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# OPPAM

O N L Y P O S I T I V E



**IS SMILE A SIGN  
OF HAPPINESS?**



# OPPAM

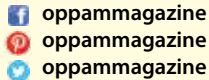
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# Editorial

**DR ANTONY P JOSEPH**  
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# NEVER FORGET YOUR MOTHER

**C**ristiano Ronaldo is one of the greatest footballers of all time. He had a very humble beginning. He grew up as a boy in the midst of poverty. Later, when he was in his prime, career-wise and financially, a journalist asked him: “Why do you let your mother stay with you? Why can’t you build a separate house for her and let her live there?”

Ronaldo’s reply was instant: “My mother has sacrificed her life for me. She has starved for many days to feed me. It was she who struggled most to make a soccer career for me. So, I try my best to make her happy. She was with me in my success and failures. She is the greatest gift I have in my life!”

Today, we see a trend of forsaking old parents. When their hair turns grey and skin gets wrinkled, parents become a burden for many children. There are very few children today who are kind enough to sit near their parents to talk with them for some time and caress them lovingly.

Mother is one who sacrifices most in the course of her children’s growth. Her sacrifice and service do not end with bearing the child in her womb and giving birth. Her loving care is there at every step of the child’s growth. She is there as a guard in every phase of his progress. Her prayers are with him in his success. She has shared her life with you. She is as priceless as our very life!

So, never abandon your mother. As a human, she may have limitations. But, never forget that she has only the same limitations we have. Be kind to her and bear with her failures.

We never understand the value and greatness of our mothers when they are with us. But, when we have lost them forever, we would long to see them once more. We would yearn to hear their voices. We would painfully long to hug them. But...

An old saying goes thus: “God created mothers because He is not able to reach everywhere.” Yes, mothers are true representatives of God. Never sadden them nor forget them.

With best wishes,  
**Dr. Antony P Joseph**



# THE VERB CALLED LOVE

The act of loving becomes a difficult task because we do not know how to love. Those people are interested only to celebrate love nominally. Love is never a noun. It is actually a verb. Just as the unrecorded words vanish into the thin air, love that has not been converted to verb, will remain as a lifeless noun.

Until we understand the forms of love, our ignorance of loving will follow us. Verbal love is merely a noun, whereas the verb called love is proved in acts of love. The saying 'I love you' is a noun. But, when love becomes a sign which expresses my love through my actions, it becomes a verb. Relationships become valuable only when we love. We are living in the midst of many bonds

such as Father-daughter, Mother-son and Husband-wife. There are several other relationships in which we get involved. But, what is the foundation of relationships?

It should be love. Love should be the touchstone to judge the value of every relationship. It is not enough to have a relationship alone; there should be love as well. When a husband or wife has a relationship with his/her spouse, he/she will go after others when his/her spouse gets ill or financially poor.

When we have a relationship, but not love, we will abandon our elderly parents. On the other hand, we will lift up a fallen stranger lying on the wayside, when we have love, even though we do not have any relationship with him. It is

**The toughest lesson in this world is to learn to love. The biggest discovery in this world is to discover love. All frictions in this world are caused by incapability to discover love.**

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then that we decide to walk an extra mile with someone who had requested us to walk a mile with him.

People like Mother Teresa of Calcutta emerged here because there was love, even in the absence of relationships. We read about murders of family members by other members of the same family. This happens because there were only relationships, but no love. Love is important, not relationship. In other words, it is love that enhances the beauty of relationships.

We tend to turn cold towards our kith and kin because there is no love. If we have love, even in the absence of

relationships, we will be connected. On the other hand, a loveless relationship will be a sort of slavery.

The toughest lesson in this world is to learn to love. The biggest discovery in this world is to discover love. All frictions in this world are caused by incapability to discover love. When there is love, everyone will be connected.

When we engage in love, we need to ask certain questions to ourselves: How do I love and why do I love? How much do I love? You can love in any way and at any time. You can love as much as you want. A time-bound love with ulterior motives is never true love.

The oldest commandment is to love. The same is the newest commandment as well. The realization that there are still unexplored continents and unrevealed treasures, triggers me to go on with my love for you. Once I discover those, my love will end. It is for the same reason that my love does not end and that it goes on...





# A CRISIS IS NOT A FULL STOP

Is there a life without a crisis? The nature of the crisis faced by each one is different and distinct. Since each person is unique, his response to the crisis will be unique and distinct as well.

Some persons shrink before a crisis like a plant on which hot water is poured. Some others will get distressed. Their mind will become like a dark room. On the other hand, there are some people, who creatively respond in the face of

crisis. I will give an example: Suppose we are going for a journey. All of a sudden, one tyre of your car gets punctured. Won't you take instant measures to change the tyre or fix the puncture, and continue your journey?

On the other hand, will you sit idly wimping: "Oh! My car's tyre has been punctured! So I have to cancel my trip!?" Never. We will seek means to solve the problems we are facing. We



need to keep our mind calm to have our way ahead clearer. To fetch clear water from a murky river, we must wait for the river to get clearer.

Accept every crisis that comes along your way, with a serene mind. You will be able to think and find a way out only if your mind is calm and composed. Never tremble before crises. Never take a rash decision. Thus, you will be able to view the problem from a different angle. Most crises can be solved. In case, a certain crisis cannot be solved, there is no other way than to face it. Take care not to get into a conflict by confronting the crisis. Understand that there are inevitable and unavoidable crises in life.

Never look at a crisis as the end of life. It is not a full stop, but only a comma. Each crisis opens before us the door to a new beginning. It is generally said that a crisis is the end of an old thing and the beginning of a new thing. Each crisis is an opportunity to surpass

**Crises are an opportunity to discern true friends and true love. The lessons learned during a crisis should never be forgotten.**

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ourselves and find out new potentials within us. It brings out our innate and hidden talents. It reveals the infinite possibilities lying ahead of us.

Crises also reveal the love and honesty of those who are related to us. Some people feel alone when they are faced with crises. Even those closest to him will abandon him. Crises are an opportunity to discern true friends and true love. The lessons learned during a crisis should never be forgotten.

Today, some of us will be standing stupefied before a crisis. But, when we look back to it from the future, we would find it amusing, perhaps!



# BIRTH ORDER AND PERSONALITY TRAITS



According to some observations, the order of birth can affect one's personality. The personality traits of the elder child will be different from that of the younger one. On the other hand, a single child will be different from these two. Let us have a look into the connection between birth order and personality.

Most parents are vexed with the differences in personality they find in their children. Psychologist Kevin Leman says that children are not to be blamed for this. He adds that it is due to the birth order that there is a difference between them. Leman has been doing research on personality and birth order since 1967. The behavior of parents to the elder ones and the younger ones are different. And a single child is nurtured

in yet another way.

A single child is nurtured in a peculiar way. Since they have no other children, the parents focus all their attention on this child. He/she gets all their attention, love and consideration. They enjoy a sort of monopoly. So, these children think that they are one of a kind. Since, they get all the support of their parents, these children also tend to carry on their shoulders all the expectations of their parents.

Here are the peculiarities pointed out by experts as found in single children:

- They will be mature
- They will be perfectionists
- They will have leadership quality
- They will have a strong conscience
- They will be diligent

**The elder ones have to take upon themselves all the responsibility of the family. They have to take care of the younger ones.**

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Since there are no other children when they are born, the eldest child also enjoys all the attention and love of his parents just like the single child. The eldest ones will have all the advantages and disadvantages of parenting. Sometimes they will behave like grownups. They are generally trustworthy and conscientious. They also have the capability to control others.

The elder ones have to take upon themselves all the responsibility of the family. They have to take care of the younger ones. This gives rise to conflict in them. Sometimes, these children are

under pressure to prove their smartness before their parents.

In families where there are more than two children, the second one, or the children coming in the middle, will be growing up with less consideration and attention from their parents. They will be growing up with a vexing thought 'I am not the eldest nor the youngest, then who am I?' These children may not be getting much consideration from their parents. Often they would be compared to the eldest and the youngest. They will be more inclined to making others happy and nurturing friendships. They will have a large social connection around them. These people are generally peace-loving.

Experts in this field say that the middle ones grow up with a feeling that they are not adequately accepted in their family. It is a difficult task to inculcate the feeling of worth in such children.

The youngest children often get a great amount of consideration, love and care from other members of the family. For this reason, they will always try to attract the attention of others and crave more attention. All their activities will be self-centered. They will find their own means to grab attention. According to an observation, famous actors and comedians were the youngest children!

Stating these traits does not mean that these peculiarities are rigid and fool proof. Sometimes, some eldest children might behave like the younger ones and vice versa. What we need to know from this is that parents must understand that birth order can influence the personality traits of children and so they must deal with their children keeping these insights in mind.





# A NEW SKY

When Marissa Mayer was appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer of Yahoo.com on July 16, 2012, some journalists asked her: “Madam, what are your topmost priorities as the CEO of Yahoo.com?” To the surprise of everyone, she replied: “First God, second my family, third yahoo.com!”

The response of Marissa, whom Fortune magazine selected as the 32nd most powerful lady in the world, must be taken seriously by those who forget God and their family for obtaining transient benefits. Marissa was only 37 when she was elected for this great

honor.

Our choices are important. God’s blessings are hidden in choices. Every dawn hides some sparks of beauty like that of a flower’s bloom. Every day, life’s hopes and meanings become sweeter. We are standing there like a little boy, unwinding the string of the kite of love. We are waiting to welcome the new ones into the casket of memories of our thousand friendships. Our lives derive meaning and radiance in that act of waiting. Doors of love are opened in the house of goodness. I also need to trigger a change by opening those doors. But, my choices are important. How are my



**Some wounds are bound to happen. Sometimes, they occur by decomposing and decaying; at other times, we find it in poverty. A real friend is the one who surrenders himself and meets the other on the wayside of self-negation.**

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choices?

I have read somewhere that the distance from a bamboo to a flute is that of 7 seven wounds. Music will flow from our lives only when there are wounds - sufferings. Some wounds are bound to happen. Sometimes, they occur by decomposing and decaying; at other times, we find it in poverty. A real friend

is the one who surrenders himself and meets the other on the wayside of self-negation.

Haven't you seen the smartphone giving us notifications time and again? At the time of these notifications, a light blinks and a sound tinkles. This is a reminder: that the light we must keep within us must ablate at times. Like a thousand candles are lit from a single candle. Some of your choices must be a travel through new paths.

The title of a book I read recently is this: "My Stolen years." This was a book written by a prisoner, written about his years in the prison. We also have stolen years in our lives, which we must reflect upon, with closed eyes. Someone has stolen our years in the past. A part of my mistaken choices. At least now, we must regain them.



# WAITING

When he was about to leave for home after having completed his long-term training, the disciple asked the Master: “Master, I have a doubt...”

The Master was all ears. Then the disciple continued: “My doubt is this: When will I become a Master?”

The Master stood silent before the innocent question of the disciple. He sensed the fervor in the eyes of the young man.

The Master handed over an empty pot into the hands of the disciples and asked him to bring some water to drink. The disciple ran to the river nearby, fetched a pot-full of water, and brought it to the Master.

Taking the pot from the young man and having a look at the water, the Master poured out all the water from the pot. Handing over the empty pot, he again asked the man to bring some water to drink. The disciple went to the river a second time and brought a pot-full of water. The Master looked into the water, but poured the water out again and asked him to bring water.

This time, the disciple knew. He went back to the river bank. Then he knew that the river was somewhat murky. So, he waited with patience till dusk. Now, the river turned crystal clear. Without hastening, the disciple slowly fetched a pot of water and returned to the Master.

The Master said, while taking a sip from the pot: “Be calm. You will be transformed into a Master in the full-





ness of time.”

We are living in a busy time. Speed is the hallmark of this time. Fast vehicles, fast technology, fast manufacturing, fast decisions... everything is so fast in our times.

We do not have patience to wait for anything or anyone. We are so restless when a railway gate is slow to open, a bus is late, a traffic signal is late, and a pizza is late to arrive at our table in a hotel; and why to say more, we cannot wait the buffering time of a WhatsApp video! We are hastening around with fast food, fast tracks and 5G internet speed.

This hastening nature has crept even into spirituality. We want instant reply to our prayers. We are ready to make any offering to gain our desires at the earliest. Most often, we look at God as

an ATM. We want to get his blessing as quickly as we withdraw money from an ATM counter. Such is our concept of God today!

There is a story by Malayalam Writer C.V Balakrishnan titled ‘God’s pathway’. A man is travelling with a bundle of rejection and insult on his back. Arriving at a decision to commit suicide, he reaches a deserted place after prolonged wanderings. There, he finds a boy, weeping near a burning funeral pyre. He stared at the boy. He was a hollow-eyed boy with shabby clothes and bulged belly.

The man approached the boy. The moment he saw the man, the boy asked him: “Why are you late?” Surprised, the man asked him: “Who do you think I am?” The boy said: “I know you. My



**In fact, a candle flame of hope is being lighted behind every wait. The waiting becomes unbearable only when this flame is extinct. The best thing one can do in these dark times, is to keep a candle of hope lit.**

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mother has told me that you would come. Haven't you seen what I have suffered? From the moment I set my mother to fire, I had been waiting for you...?

With increasing curiosity, the man asked him: "Who do you think I am so that you may speak thus to me...?"

"Who else than God? My mother has said that God will come when I am alone and orphaned. Thanks for coming, although you are a little late!"

Tears rolled down the man's cheeks. He hugged the boy with a welcome gesture and took him along. The author ends the story with these last lines: "God will come in different forms to

a man standing with hope against all odds!"

In fact, a candle flame of hope is being lighted behind every wait. The waiting becomes unbearable only when this flame is extinct. The best thing one can do in these dark times, is to keep a candle of hope lit.

The end scene of an old Malayalam movie, which I have watched many years ago is thus: A woman was waiting for her lover in a railway station. He does not arrive at the expected time. Nevertheless, she keeps on waiting in that railway station for years, train after train... During these years, she becomes old and grey-haired.

Finally, a train arrives and a young man alights from it. He sees her and wants to convey the news that her lover is no more. But, he does not dare to blow off her candle of hope. Her hope stays alive... The eyes of the audience are moistened.

The Will of God about us is that we have to be the caretakers of others' hope.



# ARE YOU TIRED EVEN AFTER A SOUND SLEEP?

Sometimes, after sleeping for six to seven hours every night, we wake up very tired in the morning. That fatigue can last all day. Why does it happen? Just because you slept at the right time doesn't mean you get the right amount of sleep, it's the quality that matters more than the quantity. Sleep specialists say that there are a few reasons why you feel tired even after waking up.

## Disease

It can be caused by certain diseases or medical conditions—especially

thyroid diseases, pulmonary diseases and anaemia. If you feel tired even after sleeping for 7 to 8 hours then you must consult a doctor, advises Christopher Barnes, Professor at the National Sleep Foundation, Washington

## An unhealthy lifestyle

The World Health Organization recommends that adults should get at least 150 minutes of physical activity per week. It is also said that even pregnant women should do aerobic exercises. But in today's busy world, many



## **Sleeping less on work days and sleeping more on non-work days and holidays. This also disrupts the systematic flow of the body.**

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people don't have time to exercise. A sedentary lifestyle can leave you feeling tired even if you get enough sleep.

### **Depression and anxiety**

Depression and anxiety are debilitating factors in the body. These create a negative impact on the body. Waking up several times at night increases fatigue.

### **Irregular sleep**

Another cause is sleep disturbances due to the nature of the job. Sleeping less on work days and sleeping more on non-work days and holidays. This also disrupts the systematic flow of the body.

## **Dehydration**

A sufficient amount of water is essential for digestion and hormone production. Oxygen levels can be maintained properly only when the body is hydrated in sufficient quantity. Lack of water in the body can lead to sleepiness and increased fatigue. To remedy this deficiency, it is said to drink water before going to bed.

### **The bedroom environment**

The room environment you choose to sleep in can have both positive and negative effects on sleep. This includes the lighting, cooling, and heating of the room. It is essential to cut down the use of alcohol six hours before going to bed. Spicy food should be avoided two hours before.

### **Companion**

Spouse, friends, and children who are with you while sleeping can affect your sleep, things like their snoring can disrupt sleep.



# IS SMILE A SIGN OF HAPPINESS?

Do we not meet some who deal cheerfully, with a smile that never leaves their lips? People will say in their mind: 'What a happy person he is!' But are they happy individuals? A smile on a person's face is not necessarily an indication of one's happiness. May be

or may be not, but this is what a recent survey by a leading magazine says about the characteristics of happy people. A title named 'Weekly happiness habits' suggests that the reasons for happiness are as mentioned below.

Sleeping for seven hours or more, those who maintain personal hobbies (art, music, cooking, reading, playing), engage in sports or exercise, spend time in nature, doing meditative practices like yoga, people who are focused on spiritual matters like prayer and visiting shrines, those who keep friendships outside the home, those who go out with their families; claimed that they are happy in the survey because they engage in such activities every week.

Happiness is always subjective. Just because one person is happy doesn't mean it makes the other person happy. Some think that money can bring happiness. Money can never buy happiness, but spending money on positive things can make you happy. The happiness that comes from helping others with money for example is boundless. Being able to be happy through positive things and being able to maintain satisfaction is not trivial.

Adopting the methods of the survey participants mentioned above, can make us much happier persons than we are now. So start working towards it from today. What is life without happiness?







# CONDITION

Summer is one condition and winter is another condition. Conditions will change. Part of being practical is to take precautions and survival techniques that suit each situation.

Even though conditions are different, those who face it and those who go through it are the same. Those who go through the winter season are the same ones who go through the summer.

When winter starts, the windows will be closed and warm coats will be worn. When the summer begins, the windows are opened and the snow coats are kept away. Yes, the situation

will change. But reactions to them are different. So don't blame too much on the circumstances. They are the demands of life. They are inevitable. Some situations will enter our life uninvited. Like the vehicles that come from behind and knock you down even if you walk carefully.

Aging is a condition. Retirement is a condition. Illness is a condition; childhood, adolescence, and youth are conditions, and death is also a condition.

Situations beyond our control. What can we do with all of them? Can it be resisted and defeated, except to watch with a tearful smile...



# THEATER

Someone long ago said that life is a theater. When you think about it, it is true. How many roles have we already played? How many more roles are left to act and perform? How many people came as co-actors... how many people left... how much fun was reflected...?

The venues may change; also the viewers. But we should be happy that the stage is there, and we can act. Oth-

er people may have different opinions about the role played. There may be differences of opinion. But only we can judge. Because we only know under what conditions and circumstances we disguise ourselves. There may be shortcomings. Investigate opportunities for improvement. Be proud of the roles you get without regretting the roles you missed. Be sincere in whatever role you get. Keep trying to improve more.



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