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From negative to positive

Students, Teachers and Doctors!

The whole world is a stage and every individual is an actor. How should the actors conduct themselves? The primary goal of every actor should be to carry out their duty in the part assigned to them. He should set aside his individuality. How?

During the recent festival, the students enacted a play. One student played the role of a municipal chairman. In that role he had to behave as a municipal chairman and not exhibit his individual talents. These should be given a back seat. He should act his part well. However, who is the director of the cosmic drama? It is the Divine. Every human being is a manifestation of the Divine Will. He has taken birth as a human being to fulfill his duty. He has to manifest his humanness. Every individual has to play his role well and acquit himself worthily.

Maarakam and Thaarakam

In the drama of life, there is a mixture of good and bad. Humanness is present in this mixture. Of the two –the good and bad– one is known as *maarakam* and the other is known as *thaarakam*. *Maarakam* implies that one acts on the basis that nothing belongs to him and that, whatever words he utters or whatever action he does, all belong to God and nothing is his own. He plays his role in this spirit, ascribing nothing to himself. *Thaarakam* represents the attitude of the actor, who is conscious of the role he is playing and does not forget his individuality in his actions. He does not consider himself as merely acting a part but regards himself as the doer. The difference between the two is that while the former realizes the temporary nature of the part he is playing and is not attached to the things connected with the role, the other (*thaarakam*) develops attachment to the role he plays and does not wish to part with things connected with the role. In the concept of *maarakam* there is no sense of possessiveness. But in *thaarakam*, one is attached to what he considers as his.

Modern man suffers from the sense of possession. This is a negative attitude. He is obsessed with the idea of "my" and "mine". He attaches excessive importance to the body, forgetting the most precious *Atmic* principle that is within it which will give him enduring bliss. The reason for this attachment is the failure to use the senses properly and to become a slave of the desires prompted by the senses.

The eyes, the ears and other sense organs should be used only to perceive sacred things. They should not be used indiscriminately to enjoy whatever pleases them. This is the reason why Swami advises people not to see evil, speak evil, or hear what is evil, but to see what is good, hear what is sacred, and speak what is good. These may seem simple maxims, but they are full of profound significance.

In this context, people should constantly discriminate between "negative" and "positive" actions. All bad and unwholesome actions are "negative" in character. They should be eschewed altogether.

Human birth is a God-given gift

Students should realize that what matters when they sing *bhajans* is not the tune or the conduct of the songs but the genuineness of the feeling with which they sing the *bhajans*. When their hearts are pure and full of deep devotion, the *bhajans* will be full of feeling and will appeal to the hearts of the listeners. What ensues from the heart is "positive", while what comes from the mind is often negative".

Human birth is a God-given gift which should be used with due care. It should be filled with righteous acts. Unfortunately, today men misuse all their God-given talents for unholy purposes. The mind should be filled with good thoughts, the heart should be filled with compassion, and the hands should be engaged in selfless service.

Man will be caught up in "negative" behavior as long as he identifies himself with the body. The moment he considers himself the master of the senses, his actions will be "positive". Mastery of the senses leads to "liberation". Liberation is not something to be achieved in after-life. The striving for liberation must start early in life and proceed continuously. Another term for liberation is "emancipation". That is true freedom—freedom from bondage to the senses. This means that you must carry on all duties without attachment to the fruits thereof. Today, all actions are performed with attachment to the results. For instance, students pursue study of the bio-science with a view to become doctors. There is per se nothing wrong in this. But when they become doctors they should be

primarily concerned about the welfare of their patients and not in their earnings.

Even in rendering social service, there is often an element of self-interest that vitiates the quality of your service. Instead of being a "positive" act of selfless love, the service becomes a "negative" act carrying the taint of self-interest. No permanent joy can be derived from such "negative" activities.

Students must begin sanctifying their actions from their days at school. They must cultivate good company as part of their education. This is the way to get near to God. The final stage is *Sayujyam* (becoming one with God).

Life is filled with bondages of various kinds –from hunger and poverty to ignorance and disease. To strive for freedom from these bondages is spiritual *sadhana*. It means giving up those actions that bind you.

The story of the king and the shepherd

It is not always easy to get the answers to spiritual questions. There is a story to illustrate this. Once there was a king in Kapila, who was putting questions to various scholars in his kingdom. He was not satisfied with their answers and so turned them away from his court. A shepherd who heard about this came to the king and said he was prepared to answer any questions put by the king. The king was surprised at his claim and said that if he failed to give a satisfactory answer he would be beheaded. The shepherd agreed to the condition. Then, he told the king that they should exchange places in keeping with the new situation, in which the king would be the learner and the shepherd would be the teacher. The king transferred his robe to the shepherd and sat at his feet, while the shepherd put on the king's robe and sat on the throne. He then asked the king to put his questions.

The king's first question was, "What does God do in this world?" The shepherd answered, "He makes a millionaire a pauper and a pauper a millionaire. Till now I was a poor man. Now I have been made a king with a seat on the throne. From being a king, you are now wearing a shepherd's clothing. This is what God has done."

The king was fairly satisfied with the answer. His second question was: "Whom does God favor? Who is the recipient of His grace?" The shepherd pointed to a light and said, "The light from the lamp sends its rays in all directions. Likewise, God, who is embodiment of all effulgence, sees in all direction, and showers His grace on all. He does not see in one direction alone." The king was pleased with the answer.

While the shepherd was wondering what the king's third question would be, the king addressed him as "Swami!" and said: "Where is God?" The shepherd brought a cup of milk and asked the king, "Can you say in what part of the milk there is butter? In every molecule of the milk there is butter. Likewise, God is all-pervading. What is it that you have to do to see the butter in the milk? You have to make curd out of it, churn it and then the butter will rise to the top. Likewise, God, who is everywhere, has to be enshrined in the heart, turned into curd by good deeds and churned by *sadhana*. Then there will be direct experience of the Divine."

The king was totally satisfied with the answers of the shepherd. He gave away half of his kingdom to the shepherd and declared that wisdom was to be found more among the common folk than among scholars. There is nothing great in mere scholarship as such. To give intelligent answers to questions out of wisdom gained from daily life is what matters.

Today, very few people understand the difference between the "positive" and "negative" aspects of life. Whatever attracts the mind is "negative". Desireless actions are "positive".

The discharge of duties in a spirit of detachment is the basic obligation of everyone from a student to a scholar. Thereby you can manifest the divinity within you. But, if you cannot recognize your humanness, how can you recognize your divinity? The first requisite is purity of heart and a mind free from all desires.

You may or may not believe it. Here is My body. It has a mind, intellect etc. exactly like that of any of you. But I am aware of the workings of the monkey mind. I have no desires in My mind. I do not let myself be caught by the wiles of the mind. It is natural for the mind to behave in that way. I do not get trapped by it. I am not attached to the body or the mind. I follow the conscience.

Here is the body of Mine. You may touch any part of it. You will receive positive vibrations from it. There is no trace of the negative vibrations anywhere in my body. No negative thoughts enter in my mind. Sometimes I may appear to speak harshly. But it is not for my sake, but for correcting others. Although seventy-two years have gone by, yet I entertain no desires. I have had no desires at any time.

The way my life is spent from moment to moment is remarkable. Every one of my actions is "positive" and not "negative". My whole body is "negative". But all my thoughts and actions are "positive". There is no disharmony between my thoughts and actions. In fact, this has been the case from the age of nine.

How Swami taught a lesson to the village officer

In this village (of Puttaparthi) there was a *karnam* (village officer) named Subbarao. He was the richest man in the village. He owned most of the lands here. All the villagers used to be afraid of him. Swami was a short lad at that time. The *karnam* was given to bad ways.

Swami called all his young friends together, taught them various songs, and asked them to go round the village singing the songs. The boys told Baba, "Swami! The *karnam* may beat us up". Swami assured them, "He has no authority to touch any of you. No one can object to your singing the songs". Swami taught them how to sing the songs tunefully. The boys did not know the meaning of the song.

On the first day, when the boys sang the songs in front of the *karnam's* house, the *karnam* went inside. On the second day, when the boys repeated their performance, the *karnam* went inside, brought some mangoes, distributed the fruits among the boys, and asked them not to sing the songs. He asked them: "Who taught you these songs?" They all shouted: "Raju. Raju taught us all the songs."

One day the *karnam* invited Raju (the young Baba) to come to his house for *tiffin* (snack). Raju told him: "I don't want your *tiffin*". The *karnam* was furious that a young fellow should speak like that to him.

In those songs I was teaching what was appropriate to those times. The song condemned those who went after women of ill fame and warned that such persons would be shunned by society and forfeit the respect of everyone. The boys were afraid to sing the song. The strong words used in the song were necessary to teach a lesson to those who misbehaved. To correct people who were leading bad lives, I used to compose poems and write plays even from those early years. I am always in the habit of living up to what I preach. I do not preach what I do not practice. Whatever I do is of a "positive" character. I have no desires of any kind.

Students are My property

I have often declared that "students are my property". A student also said earlier: "Swami! we are your property." This

is true. But there are properties of different kinds –those that are valuable and those that are not. As long as students consider themselves as my property, they should lead ideal lives. You should not become useless garbage. You should stand up as high mountains. It is for this purpose that I am training all of you. Many students are not coming up to my expectations. They are not understanding my message. Some day they will understand it. There is no trace of the negative in me. Everything is positive.

Pay heed to my advice. Talk as little as possible. Some students tell me that their parents want them to get married (after finishing their studies). I won't advise you not to get married. If you wish to marry, do so. But, I will not force anyone to marry against his will. Each one should consult his conscience and decide.

Do your duties to your family. Do not let your children do what you consider is wrong. In the *Mahabharatha*, Dhritarashtra failed to correct his eldest son, Duryodhana, and the result was disastrous for the entire Kaurava clan. Vidura reminded him that if only he had taken firm action to restrain Duryodhana, the family could have been saved.

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