

Now or Never...

Imagine a boy who adorns his study desk with a beautiful rose for several days. When the rose rots and stinks, he offers it to his sweetheart with a smiling "I love you."

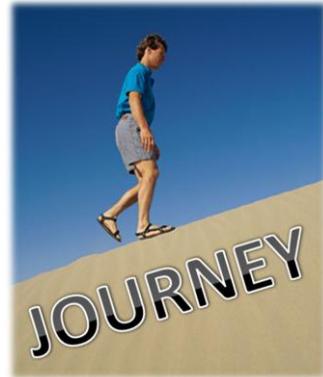
Hardly anyone would do this with his beloved. Yet many people do this with God. They use the best part of their lives for selfish godless enjoyment. When their bodies age and become good-for-nothing, then they – sometimes – offer their lives to the Supreme with a ceremonious "I am your devotee".

Life from the beginning to the end should be a progressive journey of increasing devotion to the Supreme. We are souls fallen from the eternal world and transmigrating through various species in material existence. Now that we have received human bodies, we have the opportunity to revive our dormant divine love and return back to our lost spiritual home.

Suppose somebody knows there's a treasure underground, yet covers it with mud. Isn't that unfortunate? Devotional service is the only treasure of life; it's the only wealth which brings fulfillment in this life and which accompanies us to the next life. Despite knowing this, if we preoccupy ourselves with materialistic pursuits, we will simply be thickening the covering on our latent spiritual awareness and joyfulness. Moreover we will be habituating ourselves to materialistic living. And the chains of habits are too soft to be felt and too hard to be broken. So if we postpone devotional service in favor of materialistic pursuits, aren't we like the unfortunate person?

Also postponing spiritual life to old age is based on the assumption that we will live till old age. But death does not follow the queue system of first come, first go. So why delay at our own risk? Misled by the notion that death was far away, in our many previous lives, we postponed devotional service till it was too late. That's why we are still here in this miserable material world soon to undergo another round of suffering of old age, disease and death. Will we repeat our past mistake in this life too?

And what is old age anyway? It is proximity to death. As we may all die at anytime, are we all not old? That's why we refer to ourselves and others as, say, "thirty years old" – not "thirty years young."



So is youth the right time for spiritual life? No, it isn't. Childhood is, as proclaimed by books of timeless wisdom like the Srimad Bhagavatam (7.6.1). Wet clay can be easily shaped, dry clay can't.

Why should the best career ambition in life – everlasting wisdom and happiness – deserve anything less than the best learning years of life?

If we are teenagers, youths or middle-aged or senior citizens, then we are already late in starting spiritual life – late by several years. Just as a late train has to accelerate to reach on time, we need to practice devotional service with above-average intensity if we want to attain the samadhi of divine love before death reaches us.



During funeral ceremonies, people chant, “*rama naam satya hai.*” (The name of God is the only truth.) But when a living person invests time in chanting, these same people often discourage him. Despite their pompous words what they are effectively saying is “*rama naam vyarth hai.*” (Chanting is a waste of time.) Double standards. Those who try to cheat the Supreme will themselves be cheated. Despite their show of religiosity, they will continue to suffer in material existence life after life. Why should we join them?

“Spiritual life is for oldage” is a bogus and baseless idea. It is true that in Vedic culture *sannyasa* – life dedicated to God – is the last stage of life. But the first stage of life is *brahmacharya*, life in pursuit of *brahman*, God.

If someone wants to swim in the ocean, but waits for the waves to stop, how long will he have to wait? Forever. Similarly, if we want to take to spiritual life, but wait for the waves of material distractions to subside, how long will we have to wait? Forever.

Therefore if it's not now, it's never. Because till we decide “*now*”, the default course of action will be “*never*”. So why delay the desirable?

God, as the *Paramatma* dwelling in our own hearts, has been waiting for us life after life. How much more are we going to keep him waiting?

Therefore let's invest our time for God *now* – and reap the ultimate dividend of a satisfied life here and hereafter.

