

Rise From Human To Divine Level

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Editor's note. This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, November 2016. In this illuminating discourse, Bhagavan cautions the youth to limit their desires and control their senses by using their power of discrimination. He advises them to be aware that unchecked gratification of senses can ruin their life.

Human life is as unstable as a drop of water on a lotus leaf.

This body is a den of diseases and attachment.
The entire world is riddled with sorrow and misery.

Therefore, oh foolish people, chant the name of Govinda.

(Telugu poem)

There are many stages in the lives of people. At every stage, people embrace only untruth and unrighteousness. They make no effort to seek truth and righteousness and thus turn their sacred hearts into hard stone.

Today, a human being is not able to understand the meaning of humanness. Humanness implies harmony of thought, word, and deed. What is the use of saying one thing, thinking another thing, and doing something else? People pass through divine experiences at every stage of life, but do they make any attempt to know their import?

Unlimited desires ruin people's lives

The first stage of life is childhood. This period is totally spent in playing and singing, fun and frolic. Gradually, people grow up and attain the stage of youth. At this stage, they behave in an arbitrary manner, lose discrimination between good and bad, and get entangled in many desires. What are these desires? Do they befit a human being? They do not question themselves: Am I a human being or an animal?

Along with education, people acquire ego and other perversions. Before completing their

education, they are filled with ego and attachment from top to toe.

Due to the effect of the present education system, people lose their sense of discrimination. They consider selfishness and self-interest as the main objectives of life. They want to possess all that they see and want to fulfill all their desires. To desire all that you see is the quality of an animal, not that of a human being. Unchecked fulfillment of desires makes a person demonic.

People should use their sense of discrimination to know what they should see and desire. But at this stage of youth, they are not able to understand that fulfillment of all sorts of desires can put them into danger. They think that they can derive pleasure and happiness by gratifying the senses without knowing that these senses are verily the emissaries of Yama (the god of death). Senses lead people to the path of ignorance and burn their humanness to ashes.

So, one should remain absolutely cautious in youth and should exercise control over one's senses. Otherwise, the senses will gradually destroy one's humanness.

What does humanness actually mean? Humanness implies treading the path of discrimination, quietude, and self-enquiry without haste and anxiety.

Spend the period of youth in a sacred way

Young people do not realise how everything changes with the passage of time. A water drop shines like a pearl on the lotus leaf. How long

does its beauty last? The moment a gust of wind comes, the shining pearl-like water drop will merge in water. Similarly, a youth today shines like a pearl on the leaf of desire in the lake of worldliness (*samsara*). The youth does not enquire where the water drop has emerged from.

The drop of water came out of water. It was born in water, grew in water, and ultimately merged in water.

A human being is a water bubble. Lord Narayana is water. People have no other choice except to merge in Narayana. But people do not realise this truth. Thereby, they destroy their humanness and turn it into animality.

Born as *manava* (human being), people should rise to the level of *Madhava* (God). They should not degenerate to the level of an animal. This truth has to be realised by everyone.

The stages of a person's life may change, money may come and go, and the person may acquire any amount of worldly knowledge and wealth, but their lifespan must end one day. They cannot bring back even one moment of the time that is gone. Therefore, do not waste time; instead, sanctify it by using it in a sacred manner.

Having been born as human beings, people lead the lives of animals. Even an animal has a reason and a season. But people today have no reason and no season.

In spite of high education, scientific knowledge, name and fame, and high position, people follow the path of selfishness and become worse than even an animal.

What is education for? Why accumulate wealth? Of what use is a sharp intellect? People use all of them only to deceive others. They think that they are deceiving others. No! They are deceiving themselves. Today, people are not using their capacities and potentialities in the right way.

The stage of youth is not meant to be whiled away in careless abandon. The youth stage comes in between. It does not come with us and does not go with us. It is transitory, like passing clouds. Even intelligent people are not able to recognise this truth. The so-called intellectuals

have a high name but low thoughts. Such persons cannot be called human beings at all. One who is unable to improve oneself is, in fact, a fool.

Therefore, it is necessary for youth to follow the right path, utilise their authority in a proper manner, and earn a good reputation. Then only will their humanness shine brilliantly.

The third stage of human life is old age. In old age, people keep brooding over past events and past deeds. As the old age of a man starts, even his wife and son do not respect him. What is the reason? He will be respected in old age only when his conduct in young age has been good. Nobody will respect him when his conduct has not been proper in younger days.

Ultimately, brooding over his past misdeeds, the man will spend his time in repentance. He will not be able to derive any happiness from the money he earned through unrighteous and devious means. All the money he amassed will ultimately reach either a wicked child or a relative after his death.

Therefore, take to the right path before it is too late. Prahlada said:

If one does not worship the Lord wholeheartedly,
If one does not sing His glory till the mouth aches,
If one lacks truth and compassion in the heart,
Then one is a curse on the womb of their mother.

(Telugu poem)

Education should develop divine feelings

The eyes are one of the main organs of the body. That is why eye (*netra*) is called scripture (*sastra*). Ninety-five percent of one's actions in daily life are done through the eyes. All that we read, all that we watch, all that we perceive is based on the eyes. Without the eyes, one cannot recognise even a small object or walk even an inch forward. Though the eye is so small, it can see stars that are millions of miles away.

Apart from such powerful physical eyes, people should develop their inner eyes. Humans travel lakhs and lakhs of miles in space, but do they go even an inch within themselves?

Do you know why eyes are given to humans? Are the eyes meant to see anything and

everything? No! no! Eyes are given to see the Lord of Kailasha, Siva. Do you know why God has given hands to humans? Hands are not given to do whatever ones likes. Hands are given to worship God.

What is human birth for? Is it to give pain to the mother's womb? Even dogs and foxes have birth. What is the use of a person's birth when they do not render any help even to their parents? Is that education? No! This is no education at all. What is meant by education? Real education is that which develops divine feelings for one's elevation. That is true humanness.

- One may acquire a high academic qualification such as M.A. or B.A. and attain an exalted position;
 - One may amass wealth, perform acts of charity, and attain name and fame;
 - One may have physical strength and enjoy a long and healthy life;
 - One may be a great scholar studying and preaching the *Vedas*;
- But none can equal a true devotee of the Lord.
(Telugu poem)

Devotion, devotion, devotion! What is this devotion? Does it mean deceiving others? To deceive others in the name of devotion amounts to deceiving God.

Devotion means obeying God's command implicitly. Under any circumstances, do not harm anyone. Help Ever! Hurt Never! That is the essence of the eighteen *puranas* (mythological texts).

But, unfortunately, some people go on harming others all their lives. All this is selfishness, selfishness, selfishness.

We are born in society, we grow up and progress in society. But what help are we rendering to society? We don't have that social awareness. All that we know is I and mine. Is that the entirety of life? No! We should travel from 'I' to 'we'. From 'we' we should progress to the principle of 'all' and merge in it.

This kind of broad feeling is not found in the present system of education. This is how the minds of people are working today: What should I study so that I can prosper? What type of education should I acquire to attain high po-

sition? How can I deceive others and earn money?

Rather they should ask themselves: How can I do good to society, in what way will my education help society?

But people in general lack such broad ideas. Those who lack this broad-mindedness cannot be called human beings in the true sense of the term. All that they study is no education at all. Even a monkey can learn to ride a bicycle by training, as we see in a circus. This is also a kind of education.

Real education is not what you learn by reading books—that is only bookish knowledge or superficial knowledge. Practical knowledge is important. You have been listening so much. How much of it have you put into practice? Nothing whatsoever!

Put your knowledge into practice

Years are rolling by. You are aging. But you haven't developed your intellect and discrimination; no practice whatsoever. It is not the way you can progress from human to divine level. Put at least one or two teachings into practice.

In spite of his education and intelligence, a foolish man will not know his true Self and a mean-minded man will not give up his evil qualities.
(Telugu poem)

Modern education leads only to argumentation, not to total wisdom.
What is the use of acquiring an education that cannot lead you to immortality?
Acquire the knowledge that will make you immortal.
(Telugu poem)

Why should we study? Just to die one day! It is better to die without education than to die with education. People should acquire the education that will make them immortal.

There are so many educated people in the country. What service are they rendering to the country? They should enquire why their country is degenerating. The fact is that people are immersed in utter selfishness and are behaving like a frog in a well. They lack broad feelings of welfare of others. They have only two consider-

ations, 'I' and 'mine', 'I' and 'mine', nothing else. This is not the quality of a true devotee. It is a bad quality.

Swami sees many people. There are some true devotees also. But if they waste all their time in worldly pursuits, then when will they have the experience of Divinity? When you spend all your life in studying books, when will you put your knowledge into practice? It is only practice that gives you bliss, not learning. All that you do should make others happy and should spread happiness in society. This is the essence of *Bhaja Govindam* of Adi Sankara¹.

An old man was sitting under a tree on the bank of the Ganga and repeating, "*Dukrun karane, dukrun karane.*" At that time, Sankara along with his disciples was going to the Ganga for bath. When he heard this, he went to the old man and asked, "Oh scholar! What are you memorising?"

The old man said, "I am memorising the rules of grammar written by Panini."

Sankara asked him, "What is the benefit of this?"

He replied, "I will become a scholar in grammar."

"What do you gain by becoming a scholar in grammar?" Sankara asked.

"Being a scholar in grammar, I can go to the court of the king and receive hefty rewards from him."

Sankara then asked him, "Out of the rewards you get from the king, what happiness will you have?"

"What happiness? My family and I can eat well and lead a happy life."

"How long you think you can enjoy all this?" Sankara questioned him.

"I will enjoy all this until death."

Sankara then asked, "Do you know what happens after you die?"

¹*Bhaja Govindam* is a prayer that emphasizes the importance of devotion to God as a means to spiritual development and liberation.

The old man said, "I don't know."

Then Adi Sankara chanted this Sanskrit verse:

Oh foolish man, chant the name of Govinda.
The rules of grammar will not come to your
rescue when the end approaches.

*Bhaja Govindam, bhaja Govindam,
Govindam bhaja moodha mathe,
Samprapthe sannihithe kale,
Nahi nahi rakshati dukrun karane.*

Neither your knowledge of grammar nor your near and dear ones will protect you. Oh foolish person, think who will protect you. It is only Lord Govinda. *Bhaja Govindam*. Repeat the name of the lord (do *namasmarana*) and sing the glory of the Lord.

This chanting is a boat that will take you across the ocean of worldliness (*samsara*). To cross this ocean, you don't need a very big boat. Even a vast ocean can be crossed with a small boat. Similarly, this small Name of Hari will mitigate all your sins.

But man today worships *siri* (wealth), not Hari (the Lord). He craves only wealth. How long will wealth remain with you? Nobody will follow you after your death. All your relatives will follow you up to the cremation ground. No one will follow you thereafter. You have to leave all the wealth you earned here. Even the clothes you are wearing have to be left behind.

Oh Lord!
I am caught up in this cycle of birth and death.
Time and again, I am experiencing the agony of
staying in the mother's womb.
It is very difficult to cross this ocean of worldly
life.
Please take me across this ocean and grant me
liberation.

*Punarapi jananam punarapi maranam,
Punarapi janani jathare sayanam,
Iha samsare bahu dustare,
Kripayapare pahi murare.*

Time and again, you are born from your mother's womb. You take birth and die again and again. Is that the essence of human life? No! Not at all.

Once, there was a thief whose routine had been to commit thefts and spend jail terms again and

again. At one time, he committed a very big theft and was imprisoned for six months. At the end of the period of jail, the Jail Superintendent came and said to him, “Your period of imprisonment is over. You can leave with your bag and baggage tomorrow.”

The thief said, “Sir! Why should I take my bag and baggage? I am going to return to the prison soon; let it stay here.”

In spite of suffering punishment, he is not prepared to leave the bad habit of thieving. He does not have the awareness that he should not commit the same mistake after suffering so much punishment. Human beings are also like that. They are born and they die again and again.

People are eternal, with no birth and death,
They are the primordial principle, without
beginning or end,
They are not born; nor do they die or are slain by
anyone.
They are the *Atma*, which is the eternal witness.
(Telugu poem)

Go back to your source

Strive to attain this exalted state. See to it that after coming to this world once, you do not come again. As I told you the other day, “Birth is like a newspaper. You read it once and throw it away as waste paper. How foolish it is to read it again and again!

We have come, we have seen the world, and we have seen good and bad in the world. We have experienced some good moments also. It is enough. This life is now a waste paper, which we do not need again. So, search the path that will help us not to come again.”

That is what Prahlada also said. He sought good intellect to find this path.

What is this path? Devotees say, “Swami! Show us the path to liberation. What path should we take?”

I tell them, “Go the same way you came. Where did you come from? You didn’t come from Madras (Chennai), Bombay (Mumbai), or Delhi. You came from the *Atma*. So, go back to the *Atma*.”

For all living beings, the destination is their source. We put a clay pot to many uses. When it falls down, it breaks and becomes ultimately clay again. It came from clay and became clay again. An inert earthen pot goes back to its original state.

A person’s real nature is consciousness (*chinmaya*), and one should strive to go back to that state. But, unfortunately, one follows the wrong path, which takes one to the state of inert matter (*mrinmaya*). So, even a clay pot is superior to him.

What education have you acquired? What college have you attended? How many degrees have you earned? What high position did you attain? All this is utterly useless if you do not have this awareness.

Birds and animals follow rules and regulations in their life. But with all this education, a person does not have even that much discrimination (*vi-veka*). Does one observe any rules and regulations? Is there any limit to desires? No! Even foxes and dogs exercise some limit to their desires. But people madly pursue their limitless desires.

Therefore, correct your thinking and uphold humanness. Contemplate on your divinity and merge in God.

—Bhagavan’s Discourse in Sai Sruthi, Kodai-kanal on 20 April 1993.