

EVERYTHING DEPENDS ON GOD'S GRACE

Everyone has to face the consequences of his actions. Who has made the bats to hang from the branches of a tree with their heads downwards? Has anyone done it out of hatred? No. It is their Karma (fate). Likewise, nobody can escape from the consequences of Karma.
(Telugu poem)

Birds fly in the sky with the help of wings. Likewise, bats too fly in the sky, but unlike other birds, they hang with their heads downwards from the branches of trees. Is it not their fate? One may perform any activity, but one is bound to face the consequences of one's action. This is the law of nature.

Students Boys and Girls,
People may act as they please, but they cannot escape from the consequences of their actions. Whether he is a pamara (simpleton) or a mahaneeya (noble soul), he has to face the results of his actions. Let no one be under the illusion that one can commit sin and still go scot-free. Hence, one should enquire before undertaking any activity whether it is good or bad. Wherever you go, the results of your actions will follow you like your shadow. However, it is possible to escape from the consequences of action by the grace of God. God is always by your side saying "Tathastu!", "Tathastu!" (so shall it be!). Man is not taking cognisance of this truth and is indulging in wicked deeds. He knows pretty well what is good and what is bad, yet, he is unable to give up his evil ways. One's experiences in life, good and bad, depend on his actions.

No one can comprehend the ways of God. They are beyond description. You may think that you can commit a mistake surreptitiously and feel that no one has seen you. But you cannot hide your actions from God. The consequences of your actions will haunt you wherever you go.

One should not be judged by his external appearance. One may look noble and speak in a pleasing manner, but his actions may not be in consonance with his words. We may undertake a number of good activities, yet we cannot escape from the consequences of our past deeds. We have to bear this truth always in mind.

Embodiments of Love!

The world is full of wonders and mysteries. The law that governs human life and the world at large is beyond the ken of human understanding. The principle of divinity is not visible to the naked eye, but it is what prompts you to perform action and experience the consequences thereof.

The story of the Lord is amazing,
It purifies the lives of people in all the three worlds,
It is like the sickle that cuts the creepers of worldly bondage,
It is like a good friend who helps you in times of need,
It is like a shelter for the sages and seers doing penance in the forest.
(Telugu poem)

Embodiments of Love!

You may not be able to comprehend fully all that is being said. But you will understand it through experience. It is impossible to escape Karma Phala (fruits of action). We read a number of books, but do we put into practice whatever we have learnt? No. No. We put into practice only that which is convenient and necessary for us and ignore the rest.

Students!

You may wonder if there is a way to escape from the consequences of Karma. Yes, it is possible for those who earn the grace of God. Once you become the recipient of God's grace, you will not be affected by

Karma Phala. Hence, you should strive to earn Divine grace. Scholars say, it is impossible to escape Karma. What they say is true to a certain extent. But once you earn Divine grace, even if you have to experience the consequences of Karma, you will not feel the pain. Take for instance a bottle containing medicine. You find the expiry date mentioned on the bottle. After the expiry date, the medicine will lose its potency. Likewise, God's grace will make the Karma Phala 'expire', i.e., it nullifies the effects of Karma. Hence, it is possible to escape from the consequences of Karma. Man should cultivate the necessary strength and will power to deserve Divine grace. You will be free from the shackles of Karma once you attain Divine grace.

Lord Easwara had granted only sixteen years of life-span to Markandeya. But Markandeya was unaware of this. One evening, he found his parents full of sorrow. On enquiry, they revealed that his end had approached and that was the cause of their sorrow. They said, "Lord Easwara had ordained that you would live only for sixteen years and today happens to be the last day of your earthly sojourn. Tomorrow our earthly ties will be snapped." Markandeya was surprised to hear this. He also felt sorry that he was not made aware of it earlier. He said, "I would have made proper use of my time if I had known that I would live for only sixteen years." He went to the temple of Easwara without wasting even a moment, hugged the Siva Linga and started chanting Om Namah Sivaya wholeheartedly. At the appointed hour, Lord Yama (God of death) cast his noose around the neck of young Markandeya. As he was hugging the Linga, the noose fell around the Siva Linga also. Easwara manifested there and remonstrated with Yama, "How dare you cast the noose around Me?" Pleased with the devotion of Markandeya, He blessed him with the boon of immortality. In fact, it was Easwara who had stipulated 16 years of life-span for Markandeya. But on account of Markandeya's intense devotion and

total surrender Easwara had to change His decree. Markandeya's episode bears ample testimony to the fact that one can escape even from the God of death if one becomes the recipient of Lord Easwara's grace. Hence, contemplate on God and chant His Name incessantly.

Once when Lord Yama was going round the world, he noticed that everyone was chanting the divine name. Wherever he went, he found devotees contemplating on the Lord. "If everyone starts chanting the Divine Name, how am I to discharge my duties? How can I cast my noose around a devotee?", he wondered. He started praying to Lord Easwara thus. Then Easwara appeared before him and said, "You may cast your noose on anyone at the appointed time. But, remember that only those who have experienced the fruits of their actions will be ensnared by your noose. It cannot touch those who have no trace of Karma Phala (fruits of action). That is why Markandeya became My property and I showered My grace on him."

That is why people start chanting the divine names such as "Rama, Krishna, Govinda..." as the end approaches. As demonstrated by Markandeya, devotees can alter the Will of God by their sincere prayers. In matters relating to Divinity, the word 'impossible' does not exist. God can accomplish anything. If you surrender to Him completely, He can cancel the consequences of your actions and confer His grace on you. One need not feel depressed or dejected thinking that he is bound by Karma Phala. God can cancel your Karma Phala if your prayers are sincere. In this manner, God protected the lives of many devotees and alleviated their suffering in response to their prayers. Some people out of their ego doubt the power of God and try to test Him. They think, "Let us see, how he will do this." But God cannot be understood or experienced by such tests. Such tests are futile exercise. Evil qualities like ego,

jealousy and hatred will ruin man's life. One should make every effort to earn the grace of God. Sarvada Sarva Kaleshu Sarvatra Hari Chintanam (everywhere, at all times, under all circumstances contemplate on God).

That is why Swami is exhorting you to undertake spiritual Sadhana. Nagar Sankirtan is one of the Sadhanas that is prescribed for devotees. No one knows when one's end approaches. Yama has no consideration of what one is doing, good or bad at the time of casting his noose. One may leave his mortal coil even when one is doing Nagar Sankirtan. Hence, one should always be prepared to face Yama by chanting the Divine Name. You should undertake spiritual practice and earn the divine grace so as to be free from Karma Phala. One need not feel depressed and resign to one's fate. One can easily overcome fate with sincere prayers. The story of Markandeya proves this point beyond doubt. Everything depends on God's grace.

Embodiments of Love!

You may undertake any number of spiritual practices, but never forget God's Name even for a moment. Only then will you be protected. Never do anything that will take you away from God. You can achieve anything through prayer. You do not need to pray loudly, it is enough if you pray mentally. Some people have a mistaken notion that God will not come to their rescue if they do not pray loudly. God resides in your heart. He listens to your prayers. If you aspire to attain His grace, you have to contemplate on Him incessantly. Worldly difficulties come and go. One should not attach much importance to them. However, through prayer, one can overcome any difficulties. Only God's grace is true and everlasting. One should strive to attain it.

Embodiments of Love!

Chant the name of God day in and day out. That alone

will protect you at all times. Just as air is all-pervasive, God is present in you, with you, around you, below you, above you. Hence, you should be in constant communion with divinity. When you develop faith in Divinity, you will naturally have unity. Consequently, there will be no scope for enmity. You need not perform any rituals in order to win the grace of God. It is enough if you do Namasmara (chanting the Divine Name) from the depth of your heart. Bhajan Bina Sukha Shanthi Nahin... (one cannot attain peace and happiness without singing the glory of God). If you incessantly chant the divine name "Rama", no harm can ever befall you.

Embodiments of Love!

It is because of your good fortune that you all have gathered here today. Do not fritter away this opportunity. Make the best use of your stay here and get the maximum benefit out of it. Remember that God is always with you wherever you are.

God is your sole refuge wherever you may be, in a forest, in the sky, in a city or a village, on the top of a mountain or in the middle of deep sea. (Telugu poem)

Students, Embodiments of Love!

I am very much aware that you think of Swami always. It does not matter whether you sing the Divine Name loudly or silently. I see only the feeling behind it. Nothing can come in the way of God and His devotee. Rishis of yore went to the Himalayas in order to spend their time in contemplation of God. Wherever you are, God listens to your prayers. Do Bhajans sincerely. Swami will certainly listen to you. Never give room for any type of weakness. Be always courageous. When you adhere to Swami's words, the power of Sai will manifest in you. Chant any name of your choice, Easwara, Rama, Krishna, etc., but always remember that God is one. I will never force you to chant a particular name. One should not limit God to a

particular name or form. You may call Me by any name, I shall respond.

Recently, a strange incident took place. Subramaniam of Larsen & Toubro and Chief Engineer Kondal Rao had gone to East Godavari and West Godavari region in connection with the Water Supply Project works. As they were conducting a survey in a forest area, they were confronted by a group of naxalites. The naxalites questioned them, "Who are you? Why have you come here? Who has sent you here? How dare you enter our area without our permission?" They replied, "We have come here in your own interest. As there is scarcity of water in this region, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba has sent us to make arrangements for the drinking water supply." On hearing this, the naxalites were stupefied and overjoyed. They said, "We are living in the forests and hence are not aware of the magnificent service activities that Swami has undertaken." They guided the engineers as to where to lay the pipes and fix the taps. They are all coming here for Swami's Darshan. The Water Supply Project works in East and West Godavari districts are nearing completion. We have already drawn plans for a water supply project in the Krishna District also. I am taking up these projects and completing them of My own accord, without anybody's asking. Water is very essential for the survival of everyone. It is the sustainer of life. What else can be of greater service than providing drinking water to the needy? It is the source and sustenance of life. I do not expect any rituals or worship from you. I

am doing it out of My love for you. East Godavari, West Godavari and Krishna districts are now being covered under Sri Sathya Sai drinking water supply project. The people of those districts are extremely happy. There can be no greater service than providing drinking water. That is what I have been doing. You need not ask for it. I am giving it out of My own accord. Till today no government or anyone for that matter has taken up the task of providing drinking water to Krishna district. It is only Sai who is providing water to all. I am always engaged in such humanitarian projects. I do not involve Myself in any other work. Water is essential for human life. Hence I am prepared to provide water for all. Devotees should pray that everybody should have water to drink. Pray for the welfare of all. Prayer is the need of the hour. You may be worried that Swami is not able to walk. But always remember that Swami is not the body. I have no connection with the body. I am always happy and healthy. Do not pray to God for the fulfilment of your desires. Pray for the welfare of all. When I had a fall, the people of East Godavari and West Godavari came and prayed, "Swami, we want only Your health and not water." I told them, "Your welfare is My welfare." They are bringing a helicopter for Me with the prayer that I should pay a visit to East Godavari and West Godavari districts. Very soon, I will be visiting these districts.

Recapitulate and savour these blissful moments you have spent here. Do Namasmaraana.