beneficial for nourishing and nurturing one's physical, mental, and spiritual health.

Man is born out of karma, grows and
departs from the world due to karma;
Karma is verily the embodiment of divinity.
It is only due to karma that happiness and sorrow
occur in the world.
(Telugu Poem)

The Bhagavadgita exhorts that man has a right only to perform his duty and none to the fruit thereof. Of course, there will be a result for every karma that is performed by a human being. There will be a good result for a good karma and a bad

result for a bad **karma**. This is the eternal law. When you partake of a mango fruit, you will only have the belch of that fruit and not that of a lime fruit. In the same manner, your head (thoughts) will always be conditioned by the type of food you consume.

"As the food, so is the head (thoughts). As the head, so is God" Thus, the food, the head, and God will be on the same wavelength. Hence, one has to cultivate good and noble thoughts always. If you eat **sathwic** (pure, serene) food and cultivate **sathwic** nature right from childhood, your entire life will run smoothly. Hence, one has to be wary of one's food and head (thoughts). If you wish to sanctify your human birth, you should not live like a bird, beast, or an animal. Having taken birth as a human being, one has to perform the **karmas** worthy of a human being. One has to conduct oneself as a human being.

What does the term "human values" imply? **Sathya** (truth), **dharma** (righteousness), **santhi** (peace), **prema** (love), and **ahimsa** (nonviolence). It is only when we cultivate and exhibit these five human values in our daily lives that we will be entitled to be called human beings. Human being is a repository of **trigunas**, namely, **sathwa** (calm serenity), **rajas** (passionate activity), and **thamo guna** (sloth, slumber). Unfortunately, today, we find the **rajo** and **thamo gunas** more active in human beings. We do not find even a trace of **sathwa guna** anywhere. Hence, it is of utmost importance today that people are taught and encouraged to cultivate **sathwa guna**, perform **sathwic karmas** and finally reach the abode of **sathwic guna**.

Embodiments of Love!

You are now in the stage of childhood. This is the right age to cultivate **sathwa guna**. The quality of your life in the later stages will depend upon the qualities you cultivate now. What is the use of trying to cultivate **sathwa guna** at the fag end of your life, when your physical body refuses to co-operate with you in your **sadhana** (spiritual exercises)? Hence, you must cultivate and put into practice the **sathwa guna** in the youthful age itself. If man wishes to experience **manavatwa** (humanness) and reach **Daivatwa** (Divinity), **sathwa guna** is very essential. It is only when you consciously cultivate **sathwa guna** that you will be able to attain **sathwic** nature. If you aim to attain **sathwic** nature but indulge in **rajasic** and **thamasic** acts, it is not possible. All our ancient sages and seers did their **sadhana** when they were young and strong.

Embodiments of Love!

You have to partake of **sathwic** food. By partaking of **sathwic** food, you will be able to cultivate **sathwic** thoughts. And, by cultivating **sathwic** thoughts, you will be able to undertake **sathwic karmas**. It is absolutely necessary that one should have **sathwic** friends in youth and constantly move about in their company. It is said,

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

Hence, you have to partake of **sathwic** food, keeping your goal of liberation in the mind.

You may at times have a doubt that you may not get such **sathwic** food. I do not at all agree with this view. Don't you get vegetables and edible green leaves in plenty? In fact, the moment you are born out of your mother's womb, you are surviving and thriving on your mother's milk or cow's milk. Is this not **sathwic** food? Can you not live upon a vegetarian diet consisting of vegetables, green leaves, and cow's milk?

Why should you cater to the dictates of your palate, adding chillies, salt, tamarind, and spices? It is only when you gradually reduce these ingredients for taste you will be able to cultivate **sathwa guna**. Parents have a great responsibility in teaching the children about the efficacy of **sathwic** food and getting them accustomed to it right from their childhood. On the other hand, if the parents themselves prepare and serve **rajasic** and **thamasic** food consisting of meat, fish, etc., in their homes, how can they expect the children to develop **sathwa guna**?

I am of the view that the children at least should abstain from such **rajasic** and **thamasic** food and demand from their parents only **sathwic** food. One has to consciously cultivate the habit of partaking of only **sathwic** food. Only then will one be able to develop **sathwa guna**.

Embodiments of Love!

All our senses are conditioned by the **trigunas**, and the **gunas**, in turn, are conditioned by the food we consume. Hence, if we start eating **sathwic** food, undertake **sathwic karmas** and move about in the company of **sathwic** friends, I am sure that we can transform ourselves into **sathwic** individuals. It is bad company that is responsible for evil qualities. If you want to cultivate good qualities, you have to eat **sathwic** food. In fact, it is the food that we consume is responsible for all the evil qualities.

Dear students!

If you develop bad qualities like anger, passion, envy, jealousy, etc., right from this early age, your entire life will be spoiled. You are poisoning your young minds with these evil qualities. My advice to the youngsters and students is eat **sathwic** food; cultivate **sathwic** behaviour, and keep the company of **sathwic** people right from this early age.

I often observe that youngsters today join bad company the moment they enter the school or college and continue to move about in the company of bad people. With the result that they cultivate bad qualities, resulting in bad behaviour. Frequently, they are not even aware of the subtle changes taking place in their behaviour toward elders, parents, teachers, and society. They think that they are on the right track, since they are pursuing education in a good educational institution. The education they are pursuing may be good, but the core of their heart is polluted due to bad company. Several bad thoughts emanate in their mind even at a young age.

People often think that it is a natural phenomenon due to young age. I do not at all subscribe to this view. It is not a natural phenomenon at all! It is most unnatural. Since you are partaking of bad food, you are having bad thoughts. Hence, first and foremost, give up bad food. People who are devoted to Swami, must join **satsanga**. But you are joining bad company and, as a result, are developing bad thoughts. Once bad thoughts enter your mind, none can drive them away. Hence, you have to cultivate good thoughts even before bad thoughts enter your mind.

Several parents are not concerned about the future of their children. Either they are too busy pursuing their vocations or they are helpless in supervising your behaviour. But, if you tread the right path, they will be most happy. On the other hand, if you are moving about in bad company, cultivating bad habits, resulting in bad behaviour, they will be very sad and will be unable to share their distress or anguish with anybody. Hence, it is your foremost duty to keep your parents happy.

If you want to keep your parents happy, you must tread the right path. So, tread the right path and keep your parents happy. Only then will you be able to cultivate good behaviour. There are three aspects in human life, which are interlinked: thoughts, behaviour, and the end result. As the thoughts, so will be the behaviour, and as the behaviour, so will be the result. Teachers expect good behaviour from their pupils. How is it possible, when the students move about in bad company, eat wrong kinds of food, and entertain bad thoughts? The end result is always bad in such a situation. While taking bitter food, how can you experience sweetness? In short, the **rajasic** and **thamasic** food that you consume is the root cause for the bad thoughts that are entering your mind.

Dear students!

All of you must tread the right path. Even if your parents for any reason offer you **rajasic** and **thamasic** food prepared in the home, you must explain and convince them of the ill-effects of such food, saying, "Mother! If you serve **rajasic** and **thamasic** food to me, I will only get bad thoughts. This is not conducive to good behaviour on my part." You must also convince them of the need to prepare and serve **sathwic** food to all members of the family. Not only should you eat **sathwic** food, you should also read good books. Your entire life is dependent upon good food, good thoughts, and good company.

Dear students!

You should not read all sorts of trash like cheap novels, stories, etc. Such trash will generate bad thoughts in you and pollute your mind. When you go to a library, you should read the biographies of great and noble people, which will help to cultivate good qualities and good thoughts in you. One reason for the pollution of young minds and proliferation of bad thoughts in them is reading all sorts of cheap literature. In fact, it is only the mind that is responsible for good or bad thoughts. That is why it is said, **Manaeva manushyanam karanam bandhamokshayo** (mind is responsible for both bondage and liberation of man). Unfortunately, in these days it is only cheap books that have become popular and acquired great attraction. Good books have become a rare commodity.

A question may arise as to where one would get such good books. You go to good libraries of institutions committed to

the moral and spiritual uplift of humanity. Frequently, we come across people traveling in trains and buses purchasing worthless books available in the railway platforms and bus stands and reading them with absorbing interest. They may say that they are reading them for whiling away the time. They do not realise how harmful those books are in generating bad thoughts and polluting their minds. Hence, you must always select books that contribute to your intellectual, moral, and spiritual development.

Embodiments of Love!

If you wish to cultivate good thoughts and good behaviour, you must read good books. Several students today consider it a fashion to read cheap literature that is available for a low price. With the result that cheap thoughts and cheap behaviour are generated in them. They look for cheap books and trash distributed free of cost. They woefully lack a sense of discrimination to judge whether such writing is conducive to their moral, spiritual, and character development. They will, however, realise the consequences of their action after their minds are totally polluted. Then it will be too late for them to retrace their steps. It is only through good books that good thoughts and good behaviour can be cultivated.

Dear students!

There are several other important aspects to be taught to you in these three days that will enable you to cultivate noble thoughts and tread the right path. I will teach several aspects in due course that will enable you to cultivate pure thoughts.