

4. Redeem Your Life By Good Actions

One is born out of *karma* (action),

One lives and dies in *karma*.

Karma is verily God,

And it is responsible for one's happiness and sorrow.

(Telugu poem)

K*arma* (action) is verily the life of a human. Whatever actions one undertakes to perform from morning to evening, one should first understand and then perform. This is your primary duty. The nature of the action that you perform determines the type of result you get. When you perform good deeds, you will have good results. On the other hand, when you performs actions with evil intention, the results are bound to be bad.

Man should behave like a human being

Bats fly in the sky like all other birds, which perch on the branches of trees to take rest. However, unlike birds, bats hang from the branches with their head down and feet up. Has anybody tied them in this manner with a thread? Or, has someone forcibly put their heads down? No. It is the result of their *karma*. In the same way, a person who harbours evil thoughts and performs evil actions is bound to get evil results. However, a person who performs good actions will get good results in accordance with the nature of the actions. When we look at them, even bats appear to be like other birds, but they have a different fate unlike other birds, which fly freely.

We cannot escape from the consequences of our actions. But we perform bad deeds and expect good results. Nobody desires bad results after performing good actions. However, every action has a result in accordance with its nature. When you write correct answers to the questions put by your teacher in the examination, you get good marks. But if you commit mistakes, your marks will be deducted. In the same way, one who is born as a human being should perform actions after enquiring what is good and what is bad. To perform good actions is the primary duty of man. To perform bad deeds is the attribute of an animal.

Always remind yourself that you are a human being and that you should perform only such actions that be-hoove a human being. You should ask yourself before performing any action, "Am I behaving like a human being or an animal?" We should perform actions after examining them in a proper way. Humans should perform actions that befit their human birth.

If you act contrary to human nature, even your neighbour will chide you, saying, "Having been born as a human being, you are behaving like an animal." In this manner, one will be punished by one's fellow human beings if one behaves like an animal. Therefore, conduct yourself like a true human being. It is a disgrace to humanness to behave like an animal. You must conduct yourself in a manner that is appropriate for a human being. The result of good actions will be good and of bad actions will be bad.

Do not forget your humanness

There is no need for God to punish you for the bad actions performed by you. Your own bad actions will give you the punishment. It is not possible to get good result out of a bad action and vice versa. We should understand

the truth that we are born as human beings only to perform good deeds. The word *manava* (man) consists of three syllables: *ma*, *na*, *va*. *Ma* means ignorance, *na* means without, and *va* means to conduct. A human being is one who conducts themselves without ignorance. One who is born as a human being must conduct oneself like a human being and speak sweetly and softly.

Among the birds also there are many categories. Some of them sing sweetly and give happiness to all. But others, like the crow, are disliked by people and are driven away when they start cawing. One feels like listening to the song of a cuckoo for any length of time. Similarly, the type of treatment that we receive from others is in accordance with our speech and behaviour.

We are born to do only good deeds. Human beings should always help their fellow human beings. Help Ever, Hurt Never. We should not hurt anybody. Sometimes, we hurt others knowingly. This is a greater mistake. God has given mind, intellect, and mind stuff (*chittha*) to humans to use them in a proper way. It is for this reason that the *Vedanta* declares, “mind is the cause of bondage and liberation (*Manah eva manushyanam karanam bandhamokshayo*).”

The mind that has been gifted by God to humans should be put on the right path. It is not the real nature of a human being to criticise others, to make fun of them, or to hurt them. One should be devoid of all such evils. When even animals are doing service to humans, there is nothing great if people help their fellow humans. Having been born as human beings we should love our fellow human beings like our brothers and sisters. That is the hallmark of a true human being.

First and foremost, obey the command of God. The same divine principle is present in all human beings. “God is in the form of a human being (*Daivam manusha rupena*).” One should implicitly follow the command of God, who incarnates as a human being. You should listen to the command of God and not of your friends who may be very close to you. We are born as human beings. Our appearance is also like a human being. So, we have to conduct ourselves like a human being. Never harm anybody by your thoughts, words, or deeds. Conduct yourself as a human being and uphold your humanness.

Whatever caste or culture you may belong to, you should acquire goodness in accordance with that. Since you are born among human beings and live among human beings, you should follow humanness. Only then will your life as a human being become worthwhile. If you forget your humanness, there is no use in performing any amount of recitation of God’s name, penance, spirituality, and sacrifice. Whatever spiritual practice you undertake, you can be called a human being only when you uphold humanness.

First achieve unity of thought, word, and deed

Perform only such actions that will please God. Then only will your life as a human being become meaningful. Of all living beings, human birth is the rarest. Do not waste such a precious and rare human birth. You will lose your humanness completely if you indulge in falsehood, injustice, and unrighteousness. Therefore, have good thoughts, good speech, and good vision. See good, do good, be good. This is the inner meaning of human life.

Some people may appear to be good and smiling but their mind is filled with evil intentions. This is not good.

*Manasyekam vachasyekam, karmanyekam mahatmanam;
Manasyanyat vachasyanyat, karmanyanyat duratmanam*

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

One should have unity of thought, word, and deed. If you have unity, then you will attain purity, and purity will lead you to Divinity. Therefore, have purity in order to attain Divinity. Saying one thing and doing something else is not good. This is no unity at all. How can you have purity when you are devoid of unity? Therefore, if you want to have purity, you must have unity.

Suppose somebody criticises you; you should think that this also is for your good. Whatever others may do, think that it is all for your own good. Perform all actions with the aim of redeeming your life. See to it that you do not lose your humanness. You may lose any property, but do not lose the property of humanness.

Lead your life always smilingly and blissfully. But laughing unnecessarily is also not good.

Perform all actions with good intentions. When you perform good actions, your thoughts will also be good. When your mind is filled with good thoughts, all your bad thoughts will disappear. Therefore, always develop only good thoughts. This will lead to good health. We should love everyone. Love all, serve all. If you adhere to these principles, you will always have good health.

It is necessary to be healthy. Health is not limited only to the physical body, it includes mental well-being also. Never eat improper food. Eat only food items that are good and sacred and have been sanctified by offering to God. Do not offer improper food to God. Offer only sacred and pure (*sathwic*) food to God in clean utensils.

You get the result in accordance with the offering that you make. As are the actions, so will be the result. It is not possible to get good results by performing bad actions. Therefore, we should perform good actions and experience good fruits. Then only can we have good health. If we eat good food, we will have good thoughts. But people today say one thing and do something else.

Once a renunciant (*sanyasi*) came to a house and begged for food. The housewife said to him, “My dear son, go to the river and have your bath. Meanwhile, I will prepare food for you.” This renunciant was an epitome of laziness. He said to her, “Mother, for renunciants like us, reciting the name of Govinda is like having a bath.” The intelligent housewife gave him a befitting reply, saying, “Reciting the name of Govinda is like having food. Hence, you may go.” It is meaningless to say, “reciting the name of Govinda is like having a bath,” to justify laziness and not have a bath. When you say that reciting the name of Govinda is like having a bath, you should also accept that the recitation of His name amounts to having food. We should observe propriety in our life.

Understand the importance of good company

Sometimes, you may get bad thoughts. You should immediately change them into good thoughts. For this, good company is necessary. “Tell me your company, I shall tell you what you are,” it is said. When you join good company, you become good. On the other hand, when you are in bad company, you become bad. Hence, always have good company. How can anybody accept you as a good person when you indulge in smoking, drinking, and meat eating? If you want to be good, perform only good deeds. Whatever the type of action you perform, you will get the result according to that.

Human life is most sacred. It is attained as a result of merits earned in many previous births.

Thousands of people have gathered here. For what? Only for God. Many people gather at places like liquor

shops also. But there you cannot have good thoughts. Therefore, always have good company.

Join good company and develop good feelings. Do not have jealousy, anger, and ego. Not only that. Have gratitude for every good thing done to you by others. Gratitude is very important. One with a sense of gratitude will reap its good fruits wherever they may be. Some people betray even those who have done good to them. This is not good. We should be grateful even for a little good done to us. Your life will be a mere waste if you lack gratitude. Develop good qualities.

Wherever you may go, conduct yourself with good feelings and serve everyone. Even if you come across your enemy, offer your greetings to them. Then they will also reciprocate in the same manner. On the other hand, if you talk to them with disrespect, they will also show disrespect to you. Our entire life is reaction, reflection, and resound.

If you want to achieve good results, lead a good life. If you work hard and study well, you will secure first rank. But if you do not study well, how can you get good marks? If you do not study well and yet get good marks, people may doubt that you have copied in the examination. Your conscience is your witness that you got good marks because you had written your examination well. Hence, do good and experience goodness. Only then will your life as a human being become meaningful. Live your life as a human being.

You need not pray to God for protection. Your goodness will protect you. Your goodness is your true support in life. “Mind is the witness of mind (*Manasuku manasu sakshi*).” We do not need any other witness. Lawyers say, “witness, witness, witness”. But what sort of witness? Not always a true witness. Our true witness is only our mind.

Whether it is for earning money or for developing virtues, we should act in a righteous manner. Do only such acts that are acceptable to our conscience. Self-satisfaction is very important. We can perform self-sacrifice only when we have self-satisfaction.

Students! Right from this age, you should develop good feelings. That is true education. There is no use reading big books without developing good feelings. Many students appear to be studying all the time, but nobody knows what they are really studying. Study something only after knowing that it is good for you. Do not read books that teach you to go on paths contrary to humanness.

Perform all actions to please God

You are all students, so your only objective should be to acquire education. But what sort of education? Education of the Self (*Atma vidya*). You should study for self-satisfaction. Some students study day and night, but nobody knows what they are studying. They have big big books, and within those big books they keep trash books and read them. Their parents feel happy thinking, “Our child is reading the *Mahabharatha*!” Do not resort to such evil practices. When you act in this manner, you will lose respect in society. Not only that, your life itself will be ruined.

First and foremost, students must control their anger. Thereafter, they should develop forbearance. Not merely that, they should always be peaceful. Only when you are peaceful can you understand the real meaning of what you are studying. At this age, students have a sacred heart. Offer your pure heart to God. You may not be able to please everybody in this world, but you can please God. If you return the money given to you by someone, they will be satisfied. But you should not only return the money but also give them your love. Treasure that gratitude

in your heart. Then only you can say that you have repaid your debt.

Everybody wants happiness. But where is happiness? “There can be no happiness and peace without chanting the name of God (*Hari bhajan bina sukh Santi nahin ...*).” That is why Guru Nanak started the practice of community singing. When many people sing the glory of God together, at least a few of them may be able to focus their mind on God and achieve self-satisfaction. Some people may be dozing during *bhajans*, while the mind of some others may be wandering here and there. But at least one person’s mind will be focused on God. Hence, community *bhajan* singing is very good; it will fill your heart with bliss.

Yesterday was *Sivarathri*. *Sivarathri* means auspicious night, the night to develop virtues. Day and night come one after the other. But all nights are not *Sivarathris*. The night on which you recite the name of God is the real Sivaratri. That is the night which brings auspiciousness to you. Hence, develop good feelings in your heart at least on Sivaratri.

Sivaratri, Prasanthi Nilayam, 2008-03-07

Students should realise the importance of service, to realise the Divine. It makes **One’s** life significant and purposeful.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Doctors must proceed to slums and villages and help the dwellers. There is urgent need for this type of selfless service. Lawyers must take up the cases in which wrongs are committed on the poor through their ignorance and plead on their behalf for justice. They could devote time for at least two or three such cases per week. Their pleadings on behalf of the poor should not be cursory and casual. They must be as earnest and as effective as the rest ...

This day is really a day of joy. I am happy I am amidst persons dedicated to service. **I**t is essential that members of such clubs pay attention to our spiritual advancement also, for that ensures our attainment of the goal of life.

The worldly and the spiritual are like the two wings of a bird, the two wheels of a vehicle, equally essential and equally important. By means of spiritual practices, earn spiritual wealth and share it with those whom you serve.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba