

21**Dedicate Your Life To Serve Society**

All your education, all your positions of authority, all your acts of charity and service have little value without the four virtues of Sathya, Dharma, Prema and Santhi (truth, righteousness, love and peace).

(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love!

YOU are all forgetting the purpose for which you have come into this world. Wherever you are, you must remember three things, namely, Where did we come from? Where are we at present? and what is the purpose of our coming here? Supposing you are dropping an envelope or letter in a post box; it should have the “From” address and “To” address written thereon. If these two addresses are not written, where

will the envelope or letter go? It will go to the “dead letter office”. Similarly, you are in the world now without these two addresses. You can very well imagine what will happen to such an individual. You must therefore find out yourself an answer at least for one of the three questions. Otherwise, your life itself will become a waste.

Here is a small story. The business people in the delta areas of East and West Godavari districts in Andhra Pradesh cross the river on boats. Once, a businessman was travelling in a boat. There was no one else in the boat except himself and the boatman. Usually, people would like to engage themselves in conversation with somebody during travel in order to forget the tedium of the journey. Therefore, he started a conversation with the boatman to while away the time. He asked the boatman, “Do you have a newspaper?” The boatman replied, “Sir! I don’t have a newspaper. I cannot read and write.” To this, the businessman commented, “Alas! If you cannot read and write, one quarter of your life is consigned to the waters of Ganga.” The boatman felt sorry for his pitiable condition and kept quiet. After a few minutes, the businessman enquired again, “My dear! Do you know the present prices of gold and silver in the Bombay market?” The boatman replied, “Sir! I do not have any experience in gold business. Hence, I do not know the prices of gold and silver in the Bombay market.” Then the businessman commented, “If you do not know about gold business, half of your life is consigned to the waters of Ganga*.” The conversation continued. Observing the

wrist watch worn by the boatman, the businessman again enquired, “My dear! What is the time now?” Though the poor boatman had a watch on his wrist, he did not know how to read a watch. The businessman again asked, “Why then did you wear a wrist watch?” The boatman replied, “Though one does not know how to read a watch, it is a fashion nowadays to wear a wrist watch. That is why I am wearing one.” Then, the businessman commented, “If you do not know even to tell the time from a wrist watch, then three-fourths of your life is consigned to the Ganga.” Meanwhile, a gale started with great force raising high waves in the river. The boat started tossing up and down and became unsteady. The boatman then asked the businessman, “Sir! By the way do you know swimming?” The businessman replied, “Alas! I do not know swimming.” Now it was the turn of the boatman to comment, “Then, your entire life is about to be consigned to the waters of Ganga.”

Today, we are all in the same situation and are tossed in the river of this world. But, unfortunately we are not making any effort to know why we are here, what have we to learn in this world, where do we have to go and by knowing what we could reach there, etc. Thus, by being ignorant of these aspects, our entire life is being consigned to the Ganga. Therefore, we have to

* Note : The expression consigned to the waters of the ganga is a colloquial way of saying that something is totally wasted.

first try to find out answers to the queries of: Why have we come here? What are we supposed to know? and Where do we go from here? If we are not able to know the answer to at least one of these queries, our life's journey will be without a purpose. It is only when we are aware of the "From" address, "To" address and the "present residential" address, our life will be meaningful and sanctified.

You Must Have Unflinching Faith

Dr. Michael Goldstein (Chairman, Prasanthi Council and a devotee of Swami) and his wife visit Puttapparthi often. When I was going to the college one day, he approached Me and requested, "Swami, if You kindly permit me, I will accompany You to the college." I told him to come. While we were travelling in the car, I asked Mr. Goldstein, "What is your programme?" He replied, "Swami, I have to start my journey back home today." Then I advised him not to leave on that day. He again told Me, "Swami, I shall go today, but I shall take the next day's flight from Bombay. "Thereupon I told him firmly, "You do not talk to Me about all those things. If I say don't go, it is final." Goldstein could not realise that his life itself would be in great danger if he decided to start on the same day. At last I told him, "Okay, you can go, if you so wish." Then he returned to his room, packed up his luggage for the Bombay flight. Thereafter, he boarded the plane for USA. Soon after the plane took off, it was realised that there were some

hijackers in the plane. The entire atmosphere in the aircraft was extremely tense. Two hijackers stood guard at the entrance. Another two were roaming about in the aircraft with fully loaded guns pointed at the passengers. It is then that Goldstein realised why Swami wanted him not to board the aircraft on that particular day. He could not do anything in the situation and was praying to Swami as his sole refuge. His wife is a great devotee of Swami. She started chanting Swami's Name, "Sai Ram, Sai Ram, Sai Ram". When the aircraft gained some altitude, the hijackers started shooting the passengers. The passengers were struck with terror not knowing what to do. As the hijackers opened fire, the aircraft was strewn with dead bodies. He and his wife were seated on the front portion of the aircraft. The hijackers started shooting the passengers around them. They thought it would be their turn next. Goldstein then told his wife, "Swami advised me not to start on this day, but I did not follow Swami's instruction completely and that is why we are in this situation." Meanwhile, one hijacker set his eyes on the couple. Goldstein's wife, however, had been chanting the Name of Swami incessantly forgetting everything. The chanting of Swami's Name worked wonders and Goldstein's wife was spared. Goldstein then got up and stood at the entrance of the aircraft. The hijackers, however, could not notice him even though he was such a hefty person. Thus, the life of Goldstein was saved by Swami's grace. They remained on the plane as hostages for a long time without food, water and

sleep. They were very much depressed. Goldstein's wife has intense devotion for Swami. Normally women are more devoted than men. It is not that men do not have devotion, but they do not show it outwardly. Goldstein's wife advised him, "You do not worry, contemplate on Swami." At this point the hijackers began to shoot men, women and children mercilessly. Goldstein and his wife, however, continued to pray to Swami, "Sai Ram, Sai Ram, Sai Ram". They silently prayed to Swami closing their eyes. In the meantime, all the ammunition in the guns of the hijackers was exhausted. The police caught the hijackers. Goldstein and his wife were released and put on board on another aircraft bound for America. However, the ordeal that they underwent continued to haunt them. After a few days, the police came to enquire about the incident. Goldstein was offered some compensation, but he did not accept it. After two or three months, Goldstein again came to Puttaparthi and had Swami's *darshan*. Now he realised through his own experience that he had not to fear anything under any circumstances if he did *namasmarana* (chanting of God's Name). After he had Swami's *darshan*, calmness was restored in him. From then on, when Swami would enquire about his return journey he would leave it to the Lord's Will. He realised that it would be better to leave the matter in Swami's hands. From then on Goldstein developed unshakeable faith in the words of Swami and stood firmly by them.

People today are unable to realise from where they came and where they would go. It is only after people have undergone such experiences that they realise the strength of faith. They have come into this world and somehow spend their time. When someone questions them how they spend their time, they reply that they have come into this world for enjoying food and comfortable sleep. However, it should be understood that man has taken birth in this world not merely for enjoying food and drink. The same truth has been explained by Adi Sankara in his famous *Bhaja Govindam* song thus:

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

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

Realise The Purpose Of Life And Sanctify It

When people are questioned why the human birth was given to them, most of them would reply that it was for *khana* (food), *peena* (drink), *sona* (sleep) and *marna* (death). This assumption is totally incorrect. There are several things in life that one has to achieve. The purpose of a human birth is not for enjoying food and comforts. It is not even for pursuing education. The purpose of human birth is totally different and the people

have forgotten it. You have to fulfil your life and sanctify your birth. The body comes, grows and dies, and finally undergoes decay. Before the body dies, one has to fulfil the purpose for which he has come into this world.

Embodiments of Love!

There will be several trials and tribulations in the journey of life. One has to acquire the power by which he can courageously encounter them. That is the power of spirituality. One should not become diffident and withdraw from his effort in the middle. In this *Bhavasagara* (ocean of life), there will of course be, turbulent waves which will toss your boat up and down.

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

(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.)

The purpose of human birth is not to be born again and again from the womb of the mother, spend the life aimlessly and finally depart from this world. There is a specific purpose why one is born in this world. Therefore, one has to realise the purpose and sanctify his life. Our

education, our work and the money we earn, all these must be spent in a purposeful way. The students of the present-day are pursuing education to make a living. They are acquiring degrees with the sole purpose of earning money. What is so great about struggling for filling one's own belly? Even dogs and foxes fill their bellies. You might have observed in the circus that even the monkeys learn several types of feats and display them. You, who are born as human beings should not behave like dogs, foxes and monkeys. If you do so, of what use is your education? The education you acquire must be put to proper use. Only then will it become meaningful and will give strength to your personality. The purpose of your life is not merely pursuing education and acquiring degrees. Of course, you may study, but it is not enough if you simply study for acquiring degrees.

Can you call all those who know how to read and write educated?

Can one be called educated merely by acquiring degrees?

Can you call it education which does not confer virtues?

If education is just for a living, don't we find birds and beasts carrying on their lives?

(Telugu poem)

It is only when you keep education for both life and for living as your goal, your education will be meaningful. Therefore, every human being must keep

the purpose of life in view. Of what use is it, if you exult in your success thinking, "I have passed MBA; I have acquired several degrees." Those degrees must be put to proper use. Only a human being has the power to realise the purpose of his life. If one is satisfied thinking, "I am born, I am educated, I earned money, I have sufficient bank balance, I have got my children educated and sent them for higher education to foreign countries", that is not the sole purpose of life. You should never forget the purpose why you were born in this world. Unfortunately, today, you have forgotten the purpose of your life and are indulging in futile activities. As long as you live you must experience peace until your last breath. You should attain true and eternal bliss.

Acquire The Spirit Of Sacrifice

Mahatma Gandhi went to London and was conferred with the degree of Bar-at-Law. He wished to fulfil his life by utilising his education in the service of society. Therefore, after his return to his motherland, he joined the Indian National Congress. He sacrificed his entire life for achieving Independence for the country. He started wearing a simple *dhoti* and a piece of cloth to cover the upper portion of his body. He underwent several difficulties in the north Indian States during the freedom struggle. He was beaten by the police with *lathis* (baton) in Lucknow. However, in spite of undergoing several difficulties and physical torture at the hands of the police, he did not give up his resolve to attain

Independence for the country. He started practising Law. Even then, his life did not go smoothly. He joined the Independence movement on behalf of the Indian National Congress and underwent great torture at the hands of the British. Nevertheless, he did not lose heart. His wife Kasturba was a noble lady. She always served her husband with great devotion, even when Gandhi was in jail. Simultaneously, she was also engaged in service to the country. It is only her spirit of service that protected her throughout. During the days of their involvement in the Independence movement, there were occasions when the husband and wife got separated. But Kasturba was reconciled to the situation that whatever happened was for her good only. Thus, people who serve others with a noble heart will always see good only. At last, the country attained Independence and Jawaharlal Nehru became the first Prime Minister.

Subhash Chandra Bose was another great leader of the freedom movement who was good at heart and was a great patriot. It is only because of the efforts of such men of sacrifice, the country could attain Independence. However, it is not merely *Swatantrya* (Independence) that we have to wish for. We must attain *Swarajya*. That is great. *Swatantrya* is a temporary phenomenon of freedom from foreign rule while *Swarajya* is concerned with and attained by the heart.

Dear Students!

You must be prepared to sacrifice even your life for the country. You are not the body. The body is only an instrument and a means for achieving something higher and noble. The body has to be put to use for achieving these higher and noble aims. The body is like the dress we wear. One day or the other the dress is bound to decay. Till then the body has to be maintained properly. It is only by sacrifice one can attain *yoga*. That is what the *Veda* has proclaimed, *Na karmana Na Prajaya dhanena thyagenaike amrutatthwamanasu* (immortality is not attained through action, progeny or wealth; it is attained only by sacrifice). Having been born as human beings we must dedicate our lives in the service of God and in the constant contemplation of God. If you do so, none of the physical ailments will trouble you.

Give Up Attachment To The Body

A small example which I would like to narrate to you. When I was in Bangalore sometime back, this body fell in the bathroom. There were two students by name Satyajit and Achintya who used to attend to My needs. They did great service to Me. I told them “I have no body attachment. You may conduct an operation on this body, but I have nothing to do with this body. I am not this body. As long as the body is there, I have to do My work.” The doctors wanted to put Me in bandage, but I did not agree. They advised Me to undergo an operation so that the fracture would be healed quickly. I placed this body in the hands of the doctors and let them

do whatever they wished to do with it. I continued to walk which I am still doing. I have no pains or suffering. Several devotees are anxious that Swami is walking with great difficulty and perhaps is undergoing great pain. I would like to reiterate that I do not undergo any pain or suffering. Till today, I did not undergo any body pain whatsoever. If you thus sacrifice your *dehabhimana*, you can achieve anything in life. Whatever I do, I tell the same thing. One has to do what he says and say what he does. That is what is meant by

*Manasyekam vachasyekam 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.)

That is the real *manavatva* (human nature). I can stand for any length of time though the doctors advised Me against it. Even now I have been standing for a long time. I have no suffering at all. I don't take even a single tablet. I don't put on any bandage. Mine is *atmabhava* and *atmabhava* alone. I set an example by My own actions.

Dear Students!

The body may undergo any amount of suffering. It is like a water bubble. The mind is like a mad monkey.

Therefore, we should not follow either the body or the mind. We must follow our *antharatma* (conscience). We must develop *atmabhimana*. If *atmabhimana* is developed, no pain can trouble us. It is only for teaching you about this *atmabhimana*, I am undergoing all this trouble. I don't feel any pain at all. I am telling you the truth. I am not suppressing the facts. In fact, I don't know or feel what pain is. We must face the difficulties courageously. It is only to teach you this steadfastness and courage, I have taken upon Myself this pain. You must follow My ideal. Do not ever give importance to the suffering of the body. Give up *dehabhimana*. However, engage the body in proper activities. Engage the body in the service of God. Our body is a gift of God. For what purpose has God given us this body? It is only for dedicating it in the service of the Lord.

Embodiments of Love!

The body has been given to you for performing sacred *karmas* (actions). Several people wonder why Swami does not feel tired in spite of undergoing so much physical suffering. Especially, the ladies can observe the signs of weakness quickly. I want to assure you that I am maintaining a constant body weight and good health throughout. Neither I have put on weight nor become weak. I can walk swiftly, but I am desisting from doing so only to satisfy the doctors. The doctors are particularly pressurising Me not to walk swiftly. They advised Me, "Swami, please do not walk fast. You always keep two

students with You to help You." It is only to please them and satisfy them that I am keeping these two students with Me. I am not causing any inconvenience to these boys. Both these boys, Arun and Prusty go to their offices and work there besides attending to My needs. The moment I call Prusty, he immediately rushes in. I ask him to get Me a glass of water and I drink the water given by him. Similarly, both these boys constantly attend to My needs. They are serving Me with great devotion and love. I do not cause any inconvenience to anybody.

Embodiments of Love!

Today you are celebrating Swami's birthday. In fact, it is the body that has a date of birth. This body has already passed 78 years and has entered the 79th year. But do I look like a 79 year old man? No. No. Not only now, even after 80 or 90 years of age, I will be like this only. I will never depend on anybody. My eyes and teeth are in perfect condition. Normally, by the time a person attains 79 years of age, all his teeth will be lost. His eyesight will be affected by cataract. His skin will have wrinkles, but I have no wrinkles at all. I will not have old age. In fact, I have no old age. Similarly, you also develop such courage and confidence. You will certainly feel good. Not only Myself, all of you should be in sound health. But you are spoiling your own health. You are misusing your physical strength in so many ways. If you put your body to proper use, you can come up well by Swami's grace. You can serve any number of

people with a healthy body and a sound mind. Therefore, you have to maintain your body in healthy condition in order to serve others, not to show off your beauty. Even for Me, this body is required for serving others. In the service to humanity, I am prepared for anything, even to sacrifice My life. Similarly, you must also be ever ready to serve others. Do not ever consider that the body is very important. Neither, you fritter away the physical strength. You must make proper use of the physical body. You must also gain enough mental strength. You must come up well in your educational career and make your life sanctified in the service to humanity. You must always be ready to face any situation in life boldly. That is the real nature of humanity. Whenever your services are required, you must respond immediately, saying, “I am ready, I am ready, I am ready.” Develop such a courage and confidence and set an ideal to the world.

This body is a den of dirt and prone to diseases; it is subject to change from time to time; it cannot cross the ocean of Samsara. It is nothing but a structure of bones. Oh mind! Do not be under the delusion that body is permanent. Instead take refuge at the Divine Lotus Feet. (Telugu poem)

You seek refuge in the lotus feet of the Lord. Do not mind any amount of suffering of the physical body. You serve the country to the extent you can. Utilise every small opportunity to serve the country and society. Even a small help done to an old woman that you come

across on the way is service. Do not ever think, “What do I gain by helping this woman?” There is great merit even in such a small service. Therefore, continue to serve. There is no greater *sadhana* than service to the fellow human beings. *Seva bina nirvan nahi* (there is no redemption without service). You should not mind any inconvenience that you may undergo while serving others.

I have no intention of celebrating My birthday on a grand scale. My only intention is that the body should be maintained in a proper condition and through the body service should be rendered to others. You must always be prepared to dedicate your life to serve society. That is the real service.

[Divine Birthday, 23-11-2004, Prasanthi Nilayam]