Index Of Discourses

1. The triple purity 5
2. Learning a lesson from a child 12
3. Triple transformation : Sankraanthi's call 20
4. Spiritual basis of human values 27
5. Spiritual significance of Shivaraathri 36
6. Cherish the glorious heritage of Bhaarath 42
7. Let everyone do his duty 50
8. Let Raama live in your hearts 59
9. Make Swami's words your beacon-light 70
10. Srishti and Dhrishti 81
11. The triple transformation 86
12. The quest for truth 91
13. Heroic mothers and noble sons 95
14. Message of the Avathaars and the Epics 102
15. Bhagawan Baba's exhortation to students 109
16. lnfinite potency of the Raama principle 115
17. Greatness of Vibheeshana 117
18. The greatness of Raama-Raajya 122
19. Render unto God what is His 132
20. Love Propels Man Toward God (Alternative Translation) 136
20. The four beacons 154
21. Discipline is the Life Principle of Man (Alternative Translation) 161
21. Importance of discipline 181
22. Sacrifice and Selflessness are the Hallmarks of True Love (Alternative Translation) 186
22. Selfless love and firm faith 201
23. As you sow, so shall you reap 204
24. Not salaries but service 206
25. Adherence to truth 208
26. Bhagawan deplores devotees' lapses 210
26. Love is the Royal Road to Attain Swami's Grace (Alternative Translation) 217
27. Forget the Non-Self and Contemplate on the Self (Alternative Translation) 230
27. The human adventure 244
28. Love Is The Greatest Binding Force 250
28. Saadhana and sense control 261
29. Love for the divine transcends all kin 264

29. Peace is Possible Only Through Love (Alternative Translation) 270
30. All Are Embodiments of Brahman (Alternative Translation) 283
30. Seek the guru within you 301
31. The message of Vedhaantha 307
31. Vedanta is Very Easy to Practise (Alternative Translation) 314
32. Man's true kith and kin 335
33. Ego and Attachment Lead to Bondage (Alternative Translation) 344
33. God is the sole refuge 359
34. Be Ever Grateful To God (Alternative Translation) 364
34. Man's debt to God 377
35. The Gospel of hard work 380
36. Shirdi Baba's first miracle 383
37. Jnaana and Bhakthi 388
37. Make Your Heart the Temple of God (Alternative Translation) 391
38. The Lord and the devotee 406
38. Work With Discrimination; Worship With Awareness (Alternative Translation) 410
39. Divinity Imparts Value To Everything (Alternative Translation) 427
39. The greatness of Bali and Prahlaadha 444
40. Krishna's life and message 450
40. Love For God Is The Only Real Wealth (Alternative Translation) 460
41. The power that draws devotees 479
41. Turn Your Vision Toward God (Alternative Translation) 485
42. Hold on to the Fundamental Principle of Oneness (Alternative Translation) 499
42. Ways of the Divine : Advent of Shankara 512
43. Knowledge of the Self is Real Knowledge (Alternative Translation) 520
43. The glorious saga of Shankara 534
44. Vedha and Vedhaantha 540
45. Attachment to the Self is True Love (Alternative Translation) 546
45. Shankara's call to youth 559
46. Atma is the Fundamental Basis of Everything (Alternative Translation) 566
46. The conquest of attachment 575
47. The Vinaayaka Principle 582
48. Attain the Sovereignty of Atmic Kingdom (Alternative Translation) 586
48. Who is dear to the Lord? 601
49. The devotee's ordeals and God's grace 610
50. The glory of Bhaarath's women 614
51. Adhere to Sathya and Dharma 621

52. Fill your hearts with love 627
53. Realise God through love 636
54. Divine Ideals of Indian Culture 643
55. Rich Cultural Heritage of Bharat 664
56. Divinity Manifests the Effulgence of Truth 679
57. Your Thoughts Are Responsible For Your Happiness And Sorrow 692
58. Make Faith The Basis Of Your Life 702
59. Students are the Future Saviours of a Country 715
60. Equal-Mindedness is the Hallmark of a Human Being 727
61. Follow the Religion of Love 740
62. Lack of Values is the Cause of Violence in the World 751
63. Namasmarana is the Greatest Sadhana in the Kali Yuga 762
64. Hold on to Truth Under All Circumstances 774
65. Divine Proximity is the Real Wealth 789
66. Dharma Is Our Real And Permanent Property 801
67. Develop Virtues and Contemplate on God 814
68. Humanness Blossoms In A Compassionate Heart 824
69. Do Not Waste Natural Resources 836
70. Nama Sankirtan Is The Royal Path For Man's Redemption 849
71. Develop Your Faith With Love For God 857
72. Expand Your Love and Experience Eternal Bliss 868
73. Become Deserving of God's Love 878
74. Education Should Foster Virtues In Students 889
75. Sathya and Dharma are Natural Attributes of Man 900
76. Experiencing Unity of Man and God 910
77. Virtues are the Foundation of Peace 918
78. Develop Love for God 929
78. Develop Love for God and Sanctify Your Life 943
79. Love is the True Form of God 954
80. Bliss Is Your Real Form 968
81. Earn the Wealth of Divine Grace 982
82. Knowing the Self is Real Freedom 997
83. God is the Embodiment of All Names and Forms 1.008
84. Divinity is the Basis of the Entire Creation 1.019
85. Spirituality is the Basis of All Types of Knowledge 1.029
86. Faith In God Removes All Fears 1.042
87. Do Not Allow Politics To Enter Villages 1.054
88. Pursue the Path of Truth and Wisdom 1.064
89. Supreme Bliss Comes From Absolute Wisdom 1.078

90. Develop Purity of Heart 1.090
91. It Is Love That Unites The World 1.102

1. The triple purity

Date: 01 January 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: New Year

Devotion Alone Bestows The Supreme Good;
Devotion Alone Is The Destroyer Of The Disease Of The Cycle Of Birth And Death;
Devotion Alone Is The Means Of Recognizing Divinity;
Devotion Alone Is The Means Of Liberation.

EMBODIMENTS of Love! Only through devotion does man attain the supreme Truth. Through devotion alone does man get release from the disease of birth and death. Through devotion man seeks to realise God. Through devotion alone he achieves Liberation.

Esteeming Bhakthi (devotion) as the supreme end and the highest goal of life, Bharatheeyas have been pursuing the path of devotion from ancient times.

The term Bhakthi (devotion) has been interpreted in many ways. The word Bhakthi is derived from the root 'Bhaj.' "Bhaja Sevayam," declared Shankara. "Service is devotion," according to Shankaracharya. Whom do you serve? What is the form of service? Service to God is true form of service.

Viveka Chudamani (of Shankaracharya) expounded the meaning of Bhakthi in a different way. "Svasvaruupa dharshanam Bhakthi" (The recognition of one's own true Self is Bhakthi).

Naradha, who was a great exponent of devotion, declared: "Bhaja Paramabhakthih." Naradha defined Bhakthi as the ceaseless flow of devotion arising from dwelling on the Lord's name.

He also declared that one who is filled with Paramabhakthi (supreme devotion) is in a state of intoxication, forgetful of the body, totally immersed in the love of the Divine. This means that true devotion consists in

obliviousness of the body and total absorption in the love of God.

Radha and Bhakthi

Ramanuja who is the exponent of the Visishtadhvaitha philosophy, derived the meaning of Bhakthi from the name of Radha and interpreted it as the continuous flow of love for God. The word 'Radha' contains four syllables: Ra, a, dh, and a. If you read the word starting from Ra, you have Radha. Starting from a, you get the word Adhara. Starting from Dh you get the word, Dhara. Starting form the second: a, you get the word Aradha. Adhara means "basis." Dhara means "continuous flow." Aradha means "worship." Thus Radha signified for Ramanuja the continuous stream of worship of the Divine.

Vallabhaeharya gave a different interpretation of devotion. He made a distinction between the continuous flow of devotion and devotion falling in drops. When a devotee's heart is completely filled with the love of God, he ceaselessly chants the name of God. This state of mind of the devotee was described thus, "Sarvadha Sarvakaleshu Sarvathra Harichinthanam" (ceaselessly thinking of God at all times and at all places).

True devotion is to regard God as friend

Madhvacharya described true devotion as regarding God as the only unfailing friend. All others may be friends for some time and turn inimical later. Thus all worldly friends may turn into enemies some time or other. God is the only true friend. Madhvacharya defined true devotion as the manifestation of the love for God, considering Him as the greatest friend.

The Vedas have proclaimed a truth transcending all these interpretations. The Vedas repeatedly harked upon two words: Nithyam and Svagatha. Nithyam is that which remains unchanged through all times. This has also been described as Truth which remains the same in all the 'three' categories of time past, present and future. Svagatha refers to that illuminating power,

which remaining alone spreads its effulgence all around.

This is illustrated by the sun, who is one entity that is unchanging and spreads his light all round. The permanence of the sun indicates the attribute of Nithya and the dispersal of his light indicates the quality of Svagatha. Both the qualities are rooted in a single entity. The smrithi referred to this characteristic as Svaruupa-Svabhava (the combination of form and quality).

The sun has two qualities: One is shedding light; the other is transmitting heat. Likewise, the Atma has two qualities. One is: Prabhava (effulgence). The other is spreading the light all around. You have the example of a lamp in your home. The lamp is one, but its light illumines the whole house.

Likewise, the Atma (Spirit) is one only in its form. It is eternal and unchanging. The Smrithi described it as: Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantham Brahma (The Supreme Self is truth, wisdom and infinite). It is the nature of the Self to spread Jnana (spiritual wisdom) everywhere.

The Smrithi declared that the Self has the form of Anu (the atom). The implication of this is that there is nothing in the universe without atoms. All material objects are made up of atoms. The scripture declared that God is omnipresent as Anusvaruupa. God is present also as the macrocosm.

Dharmee and Dharma

The Anusvaruupa (micro-essence) of God is termed Dharmee. In this form, Dharmee is present in all objects in creation, but none of them is present in Dharmee. All objects in the universe appear as different from each other, but the Divine principle in all of them is one and the same. That Divine principle, which manifests the oneness underlying all objects, is called Dharmee. This means that Dharmee is what unifies all apparently manifold objects. Dharma demonstrates the diversity in the forms of objects. The underlying principle which reveals the oneness of all these objects is Dharmee. This Dharmee is described by the Veda as Muuladhara padhartham - the thing that is at the

root of all things. This primal basic substance is the basis for everything else. Today the significance of this Dharmee is being forgotten. It is also forgotten that this Dharmee is all-pervading.

As the all-pervading Dharmee (divinity) is present in all objects as the subtle atom, man is regarded as Dharma-Svaruupa, the embodiment of Dharma (righteousness). What for has man been given a body? What for does he exist? The scriptures say: "Shareeram adhyam khalu dharma sadhanam" (the body verily is primary tool for realising righteousness). The body has been given to man to practise Dharma.

Today men tend to forget the purpose for which they have come to existence. They ignore their duties. They go after meaningless fancies. Hence they are not able to understand their true nature.

Role of festivals

In order to make people understand their real divine nature, festivals were designed. Today is Vaikuntha Ekadashi. What is Vaikuntha? The Lord's abode is described in various ways as Vaikuntha Kailasa, Svarga etc. All these are fanciful names.

What is the abode of God? The Lord told Naradha: "I reside wherever my devotees sing my glories." The Lord dwells in the hearts of devotees. This is His main address. All other places are "branch offices." Any message addressed to the Divine Indweller in the heart is bound to reach God. Vaikuntha as the abode of God means a place which is changeless. Many things may change in a man, but his heart is changeless. What is meant by Ekadhashi? This should not be regarded as some special place or time. The form of Ekadhasha Rudhra is made up of the five organs of perception, the five organs of action and the mind. Rudhra is a resident of the human body, which is full of numerous potencies. Men today are forgetful of these potencies and the Divinity. that dwells in the heart.

New year days come and go. Of what use are they? Samvathsara (the year) is one of the names of the Lord. Every moment is new. Why wait for a whole year to make the change in yourselves? As long as you are caught up in worldly celebrations of New year, Vaikuntha Ekadashi and the like, God will elude you. You can realise God only when you forget the phenomenal world and the body-consciousness.

The three active agencies in man

Turn the love that arises in you towards God. Dedicate your body to the Divine. This is the true mark of devotion. There are three constituents in man: the mind, the power of speech and the body. These three are called Thrikaranas - the three active agencies in man. It is when all three are used for sacred purposes, man becomes sanctified.

Every human being needs to cultivate the spirit, irrespective of his beliefs. All need devotion. It is only spirituality that can purify the heart and mind of man. The second requirement is morality. Morality helps to purify Vak (speech). The third is Dharmikam. All righteous deeds done by the body or hands sanctify a man. It is through spirituality, morality and righteousness that the three instruments get purified.

Only the one who has achieved this triple purity can realise the Divine, If any of these instruments are impure, he cannot realise the Divine.

To comprehend the Divine, man has to understand the subtle atomic principle that pervades the entire cosmos. The difficulty in comprehending the Divine was recognized by the Gopikas who declared: "How can we know you, oh Krishna! You are the subtlest among the subtle and vaster than the vastest among the 84 lakhs of species in the cosmos."

The three ornaments to cherish

With faith in the omnipresence of the Divine, man should engage himself in good deeds, cherish good thoughts and dedicate his life to good practices. His words should be words of truth. The ornaments he should cherish are truthfulness in speech, charity for the hands and listening to sacred lore for the ears.

Develop faith in your divinity. Then you will redeem your life. Follow your conscience. Make your heart pure.

You cannot realise the Divine by immersing yourself in worldly concerns. There are two kinds of knowledge: Dharmee-bhuutha Jnana and Dharma-bhuutha Jnana. Dharmee-bhuutha Jnana is knowledge related to forms. Dharma-bhuutha Jnana is related to names. There is no basic difference between the two kinds of knowledge. Name and form are interrelated. This truth has to be understood. The awareness that shines within all beings is the form and nature of the Divine. This oneness of form and name has to be properly understood. Every such concept has an external and an inner meaning. You have to grasp the inner meaning. For instance, the mike here rests on the table. The table is the base. The table stands on the earth. The earth is the base and the table is supported by the earth. The base is called Adhara and the object supported by the base is called Adheya. Today people tend to forget the Adhara and think only of the Adheya.

Anything can be accomplished with Divine support

Embodiments of Love! The New Year comes regularly year after year. But do you have any new thoughts? You do not shed your old, mistaken ideas. They should be given up, yielding place to new, sacred and sublime thoughts. Of what use is it to celebrate new year days if you do not change your old ways of thinking and behaving? Make proper use of time which is both precious and sacred. Do not indulge in useless gossip. Develop good qualities like compassion, love and sympathy. Act as your own monitor and correct yourself by self-punishment. By a simple method you can control your wandering mind or your anger. Moreover, place your reliance on God.

With the power of the Divine to sustain you there is nothing you cannot accomplish. Karna and Ravana are examples of powerful men who were destroyed because they did not have the power of the Divine behind them. The Pandavas were saved because of their faith in the Divine and their unity. Happenings in the world show how some families have prospered because of unity and how others have suffered because of divisions within the family.

Today the nation needs unity above everything else. It is through faith in God that unity can be promoted. Look at the diversity of people in this hall, the different creeds they profess, the different nationalities to which they belong. All are united in their common allegiance to Swami. By this single feeling of faith in the Divine, unity can be achieved. It is the absence of this faith that is the cause of division.

All of you are embodiments of the Divine. All of you are embodiments of love and peace. You are the Divine in human form. Develop that conviction. Immerse yourselves in Divine love. Offer that love to the Divine. Thereby you will have love for all. It is only when you develop this love principle you will be realising the meaning of festivals like these. Stand up for your belief in God, even as you stand up for your father or mother.

Render service to society, without which you cannot exist. Your welfare is bound with that of society. Develop the feeling of oneness with all, loving all as members of one Divine family.

> If you take one step towards Me, I take hundred steps towards you.
>
> *- Sathya Sai Baba*

2. Learning a lesson from a child

Date: 14 January 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Sports Meet

The farmer has no fear of going without food;

One who chants the Lord's name has no fear of worries; The silent man has no fear of discord; The careful man has no fear of danger.

EMBODIMENTS of Love! The hard-working farmer has no fear of starvation. The one who chants the name of God has no fear of worldly worries. The man of few words will be free from enmity. Through excessive talk man falls a prey to quarrels. Everyone should cultivate moderation in speech. Restraint in speech is conducive to friendly feelings. The one who is careful in his behaviour, doing all actions after due deliberation, will have no fear of danger.

All these precepts are related to education. True education consists in knowing how to lead a peaceful life. This means that in embarking on one's educational career, one should aspire for world peace. The reason is, he is a part of the world community. His well-being is intimately bound up with the well-being of the world. He should give up all narrow feelings. Students have also got to acquire unity and fellowship.

All these qualities cannot be taught by teachers. For every individual, Nature is the best teacher. Nature is teaching all lessons to man all the time.

The supreme virtue in a man

What lends beauty to sports and games is the spirit of unity with which the participants play in them, eschewing feelings of envy and hatred. The supreme virtue in a man is to forget his individual differences with others and move with them in a spirit of equality and harmony.

Today people derive only physical fitness and strength from taking part in sports and games. But man is not the body alone. Fulfillment in life is not attained by physical health and strength alone. Even when the stomach is full, 'the mind must get satisfaction. Hence, efforts should be made to promote mental health also. Only when both the mind and the body are hale and well can one experience happiness. However, young people today are concerned only about physical appearance and fitness.

Man is endowed by Divine grace with physical, mental and spiritual potencies of many kinds. Unfortunately young people tend to misuse these powers and come to grief. They do not recognise the magnitude of their internal powers. The mind is the source of all powers. Only when the mind is subdued can man realise the Divine.

Use and abuse of energies present in man

For achieving anything, strong determination is necessary. Young people in particular should take note of the powers in them. It is comparable to a kind of electrical energy. This energy enables them to see things through the eye (which is like a bulb). You must ensure that your vision is pure, sacred and pleasing. Do not taint or pollute your sight by looking at undesirable objects. Do not look at anything with bad thoughts. The eyes are spoilt by misuse.

Then you have circulating in the entire body a magnetic energy. Although this energy is present throughout the body, its presence is conspicuous in the hand. Hence the hands should be employed for good purposes. They should not be used for doing harm to others or hurting them.

Moreover, there are in the body rays emitting light. The electrical energy in the body serves to transmit these rays throughout the body like radio waves. People do not use these energies for right purposes. The ears listen to gossip, slander and evil talk. The result is that the power of hearing gets polluted.

Then, you have the power of speech. This power finds expression in sound

waves. This power has to be used with great care. The words one utters should be examined to see that they do not excite, irritate or anger others. Bad words come back to the speaker with double strength. Hence one's speech should be soft and sweet.

The major weakness of young people is the tendency to misuse their boundless potencies. This degrades them as human beings.

Young people, failing to exercise control over their actions, tend to become unruly and ungovernable. You may be great scholars or intellectual giants. There are many Nobel Laureates. How many remember them? But the great benefactors of mankind, the men of noble qualities, are cherished by all mankind. For instance, there is the example of a noble soul from Calcutta. Calcutta produced many great intellectuals. After a time they are not remembered at all. But if today Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, an illiterate person, is enshrined in the hearts of millions all over the world, is education responsible for it? Likewise, if many noble persons are enshrined in the hearts of people, what is the reason? They have earned their good name by their faith in God, their character, magnanimity and. spirit of sacrifice. God has been the prime factor in their lives.

A child's faith in God

The other day you witnessed in the sports festival a young child dancing as Krishna on the hood of a serpent. Owing to the firing of some crackers, the cloth on a platform where the child was dancing caught fire. As the flames rose, the police, the students and others rushed to the spot with buckets of water to put out the fire. There was great commotion. But the child Krishna went on with his-dance, totally indifferent to what was happening all around. His entire concentration was on the role he was playing. The child went on with the dance with his concentration on Swami. His eyes were centred on Swami. When one's look is centred on the Lord, nothing untoward can happen. All around the child, the decorations had been prepared with paper. Behind the decorations five hundred children were seated. What disaster

might have happened if the fire had spread towards them? But, even a mountain of danger will melt away like lee if one's thoughts are centred on God. This means that together with concern for worldly things, there should be devotion to God. Together with education Samskara (refinement of character) is essential.

What is meant by Samskara? "Samyak Krithi ithi Samskara" (Refinement of action is culture). The true implication of the benediction, "Lokas-Samasthas-Sukhino-Bhavanthu" is not properly understood. "All should be happy." This is the assurance of the Divine.

Valmeeki, Vyasa and Pothana

How did a highwayman like Rathnakara become the immortal author of the great epic Ramayana? By continuous chanting of the name of the lord, as taught to him by the Saptharishis (seven great sages), his face acquired a new effulgence and he could become the sage Valmeeki, who is immortalized as the author of the Ramayana. He composed his work to please the Lord. He did everything in a spirit of dedication to the Lord.

Take the case of Sage Vyasa. He was the author of eighteen puranas (ancient spiritual epics). He wrote the Mahabharatha and many other great works. But it was only when he was filled with divine fervour and wrote the Bhagavatham that he became enshrined in the hearts of the people. Valmeeki and Vyasa have become immortal through their devotion.

We have Pothana, the author of the Telugu Bhagavatham. He began writing his Bhagavatham with an invocation in which he declared: "What is being composed is Bhagavatham. The one who inspires the writer is Ramachandhra. What is written by me will be redemptive. I shall write, as there is no greater story to tell." Pothana began composing his magnum opus with the feeling that everything he was doing was by the will of Shri Rama. So, when you think of Bhagavatham, you are reminded of Pothana. By his great work he has installed himself in the hearts of the devout.

Mind should be directed towards God

Students should not end with mastery of books. The hearts should be filled with right knowledge. The students should see that the darkness which envelops the mind is dispelled. This was the prayer which the gopikas requested Uddhava to convey to Krishna: "Oh Krishna! Dispel the darkness in our-hearts and fill them with your effulgence. Pour your love on the parched fields of our hearts so that devotion may sprout from them."

The gopikas and gopalas prayed to Krishna that they could not live apart form Him that therefore they should be endowed with forms related to whatever forms He took so that they could stay with Him. Separation from God is the cause of men's wallowing in sensuous pleasures. The mind is the cause of man's pleasure and pain. It should be directed towards God to secure freedom from pleasure and pain.

God will not give up devotees

People today speak about God having forgotten man. This is not true. God can never give up the devotee. It is the devotee who gives up God. God can never forget the devotee. It is the devotee who forgets God. God is never away from you. Only the devotee is away from God. You think that God is moving away from you. Not at all. You forget God and declare that God has forgotten you. Your own feelings are reflected in your utterances. What is the result of education? You find that in any conference, the members criticize one another in unspeakable terms. The critics are invariably petty-minded persons. Many leaders today indulge in mutual mud slinging, which is totally unbecoming. Indulging in abuse of others is a grievous sin. Develop your own good qualities and share them with others. That is the right way. Try to correct yourself rather than to criticize others.

Most young people today indulge in slander, instead of cultivating qualities

like devotion to God, service to society and sympathy for fellow-beings. They should realise that they have to lead exemplary lives and serve their fellowmen. Every individual should dedicate himself to social service.

The spirit of sportsmanship which you display in sports and games should be displayed in other fields also. The determination displayed in sports should also be shown in the game of life.

You young people have to learn many things. First and foremost, get rid of Ahamkara (arrogance). Earn a good name as a scholar, a man of character, endowed with a spirit of sacrifice. Realise that if you please God, you can please the whole world. You saw the film about the saint Ghora Khumbhar. In his total absorption in God, he forgot the presence of his son and unwittingly caused the child's death. When he realised what had happened, he did not mourn the death of the child. He declared that God took away what God had given him. Such was his total faith in God.

While pursuing your studies remember that you have also to strive for the well-being of the world Loka hitherathah.

Service should justify the salaries

Make use of your education for public welfare. You have no doubt to take up a job for earning a living. See that the work you do justifies the emoluments you get. It is treason to the nation to receive thousands by way of salary and do hardly a few hundred rupees worth of work. Today such disloyal employees are, increasing in numbers all over the world. High salaries and poor turnout are the rule today. This accounts for the deplorable condition of Bharath today. The public debt is growing alarmingly. Who is responsible? If public servants rendered service according to the salaries they received the country would not be in such a bad plight.

Discharge your duties according to your conscience. Our students should live up to this ideal. There is nothing wrong in receiving a high salary provided

you do the work to deserve it. Now young people are concerned only about the pay packets and not the work they have to do in the service of society to deserve the pay. Think more about what you owe to society than what you can get from it. It is sheer selfishness to be concerned only about your earnings. The Veda has declared that immortality can be attained only through sacrifice.

"Students are my only property"

Students! Boys and girls! Wherever you may go, wherever you may live, serve the elders at home, serve the society and bring a good name to the institutions which have educated you. Observe discipline all. through your life. Do your duty.

It is not easy to bring back the glorious days of the past. You young people cannot be aware of the times when a bag of rice could be got for four rupees, when people could go about without any fear of attack and houses could be left unlocked. Today fear stalks the country. No one is safe. For all these evils the insatiable craving for money is responsible. The evil began in a sway in the Dhvapara Yuga. Today it has reached frightful limits. The craving for wealth has led to many other evils like jealousy and pride.

The money that comes from the people should be given back to them in one way or other. This is Bhagawan's will. People say that Sai Baba is spending crores of rupees on the drinking water, project. There is not a single rupee of Sai Baba in all this. What has been received from the people is being given back to them. I do not own anything. I have only one property, my most valuable property. My students are my only property. It is enough for me if my students conduct themselves well.

I bless you all that you should carry on your lives in the same spirit in which you have distinguished yourselves in games and sports. Win prizes in the game of life, carry out the injunctions of God and stand forth as ideal citizens. Never forget the supremacy of love as the ruling principle in life.

It is enough if Prema is cultivated. Prema that knows no distinction between oneself and another, because all are but limbs of One corpus of God Almighty. Through Love alone can the Embodiment of Love be gained. Here, no scholarship is needed; in fact, scholarship will be an impediment, for it caters to egoism and it breeds doubts and the desire for disputation and laurel of victory over others preening themselves as learned.

- Sathya Sai Baba

3. Triple transformation : Sankraanthi's call

Date: 15 January 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Sankranthi

The Sun Appeared Cool And Serene; The Day Started Getting Shorter; The Chill Wind Blew Fiercely;
The Fields Were Filled With Golden Harvest.
The Farmers Rejoiced In Singing At Night With The Moon Shining Bright,
The Buds Of Flowers Blossomed Like Garlands Of Pearls On The Banks Of Rivers;
Farmers Were Bringing Home The Newly Harvested Grain, Hailing The Advent Of The Joyous Festival Of Sankranthi.

Embodiments of Love! Bharatheeya festivals are full of inner significance, imparting bliss, and not ostentatious shows. Every festival has a unique significance of its own.

The sun moves into a house of the zodiac every month. In a year he goes round the twelve houses of the zodiac. Of these, the main houses are four. The first is Makara Sankramana (the zodiacal sign of Capricorn). The second is Karkataka (Cancer). The third is Thula (Libra). The fourth is Mesha (Aries). Of these four, the most important is Makara (Capricorn). The entry of the sun into Capricorn has physical, ethical, social and moral significance.

The northward journey of the sun

From today the sun starts on his northward journey. What does the north signify? It is considered the direction leading to Moksha (Liberation). The sun is said to move towards Himachala. Himachala is made up of two words: Hima + Achala. 'Hima' means that which is white as snow. 'Achala' is that which is firm and unshakable. What is the place to which this description applies? It is the region of the heart. In a heart that is pure and steady, the sun of Buddhi (the intellect) enters. There is no need to undertake a journey in the external

world. The Uttharayana (or the Northward Journey) means turning the intellect inward., towards the heart. The bliss that is experienced within alone is true bliss for man. All other external and sensory pleasures are ephemeral. Only the Athmik principle is pure, permanent and infinite. This has been termed the abode of Moksha (Liberation). The journey to Moksha is called the quest for liberation.

Sankramana is the time when the inward journey towards a pure and unsullied heart is made. Just as the sun embarks on his northward journey, Sankranthi is the day on which the intellect should be turned towards the Atma for Self-realisation.

The Veda has declared the Uttharayana as a sacred period. The great warrior Bheeshma, lying on a bed of arrows, waited for 56 days for the advent of Uttharayana to end his life. The puranas have stated that whoever passes away in Uttharayana will attain liberation.

Inner meaning of festivals

In the movement of the sun from house to house in the Zodiac, the entry into Capricorn is most important. Capricorn is a sign of peace and contentment. According to the Gregorian calender, Sankranthi begins on January 13 or 14. This confers a kind of mental and physical peace.

In this period, farmers and others labouring on the soil enjoy a period of rest. The farmers are at ease enjoying the fruits of their labours. Their granaries are filled with grains of all kinds. Farmers have no other period of rest. During this month, farmers enjoy peace of mind and body.

Few people understand the true significance of festivals like Sankranthi. Man cannot secure enduring bliss through physical pleasures. He has to discover that the source of this bliss is within himself. Sankranthi enables man to make this discovery, like a man who carrying his spectacles on his forehead searches for it everywhere and discovers to his joy that it has been with him

all along.

The Divine is not anywhere else. It is enshrined in one's heart. Hence, the man who seeks the Divine within his heart redeems himself. He then attains liberation. All external spiritual exercises are of temporary value. They should be internalized to experience lasting bliss. All mental exercises also leave the heart unaffected. In the nine paths of devotion, beginning with listening to sacred things and ending with Atma-nivedanam (total surrender of the self), the last is the most important. After Atmanivedanam there is no need for any other effort.

The feelings promoted by Sankranthi

Sankranthi gives the call for this total surrender. Subba Rao (in his speech prior to Swami's discourse) said that Sankranthi is a kind of family festival. Yes. This is so. But the whole world is one family Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam. The festival relates to the entire world. It is not confined to one's kith and kin. Sankranthi is related to the entire mankind. Whether people realise it or not, Sankranthi promotes in one and all a feeling of happiness.

Sankranthi promotes mental transformation. It illumines the minds of people. It induces the unfoldment of inner feelings. It beings about the manifestation of the invisible Atma within everyone. Sankranthi is pregnant with such immense significance. It influences not only the mind but also the powers of nature. Nature is a projection of the mind. "Manomoolam idham Jagath" (The world is rooted in the mind). When the mind is turned towards the heart and the heart is filled with the Divine, the mind will cease to be a source of trouble. The mind is the master of the senses. When the senses are controlled the mind is under control. Only the master of the mind can attain Madhava (the Divine).

Young people should realise that the root cause of all their bad thoughts and bad actions is the food they consume. The nature of the food determines the state of the mind. Food does not mean merely what is eaten, but includes all

that is received through the senses and stored in the mind. The mind, as Subba Rao said, has the power of attraction. It attracts impressions of all kinds from the external world. What do we find in every home today?' Harm done by Television There is a television set. T.V. sets are installed in every room in the houses of the rich. From the moment television made its appearance, the mind of man has been polluted.

Before the advent of T.V., men's minds were not so much polluted. Acts of violence were not so rampant previously. Today T.V. is installed in every hut. People watch the T.V. even while taking food. The result is that all the foul things seen on the T.V. are being consumed by the viewer. Concentration on the T.V. affects one's view of the world. The scenes, thoughts and actions displayed on the T.V. set fill the minds of the viewers. Unknowingly, agitations and ill feelings enter their minds. In due course they take root and grow in the minds.

Hence while taking food, you should not discuss dreadful incidents. No room should be given to subjects which excite the mind. Silence should prevail during eating. Even sound waves enter into us and affect our minds. Hence people should avoid T.V. while taking food.

There is now what is called "Star TV." It is doing great harm to human life. The temporary satisfaction given by it is followed by lasting damage. It is like a sword coated with honey. As you lick the honey, the sword will cut your tongue.

Not Bharath alone, but the whole world is suffering from the consequences of T.V. The world is racked by disorder, discord and frustration.

Fill your life with holy thoughts

Men today are plagued by a whole battery of troubles from birth to death. How can they hope for happiness amidst this sea of troubles?

They have to change their vision, their thoughts, their words and their conduct. This is the meaning of Sankramana. Unless you purify yourself, what can any.-number of Sankranthis mean to you? You tasted sweet prasadham this morning. After some time, its taste is gone. It is not sweet food that is important. You must fill your life with holy thoughts. That is the purpose of sacred festivals.

Young people ask why they should not enjoy freedom as the fish, birds and animals do. They should understand that each of these creatures are enjoying freedom in accordance with their own sphere of life. Similarly man should enjoy freedom related to his human condition. You cannot call yourself a human being and lead the life of an animal. Enjoy the freedom of a human being. To be free like an animal is to become an animal yourself. What is the freedom a man can enjoy? Man is governed by certain restraints. He has to adhere to truth. He has to follow righteousness. He has to cultivate love. He has to live in peace. He has to observe non-violence. Sticking to these five values, man can exercise his freedom. These five values are associated with the five elements which make up the cosmos. These five elements may be used in different ways, but they are the basic substances constituting the universe. Beyond these five, there is only one sixth element, that is, the Anthahkarana, the Inner Motivator, which is identical with the Athmik principle.

To exercise freedom in its true sense, man has to respect the five basic values. It is in that freedom he will find true bliss.

Imitation has become a deadly disease

In exercising freedom you should not merely imitate others. Imitation has become a deadly disease among modern youth, in matters of dress or other behaviour. They should consult their conscience in all matters rather than copy others. Films and TV have totally demoralized the people. People have become completely oblivious to Divinity within them.

People today have lost the quality of forbearance. The sages in the past allowed even anthills to grow over them while they were immersed in penance. Today people cannot tolerate the slightest disturbance by a fly or a mosquito. Young people should cultivate forbearance and tolerance. Without peace of mind there can be no happiness. Peace can be got only through sacred thoughts.

Youth today have lost confidence in themselves. They are affected by criticism levelled against them. They should see that if the criticism is justified, they should correct themselves. If it is not justified, they should ignore it. Taking myself as an example, I may tell you if somebody somewhere says, "Sai Baba has a mop of hair," I accept it, as it is true. If someone were to say to my face, "Sai Baba is bald," I will ignore it, as it is not true. Why should I bother to quarrel with him? If you are criticized for a fault that is not in you, you can ignore it even if the whole world joins in the criticism.

When we pronounce "Shanthi, Shanthi, Shanthihi," three times, it is prayer for peace of body, mind and the spirit. Though people have been mouthing this prayer for thirty years, they have not found peace, because they have not enshrined peace in their hearts. They must learn to speak sweetly and softly.

Students must pledge to rid the world of its ills

Students! Apart from educational programmes, do not look at T.V. at all, especially while taking food. Concentrate on the work on hand, whether it be eating or anything else.

You are observing many things in the world today. You must see how you can make use of your knowledge to make the world better. Students-boys and girls - must pledge themselves to rid the world of its ills. Earning incomes is not a great thing. To ensure peace and prosperity in the world is the highest achievement. You have to strive for peace in the nation, starting with peace in the home.

Above all, unity is important. Young people should promote unity and serve the nation. They should be a power for peace wherever they go. Educated young men should be examples of discipline and good behaviour. Revere parents and elders, love the Motherland and uphold its greatness.

Sankranthi should be hailed as the harbinger of unity and peace. This was the immemorial message of the Vedas. "Let us live together in harmony and strive together."

God draws the Individual towards Himself; it is the nature of birth to have this affinity, for they are the same. They are like the iron and the magnet. But if the iron is rusty and covered with layers of dirt, the magnet is unable to attract. Remove the impediment; that is all you have to do. Shine forth in your real nature and the Lord will draw you into His Bosom. Trials and tribulations are the means by which this cleansing is done. That is why Kunthi prayed to Krishna, "Give us always grief, so that we may never forget Thee."

- Sathya Sai Baba

4. Spiritual basis of human values

Date: 18 January 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Discourse in the Secondary School Hostel

BORN as human beings, growing as human beings, men have forgotten the value of human existence. Developing religious differences, fostering demonic tendencies, they are destroying peace. What is the state of human life today? The foremost thing that should exist is respect for human values. However great an intellectual may be, however great one may be as a scholar or a man of learning, one has also to acquire humanness. With out humanness, scholarships and intellectual eminence are of no value.

It is only when men cultivate humanness that society will shine with radiance and the nation and the world will progress. Humanness can be promoted only through spirituality and not by any other means.

Just as a seed can sprout only when it is planted in the soil and watered, human values can grow only in a spiritual soil. If a man wants to cultivate human values he has to apply the manure of spirituality to his heart, water it with love so that human values will grow. Human society needs essentially fellow-feeling and unity. When these two are present, humanness will flourish.

The five principles of Yama (sense control)

Wherefrom are human values to be derived and how are they to be developed? Human values are born along with human birth. They exist in union. Unfortunately, man today separates himself from human values and yet wants to live as a human being. To recover human values, man has to take the spiritual path.

In spiritual sadhana, there are eight Yogik disciplines to be observed: Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Prathyahara, Dhyana, Dharana and Samadhi (sense restraint, observing rules, seating posture, breath-control, withdrawal

of senses from objects, meditation and Super Conscious state). Of these, the first is Yama It is enough if this single discipline is observed. All human values are comprised in it. Humanness is embedded in it. Yama includes the Pancha Pranas (five-breaths), Pancha Bhuuthas (five elements), Pancha Koshas (five sheaths), Pancha Thathvas (five basic principles), and Pancha Ruupas (five forms). The five forms are the form of Gayathri. The five basic principles are: Ahimsa, Sathya, Brahmacharya, Astheya and Aparigraha (Non-violence, Truth, Celibacy, non-stealing and non-possessive qualities). These five constitute Yama. The first is Ahimsa. Buddha attached the great importance to Ahimsa. He considered it the foremost Dharma (duty). "Ahimsa Paramo Dharmah," declared Buddha.

Wider meaning of Ahimsa

What does Ahimsa signify? It is not merely refraining from causing harm or injury to others. It implies also refraining from causing harm to himself. One who harms himself cannot avoid harming others? Whoever desires to observe Ahimsa must see that he does not do violence to himself. How is this to be ensured? By constantly examining whether his conduct is right or wrong. For instance, in the matter of speech, he must examine whether his words are causing pain to others or not. He must see that his looks are not tainted by evil intentions or thoughts. He should not listen to evil talk. All these cause harm to the individual.

Hence, everyone should see that he gives no room for bad looks, bad hearing, bad speech, bad thoughts and bad actions. How do you determine what is bad? By consulting your conscience. Whenever you act against the dictates of your conscience, bad results follow. The conscience is the form of the Divine within everyone. Whatever you do, the conscience tells you whether it is right or wrong. However, to ascertain the directive of the conscience you have to wait for some time. You should not be in a hurry. When you want to say something, you must consider for a moment whether it would be proper Or not and then speak. When you want to listen to something, you must examine whether it is good or bad to listen and then decide what is proper.

You should be careful not only with regard to how you react to the five elements, but also with regard to your food. Excessive eating does violence to the body. Moderation in food is conducive to happiness. Ahimsa (non-violence) is thus what confers happiness on you. That which hurts you is himsa (violence). Nor is that all. Even in drinking water, you should observe restraints. Likewise, one's entire life should be governed by the principle of non-violence. Many germs die when one takes a bath or walks or does any other action. Even in the process of breathing many germs die. Violence is present in all these activities. Therefore, to avoid the consequences of such involuntary violence to living creatures, one is advised to dedicate all actions to the Divine. But there is no meaning in dedicating to the Divine conscious acts of violence. The conscience will not approve of such conduct. In Vedanthik parlance, the conscience is called chith. It is also called Awareness. Awareness is total understanding. This total understanding is within the capacity of every human being. Everyone must strive to express this awareness. Thus, Ahimsa is the primary duty of man.

Adherence to truth

The second duty is Sathya (Truth). Truth is not merely telling the facts about what you see or hear or know. These are temporal truths. In its full sense truth can be applied only to what comes out of your heart in its pure and unsullied form as the voice of conscience. This Sathya (truth) is also called Ritham. It is true for all time - past, present and the future. It is not affected by changes in time or place. It is unchanging and cannot be suppressed. Truth is its own proof. It is the form of the Divine as declared in the Vedhik saying: Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantham Brahma (Thath, the highest Wisdom and Infinite - that is the Absolute Self). Truth is thus the second human value.

The third is Astheyam (non-stealing). Astheyam means not stealing the properties of others. Property should not be confined to physical objects like a book. When you need anything, there is nothing wrong in your taking it with the permission of the owner. To take or use any object without such permission amounts to stealing. Even to criticize someone in a way that

harms him also amounts to theft (of his good name). It is common among students to borrow a friend's camera and use it. When the camera is damaged, the responsibility for getting it repaired is that of the user. In this manner, you can understand how the concept of stealing applies to even trivial incidents in daily life. This is the third duty.

The true meaning of Brahmacharya

The next duty is Brahmacharya. Brahmacharya is interpreted in many ways. One meaning is remaining unmarried. This is not the correct meaning. The true meaning of the term is "Moving in Brahman." Brahmacharya means ceaseless contemplation of God. Charya means moving or treading. Brahmacharya means "moving in Brahman." Mere bachelorhood is not Brahmacharya. A married man is called Girhastha (house-holder). There is Brahmacharya even in a house holder's life. This consists in his leading the conjugal life with the wife alone - Ardhangi. If a married man leads a promiscuous life he is not observing Brahmacharya. Even in thoughts and looks. one should observe continence. Brahmacharya acquired its importance because of its strict observance by our ancient sages.

Unconsciously or otherwise men tend to waste their energies. All these are lapses from Brahmacharya. Sense control is vital in practising continence. It is easier to conquer Indhra (the Lord of gods) than to subdue the Indhriyas (senses). Control of senses is an important human value. It is because these vital disciplines were observed by the sages and others since ancient times, they continue to be cherished to this day. Bharath has passed through innumerable vicissitudes in its long history, including foreign invasion. Nevertheless, by and large, the people have managed to foster the human values.

Subtle implications of Aparigraha

The fifth discipline is Aparigraha. This means not accepting things from

others. You have every right to receive gifts or other things from your parents. You are the product of your parents and hence you can accept from them whatever they give. Aparigraha has certain subtle implications. For instance, it is not proper to accept gifts even from one's uncles or in-laws or even from one's brothers. When any gifts are received from these relatives you have to requite them by equivalent presents. Today the Aparigraha role is blatantly violated.

For instance, boys when they get married after their education, receive dowries at the time of marriage. This is very wrong. It even amounts to a sin. A girl who has been brought up well is offered to a young man in marriage. That itself is a great gift. Why should one ask for money along with the bride? The parents of the girl may give her whatever they choose. But the bridegroom should not expect or accept anything.

This is the attitude one should have towards gifts from others. It is because many of these immemorial injunctions have been given the go-by that today Bharath is experiencing various troubles.

No limits to gifts from God

Gifts can be accepted from parents, the preceptor and God. These are the. exceptions to the rule of Aparigraha. From these four, you can receive anything. But even from the parents you should not seek to get anything by compulsion or litigations. What is offered by the parents with love should be received with love. There are limits to what you can receive from the parents. But there is no limit to what you can receive from God. You can accept anything from God because He is the Lord of everything. He can free you from sin and redeem you from the consequences. God encompasses all relationships and hence one should identify one's self with God. "You and I are one." Attributing relationships like mother and father to God sets binding limits to the association between God and man. In the vast ocean of Sath-Chith-Anandha (Being Awareness-Bliss), the myriad human beings, with different names and forms, are like waves. But as the waves are made up of

the same water as the ocean, all human beings are sparks of the Divine.

Sath-Chith-Anandha are present in every human being. People out of their ignorance go in quest of Sath-Chith-Anandha elsewhere. Ajnana (Ignorance) is the cause of Aviveka (stupidity). Stupidity is the cause of Ahamkara (egoism). Egoism gives rise to attachment. Attachment leads to hatred. Hatred gives rise to Karma (action). Karma is the cause of birth. The original cause of the chain of processes leading to birth is ignorance.

What is ignorance? It is the state of bhinnathvam (divisiveness). To regard "That" as different from you is ignorance. To differentiate God from yourself is ignorance. All are fragments of the Divine, sparks from the same flame. When the sparks are near the fire, they retain their heat and light. But when they are away, they turn into charcoal. Likewise, when one is near God, Sath Chith-Anandha will be in him. When he is remote from God, he will lose the attributes of the Divine. He will be immersed in ignorance. It is not mastery of books and scholarship which makes a person a Jnani (a knower of the Supreme Truth). "Advaitha dharshanam Jnanam" (To perceive the One without a second is Knowledge).

"Happiness is union with God"

It is only when you manifest the bliss that is in your Sath-Chith-Anandha - that you can call yourself Vyakthi, the manifested individual. The term Vyakthi cannot be applied to all and sundry. He alone can be called Vyakthi who manifests the invisible divinity within him.

What is meant by Sath-Chith-Anandha? Sath is "Being", that which is eternal and unchanging. Sugar has the quality of sweetness, which remains in whatever form it may be used. For purposes of analogy, sugar may be described as Sath. Chith may be compared to water. It has the quality of mobility. When sugar and water are mixed, you have neither sugar nor water as such, but a new product, syrup. When Sath and Chith come together, you have Anandha (Divine Bliss). People imagine that this bliss is to be found in

jobs, marriage, property or progeny. That is not the case. You hope for happiness in one thing after another: education, jobs, marriage, children and so on. But happiness eludes you. The only enduring happiness is got by oneness with the Divine.

The answer to the question, "Where is happiness?" is "Happiness is union with God." Students tend to forget this, in the pursuit of worldly pleasures. It is only through the ripeness of experience that this realisation can come. For instance, you see a barren field in the summer. After a night's rain, you find grass coming up. Wherefrom did it come? It is from the field. What was present in the form of seeds in the earth came up as grass after the rain. Likewise the bliss within you will sprout when you water your parched heart with the rain of divine love.

Do not underrate the powers in the atmosphere

Scientists today have made many astonishing discoveries. But they lack peace. They have failed to understand the Vedantik truth about their true nature. Hence they are unable to experience the bliss of the Spirit that is in them. People should not underrate the powers present in the atmosphere. For instance, it is filled with radio waves coming from different broadcasting centres. But the waves maintain their individual wave length and do not collide with the others. This electrical energy is divine. It is one of the secrets of creation. The body is like a radio set. When you do not tune in properly by concentration you will not get the right station. Concentration is essential for every kind of activity in life. Students should realise how much can be gained by reducing one's desires. They may experiment in a small way with reducing the consumption of coffee. They will find that their memory power increases. As desires are reduced, their will power will grow. This Ichcha-shakthi (will power) is being undermined today. The result is their ability to act is also reduced. Consequently, even the Jnana-shakthi (the power of wisdom), is also lost.

Place your faith in God

Students! Understand that there is no free will for individuals. They are constrained by various limitations. God alone has total free will. All others are bound in. one way or another.

Whatever one's efforts, the ultimate outcome lies with Providence. Therefore, place your faith in God and do your duty, wherever you may be. Do not cause any harm to others. Observe continence, avoid covetousness and lead a good, righteous life. A bad habit, which may seem trivial in the beginning, may develop into a menace in later life. Correct such faults in the initial stages. Pursue spiritual exercises with the same enthusiasm you have for sports and studies.

(Bhagawan related at length the story of Ghora Kumbhar and his final mergence in the Lord of Pandharpur, Panduranga. Bhagawan pointed out how God's grace was needed for the Rishis to obtain a vision of the Divine, or get the opportunity to speak to God. The Rishis later took birth as monkeys to converse with God and again took birth as gopikas and gopalas to have contact with God).

The purpose of the Sai avathar is different from that of Rama and Krishna because the forces of good and evil are now present in every human being and the process of transformation has to be effected in a context very different from the previous yugas. In the Kali Yuga, the process of transformation has been individualized. Everyone has to correct himself. "Child! You have to save yourself. I am present within you as a witness." This is the Lord's message. Hence, everyone should try to reform himself. You have to decide what is right and what is wrong and give up what is bad.

The ways of God are inscrutable. You should not ascribe to God motives which are a reflection of your own feelings. Hence, self-enquiry is essential. Embark on the Divine path with sincerity. You will emerge as leaders in the world.

I have high expectations regarding your future. Revere your parents, serve

society and protect the nation. It is to produce such students that I am devoting three-fourths of my time to them. Carry out Swami's injunctions. Earn a good name. Uphold the prestige of the Sai educational institutions. That is the gratitude you can show to Swami. Do not think of the pens and other gifts you received. Remember only that Swami gave you good sense. Develop both goodness and godliness. Beyond these two, there is nothing greater which education can do for you.

5. Spiritual significance of Shivaraathri

Date: 17 February 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Shivarathri

Moham hithva priyo bhavathi Krodham hithva na sochathi Kamam hithva arthavan bhavathi Lobham hithva sukhee bhavathi.

EMBODIMENTS of Love! "Moham hithva priyo bhavathi" (As long as one is proud, men will not like him). Only when he suppresses his pride will he be liked by one and all. "Krodham hithva na sochathi" (The man filled with anger will have no happiness). He will be immersed in misery. When he subdues his anger, he will be free from grief. "Kamam hithva arthavan bhavathi" (When a man has insatiable desires he will never fell contented). When he controls his desires, he will be truly rich. "Lobhamhithvasukhee bhavathi" (A miserly person will never feel happy). When he gives up greed he w111 realise happiness.

Embodiments of Love! Divinity is not easily perceived or realised. It is easy to talk about the Divine. It is easy to comment on the miracles and sports of the Divine. But to understand them in their fullness is very difficult. To look at something evil and shout about it like crows is not a good thing. It is better to sing like the cuckoo over something good. Tastes differ from person to person. One man's sweet is another man's poison. With such diverse tendencies, how can men recognise the Divine?

The ancient sages of Bharath carried out many spiritual investigations and through the study of the scriptures proclaimed their experience of the Divine. The Upanishaths declared: "Raso vai saha." That is, the Divine is present in all things as their essence like sugar in sugarcane and butter in milk. God is present both in the good and the bad, in truth and untruth, in merit and sin. That being the case, how is one to determine what is false and what is unrighteous? The Geetha declares: "My Spirit is the indwelling spirit in all beings." The individual who realises this truth will experience samathvam (equal-mindedness).

Duality in life cannot be escaped

But, for people living in the mundane world and concerned with worldly affairs, right and wrong, truth and untruth and similar opposites are unavoidable. Hence, as long as one is involved in leading a worldly life one cannot escape from duality. One's peace and security have to be found in the context of pleasure and pain. One's joy is linked with suffering. Pleasure is an interval between two pains. Life is a combination of light and shadow. Without sorrow there can be no happiness. Only when you walk in the hot sun can you experience the pleasure of a shady place. In such a life, it is not possible to experience pleasure alone all the time.

The cosmic process

The entire cosmos is governed by three states: srishti, sthithi and layam (creation, sustenance and dissolutions). The truth of this is beyond dispute by anyone at any time. A Divine truth is conveyed by this concept. Srishti (creation) is the expression of the Eeshvara Sankalpa (Will of God). It is called Prakrithi (Nature). Every object in creation should have the characteristics of Nature. Man has come into existence to manifest the powers of Nature. The powers of Nature are not present in all in equal measure. The man who is conscious only of the physical has a perverted view of these powers. The spiritually-oriented person sees their benign nature.

Prakrithi (Nature) and Chaithanya (Spirit) are one. But in accordance with their varied feelings and attitudes, things appear good or bad to Loka is one of the names applied to the world. Loka is that which has the power of alochana (thought). In this assembly there are a large number of persons. They are all gathered in one place. But each lives in a world of his own. What is the reason? One will be thinking about an educational problem. Another will be thinking about a job. Yet another may be worried about his business. Another may be concerned about agriculture. Others may be thinking about some scientific problem. All these different realms of thought are all exercises

of the mind.

The trinity in man

Thus the cosmic process shrishti (creation), sthithi (sustenance) and layam (dissolution) goes on in every human being. Srishti is the outcome of sankalpa (thought). Sthithi is protection of creation. Layam is the merger of creation in its source. Srishti, Sthithi and Layam are also identified with the three qualities - Sathva, Rajas and Thamas. Man is the embodiment of the three gunas. The three gunas represent the Trinity (Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshvara). The Trinity represent the Thrilokas (three Worlds). The three worlds and the trinity are present in every human being. The three are to be regarded as one and worshipped as Shivam. What is Shivam? It is the embodiment of Auspiciousness. When man recognizes the unified form of the Trinity his humanness acquires auspiciousness.

In a government there are different departments like education, finance, etc. Likewise in the spiritual field also there are different departments. They are: Srishti, Sthithi and Layam. Each department has a head. Each head has to govern his department on right lines.. There is an overlord presiding over all departments. He is like the Prime Minister in a cabinet. He is God. He is called Allah. By attributing different names and forms to God, Divinity is fragmented in various ways. The one Divine is responsible for the threefold cosmic process. This three aspects of God can be seen in the English word GOD. G represents Generation - Srishti. O represents Organizations - - -Sthithi. D represents Dissolution - Layam. GOD represents the unity of the three aspects.

There is a misunderstanding about these three. Layam is considered as destruction or dissolution. Its real meaning is mergence. O represents organization. It means protection. G stands for generation (creation). Brahma, Vishnu and Eeshvara are three potencies Immanent in man. To understand this it is essential to follow the spiritual path. Spirituality does not mean leading a lonely ascetic life. Spirituality means getting rid of attachment and

hatred and looking upon the whole humanity as one. Every one should understand this inner meaning of spirituality.

Shivarathri is an auspicious night

Man is endowed with infinite potencies. All that you experience by way of seeing, hearing and the like are reflections of the inner being. The significance of this experience has to be properly understood. For instance, today is Shivarathri day. You experience the night every day. These are ordinary nights. They are nights of darkness. But Shivarathri is an auspicious night. How is it auspicious? There are sixteen aspects for the mind. The moon is the presiding deity for the mind. Of the sixteen phases of the moon, today in the fourteenth day of Margasheersha month, fifteen of the phases are absent. On this day it is possible to get full control of one's mental faculties. Hence it is considered an auspicious day. Auspiciousness consists in diverting the mind towards God. This calls for getting rid of the inherited animal tendencies in man. This is the occasion to recognise the omnipresence of the Divine in all beings and in all objects. It follows that whomsoever you adore or condemn, you are adoring or condemning God. You must follow the injunction: Help ever, hurt never.

Every human being has sacred qualities, based on his Shivathvam (Divine essence). Hence man should realise his inherent divinity, though his body is made up of the five elements. Thereby humanness is transformed into divinity. The human birth is intended for the pursuit of Dharma. Dharma implies harmony in thought, word and deed. When every person realises his essential divine nature, the entire world will be transformed. The body and the mind are mere instruments. Man's reality is the Atma (Self). Man should use the instruments given to him to perform his duties well and realise his oneness with God.

Unity in diversity

All the phenomena in Nature proclaim the glory of the Divine. Why foster religious differences? Let everyone carry out the dictates of the Divine, who governs the universe. (Swami sang a poem in Telugu to convey this message). Everything that happens is by the Will of God.

The principle teaching of the Vedas is that all men should strive together in harmony and share their joys together in amity. Through unity, humanity can achieve purity, leading to divinity. The three great enemies of man are lust, anger and greed. These have to be eliminated. The greatest quality in man is love. Love is God. Live in love.

Bharath has been hailed as the teacher for all lands. It is the country which regarded God as one and recognized the unity that underlies all diversity. God is one, the goal is one and all life is one. This unity underlies all diversity. This basic Divine unity is missed in the perception of diversity.

Use every opportunity to help others

Embodiments of Love! At the present moment, in the prevailing situation, what is most essential is the cultivation of love. Losing love, mankind has lost its humanness. Love is the supreme human value. Truth, righteousness, peace and non-violence are other human values. Knowing these values, men are foolishly leading valueless lives. What a pity that men in human form do not behave like human, beings. Rivers, trees and cows teach the lesson of living for the benefit of others. Man should also share the divinity in him with others. Men today are steeped in selfishness.

Whoever remembers the names of scholars and scientists? But millions adore the names of realised souls like Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Thukaram, Kabeer and Ramdhas. Bear in mind four dicta to be observed: "Run away from bad company. Welcome association with good people. Do meritorious acts continually. Remember what is transient and what is permanent." Be with God, think with God, see with God and dedicate all actions to God. Consider all as members of one Divine family. Regard yourself as a trustee

and use your wealth and talents for the good of others. Use every opportunity, to help others. Be compassionate at all times. Students in particular should always be ready to go to the help of people in distress.

God today is in search of good men. Every one should strive to be sincere in thought, word and deed. Then you need not go in search of God. God will discover you.

You have to develop fraternal feelings towards everyone. Here is an example from the Ramayana. Once the four brothers as young lads were playing a game with a ball. After the game Rama ran to Kausalya and rested on her lap. He was full of joy. When Kausalya asked him why he was feeling so happy, Rama said that Bharatha had won in the game that day and that made him so happy. Kausalya remarked that an elder brother rejoicing in the success of his younger brother is a great example for brotherly love. Shortly thereafter Bharatha came to Kausalya with a sad look. Kausalya asked him why he was feeling sad when he had won in the game. Bharatha said: "When I was about to lose the game, Rama managed to lose the game and made me the winner. I am feeling unhappy because of the defeat of my elder brother. Is it not sad that on my account my elder brother should lose the game?"

What an example of fraternal love! The elder brother should rejoice in the success of the younger, even by losing the game himself. This is the lesson taught by the Ramayana. In those days the four brothers were in a supreme state of fraternal love. Today brothers go to the Supreme Court for settling their disputes! This is not proper. Brothers should be united and live in amity. The ideal of fraternal unity upheld in the Ramayana should inspire the people today. Students! Strive for the welfare of society as a whole. Experience God through love.

6. Cherish the glorious heritage of Bhaarath

Date: 18 February 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Shivarathri

Sarve Bhavanthu Sukhinah;
Sarve Santhu Niramayah;
Sarve Bhadhrani Pashyanthu;
Ma Kaschid-Dhuhkhino Bhaveth

EMBODIMENTS of love! The dictum of Bharatheeya Culture is that all people should enjoy happiness and prosperity. Bharath is the birth-place of spirituality and the qualities of charity and righteousness. It is known for its devotion to peace and security. The adherence to truth practises in Bharath could not be found in any other country. This land gave birth to the immortal Seven Sages. It is the birth-place of the first among poets, Valmeeki, (author of the epic Ramayana), and the Sage Vyasa, who codified the Vedas.

Bharath is the land where Rama established the reign of Righteousness. Bharath is the sacred land where Krishna preached the Geetha. This is the land sanctified by the advent of Buddha. It has the glory of witnessing the many incarnations of the Lord.

Unfortunately Bharatheeyas are not recognizing the sacred greatness of their country. Bharath was the land where at one time there was no one who did not practise dhana (charity) or Dharma (virtue). These two qualities constituted the main wealth of the nation. Bharatheeyas used to utter a prayer before embarking on any act, however trivial.

The young boys and girls of today are the inheritors of this sacred wealth. Bharatheeyas of today, both young and old, should strive to preserve this heritage. Since ancient times Bharath has been the leader of spirituality and holding forth the message of peace and prosperity to the rest of the world. Then and now the Bharatheeya ideal has been: "Let all the people of all countries be happy."

Fill your minds with thoughts of God

Bharatheeyas today are letting slip this great, sacred and precious heritage. They are pursuing purely mundane and material gains.

Bharatheeyas should realise that just as the body can be healthy only so long as the blood is pure, they can have real bliss, only as long as their minds are filled with thoughts of God. Bliss is not something apart. As long as sublime thoughts, noble feelings fill their hearts, they will experience bliss. Every thought arises from the heart. When the heart is filled with love, every thought and feeling becomes loving.

Hence, what Bharatheeyas should seek is love-filled hearts. Every act stemming from the heart should be filled with love. Every effort should be made to foster this ancient culture of Bharath.

In the chanting of the Lord's name there is no specific regimen to be followed. It is not governed by differences of creed, caste and religion or by any age restriction.

It is not associated with any particular language. It is like a boat that can be used by one and all. It is by the constant chanting of the Lord's name that Bharath has been protected through the ages. No other country can lay claim to the kind of spiritual wealth possessed by Bharath.

Truth is God

One of the earliest scientific investigators in the west declared that there is a base for all knowledge, all science and all wisdom. "This is the Supreme Truth. Bharath is the original home of this Truth." Truth is God. This Truth should never be forgotten.

Investigators elsewhere enquired into the .source of all knowledge and wisdom and found that Bharath had found that Truth was the basis of all knowledge. Today people are not making such investigations. Crores of rupees are spent on trivial investigations and time and energy are wasted on them.

Divinity cannot be discovered by .experiments. The different methods of devotion may not directly reveal God, but they show the path to God-realisation. For instance, the sourness in the neem fruit and the sweetness in the sugarcane indicate the presence of the Divine. The basis for all the varied phenomena in Nature - the twinkling of the stars, the revolutions of the planets, the fire from the sun - is the Divine. Nature proclaims the immanence of God. You look with awe at a mountain. You feel ecstatic at the torrent of a mighty river. The sight of a green forest lights you. All these are manifestations of the Divine mystery. All the beauties in Nature testify to the basic presence of the Divine in all things.

True meaning of "Know thyself"

What is the basis for man? It is the body. All the powers found outside are to be found in the human body. It was for this reason that the sages and the scriptures called upon man to discover his true nature.

What does "Knowing one's self mean? A man's real self is not known by finding his lineage, or his profession, his nationality or scholarship. These are all attributes employed in ordinary parlance to identify a person. A1 these are related to one's body. When a person declares that one is a Brahmin or a young man, or a woman, these terms relate to the body.

"Know thyself does not mean knowing all about the body. What is to be known is the Shareeri (indwelling Spirit). It is not enough to know about the Kshethra (the body). You must know the Kshethrajna (the Knower of the Field, the body). Krishna declared in the Geetha: "Know that I am the abode - Kshethra and the Knower of the abode - Kshethrajna." Humanness consists in

the unity of the two. The body is essential for knowing the nature of the indwelling Spirit. It is only when the Kshethra (the body) is used properly that the nature of the Kshethrajna (the Indwelling Knower) can be understood.

How are the various divine potencies in man to be made known? What are the basic requirements for every person? A mind pure as butter, a heart cool and pleasing as the moon, speech sweet as honey - when these three qualities are developed, Divinity is experienced. When you examine the present state of things, you find the mind is polluted, the heart is filled with bitterness and the speech is marked by harshness. These are not the marks of true humanness. These are signs of a cruel nature.

Hence, everyone should cultivate nectarine sweetness of speech, a moon like pleasing heart and. an unsullied butter-like mind. These are the characteristics of the Divinity latent in man.

Man is a combination of yanthra, manthra and thanthra

To realise this inherent divinity in man the royal path is spirituality. God can be realised by any path. The scriptures indicated the nine paths of devotion for God-realisation and showed that chanting the name of the Lord is the simplest. Whatever form of worship, penance or meditation one may adopt, the foundation is the Lord's name. The entire Rig Veda is replete with the Lord's name. The Yajur Veda is a compendium of manthras (sacred sound formulae). Sama Veda is filled with melody. The human heart is combination of music, manthra and name (of the Lord). The ancients regarded the human being as a combination of yanthra, manthra and thanthra.

The body is a yanthra (a machine). The life-breath is a manthra. The heart is thanthra. What is the manthra contained in the life-breath? It is "So-Ham". The manthra "So-Ham" (I am He) is chanted by each breathing. 'So' (He) is the sound that arises when air is breathed in. 'Aham...'(I am) is the sound that emanates when the air is breathed out. This sacred mantra is proclaimed by the heart with each breath. To pronounce this manthra the body is essential.

If any minute part of the body is affected, the entire system will be affected, just as a defective bolt or nut can make a rocket functionless.

All organs in the human body should be kept functioning properly. Only then it would be possible to rise from the human to the divine level. How is this to be accomplished? By dedicating every action to the Lord. When every action is done with the consciousness that it is done for the pleasure of the Lord, life gets divinised. There is no need for anyone to give up any of his duties or actions in daily life. All that is needed is to perform everyone of them in a spirit of dedication to the Lord.

Devotion without faith is useless

Embodiments of love! For anything that you want to accomplish, faith or self-confidence is vital. Faith is as basic for spiritual progress as breathing is essential for life. Today what we witness is devotion without faith. There is a familiar saying that a bull without a yoke, a horse without curbs, a car without brakes and mind without sense-control are. dangerous and useless.

Chanting the Lord's name is essential for crossing the turbulent ocean of life. It is a boat that can carry you across the deeper ocean. In chanting the Lord's name, one should be tranquil, utterly selfless and pure at heart. Ostentation and egoism should be eschewed.

One can follow any of the nine forms of devotion (from listening to total surrender) with purity of mind and in an unselfish spirit. In singing bhajans, there should be no spirit of competition and no cavilling of others. The entire concentration should be on the name and form in the present Kali Yuga the chanting of the Lord's name is the panacea. In Kritha was Dhyana (meditation). In Thretha Yuga it was Yajna (ritual sacrifice). In Dhvapara Yuga it was Archana (worship of icons). In the Kali Yuga, there is no other means needed for human redemption except the mere chanting of the name of Hari.

The Lord's name can be chanted while you are travelling or before you go to

sleep, or while you are doing any of your daily chores. This easy, sacred path has been laid down for people in the Kali Yuga.

Spiritualize life

Today you have every kind of amenity. You have hospitals, schools and other institutions to serve you. The only thing people lack is faith in God. What is the use of having everything else? Develop faith in God.

It is the duty of students, boys and. girls, to foster ,the ancient culture that has come down to us as a precious heritage. You are the inheritors of this culture. You must enter every walk of life in the world and infuse spirituality in it. Young people are sacrificing their lives in meaningless conflicts. Humanness is at a low level. Demonic tendencies have reared their heads. Young people should counter these forces and uphold the culture and human values of Bharath.

If you develop the sense of spiritual oneness of all mankind the conflicts of today will vanish. Discord has become ubiquitous. At the root of all this is the loss of faith in God. Get rid of jealousy and egoism. Then you will experience the Divine.

Sarva ruupadharam Shantham

Sarva namadharam Shivam Sath-chith-anandha ruupam Adhvaitham Sathyam Shivam Sundharam.

All forms of the Lord are peaceful. By whatever name the Divine is cherished in one's heart, that is Shivam - the one without a second, whose form is Being-Awareness-Bliss. When the changeless Sath combines with Chith (total awareness), you have Anandha (bliss). It is like the union of sugar and water which produces syrup.

The Geetha has declared that the one Divine is present in all beings as consciousness like the current that illumines a variety of bulbs. To be conscious of this oneness is the highest manifestation of love.

Max Mueller's wish

Embodiments of Love! You can have no idea of the greatness of Bharath as the land of wisdom, of yoga, of merit and noble deeds. Many foreigners desired to take birth and pass away in this sacred land. The great savant, Max Mueller, wished to be reborn in Bharath. He was such a great seeker that he was named 'Moksha Muula' (one who is rooted in liberation). He made a thorough study of the Vedas. He regarded every clod of earth in Bharath as sacred. He regarded everything in Bharath as Divine. In Bharath unfortunately Bharatheeyas do not have the same feeling regarding their motherland. Foreigners are having this blissful experience and are undergoing a great transformation.

The process of change is going on continuously everywhere. A seed grows into a tree, an egg becomes a chicken. But man is failing to grow into the Divine. Instead he is falling into the demonic state.

Mankind should ascend to Divinity

This is not proper. Mankind should go forward from the human to the Divine. Evolving from the animal, becoming human, mankind should ascend to Divinity.

Embodiments of love! Whatever situation you may confront, never give room for religious differences. Whether it is Allah or Krishna or Jesus, God is one. The one Lord has a myriad names. The goal is one. Don't entertain the idea of "my religion" and "his religion." Consider ideas of creed and nationality. Foster the feeling of oneness of all mankind. This is what you should develop on the sacred occasion of Shivarathri.

Shivarathri comes once a year. But the auspicious qualities in you are always there. Constant repetition of the Lord's name at all times and at all places is the message of Shivarathri. I bless you all that you should realise God by devotion to God and by adherence to righteous thoughts and actions.

7. Let everyone do his duty

Date: 20 March 1996 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Ugadi

Anadhi nidhanam Vishnum Sarvaloka Maheshvaram Lokadhyaksham Sthuvannithyam Sarvadhuhkhajitho bhaveth EMBODIMENTS of Love! Anadhi nidhanam is a name attributed to God in relation to time. Sarvaloka Maheshvaram signifies that God is the illuminating overlord of all the worlds. Lokadhyaksham Sthuvannithyam - He is the presiding ruler of the Cosmos. Who is He? He is the Sun. Time is marked by the Sun. Hence the Sun is the visible manifestation of God. He is the effulgence that is common to all nations, all creeds and all people. Hence Shankara hailed the Sun as "Anadhi nidhanam Vishnum," the presiding deity for the Samvathsara (year) as the over lord of Time. Samvathsara is the appellation given to the Kalatmaka (Time-spirit). Because the Lord is the very soul of Time, Shankara described Him as "Kalatmakaya namah" (Prostrations to the One who is the Spirit of Time).

Time is most precious in human life. More valuable than Time is Prana (life). Man aspires to achieve many things without concern for his life. However great his achievements are man is driven by the urge to achieve more. This discontent is itself a source of satisfaction for man.

All are embodiments of the Divine

Every man has a heart. Every heart is filled with compassion. However, how many choose to share this compassion with others? Sharing the compassion in one's heart with ten others has been characterised as Bhakthi (devotion). One who does not share his compassion with others cannot be called a human being. Today the human heart that should be full of compassion has become stone-hard. This is man's misfortune. What is the reason? It is because the heart is filled with the bitterness of differences of caste, creed and nationality that it has become stony. All human beings belong to one caste, one community, one nation. All are embodiments of the Divine. Krishna

declared in the Geetha: "All beings in the world are a fragment of My Self." It is tragic that man should forget his divine essence and behave like a demon.

What is the significance of the advent of the new year? It is not necessary to wait for twelve months for the new year to appear for one to do what he wants to do. The year is made up of seconds, minutes, hours, days and months. Every second is a new moment in one's life. Why then wait for a year? Every one should strive to render help to the people every second of his life and lead a noble and ideal existence. It is necessary for man to understand the truth underlying this dictum. The eye sees different persons in different relationship to a person the mother, the daughter, the daughter-in-law and so on. Although the eye that sees is the same, the persons seen are different and one's behaviour is to be in accord with the varying relationships.

Distinction between the apparent and the real

The distinction between the apparent and the real (the true) should be properly understood. For instance, it is apparent that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. But the truth is, the sun is stationary and neither rises nor sets. It is the revolution of the earth round itself at a speed of 1000 miles an hour that is the cause of the phenomena of day and night and the apparent rising and setting of the sun.

The relevance of the distinction between truth, falsehood and apparent fact is not limited to natural phenomena alone. It is equally relevant in the spiritual sphere. The quest for truth in the spiritual field provides proofs for the existence of God. In every man, at every moment a divine effulgence is always shining. Man has not taken birth purely for a selfish purpose. He has to strive with others to lead an exemplary life.

In the world today there is unrest everywhere. What is the cause of this unrest? The advent of the new year is viewed by people with apprehensions as to what is in store for the world, what disasters and calamities. There is continual change taking place in almost every sphere, but the mind of man

alone has undergone no transformation, pleasure and pain are not the products of time. The year is not responsible for joy or sorrow. People's actions alone are responsible for the good and bad things they experience. The year does not bring any evil with it. Many people imagine that the new year may bring calamities. The year is part of repetitive phenomenon of day and night. Hence Time does not bring in its wake any good or ill. Only human actions account for these reactions. Good acts produce good results and bad actions have bad consequences. As you sow, so shall you reap.

New year does not account for anything extraordinary

Good and bad occur in succession in the usual course. A new year does not account for anything extraordinary. However, the Panchangam (almanac) indicates some changes as a result of the movements of the planets and the configuration of the constellations. The Hindu almanac refers to five factors the day of the week, the thithi (phase of the moon), the relevant constellation, the auspiciousness or otherwise of the particular day and the Karanam (astrological divisions). The predictions in the almanac have no relation to what may happen to any particular person. The Siddhanthis (the almanac makers) give their own interpretations of the astrological configurations.

Above everything, if one has firm faith in God, one can face the future with confidence. There is no room for doubts as to who is God and where He is to be found. God is Virata-Svaruupa (Cosmic Form). The whole universe is the manifestation of God. What does God teach? The lessonsaregiventhroughPrakrithi(Nature)whichconveyslessons to mankind. The earth, for instance, is revolving round itself at a speed of 1000 miles an hour. This is going on without rest. This revolution of earth produces night and day. This enables man to have a time for work and time for rest. In addition, the earth is going round the sun at a speed of 66,000 miles an hour. This motion of the earth is responsible for the changes in seasons. The changes in seasons cause rainfall, enable the cultivation of crops and help people to live in comfort.

The earth thus is a visible manifestation of God. The ancients hailed the earth as Bhuumatha (Holy Mother Earth) for this reason. All the essential necessities of life come from the earth. The earth thus teaches man that he should do his duty even as the earth itself is performing its duties.

Dedicated action is necessary to reap the fruits

Man should be dedicated to action. Today he does not adhere to this principle. How, then, can he expect the fruits? Men must work. They must perform good deeds and realise good results. They must share the fruits of their labours with others. This is the foremost duty of man. If everyone does his-duty, there will be no room for conflict in the world. This is the lesson taught by the earth.

Karthavyam (duty) is most important. The lawyer should do his duty. The doctor, the farmer, the administrator, the businessman, each should discharge his respective duty. If this is done, the world will have no problems. Everyone should aim at excellence in the performance of one's duties. Then the nation will be prosperous and happy. Today very few discharge their duties properly. Instead of doing their work, they interfere in other people's work. They fail to do their work and spoil that of others.

The year is not responsible for the unrest in the world. Human actions alone are responsible. Every one should strive to work well and achieve good results. Every one has twenty-four hours at his disposal. If out of this, six hours are used up in sleep, six hours for one's own private concerns and six hours for one's job, still six hours remain. How does one spend them? One should utilize them for rendering social service. One must embark on divine activity. In the present state of the world, if people do not take to divine activity, the conditions will get worse.

Mastery over one's mind is the index of greatness

Today people have forgotten the spiritual, the moral and the ethical aspects of life. They are immersed in the worldly pursuits and in securing mundane benefits. There is no greatness in achieving these things. Once Shankaracharya asked his disciples what is the hall-mark of greatness. Each disciple gave his own answer. One disciple said that the man who won great victories in battle is a great man. Another disciple said that man who underwent many troubles and difficulties and amassed large wealth was great. Another said that a great man was one who accomplished by determined effort what he wanted to achieve. Planting one's flag over a territory or crossing a mighty ocean were mentioned as marks of greatness. Ultimately Shankara gave the answer that he alone is great who has mastery over his mind. All other achievements are of no avail. Every action is sanctified by making it an offering to-God. Shankaracharya declared that the one who is immersed in the contemplation of the Supreme Self, experiences the highest bliss, regardless of all other actions. (Swami sang a stanza from the Bhaja Govindham hymn of Shankaracharya). Shankara exhorted the devotee to adore God in whatever situation he was placed, whether in a crowd, or while enjoying something or in any other state. This experience of the Divine is one's true wealth.

Thus, it is essential to perform every action as an offering to God. The impulse for every action comes from the heart, whether the action is good or bad. The heart is the abode of Lord. Hence, every thought arising from the heart and every action from it should be regarded as an offering to the Divine.

Give no room for differences

Today, because men's actions are motivated by concern for one's family and possessions, society is riven by conflicts and differences. People talk about unity but there is no unity. For instance, there are different States in the Country. It is natural for people to have special regard for their respective' States. Karnataka, Thamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and so on. But they should all consider themselves children of one God. All States should be happy. If this

broad vision is developed, there will be no room for inter-State differences.

The name of the new year is "Dhathru." This signifies the spirit of sacrifice. The scriptures have declared that sacrifice is the only means to attain immortality. People should develop the spirit of sacrifice. Thereby they will make the name of the new year meaningful.

Compassion is the hall-mark of Bhakthi

Giving up narrow idea and feelings, people should show compassion towards their fellow beings. Compassion is the hall-mark of Bhakthi (devotion). No one can hope to please God without showing dhaya (compassion) towards his fellow-men. A loving heart is the temple of God. God cannot dwell in a heart without compassion.

God is one. The goal is one. People have to change their outlook. They have to develop love towards all. There is nothing greater in the world than this Premadhrishti (feeling of universal love). There are many eminent scholars and intellectuals in the world today who are adept in seeing the diversity in the world. But why don't they try to see the unity that underlies this diversity? They alone are good who see the unity in the apparent diversity. But those who see only the diversity in the One are mere clever intellectuals.

The uniqueness of every being is one of the marvels of creation. No two persons are entirely alike. There are differences even among twins. People differ in respect of talents. But it should be realised that all talents are derived from the Divine.

How are we to recognise unity in diversity? Birth and death are common to all beings. Whether one is a millionaire or a pauper, both are brought forth from their mothers wombs. Hunger and thirst are common to all. The kind of food that is eaten may vary, but hunger is the same for all. Likewise thirst is common to all. These basic common experiences point to the unity that underlies the diversity. The Upanishaths have emphasized the spiritual

oneness of all beings. The life force is one and the same, in all. The Atma is the same in all. How, then, it may be asked, there are differences in the bodies? These differences are the results of differences in the thoughts, feelings and actions of the individuals concerned. The indwelling spirit is the same in everyone.

Make every act holy

By developing attachment to persons and possessions men created causes for their sorrow. By reducing their attachments and developing love for God, they can reduce their misery and increase their happiness. The more they love God, the more the bliss they will experience. Men are plunged in misery because they hanker after the physical instead of yearning for God. If men convert their desire for material objects into the desire for the Supreme they will enjoy immense happiness. All that is necessary is for them, to see the Divine in everything in the phenomenal world. That will be true devotion. And work will be turned into worship. Make every act holy.

People need not be unduly worried about the portents of the .new year. There are, however, indications that some big changes may occur in the political sphere. Internal conflicts may increase. There will be no shortage of food. There may be floods in some parts of the country and cyclones in some areas. By developing faith in God, some of these calamities may be averted or their ravages mitigated. Men have to realise that they are sparks of the Divine. They have to develop sacred thoughts and lead ideal lives. They 'must seek to promote the welfare of society.

The power of prayer is incalculable

Pray for the welfare of all. The power of prayer is incalculable. Every one gathered here should pray every day for the welfare and happiness of all people everywhere. This is true spirituality. To render service to others to the limit of your capacity is real spirituality. The body has been given to man for

serving others. If one has a compassionate heart, is truthful in speech, and uses his body for serving others, he needs nothing else to redeem his life.

Today the book, "Vision of India," written by Shri Shivraj Patti, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, has been released. He has been coming to Swami for many years. He knows Bhagawan well and Bhagawan knows him equally. He has a compassionate heart. He is calm and serene. All are aware of the kind of uproar and disorder that prevail in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. Members have not hesitated even to shout at the Speaker. On such occasions as Chavan observed (in his speech earlier), it is natural to expect the blood-pressure of the Speaker to go up. But our Shivraj Patil spoke calmly to every member, giving suitable replies to everyone, and thereby winning the confidence of all sections of the House. He has earned the approbation of all parties. That good name is enough. Having been born, one should earn a good name. Good thoughts flow from his heart. In his book, he has related all his experiences, his aspirations and his hopes. His book covers all aspects of his life social, economic, spiritual and political.

It is not enough to speak about one's ideals. One must live upto them. Today everyone must develop a compassionate heart and be truthful in speech. Truth is the means to realise God. God is the very embodiment of Truth. Where there is Truth there is God.

Bharath in its ancient days of pristine glory achieved greatness by adhering to Sathya and Dharma. The Upanishaths have declared: "Speak the Truth. Follow Righteousness." Today in their life people must adhere to Truth. Whatever Dharmik acts you do should be done in a spirit of sacrifice. Charity is the best ornament for the hand, truth for throat and listening, to sacred things, for the ears. It is such sublime sentiments that constituted the priceless culture of Bharath. These eternal verities are being forgotten in the craze for ephemeral pleasures.

Regard every moment as new

Embodiments of love! The new year portends nothing to be feared by the common people. However, for those in high offices and for politicians there are indications of internecine conflicts of their own making. Those who discharge their duties in a spirit of dedication have nothing to fear.

Regard every moment as new Live in the present. Have good thoughts and do good deeds. Cultivate good company. Act according to the dictates of your conscience. The secret of happiness lies within you, not outside. Pray for the welfare of all. The speakers here requested to bring about peace and bliss in the world. In fact, you are all embodiments of peace, bliss and Divine. Everyone of you should make efforts to develop inner peace individually. Then the whole world will be peaceful. Don't yield to any fear or anxiety. Develop love. Hatred breeds disaster. Shed feelings of hatred. With love, the country and world will prosper.

God incarnates for the revival of Dharma (Righteousness) which includes morality, truth, virtue, love and a host of other qualities that uphold the communities of man as well as the individual. The other purposes usually given, such as serving the devoted, destroying the wicked, re-establishing the sacred tradition, these are all secondary. For, he who is righteous will be guarded from harm by righteousness itself, he who is unrighteous will fall into disaster through the evil that he perpetrates. The one task includes all else.

- Sathya Sai Baba

8. Let Raama live in your hearts

Date: 28 March 1996 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Rama Navami

Veda-Vedhye Pare Pumse
Jathe Dasharathatmaje
Vedah Prachethas Aseeth
Sakshath Ramayanatmana

EMBODIMENTS of Love! When the Lord, the knower of the Vedas, took birth as the son of Dhasharatha, Prachethas realised the Divine by writing the Ramayana.

The story of Rama is the story of one who was filled with the sweetness of compassion. This story is the royal road to human progress and an ideal life.

The Rama-principle is a combination of the Divine in the human and the human in the Divine. The inspiring story of Rama presents the triple ethical code relating to the individual, the family and the society. If society is to progress properly the family should be happy, harmonious and united. For unity in the family, the individuals composing it must have a spirit of sacrifice. The Rama story exemplifies the ethical codes governing the individual, the family and society.

The Rama story holds forth many ideals. Children today pay little heed to the words of parents. Parents also show no great concern for rearing ideal children.

The preceptor does not command respect these days. The teachers show little affection for the students. Hatred and bitterness between people are growing. Today's friend becomes tomorrow's enemy. Kinship itself is robbed of its bonds of affection. Pollution has sullied every sphere of activity - business, education, agriculture, politics etc., and caused general degradation in society. In every sphere demeaning ideas and actions are rampant.

In such a situation, the Ramayana.provides the ideals and the examples for reforming society.

Invoke the divine in pursuing aims

The world is presided over by Narayana. Narayana is under the spell of His name. The name is under the control of the devotee. Hence every person should invoke the Divine in pursuing his aims.

The world today is in a strange predicament. Every step taken by man is tainted by unrighteousness. Falsehood is ubiquitous. Men have lost the vision of great things. All desires arise from selfishness and are insatiable. Control of the senses has become rare. The truth, in short, is humanness has vanished.

On the other, hand, another strange thing is also apparent. Large numbers of people gather to listen to spiritual discourses and speeches by learned in thousands, listen to the talks, enjoy them, but do not practise any of the teachings. The result is that, though there is an abundance of spiritual teaching, disorder and unrest prevail because few people practise what they learn. What crop can you grow on the dry bed of a lake? Though man has recognized the inherent divinity present in him, he does not live according to this belief. Precept without practice is valueless.

Triple Dharma of individual, family and society

Rama is the supreme example of one who observed in his life the triple Dharma relating to the individual, the family and society. When every person in the country observes this triple Dharma, there will be peace and prosperity in the nation.

The sun illumines the world during the day. The moon sheds light during night. But Dharma (Righteousness) illumines all the three worlds at all times. A good son, it is said, becomes a beacon for the whole clan. Everyone should

strive to become a Suputhra (good son). It is not enough to have sons. They should be good and worthy sons. Such a son was Ramachandhra.

Even as a jasmine creeper fills an entire forest with its fragrance, a noble son glorifies not only his family but his entire clan. Essentially all human beings are Suputhras (good sons). But their behaviour turns them into bad men.

The author of the Ramayana is called Prachethas. How did he acquire this name? Prachethas is the name of the Rain-God Varuna. Rathnakara was the original name of the poet. After he was initiated, he began meditating on the Lord's name and completely lost all body consciousness. An anthill grew over his body. His body was not visible from outside. At this stage Varuna caused a heavy downpour. That heavy rain washed away the anthill, revealing the sage. Because Prachethas was responsible for bringing forth the sage, he got the name Prachethas (the offspring of Prachethas). He also got the appellation Valmeeki because he had come out of "Valmeeka," an anthill.

Prachethas became the sacred and immortal composer of the epic Ramayana, which he gave to the world as a perennial source of inspiration to mankind. Any person today who can get rid from the mind, attachment and possessiveness enveloping him and who constantly meditates on God will become pure and sacred, like Valmeeki.

The Divine and the human

Every man is endowed with a mind. The mind is a mysterious thing. It can appear totally stationary and yet move faster than the speed of light. Whatever births a person may undergo and whatever changes in name and form may occur, the mind remains unchanged. It follows one from birth to birth. It is the mind's peculiar behaviour. In this context, how is one to manifest his humanness? Man must follow the example of the honey bee which sucks the sweet honey even from a bitter flower. Likewise one must seek the good even in what is apparently bad. There is something good in what is bad.

Valmeeki declared that he saw the divine in the human form of Rama. Rama, who was Divinity itself, was seen as a human being. "Madhava is human. Man is Madhava." God cannot be experienced unless He appears in human form. Incarnation as a human being is essential for recognizing God. That is why it is said that "Dhaivam manusha ruupena" (God appears in human form).

Rama did not announce at any time that he was God. He declared that he was the son of Dhasharatha. In his speech, though there was humanness, there was also the illumination of Divinity.

God is not apart from the universe. The entire cosmos is the very form of God. But man, deluded by his physical vesture, forgets his divinity.

All are embodiments of the Divine

Rama and Krishna .are regarded as Avathars. This is not so. They are in their human form quite like other ordinary men. All of your are embodiments of the Divine. Recognise this fact and strengthen this feeling within you. The idea that God is different from you should be given up. You have to develop the feeling that God is not different from you.

On the occasion of Ramanavami, people hail the advent of Rama and recall his various achievements. But everyone should remember that he is an image of Rama. "Ramayathi ithi Ramah" (One who attracts others is Rama). In every person there is this power of attraction. Because of this magnetic power man is able to enjoy the world. He develops many worldly desires. But he is never satisfied. He derives satisfaction from discontent. That is a sign of the divine power of attraction. There is no limit to this power. Everyone can experience the divinity within him.

Difference between Rama and Ravana

See the difference between Rama and Ravana. Both were equally eminent

intellectually and were great scholars. Ravana was a great man. Rama was a good man. The difference between greatness and goodness should be understood. Ravana, out of egoism and uncontrolled desire, misused his knowledge and brought about his ruin. Rama used his knowledge for the benefit of the people and made them happy. Ravana did not digest his knowledge properly and suffered from the consequences of indigestion. The difference between Rama and Ravana was that between Dharma (Righteousness) and Adharma (unrighteousness).

Rama and Ravana are present in each human being. When a person takes to unrighteous courses, he becomes a Ravana. When people pursue the path of truth and righteousness, they become Ramas.

Precept and practice should go together like medicine and diet control Meditating on God one should engage oneself in godly activities. It is useless to study or listen to spiritual discourses without leading a spiritual life. Righteousness means living according to the dictates of one's conscience. Acting in violation of the conscience is wrong. To realise this there is no need to study books.

The truths propounded in the Ramayana are relevant to all mankind. Rama represents the exalted state of the human heart. Rama is the treasure-house of compassion. Where can you find such truth, compassion and grace? All thoughts arise from the heart and lead to actions. Hence for all thoughts, words and deeds, the heart is the source. What should be the condition of the heart? It should be full of Dhaya (compassion). Today Dhayyam (the devil) has installed itself in the heart. The devil in the heart accounts for all bad and for the absence of compassion.

Everyone is responsible for his condition

If men today suffer from restlessness and lack of peace, their own actions are responsible for this state. No Guru or any other person is to be blamed Nor can the changes in the years be blamed. The year is not responsible for your

happiness or misery. You alone are responsible for your happiness or misery. You alone are responsible for your condition and your experiences. Make your thoughts pure. Realise that you are human and that there is the Divine in the human.

Man has the option to pursue the Pravritthi Marga (the path of external, worldly objects) or seek the bliss that is in Nivritthi Marga (internal). Everyone is responsible for his condition. It has become a bad habit to blame others for one's plight. One should recognise one's defects. There is no greater sin than accusing others. One should see the Divine in others. When this attitude grows the nation will prosper. Men have immense potentialities for good or ill. By their good thoughts and good deeds men can transform the state of the nation.

Despite all the myriad scientific and technological achievements of man, it should be realised that human life is impermanent. Death may overtake anyone at any time. Man has all the potencies in him. This truth should be realised by all. Man is the maker of his country or the cause of its ruin. Men promote the prosperity of their nation or bring about its degradation. When humanness is fostered the nation will be prosperous.

Men have achieved many things in various fields, from atom bombs to space travel. They have acquired great destructive power. But it is not realised that by its very nature the physical body is impermanent. The truth should be recognized while the body lasts. You have to have a sacred life.

Rama took birth ages ago. He adhered to Dharma Krishna came later. He propagated great truths. He led the Pandavas to victory. He taught the Geetha. Where are they now? What has happened to all the proud rulers of the past? How many have taken birth and passed away? Death is certain. But before the end comes, one should lead an exemplary life and serve the nation.

Role of avathars

Everyone should realise that he is the embodiment of the Divine. We .may talk about the avathars of Rama and Krishna. But your present avathar is no less significant. All those avathars came to tell mankind that all human beings are avathars (incarnations of the Divine). Having taken birth as human beings men should conduct themselves as embodiments of the Divine (as beings in whom the Divine spirit resides). Recognizing your spiritual reality you should live always in the Atma-thathva.

Man who should progress upwards from day to day is going down the slope. This is not right learning. Every day you should make the ascent towards the Divine. "I am God. God is not different from me." This is the conviction with which men should live.

"All are deities"

Some people offer prayers saying, "Sarva-dhevatha Svaruupaya namah" (I offer my salutations to the one who embodies the forms of all deities). How many deities are there? Unless there were many deities, the prayer would be meaningless. The implication of the prayer is: "All are deities." Our ancients used to refer to three crores of deities. What does it signify? At that time there were three crores of human beings in Bharath. They considered all of them as Divine beings. Today we have hundred crores in Bharath. Hence, there are hundred crores (one billion) of Divine beings in Bharath. If you take the population of the world, there are 570 crores of people today (5700 million). All are divine beings.

That divinity is within you. What is the source of the life-force in you? Men today create robots which operate like human beings. But there is no life in them. There is a world of difference between the man-made artificial robots and real live human beings. Today people are attracted by the artificial creations and are not aware of the immense potentialities latent in human beings. You have to respect the potency of the human.

This was the lesson taught by Rama. He revered his parents. He carried out faithfully their injunctions. Without regard to the consequences, he carried out their commands with love. He had immense love for his brothers. They had unity and harmony amongst them.

Love that existed between Rama and Bharatha

After reaching the forest, Rama sent word through Sumanthra (who had driven the chariot) as follows: "My brother Bharatha would have returned to Ayodhya by now. Tell Bharatha that there should be complete unity in the family. He should love Kausalya and Sumithra in the same manner in which he would love his mother, Kaikeyi. He should not make any distinction between them However unable to bear the pangs of separation from Rama, Bharatha used harsh words against his mother. He did not spare even the family preceptor Vashishtha. Vashishtha approached Bharatha and told him: "Rama has left for the forest. You must get ready for the coronation. As soon as you are ready I shall fix the auspicious moment for the ceremony." Bharatha lost for a moment the sense of respect he should have for the word of the preceptor. Rama was the very life-breath of Bharatha. He spoke to Vashishtha in great anguish: "Am I to rule over a kingdom which banished Rama and plunged the whole of Ayodhya in grief?. Do not mention the name of the kingdom that sent my Rama to the forest. I have no use for such a kingdom tarnished by a grievous wrong." This was the kind of love that existed between the brothers.

Once, when the brothers were children, Rama came to his mother Kausalya in great joy. Kausalya asked him what was the reason for his joy. Rama said: "I am immensely happy today because Bharatha won in the game we were playing." Rama rejoiced in the successes of his brothers. Meanwhile Bharatha came weeping to Kausalya. She asked him: "Bharatha! Why are you crying? Rama is so happy over your victory." Bharatha replied: "Mother! I am very sad because Rama deliberately chose to lose so that I may win." The elder brother rejoices over the younger brother's victor. The latter feels sad about his victory and the defeat of the elder brother. What mutual love prevailed

among the brothers! Such was the pure and sacred unity that existed among the brothers at that time.

Rama is within you

Rama was always deeply concerned about the welfare of his subjects. He fostered unity among the people. This is the duty of every one at the individual level. Four qualities have to be developed by every individual: Equality, Integrity, Unity and Fraternity. The individual's personality blossoms when one has these four qualities. A family composed of individuals of this nature is an asset to the nation.

It is not enough if people merely observe Rama's birthday and glorify the Ramayana on one day in a year. Each one should develop Rama's qualities within himself. You should experience Rama's divinity within yourself, irrespective of whatever name you may bear. From the Athmik point of view, you are Rama or Krishna.

Do not base your life on the body, It is impermanent. The spirit within is immortal. The body is Karmakshethra, the field of action. The heart is Dharmakshethra, the abode of righteousness. The human state is a combination of Karmakshethra and Dharmakshethra.

Embodiments of Love! Recognise that there is Divinity in everyone. Man has all the potencies the power of Akarshana (total attraction), Prakarshana (the capacity to transmit that power to others) and Sankarshana (the power of self-transformation). Krishna was considered the embodiment of Akarshana (the power of attraction) and Balarama as the embodiment of Sankarshana. The combination of Akarshana and Sankarshana brings about Prakarshana - - the spread of the Divine power of attraction over the entire world. Sankarshana (which is one of the names of Balarama) literally means transferring the foetus from the womb to another. The wider meaning of the term is the process of transformation of one thing into another.

What is the Sankarshana we need today? The transformation of the human to the Divine. We should be attracted (Akarshana) to this process of transformation (Sankarshana). And then this should be spread everywhere (Prakarshana). This is the type of sadhana (spiritual exercise) to which, people must devote themselves and not be immersed in Japa and dhyana (chanting the Lord's name and meditation).

Give up attachment to the body

Concentrate on developing the firm conviction that you are the Dime. With this conviction you can achieve anything. Give up the attachment to the body. Even scientists sometimes forget their body-consciousness while absorbed in their experiments. If that is the case, why should the spiritually-minded persons retain attachment to the body, which is made up of the five elements and is a container of all foul things.

Giving up the attachment to the body, the scriptures call men to surrender to God. What is meant by surrender? Forgetting the body and thinking of God, that is surrender. Surrender does not mean offering to God your worthless body and your perishable possessions. Such offerings have no meaning for the Divine. People going to Thirumala make all kinds of promises to God if their desires are fulfilled. Does God need any of their offerings? No. Why should God be commercialized? You should seek oneness with God. God will be pleased if you realise your true self. Your happiness is His bliss.

Mind is man's most precious possession

Develop, therefore, this sense of Ekatmabhavam (spiritual unity). It is the loss of this sense of unity that is at the root of all the differences and divisions in the world today. You have no need to search for God. God is truth. Adhere to truth; follow Dharma. What is Dharma? It is not charity or gifts of earthly goods that constitute Dharma. Dharma means purity and unity in thought, word and deed. Turn your mind towards God. All will be well with you. If you

turn the mind towards the phenomenal world, you will experience only misery. The mind is man's most precious possession. Without it man ceases to be human.

The human birth has been given to man for practising Dharma. This was the truth demonstrated by Rama. He practised his Dharma. He told Bharatha that the latter should rule over the Kingdom given to him and leave Rama to do his duty in the forest. When Bharatha argued that the kingdom should be ruled by the eldest son, Rama replied that he also had been given a kingdom to role over. "Dandakaranya is my kingdom. I shall rule here. You reign over Ayodhya," said Rama. This means, that there is an Ayodhya in the Dandakaranya and a forest in Ayodhya. "Realise the oneness of the two," said Rama. Such was the equal mindedness of Rama.

Let people understand the Rama-principle and live upto it. Restrain your desires. Experience the bliss of the Divine at all times. That is true humanness, which manifests itself when you think of God. Happiness is union with God. How much bliss can you experience if you see God in yourself and in everybody! Let all differences cease. Recognizing the divinity that is present in all, you should foster the principle of love and develop compassion in the heart. Love is God. It transcends all human relationships based on attachment. Develop divine and selfless love which is enduring and infinite. A true lover of God will experience no sorrow. On this auspicious day, ponder over the sacred teachings and develop the spirit of oneness.

You have to busy yourselves with activity in order to use time and skill to the best advantage. That is your Duty and Duty is God.

- Sathya Sai Baba

9. Make Swami's words your beacon-light

Date: 31 March 1996 / Location: Brindavan

EMBODIMENTS of love! Through the power of speech man is able to conquer kingdoms. Through speech man loses all his wealth. Man acquires kinsmen and friends through speech and loses them also by his words. Through words, again, man loses his life. Words are the root cause of all these happenings. Speech is important for man whether for experiencing loss or gain, prosperity or adversity or pain and pleasure.

Life is extremely precious. Time is highly valuable. The heart is tender. The mind is a great possession. Though endowed with all these valuable things, man conducts himself as a mean, ignorant and miserable being. He is unable to recognise what a rare, sweet and blissful thing is human life. The reason is, man, forgetting his divine nature, is immersing himself in worldly pleasures and in mundane desires.

Man should realise that he is subject to Time and Time has no respect for wealth or position. Man is devoting all his time to worldly pursuits and the demands of the body. Not realising the significance of time, man leads an animal existence.

The heart, which is soft and compassionate by nature, has been hardened into stone by man. Humanness should manifest itself in a heart overflowing with compassion, but compassion has turned into hard-heartedness.

The mind is all-powerful. It can see without eyes, hear without ears, speak without the tongue and move about without legs. Man tries to control the mind, but he is subordinate to it. As long as he is subject to the mind, man cannot understand the true nature of the mind.

Scholarship alone does not make man a Panditha

Although Ravana was master of a larger number of Vidhyas (types of knowledge) than Rama, he could enjoy no peace or bliss because he did not practise in the right way what he had learnt. Rama, on the other hand, was always blissful because he had fully digested what he had learnt and put it to proper use.

Mere scholarship alone does not make a person a Panditha (a man of learning). "Pandithah sama-dharshinah," says the Geetha. The true man of learning is the one who sees with an equal eye different beings. True knowledge should become an integral part of one's being, flowing in one blood in an endless stream. Ill-digested learning results in the diseases of egoism and pride, as in the ease of Ravana.

Unfortunately education today has become a bookish affair, used only for passing examinations and forgotten immediately after quitting the examination hall. People who cannot make proper use of their knowledge for the nation's good, are traitors to the nation. They are a liability to the society and the country. Of what use is it to flaunt one's degrees if the only purpose of acquiring them is to earn a mess of pottage?

Mansur's saga

There was once in Northern India a Muslim called Mansur. From his childhood he was constantly meditating on God. Although he belonged to a poor family, his parents wanted him to have a good education. But Mansur had a pure unsullied heart filled with love and his only desire was to know his true self. When the parents wanted him to go to school, he asked what was the purpose of going to school. The parents said that he should get educated to be able to earn a living. Mansur said: "Mother! Have I to study only for earning a living? Are not dogs, birds, ants and many other creatures able to get their food without any education? Am I to waste my divine life for the sake of filling my belly?" He walked out of his home. He was a young lad, but there was an effulgence in his face. He sought nothing from any one. People seeing the effulgence on his face offered him things of their own accord. One

old lady offered him food. The purity of his heart secured for him the food. His pure love was feeding him.

Wherever he went, he was declaring: "Anal Haq! Anal Haq!" (I am God. I am God). This corresponds to the Vedanthik declarations, "Aham Brahmasmi" (I am Brahman), So-Ham (I am He). This declaration was treated with ridicule by some persons. The elders reviled him and asked: "You little fellow! How do you claim you are God? How can you be God?" Foolish people ask such questions in this world out of their ignorance and lack of faith. Why should they undermine the faith of others?

Mansur's answer to them was: "I am uttering these words because I am God. There is divine energy in everyone. But some use it for good purposes and some others misuse it. I am using it for good purposes." He went on declaring "I am God. I am God."

Meanwhile all the pandiths (scholars) came together and observed: "We have studied all the Vedas and Scriptures. We dare not make a declaration of this kind. How is it a young student goes about making such a claim? How did he dare to make such a claim?"

Do not allow your faith to be shaken

It is not scriptural knowledge that confers the courage to make such a declaration. It is the faith in the heart. Whatever others may say, one should not allow one's faith to be shaken. Students should have such firm faith.

The pandiths came together and went in a body to complain to the king. "Oh king! This. boy is insulting our scholarship. In spite of all our knowledge, we are not able to declare that we are God. This illiterate fool goes about saying that he is God. How to account for this? Either he is a lunatic or an arrogant fellow." The pandiths somehow wanted to put an end to this. It is the nature of the evil-minded to cause harm even to those who are innocent and good. They make no distinction between the bad and the good, just as white ants

make no distinction between an expensive sari and a tom piece-of cloth. People who criticize others are like these white ants.

Mansur's firm faith

When the pandiths complained to the king, the latter ordered the boy to be brought to him. When the King summoned Mansur, he declared: "I am God." The King drew the boy near him and tried to appeal to him in soft words. "Child! you are an ordinary human being. You are illiterate and ignorant. You should not boast that you are God." Mansur replied: "I will continue to do so. I am proclaiming the truth. I am God. You are God. All are God. The indweller in all is the one God. The Muslims say: 'Allah ho Akbar.' The Christians say: 'God is great.' The Hindhus say: 'So Ham.' God is one. He is the Brahma-Suthra. He is the one thread running through all beings who are like beads in a rosary." Mansur went on arguing with the King in this manner. The King's words did not appeal to him. He said: "Oh King! You are seeking to divert me to a wrong path away from royal road. This is not proper on your part." Mansur continued to assert: "I am God."

The King got angry. "You are despising my words," he said. He summoned a doctor and ordered him to gouge the eyes of Mansur. "This will force him to remain in one place and he will not disturb others." The doctor took away the eyes of the boy. But he continued to shout in joy:

"Anal Haq! Anal Haq!" (I am God, I am God). The boy was free from body consciousness. The king then summoned a butcher and asked him to cut off the hands of the boy. Continuing to laugh, he exclaimed: "Anal Haq! Anal Haq!"

The people in the audience hall could not bear to see the gruesome sight. But there was no sign of grief on the face of the boy. He continued to laugh. His faith was unshakable. He was unaffected by what others said.

Of what use is education if there is no firm determination? Is the amassing of

wealth and secreting money abroad, the purpose of education? No. Earning of money may be necessary, but it should be limited and the money earned should be used for good purposes.

Seeing the determination of Mansur, the King ordered that his legs should be cut off. After this maiming, Mansur died. But the blood flowing from his tortured limbs was proclaiming: "I am God. I am God." The dead body was cremated. But from its ashes rose the cry "I am God. I am God."

This happened three centuries ago in Northern India. The people were astonished at the phenomenon. The king felt repentant, but of what use is repentance after a grievous wrong had been committed?

You should not pay heed to the words of all and sundry, Students should use their power of discrimination and should be guided by the voice of conscience. They should imprint on their hearts, the words of wisdom of the great sages.

Students should realise that no one can escape the consequence of one's actions some time or other. But God's Grace can overcome a mountain of difficulties and sins. Why are you not taking the Sai medicine, which is the panacea for all ills?

Ingratitude is a grievous sin

You are the beneficiaries of totally free education in the Sai Institute. The gratitude you can show to the Institute is by your behaviour, as men of good character. Never be ungrateful to those who have been good to you. There is no greater sin than that. The sun, who is the presiding deity for the eye, punishes the ungrateful by denying them their eyesight. The consequences of one's actions may be felt instantaneously or after the lapse of some time. But they are bound to follow. I seek nothing from the students. All that I want is that the moment they see you, people should recognise you as the fine products of the Sai Institute. By your bad behaviour you should not bring a

bad name to the Institute. More than a white uniform, you should have a white and pure heart. You must become ideal students.

The situation in the outside world is appalling. Even tenth standard students are taking to drinks and drugs. The parents are not restraining them. Nor are they setting a good example. When the parents exchange words, the children exchange blows. The parents give a free rein to the children instead of controlling them. The parents are to blame for three-fourths of their children's misbehaviour. A child who had stolen a mango was praised by his mother for his cleverness. He grew up into a criminal and was sentenced to death for murder. Before the hanging, the man asked for his mother to be brought near him and he started strangling her, saying that she was responsible for making him a criminal. (Swami related the story so vividly that the entire audience was deeply moved).

When parents allow the children to go astray, some time or other they will suffer the consequences. It has become fashionable in this Kali Age to let the children have their own way. They fear that otherwise the children will run away or commit suicide. What does it matter what befalls such characterless children? Parents do not have today this kind of moral courage. They go on listening to bad reports about their children and end their lives in despair.

Bhagawan's grace

Thanks to the Lord's Grace you young people have come to Swami. You may not appreciate all that I have said at this age of yours. But you will realise the truth of Swami's words in due course. You have been fortunate to secure something which few others have got. You are discarding it lightly. You are slighting Swami's injunctions. You do not heed the words of Swami.

People Do Not Listen To Words Of The Wise,
But Easily Fall A Prey To Bad Advice.
Such People, How Can They Hope To Understand Swami?
Of What Use Is All Their Education?

(Telugu Poem)

They will not listen to good advice. But they will listen to bad talk. with both ears! How can they expect to know Bhagawan? Can an ant fathom the depths of the ocean? Likewise you cannot cognise the truth about Swami? But you can make good use of the opportunity that has come your way. "Sai has come to you because of your great merit. Arise! Wake up!".

Earn a good name

You are returning to your homes for the holidays. Conduct yourselves well. Bring a good name to your parents. Earn a good name in society. If you have no other work, join in any service activities of the local Sai organizations. Let service be your motto. That should become your life's goal.

If all of you behave in this way how much will the country benefit and prosper. Promote the welfare of society. Do not succumb to some of the petty desires of your parents. "Oh boy! Get married soon. You will get a rich dowry of lakhs of rupees!" What a shame that parents should speak like this and that boys should give in to them! Should a son be sold for the sake of a girl? Whether it is ten lakhs or ten crores, do not sell yourselves. You must stand on your own legs. You must depend on your own strength. Do not be carried away by what others say. Do not become a slave. Be a master. Only then can you be a master over others.

Students! Put into practice at least a fraction of what you have studied. Plunge into society and engage yourselves in social service. Make society happy. Having taken birth in society, if you achieve this much, it is enough. Remember that nothing lasts - the body, the mind or senses. Only one's reputation survives him. This is what Swami expects from you. If you achieve a good name and bring credit to the Institute where you have studied, you would have rendered great service to the nation.

Four claimants of wealth

Do not become Ravanas. Earn a good name like Rama. Do not aspire to become a Birla, a Kirloskar or a Tata. A name earned by merely amassing wealth is ephemeral. Do not sell yourself for money. Earn a good income and make proper use of it. Money earned by sinful means will not last. Either thieves will rob you or the Income-tax department will seize it.

For wealth there are four claimants: Number one is Agni (fire). Number two, thieves. Third, relatives. Fourth, enemies. These four are after one's wealth. Before any of them deprives of your wealth, you should make good use of it.

Our students should not hanker after money either in the matter of marriage or in regard to a job. Work, work, work. That should be your sole concern. Become votaries of work. Work binds men to the world. The body is given for carrying out righteous actions. It is not given for enjoying carnal pleasures.

Madhalasa gave birth to four sons. When each son was born, she did not desire that they should study, go abroad, earn great wealth and acquire name and fame. From the time the child was in the cradle, she taught the child the ideal of Vairagya (renunciation). She sang a lullaby for the child, treating Pranava manthra as the cradle, the Mahavakya "Thathvam-asi" (Thou art That) as the bed, Awareness as the cord drawing the cradle. The four Vedas were the chains for the cradle. Rearing each child in this manner, she sent him to the forest telling him that he will find real rest there.

Janaka and Gargi

King Janaka was similarly a seeker after Brahmajnana (the Supreme Truth). He sought knowledge for the sake of Self-Realisation and not for the sake of creature comforts. He held an assembly of sages where he achieved fame. At the assembly Gargi carried on a debate with the sage Yajnavalkya. The debate was based on the scriptures. It was inconclusive. Then Gargi put a

question to King Janaka: "What is the mark of a Sthithaprajna?" (a person of steadfast Awareness). The King replied; "He is the one who realises, the Oneness of the Absolute. There is no second." Gargi said: "If you have realised this state of Awareness, you will be conscious of Oneness alone. You are not in that state now. I wish to realise this Awareness."

Gargi said: "Oh King! I have one desire. Will you fulfill it?" "Certainly," replied the king. She asked him to marry her. The king said: "I have only one wife, Sunethra (the one with good eyes). I don't wish to have any other wife." Gargi said: "You are a great Jnani. You have good eyes and your queen is a good-eyed lady. May I ask what reward you are giving to the great Yajnavalkya?" The king said: "I shall give him whatever he asks." Yajnavalkya was no doubt a great scholar but he did-not have total sense control. Yajnavalkya asked the king again: "Give this Gargi to me in marriage. Celebrate our wedding." There was a-great uproar in the audience hall. The great scholars present there asked: "What is the meaning of Yajnavalkya's request?" Gargi then asked Yajnavalkya: "What is the purpose of a marriage?" Yajnavalkya replied: "To have progeny." Gargi said: "No. The wife is one-half of the husbands --Ardhangi. This means that she should pursue Dhya together with the husband as a Dharmapathni (a righteous wife). Marriage is for the sake of pursuing Dharma. It is not for enjoying worldly pleasures. Our emperor enjoys carnal pleasures in his palace. The same pleasures are experienced by street dogs. Is that happiness?"

Wealth is not the source of real happiness

Thyagaraja asked: "Is wealth the source of happiness or serving the Lotus feet of Rama?" Students should ask themselves-"Does happiness consist in the acquiring of degrees or getting good jobs or attaining high positions? Real happiness consists in the acquisition of wisdom. However, till that wisdom is got, one should try to live in the world with morality and integrity. That should be the aim, while living in the world. Keep your vision on the Divine and lead your life in the world. This is the teaching of Sai. You need not renounce the world. You need not go after jobs like dogs hunting for crumbs. Stick to the

job you have and take proper care of your family. Lead an ideal life. Always bear in mind the goal. Students should recognise this and conduct themselves properly. Therein lies true bliss.

In olden days, after the disciples had completed their education and before they entered the life of house-holders, they stood before the preceptor to receive words of advice from him. This was similar to the convocations held these days.

Today some of you are leaving for your homes after completing your studies and others are going for the vacation to return after the holidays. You must experience happiness whether you enter a new life or whether you come back. Do not get into bad company.

As one of the students speakers said, cultivate good company. Avoid bad company at any cost. Seek good company with all your life. Serve your parents. Help your mother when she goes out shopping. You must confer happiness on the mother who bore you for nine months in the womb. Do not cause any displeasure to the mother. Be ready to give a helping hand to your father. Don't waste your time in idleness. Engage yourselves in social service. Those who can sing should take part in Bhajans. Serve patients in hospitals by purchasing medicines or providing clothes, but do not give them money. If you give them money, they turn into beggars. If you render service in these ways, you will be redeeming your human birth.

Adore God: Abhor the world

Keep your minds always fixed on God. That is the true meaning of Upavasa, not observance of a so-called fast, followed by a sumptuous feast. (Swami sang a Kannada song to illustrate how fasting is observed by some people to enjoy a feast later).

Never forget God. Do not believe in the world, which is perpetually changing. Don't fear death. If you learn to observe these three maxims, you can

accomplish anything. Swami will take care of you. When students complain that Swami is not talking to them, they should understand that Swami does not want to talk to those who do not heed His words. If you are good, Swami will talk to you of His own accord. If you act upto Swami's words, Swami will take good care of you. Avoid bad friends. Cultivate good friends. Above all, cherish faith in God. God is your sole protector. Do not trust anyone else. Today distrust of each other has become universal. Esteem God alone as your true friend. You forget God at your own peril.

I seek your love

Students! I had no intention to speak today. But the Warden appealed to me to say a few words to the students. I have spoken often enough. Even now I am saying the same thing. I seek nothing from anyone. I have not sought anything all these seventy years. My hand always gives. The only thing that I seek from you is Love. My love for you is pure, unchanging and selfless. What is your life worth if you cannot believe in such love? Believe in it. You place trust in double dealers. Why don't you stand by the truth which you know? Receive my pure love with a pure heart. Make yourself holy. Live in love. Love is God. Bear in mind what Swami has said and regard Swami's words as a beacon light for your lives. With the light of Swami's advice in your hearts, you can proceed on life's journey for any length of time. Remember with love God, who is everything.

10. Srishti and Dhrishti

Date: 12 April 1996 / Location: Kodaikanal

EMBODIMENTS of Love! In this world constituted by the three gunas - - Sathva, Rajas and Thamas (the qualities of serenity, passion and ignorance)., the mixture of happiness and sorrow prevents man from recognizing his divinity. Human existence is enveloped in Moham (infatuation). When man flees himself from this infatuation, he will experience real happiness. This infatuation breeds Ahamkara (egoism) and Mamakara (possessiveness) which bring about the loss of one's name and fame. One who is filled with ego will be unable to experience love from others. It is essential therefore to get rid of this infatuation. "Moham hithva priyam bhavathi" (one becomes endearing to others by conquering infatuation).

"Krodham hithva nashochathi" (By conquering anger one is free from grief). As long as man is filled with anger, he can have no peace. To secure peace and happiness man has to subdue anger. An angry man may become the enemy of mankind.

A Man Filled With Anger
Will Not Be Able To Achieve Anything.
He Will Commit Many Sins
And Will Be An Object Of Derision.
He Will Forfeit All Prosperity
And Lose The Respect Of All Persons.
Anger Is The Cause Of Total Ruin. (Telugu Poem).

The first requisite for a person embarking on spiritual development is control of anger.

Discriminate between necessities and luxuries

"Kamam hithva sukhee bhavathi" (Conquering desire, a man becomes happy). Life is a long journey. Desires are the luggage you carry. The less the luggage the greater the comfort during the journey. Man has to discriminate between necessities and luxuries and confine his desires to what is essential.

"Lobham hithva sukhee bhavathi" (Happiness is got by overcoming greed). Life is an ocean filled with waves of pleasure and pain. Man is happy when his desires are fulfilled and is sad when they are not. "Joys and sorrows are inseparable. Joy is not separate. It is the fruit of difficulties," says a Telugu poem. Pain and pleasure are like the two parts of a seed or the two sides of a coin. People should learn to treat pleasure and pain alike. In fact, pain enhances the joy derived from the pleasure that follows. Pleasure and pain, loss and gain, fame and infamy are inextricably linked in the world. Man's divinity consists in overcoming these opposites. Unfortunately, man falls a prey to limitless desires and ends his life in misery and despair.

Examine your own faults and rectify them

Man needs God's grace to experience real happiness. But by his own thoughts, words and actions, man forfeits the Grace of God. "See no evil; see what is good." But men today look at only other people's faults and do not think of their own failings. Examine your own faults and rectify them.

Here is an example from the Mahabharatha: The preceptor, Dhronacharya, asked the eldest of the Pandavas (Dharmaja) and the Kauravas (Dhuryodhana), to go round the kingdom and find out how many good persons and bad persons were there. Dharmaja came back and reported that he could not find a single bad person in the kingdom. Dhuryodhana told the guru that he could not find a single good person. Dhronacharya pondered over this divergent findings and realised that the outlook of each of them determined the nature, of their findings. Dharmaja, being a good man, found only what is good in everyone. Dhuryodhana, with his evil mind, could only see the bad side in every body. Everything thus depends on the outlook of the person concerned and not on the nature of the things he observes. If one

looks at the world with a good mind everything will appear good.

The entire cosmos is Vishnu-Svaruupa (a manifestation of Divine). It is called Srishti (creation). Prakrithi (nature) is a synonym for Srishti. Prakrithi means creation of the Divine. The five basic elements, which constitute Nature, are in every individual human being. Hence, it is declared that the Lord dwells in every living being. When this truth is recognized, there should be no room for anger, hatred or envy. The oneness of the universe is the reality, though there are a myriad forms and names. The unity that underlies the apparent diversity should be understood.

Communion with the Divine is true Yoga

Embodiments of love! Recognise the supreme significance of the Love-Principle. Today, it is love of the Divine that should be fostered. This love transcends the mind. Various forms of meditation are purely mental exercises. But Bhakthi (devotion) which emanates from the heart transcends the mind. Communion with the Divine is true Yoga. All other yogik practices are merely physical exercises.

It is essential to limit one's desires and keep the senses under control. This is the only way to true happiness. The most important organ which has to be controlled is the tongue, which, unlike the other sense organs - the eyes, the ears and the nose - has a double function, speech and taste. The ancient sages practised silence for a variety of reasons. Silence serves to conserve energy, improve the memory and experience the Divine. Restraint in speech and avoidance of gossip and slander are commendable virtues. "Help ever, hurt never." This should be the motto of everyone.

"See no evil; see what is good" is the prescription for the eyes. Keechaka (in the Mahabharatha) looked with an evil eye on Dhraupadhi (who was serving as the Queen's maid in the palace of the king of Virata dhesa). His lustful vision brought about his death. His very name is abhorred by everyone. Likewise, one should not pay heed to bad or evil-minded words. Kaikeyi (in

the Ramayana) is the example of well-intentioned woman who allowed her mind to be poisoned by the evil counsel of Manthara and was responsible for the death of Dhasharatha and the bitter resentment of her son Bharatha. Kaikeyi and Manthara have passed into history as infamous characters.

How evil thoughts influence a person and bring about his ruin is illustrated by the story of Dhuryodhana in the Mahabharatha. He always entertained evil designs against the Pandavas. What was the ultimate result? Not only did he ruin himself but he mined everyone in his clan. Likewise, Ravana, who was well-versed in all branches of knowledge, mined himself and his kinsfolk by his wicked actions. Innumerable examples of this nature can be found in the Indian Epics.

The three stages to reach Self-Realisation

Self-Realisation should be the Goal of human existence. It has to be reached through three stages: Self-confidence, self-satisfaction and self-sacrifice. Man should regard himself as the master of the body, the senses and the mind. He has to use the intellect to experience his oneness with the divine, the cosmic all-pervading consciousness. The Prajnana (constant integrated awareness) which is in everyone is covered by the ash of worldly desires. When the ash is blown off, the fire of Brahman (Absolute Divinity) reveals itself.

To give another illustration. There is a tree on which thousands of birds are resting. Their droppings on the ground below the tree make it unusable. How to drive the birds away? When you shout "Rama, Krishna, Govindha" and clap your hands the birds will fly away. Our life is a tree on which have gathered a big flock of birds in the form of desires. The desires pollute the heart. To get rid of desires you have to perform bhajans.

The dull and the ignorant will hesitate to be active for fear of exhaustion or failure or loss. The emotional and passionate individuals will plunge headlong and rave for quick results and will be disappointed if they do not come in. The balanced persons will be active because it is their duty; they will not be

agitated by anything - failure or success. The Godly will take up activity as a means of worshipping God and they leave the result to God. They know that they are but instruments in the hands of God.

11. The triple transformation

Date: 13 April 1996 / Location: Kodaikanal / Occasion: Tamil New Year, Baisakhi, Vishu

EMBODIMENTS of love! Bharatheeya culture declared from the outset that all people should be happy, that all should enjoy peace and prosperity and that all should lead sacred lives.

Mankind today has progressed immensely in the physical and social spheres. But in the field of morality and spirituality mankind is unable to give up narrowness and pettiness. What is the reason? It is because over many lives men have grown in selfishness. In every effort of man, in every aspiration, self-interest is the driving force. Man has become a plaything in the hands of selfishness. Whatever object he seeks, whomever he loves, it is out of selfishness and not for its own sake. No step is taken without regard for self interest. This intense selfishness has resulted in the total decay of human values. This monster of selfishness has pervaded every field of human activity... the physical, the social, the economic, political and moral fields.

Shed selfishness

Hence, the primary endeavour of man today should be to shed selfishness, develop spirituality and realise the Divine. Three basic changes should take place in man. That is the truth contained in the Sai principle. S" stands for Spiritual change. "A" stands for "Associational" (or National) change. "I" stands for Individual change. By this triple change the nation will prosper. Without a change in the individual, society will not change. Without a social transformation, spiritual transformation cannot take place in the heart.

Because the individual's behaviour has gone astray, society has got polluted. Concern for social good should influence every individual's action. The individual should give up the preoccupation with the interests of his own kith and kin. He must give up this attachment to "my and mine" and aspire for the divine.

Obsessed with worldly desires and forgetting God, man is immersed in misery. Even devotion is tainted by selfishness. It does not stem wholly from the heart. It is only part-time devotion and hypocrisy. All should realise that the Divine is the basis of everything in the universe. Having evolved from the animal, man should aim at realising the Divine. Unfortunately, men today are descending to animality. As a result, peace and order are vanishing from every sphere of life.

What is the use of all the progress m science, if people have no control over their senses and are not aware of the all-pervading Chaithanya (cosmic consciousness)? Everyone should recognise the indwelling Divinity in his heart.

A minister becomes a devotee

In the Tamil land, many great saints have taken birth. Many great scholars were born in the Tamil land. One of the Tamil kings was very fond of horses and sent his Prime Minister to buy horses. During his journey the minister came across a holy man named Thirukannan. He was attracted by the teachings of the holy man. The sage said that all worldly pleasures were ephemeral and God was the only reality. Inspired by these teachings, the minister decided to give up his mission (of purchasing horses) and used the money given to him to build a temple for Shiva. Meanwhile, the king was worried about what had happened to his minister and why he had not come back. He came to know that the minister had used the money, given to him for purchasing horses, to build a Shiva temple. He had the minister arrested and put in prison. The minister was unaffected. He continued to chant the Lord's name in the prison.

Later the king realised his mistake. Recognizing that the minister was a great devotee, he summoned him to his presence and asked him What he had done with the king's money. He said: "Oh King! I used the money for God. What God had given, I gave it back to Him. Without the grace of God no one can have anything. Without the power of the Divine not a cell in the human can

move, not a blade of grass will move. The whole universe exists by the will of God. Oh king! By a stroke of good fortune you have become a ruler. Because of my bad luck I became a minister."

That minister considered his becoming a minister as a misfortune. When one becomes a minister he should be prepared to use all his energies and powers in the service of the Divine. Only when Spirituality prevails, will humanness blossom. The lotus blooms when the Sun's rays fall on it. The lotus of the mind residing in the lake of the human heart will blossom when the light of Divinity illumines it.

Manikka vachakar's message

The mind should blossom and proclaim the glory of the Divine. The minister told the king: "It is out of a realisation of this truth that I offered the money, given to me for buying a horse, to the Divine." The king ordered the freeing of the minister and allowed him to lead a spiritual life after his own heart.

From that moment he started composing hymns in praise of God. He wrote many hymns. This work is known as "Thiruvachakam." The author is known as "Manikka vachakar." His writings are spiritual aphorisms containing the sublimest spiritual truths.

This kind of transformation should take place in every person. Only then will Bharath become an exemplar 'for the world. Today men have become worshippers of Mammon. Such persons are not human at all. What use is there in endlessly seeking wealth without securing the peace of mind? Why don't you spend at least a few moments on thoughts of God?

If One Spends A Small Fraction Of The Time,
Devoted To Numerous Worldly Affairs
And To Family, Property And Possessions,
To Thoughts On The Lotus Feet Of The Lord,
He Will Have No Need To Fear The Messengers Of Death.(Shloka)

How much bliss will you derive from devoting five minutes out of the twenty-four hours of a day, to worshipping God?

Prema and Seva (love and selfless service) are like a bird's two wings for a man. He can soar to any heights with those two wings. To cultivate these two qualities one has to achieve the triple purity in thought, word and deed. In addition one has to reduce one's desires. Today enormous money is wasted on useless luxuries while people grudge expenditure on incense and joss sticks. What folly is this!

Years come and go. What avails the passage of years if there is no change in the minds of men? Time is precious. It should be used in the service of the Divine. All actions should be dedicated to God. Only through renunciation can man realise the Divine. Today people have forgotten the meaning of sacrifice. Sacrifice is Yoga. Enjoyment is Roga (disease). Make your heart blossom every moment. That is the way to greet the new year. Realise your oneness with the Divine.

My life is love

Promote love in your hearts and share it with others. That is the best form of worship. Love is the only property of Sai. My life is love. That is what I offer to one and all. I go on giving, giving. But to what extent are you putting into practice Swami's teachings? Practise silence for at least ten minutes in a day. Meditate on Swami's teachings at that time. Realise that in this transient world the Eternal is immanent. Hold fast to God. Experience the bliss of union with the Divine. Make love your life-breath. With love of God in their hearts the ancient sages could transform - even the wild animals in the forests.

On the New Year's Day in Thamilnadu people prepare a chutney made up of fruits, sweet, sour and bitter and take it as sign of their readiness to meet all situations in life with equanimity. Sorrow and happiness should be treated

alike as gifts of God.

I am the embodiment of love; Love is my instrument. There is no creature without love; the lowest loves itself, at least and its "Self is God". So there are no atheists, though some might dislike Him or refuse Him, as malarial patients dislike sweets or diabetic patients refuse to have anything to do with sweet. Those who preen themselves as atheists will one day, when their illness is gone, relish God and revere Him.

- Sathya Sai Baba

12. The quest for truth

Date: 14 April 1996 / Location: Kodaikanal

EMBODIMENTS of love! Trees bear fruits, rivers carry water, cows yield milk, not for their own sake but for the sake of others. Equally the body is given to man for helping others. (This is the purport of a Sanskrith shloka with which Swami began His discourse) We witness today humanity being racked by innumerable troubles and worries. No administration or authority can solve these problems. God alone can save mankind. Men have to develop Atma-Vishvasa (faith in the Self). Thereby they should acquire the grace of the Divine. Humanity as a whole is in need of God's grace. To receive this everyone has to fill his heart with love, render service to his fellowmen and thus redeem his life. Everyone has to embark perpetually on the quest for truth. In every thought, word and action this quest must go on. Truth is not merely what appears as a fact for the moment. It is changeless and beyond time. In uttering truth one should bear in mind that it should be pleasing and wholesome. It should not cause excitement. It should not cause harm to anyone. Truth that is practised in this way will transcend barriers of caste and creed. Rooted in the spiritual, it is valid universally.

How is the quest for Truth to be undertaken? A distinction should be made between truth, untruth and apparent fact. What is apparent at one moment is liable to change at another. Moreover, what is apparent may not be the real truth, as for instance, in the case of the Sun "rising in the East" and "setting in the West". The sun in fact does not rise or set at all. It is the revolution of the earth round itself which produces the apparent phenomenon of the sun rising and setting.

Change your vision

To cite another example. The same pair of eyes look at different persons - the mother, the wife, the child and so on. Though the eyes are the same, the feeling with which each person should be viewed has to be different. The

mother should be looked with a feeling of reverence. The child should be looked at with affection. The wife should be seen with endearment. The quest for truth in this instance calls for understanding how each person should be viewed in the context of his or her specific relationship.

In looking at the world, man has to change his vision. There is nothing wrong in creation. It is man's vision that has to be rectified. The eyes look at good and bad things, the ears listen to sweet or harsh words. The sense organs are the same. It is the individual who has to discriminate between what is good and what is bad, in using the sense organs. The senses are misused when you look at bad things or listen to evil talk. The tongue is likewise misused when one indulges in bad speech instead of using it to chant the name of God. No one should indulge in abuse or criticism of others.

The search for truth should go in every sphere of life. There is no need to search for God. He is everywhere. He is the indweller in everyone. As the Isopanishath declares: "God is immanent in the entire cosmos.

All names and forms belong to God

God can be called by any name - Rama, Krishna, Allah or Jesus. The same God is adored under different names. The names and forms are countless. All names are His. There is no name or form that does not belong to Him.

"Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantham, Brahma" says the scripture. Truth is infinite. Everything is based on Truth. Today people have to adhere to Truth. Truth is God. The answer to the question, "Where is God?" is: "He is everywhere."

Today the world is filled with hatred and discord. What is the reason? It is the feeling of "mine" and "thine." Everyone must try to find out the nature of his true self. Everyone answers the question, "Who are you?", with the reply: "I am so-and-so." The "I" that is proclaimed by everyone is Aham, the appellation of God. The inherent Divinity of each person is turned into Ahamkara (egoism), by identifying the Self with the body. The body is liable

to change and decay. It should be regarded only as an instrument for realising the Divine. The breathing process which takes place as long as life remains in the body proclaims through the manthra, "So Ham", that the individual is one with God ("I am He"). This manthra emanates from the heart. People today recite manthras mechanically.

New year is a sacred day for purifying one's self

Today is New Year Day for Malayalis. The day is usually observed as a festival occasion. But it should be regarded as a sacred day for purifying one's self. One should get rid of all bad thoughts and fill the mind with good feelings. Hatred should be banished. One should cultivate this spirit of equal-mindedness in facing the ups and downs of life. People should contemplate on God as the embodiment of infinite bliss, the bestower of all happiness, as the transcendental Lord, as the Eternal witness in the hearts of everyone, the One Absolute, immaculate Being, free from the three gunas and the pure embodiment of supreme wisdom. The Lord is described as the embodiment of Brahmanandham (Brahmik Bliss). This bliss is far beyond the comprehension of human beings. It is infinite and unchanging bliss. The heart is the seat of all bliss. There is a basic difference between the mundane happiness and Brahmik bliss. The former is temporary and is purely physical. Bliss resides in the Spiritual heart of man, which is on the right, side. From this new year day cherish pure thoughts and cultivate good feelings.

Each should practise his own religion sincerely. A Christian should be a good Christian. A Hindhu should be a good Hindhu. A Muslim should be a good Muslim. Let each one be a true practitioner of his religion. No one should criticize or hate another's religion. Muslims should not hate Hindhus and Hindhus should not hate Muslims. "All are one. 13e alike to everyone," declared Jesus. The one God is common to all.

Embodiments of Love! Whatever you may do, never give up your faith in God. Do not place your trust in the transient things of the world. Regard all humanity as one family. Transcend the barriers of creed, language and

nationality. The message of the Vedas is universal, meant for all mankind. The message is one of unity and harmony. "Let us live together, strive together and rejoice together." Develop this spirit of oneness.

Conquer anger by means of fortitude; conquer hatred by love. Do not feed anger with retaliation; do not feed hatred with fury. Meet hatred with your innate Prema; meet grief with innate joy; meet anger with shield of Shanthi, Inner Peace. You are bound to win.

- Sathya Sai Baba

13. Heroic mothers and noble sons

Date: 06 May 1996 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Easwaramma Day

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! For the benefit of others alone trees give fruits, rivers carry water and cows yield milk. Likewise the human body is given for rendering help to others. But not recognizing this truth, man uses his body for selfish purposes. Man today behaves in a more degraded manner than trees, rivers and cows.

Man is forgetting the purpose for which he has been endwoed with a body.. From dawn to dusk, he is immersed ,wholly in selfish pursuits. He has no comprehension of what selflessness means. Man considers the phenomenal world as the only reality.

People Mistake The Unreal For The Real And The Real For The Unreal.
But The Real Is The Only One
And There Is Nothing Else In The Universe.

This visible universe is made up of three gunas (Sathva, Rajas and Thamas). This is the reason for describing the cosmos as Sthree. The term Sthree has three components: "Sa", "Tha" and "Ra". "Sa" signifies the Sathvik quality. This comprises qualities like forbearance, compassion, and love. "Tha" signifies 'the Thamo guna which includes qualities like modesty, bashfulness, fear and patience. "Ra" signifies the Rajo guna represented by such qualities as courage, sacrifice and the adventurous spirit. Every being born in the world has only feminine qualities. Merely on the basis of the physical form, a distinction is made between men and women. The three qualities in the term Sthree are to be found both in men and women.

Role of the mother

The term Sthree should not be treated lightly. The Bhagavath Geetha lists

seven attributes to the feminine principle' Fame, Wealth, Speech, Wisdom, Intelligence, Fortitude and Determination. The Mother principle, which embodies these seven potencies, is highly sacred. Wherever you turn, you will see manifestations of the feminine principle in Nature.' When any person goes abroad, the first question that is put is: "What is your Mother-tongue?" No one asks, "What is your Father-tongue?" This shows how much importance is attached to the role of the mother. The mother, fosters the child in the womb and goes through all travails to protect the child. There is no greater love in the world than maternal love. Hence the ancients accorded the highest honour to the mother and declared: "Mathru dhevo bhava" (Esteem the Mother as Divine) and. "Pithru dhevo bhava" (Esteem the father as Divine). For every person the first preceptor is the mother. It is from the mother that a child learns its first words of speech, the first steps in movement and many other primary lessons in behaviour. Hence, the mother stands out as the reflected image of Prakrithi (Nature).

Heroic women in Indian history

Despite the evidences of recognition of the greatness of the feminine principle, women have been described as abala (the weaker vessel). This appellation is applied to women because of the secondary status accorded to women in the performance of yagnas (sacrifice) and other rituals, though participation together with men was permitted. Women could not perform sacrifices and rituals by themselves. Even charitable and religious acts could be performed by women only in association with their spouses.

Though the term abala is applied to women in this specific context alone, women are not weak at all in terms of strength or ability. We have innumerable examples of the strength displayed by women in the world. As against three potencies attributed to men, women are said to have seven potencies (according to the Geetha). Can you call as weak Savithri, who made the Lord of Death restore to life her dead husband? Can Anasuuya, who transformed the Divine Trinity Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva into three babies and played with them, be called an abala (weak woman)? Sumathee was a

great lady who stopped the sun from rising, because her husband was predestined to die the next morning. Could she be termed as abala? No. Was Dhraupadhi, who bore with fortitude for 14 years all the ordeals her husbands went through, a weak woman? Can Seetha, who shared with Rama all hardships of life in the forest and achieved ultimate victory, be called weak? Can Gargi, who could carry on the debate with the Raja yogi Janaka is a dauntless spirit, be called a weak woman?

There are any number of such heroic women in recorded history. Though physically women may appear weak, in reality they are full of strength. As the embodiment of the three gunas, women are endowed with exceptional strength. Even in the spiritual field women display their boundless capacity.

Gratitude to the mother

It is in her role as mother that there is the highest expression of a woman's strength. Every child that is born owes its existence to the mother. Hence everyone should be extremely grateful to one's mother.

The mother is the symbol of the Universal mother and father of the Dime Lord. There is a popular prayer in Sanskrith describing the Lord as everything:

Oh Lord Of Lords !
You Are My Mother And Father, My Kinsman And Friend,
My Wealth And Knowledge,
My Everything.

The mother is the first teacher of speech. The first words taught to the child are Amma, Appa (mother, father). Then the teaching of the alphabet starts. The first lessons are: "Om Namah Shivaya" or "Om Namo Narayanaya." The teaching of language begins with the teaching of names of the Divine - Shiva and Narayana. In ancient times, the mother occupied the place of the first preceptor for the child. Unfortunately, in the world today, what are the

parents teaching to the child? They are teaching them "A, B, C, D." Nor is that all. They go on to teach the child some meaningless stuff like: "Ba Ba black sheep!" (laughter). The mothers imagine that they are teaching something wonderful to the children. This is wrong. Teaching of the alphabet should begin with learning the names of the Lord.

Ancient mothers taught Truth and Righteousness

This was the way the mothers in ancient Bharath taught their children. The ancient teachings exhorted the people "Sathyam vadha, Dharmam chara" (Speak the Truth, adhere to Righteousness). No mother taught the child to speak untruth. No mother would think of asking the child to follow unrighteousness. Their sole desire was to see that their children secured happiness by leading worthy and meritorious lives. Hence, in the attitude towards parents, the children should give the primary place to the mother.

Today, we need to promote such ideal mothers. This is all the more necessary because the modern trends are disturbing. The tendency (among the affluent families) is to entrust the child from birth to a nurse or an ayah. The child does not get the love of the mother. The child has no knowledge of what a mother means.

In ancient times, Queen Madhalasa was teaching the children from their infancy the greatness of Vairagya (detachment). She used to sing a lullaby while putting the children to sleep:

Placing You In The Cradle Of Omkara
On The Bed Of The Great Saying 'thath Vam Asi'
Swinging To The Music Of Awareness, Dear Child, May The Gods Lull You To Sleep!
The Four Vedas Are The Four Chains Of The Cradle.
May Your Heart Be Filled With The Nine Forms Of Devotion.

Because the mothers in ancient times filled the child with devotion and detachment, Bharath stood out as a land of sacrifice, of wisdom, of yoga and contentment. Because today mothers do not bring up the child in this spirit, this sacred land is ceasing to be one of sacrifice and is becoming a pleasure-loving nation. The pleasures are turning into breeders of disease. Sacrifice in ancient times made this country the Yogabhuumi (land of yoga). Our goal should be to become yogis, not rogis (victims of disease).

There may be bad sons but bad mothers are rare

Embodiments of Divine love! You must be prepared to make even the supreme sacrifice for showing your gratitude to the mothers. Even the avathars Rama, Krishna and others, owed their advent to their mothers. Everyone should pray for sacred mothers who will bring forth good children. There may be bad sons in the world but bad mothers are rare. Most mothers today lament over the bad behaviour of their children. No son who has caused distress to his mother can come to anything good. The Telugu saying is: "There can be no prosperity in a home where the mother sheds tears." Today we need sons who will please their mothers.

The mothers, for their part, should teach the children always to speak the truth. When a mother asks the son, "Where have you been?" he should not prevaricate. He must tell the truth and confess his mistakes if he has done anything wrong. Very few children tell the truth to their parents today. Of what use is education for such children?

Today's boys and girls are the future redeemers of the nation. Hence, the parents should bring them up on right, lines so that they may be ideal citizens.

Women in various places observe what is called Ladles' Day. The day should not be observed only by making speeches or holding bhajans. They should endeavour to help the poor and the destitute. Helpless women who have no means of livelihood should be taught some occupation like tailoring to enable

them to earn an income. Slum dwellers should be helped to keep their huts dean. The environment also should be cleaned to help the children grow in a pure atmosphere. Proper housekeeping should also be taught to those people. Disease is caused mainly by unhygienic surroundings Moreover the air, the water, the mind, everything is polluted. This pollution is causing several, new types of diseases.

Example of Vidhyasagar

In the past, mothers used to play a big part in moulding their children. For instance, there is the example of Eeshvar Chandhra Vidhyasagar. He was a native of Calcutta. He justified his name by being a great scholar (Vidhyasagar means ocean of knowledge). He belonged to a very poor family. His mother brought up her son at the expense of her own food. Pursuing his studies under the most adverse circumstances, he completed his education and found a job on a salary of Rs. 50 per mensem. In due course, he rose to an eminent position by dint of hard work.

One day he approached his mother and said: "Mother, I have reached an eminent position thanks to your blessings and guidance. I am now able to fulfill any of your wishes." The mother said: "Not yet, my son. I have three desires but I shall tell them in due course." Reaching a still higher position after sometime, Eeshvar Chandhra renewed his appeal to his mother. The mother said: "Our village is poor and the village has no school. Please set up a school here so that the children will not have to go outside for their education. That school will be an ornament for me." The son carried out her wish.

Later, the mother revealed her second wish. She wanted Eeshvar Chandhra to set up a small hospital in the village to serve the villagers. She said this would be her second ornament she wanted from him. He set up a hospital as desired by his mother. In the following years, Vidhyasagar rose to greater eminence, but remained as humble and free from conceit as ever. He asked his mother what her third desire was. She said that he would build a small

rest house (choultry) for travellers passing through the village to stay. Vidhyasagar built a small community hall in the village.

Today's educated persons get puffed up over their petty educational attainment. It was his mother's teachings which made Vidhyasagar practise humility.

Not Penance, Not Rituals, Not Pilgrimages Are Of Any Avail In Crossing
The Ocean Of Human Existence.
Only Service To The Good
Can Take One Across. (Sanskrith Shloka).

Service is most important, It helps to promote humility and to further the oneness of mankind. No room should be given for ostentation. True devotion is free from exhibitionism.

Children should recognise the supremacy of maternal love, which is equal to Divine Love. Revere and love the mother. That is the meaning of Mother's Day. The parents are living symbols of God. Children must make them happy.

The most direct method of achieving spiritual success is Nishkama karma, action without any attention or attachment to 'the fruit therefrom, action as duty, action as dedication, action as worship.

- Sathya Sai Baba

14. Message of the Avathaars and the Epics

Date: 15 May 1996 / Location: Brindavan

EMBODIMENTS of Love! This vast cosmos, consisting of moving and unmoving objects, is permeated with Truth. All names and forms are founded on Dharma (Righteousness). Dharma is the form of God. The Atma (Spirit) which is present in the subtlest of the subtle and vastest of the vast as a witness, is verily the Brahman (all-pervading Consciousness).

All the objects in the universe are made up of atoms. The atom is the embodiment of the Atma (Spirit). Hence there is no place in the universe without the Atma or Brahman.

Forgetting the spiritual basis of the universe man gets entangled in misery through his worldly attachments. It was out of a recognition of this truth that Buddha declared: "Everywhere there is sorrow. Everything is momentary and everything is perishable." To consider the worldly things as permanent is the cause of sorrow.

If man recognizes that the world is permeated by the Brahman, which is all bliss, he will free himself from the cause of sorrow. He fails to recognise the divinity that subsumes the whole of Prakrithi (Nature or the phenomenal Universe). Instead, he regards the Divine as a natural phenomenon and though the workings of the Divine can be seen in Nature, man in his folly falls to recognise the Divine. Nature in its myriad forms is the effect. God is the cause. The entire cosmos is a manifestation of cause and effect. Hence the universe is a manifestation of the Divine.

See the divine in every human being

Man should realise that the five basic elements which constitute the fundamental stuff of the universe are common to all mankind and should be enjoyed as such. He should see the divine in every human being. This was the

purport of the prayer: Buddham Sharanam Gachchami (I seek my refuge in the Buddha). The second prayer is: Sangham Sharanam Gachchami (I seek refuge in the Sangha). The implication of this prayer is that, after getting enlightenment, one should enter society (to serve it).

The third prayer is: Dharmam Sharanam Gachchami (I seek refuge in Dharma). The meaning of the prayer as a whole is that for the sake of upholding Dharma (Righteousness), one should use one's Buddhi (the enlightened intellect) and engage himself in social activity. Possessing intelligence, if a person does not do social service, how can he uphold Dharma? It has been said that man had been given a body essentially to pursue Dharma.

Non-violence is the first dharana

The observance of non-violence has been described as the highest form of Dharma. All the violence in the world today is due to the fact that people do not lead righteous lives. People do penance and perform various kinds of rituals, but they have secured no peace. Why? Because they have not sought to find out who they really are.

This enquiry should lead to the realisation that one is the Divine in human form and deeming the body as the basic reality, men are misusing the body and the talents and qualities given to them. They are failing to recognise how to use their endowments for redeeming their human birth.

Among the teachings of the Buddha to the world the foremost was Ahimsa (not causing harm to anyone). Non-violence is not merely refraining from inflicting injuries on others with one's limbs or weapons. Non-violence has to be practised with Thrikarana Shuddhi (purity of mind, tongue and body). There should be no ill-feelings which is a form of violence. To cause harm to others through the body is also Himsa (violence). No one should be harmed even by speech. The speech should be sweet, pleasing and wholesome. All actions should be helpful to others.

"Buddha laid down three rules for all actions. All acts done by the hands should be good. The proper ornament for the Kantham (throat) is truth. For the ears the best ornament is listening to sacred lore. What other ornaments does anyone need?" (Sanskrith shloka).

What are people doing today? They are listening to what is undesirable. They are looking at ugly scenes. How, then, can they hope to get peace? Only by the harmony of the mind, the heart and the tongue. There should be unity in thought, word and deed.

Bhajans and Sathsang should make one purer

Despite all the teachings, no real transformation is taking place in the behaviour of man. Of what use are Bhajans and Sath-sang (the company of the good) if one does not become purer? Through the company of the good, one should cultivate good thoughts, which in due course will lead one to Jeevan Mukthi (Self-realisation in this very life).

Men should act according to the dictates of their conscience, which can discriminate between right and wrong. They should rise above animal tendencies and realise the glory of human birth. Men should lead ideal lives, manifesting their inner divinity. Everything they do, their speech and their manners, should be exemplary. Even the smallest act should cause no harm to others.

Men today get easily enraged. Where can we find the example for such anger? In the Bhagavatham. Likewise where can we find an example for Desire or lust? In the Ramayana. Where is the example for the evil quality of greed? It is in the Mahabharatha.

How do these great works contain warnings against three grievous evils? In the Ramayana, the all-powerful Ravana, a great scholar well versed in the 64 types of knowledge and one who had performed severe penances, was destroyed because of the one evil quality of Kama (lust). All his other virtues

were burnt up by the fire of sensuous desire. Kama (lust) is destructive of all other good qualities in a man. Ramayana demonstrates this truth.

In the Bhagavatham we have the story of Prahladha and Hiranyakashipu. Prahladha was a great devotee of Vishnu. His father, Hiranyakashipu, hated Vishnu. In his uncontrollable hatred of the Lord, he did not hesitate to subject his young son to the most terrible ordeals. His Krodha (anger) was the cause of his destruction.

In the Mahabharatha, Dhuryodhana stands out as the example for the evil quality of lobha (greed). He declared that he would not part with even a needle-point of land to the Pandavas (who were his cousins). His greed turned him into a totally wicked person.

Bounden duty of all to get rid of evil qualities

Ravana, Hiranyakashipu and Dhuryodhana were not men of common clay. They were all eminent in their own way. They were heroes by virtue of their accomplishments. But they.proved zeroes in their lives because of their specific vices. What use is there in possessing great talents if one is subject to a grievous vice? Ravana had numerous abilities and had made Lanka veritable paradise. But of what avail were all these when he had no Control over the sense?

It is the bounden duty of every human being to get rid of his evil qualities and foster his good qualities.

Avathars and Dharma

The role of every Avathar (incarnation of the Divine) is to establish the reign of Truth and Righteousness, banish all that is evil, false and unrighteous in the world, and help to manifest the divinity in mankind.

It was to establish the reign of righteousness Dharma samsthapana - that the advent of the Rama Avathar took place. No one should go back on his plighted word. There is no greater Dharma than Truth. In order to uphold the promises given by his father, Rama chose to go in exile to the forest.

Likewise, in the Krishna Avathar, the Lord declared: "I incarnate from age to age to establish Dharma."

When you listen to these declarations, it will be clear that Dharma is the supreme ideal. What is Dharma? Any act that is done with purity in thought, word and deed is Dharma. But, how many act up to this dictum? Very few understand or live upto it. Practice is primary.

The history of Bharath is replete with stories of the great men who have upheld Dharma. Buddha also had to face criticisms from his contemporaries. These are the familiar experiences of all Avathars. No incarnation was free from calumny. All good causes also suffer from criticisms. Peace and good result from the work of the, Avathars in spite of these attacks and' impediments.

The following is the fourfold formula for all people. Welcome good company. Eschew all association with the evil minded. Perform meritorious acts ceaselessly. Always discriminate between the transient and the everlasting.

Buddha's first teaching was, "give up bad company." In his wanderings Buddha used to take with him some young men. Some persons criticized Buddha, charging him with spoiling the young men. Buddha gave a free rein to his traducers. He listened quietly to their accusations and left without uttering a word in reply. When the disciples asked him why he chose not to reply to the criticisms Buddha said that unanswered criticisms return to the critics who made them.

By not getting excited over the angry words of a critic, one becomes superior to the critic. Otherwise, one descends to the same level as the critic. Bear no ill-will towards anyone. That is the golden rule indicated by the Geetha.

Buddha carried on his mission in this spirit of equanimity and tolerance.

Animating principle of Avathars is infinitely wide

It is the quality of great men to face obstacles and opposition with courage and calmness. It is not easy to understand the inner urges of great men or the motives and actions of Avathars. The animating principle of Avathars is infinitely wide. Compared to it, the capacity of the ordinary man is infinitesimal. How can the atom comprehend the infinite? Can an ant measure the depth of the ocean? Impossible, Likewise the nature of Divinity is beyond human comprehension. Even the great sages like Vasishta and Vamadheva could have no full understanding of the divine.

Instead of trying to understand the Divine, it is better to practise what you have learnt. Jnathum, Dhrashtum, Praveshtum (know, perceive and commune) are the three which draws the divine towards them. The bhajans should be sung with complete obliviousness of the body. Devotional fervour is more important than musical skill. The ladies who took part in the bhajans in the morning sang the bhajans whole-heartedly. Their hearts were full of sweetness. Hence sweet music flowed from their hearts.

It is significant that a large number of devotees from Sri Lanka should celebrate their national festival of Buddha Jayanthi at Brindhavan in the presence of Swami. It is their good fortune that they have been able to have this celebration here despite all discomforts and inconveniences. Their bhajans have sustained them in these celebrations. They have been singing the bhajans at all places and as often as they could. They could find happiness and peace because of the bhajans.

Sai is Sarvajanapriya and so any name which gives you joy, you can take up. Tastes differ according to temperament and the character one has earned by generations of activity as a living being in this world.

- Sathya Sai Baba

15. Bhagawan Baba's exhortation to students

Date: 20 May 1996 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course

Brahma Vidhya Is The Means By Which
One Learns The Way To Achieve World Peace And Live In Harmony With All,
Eschewing Narrow Ideas, And Cultivating Unity.

EMBODIMENTS of love! Dear Students! Boys and Girls! The main aim of a student should be to mould himself in such a way that he leads a purposeful and useful life in society. Unfortunately in the educational system today, there is no strength of purpose, no unity and no love. Whether one learns anything or not, whether one leads a meaningful life or otherwise, one's span of life melts away like a block of ice. Students should recognise this truth. Students today are not aware of what is the primary goal of life. They do not seem even to be worried about this. One in a million seems to be concerned about knowing the primary purpose of life. This concern is the first step in the ascent towards the goal.

Most students and the common people in general think that food, clothes, shelter and sleep, having a wife and children and enjoying material comforts of various kinds constitute the goals of life. However, these are not the primary purpose of life. Without knowing this, life becomes a saga of misery. With the awareness of this purpose, man can get rid of that misery.

Transcend beyond negative impulses

In this context, it is necessary to know the proper meaning of Veda. Veda is described as higher Vijnana (knowledge), as effulgence or knowledge of one's transcendental reality - Uniki. It is only when these three are known that one can get rid of sorrow and experience the bliss of Veda.

What is the effulgence that is meant here? Is it the effulgence of the sun or

the moon or the light of a lamp? No. It is the effulgence of the heart that is implied.

What, again, is meant by the term Vijnana? Is it the science of physics or worldly knowledge? No. Vijnana refers to knowledge about the functioning of the heart.

What is meant by "Uniki?" It is recognition of one's true nature. Are you the body? Are you the mind? Are you the senses or any other substance? No. Man has to realise that he transcends all these physical characteristics which are negative in nature, How can he realise his true transcendental positive nature if he fills himself with negative tendencies? What he can experience will be confined to the reactions and reflections of these negative factors and not that which is beyond them.

The first requisite, therefore, is the eradication of the negative impulses. One should investigate the truth about the divinity inherent in humanness.

Need for gratitude

What is it that one should do in this mundane, transient phenomenal world? The students should realise what everyone owes by way of gratitude to every person that has helped him in one way or another. For instance, if a doctor has cured a patient of a serious ailment, he should not forget what he owes to the doctor by way of gratitude. He should not think that after all the doctor has done his duty. Likewise, when a mother bears the child in the womb for nine months and rears the child with love and concern, the child when he grows up should not merely consider that the mother has simply, done her duty. He should be ever grateful for all the travails the mother has gone through and for all the love and care she has bestowed on the child.

You have to show towards the mother the same love and spirit of sacrifice with which she has brought you up. Similarly you have to be grateful to one who enables you to earn a living when you are without the means of

livelihood.

In the love of a mother for the child or the affection of a preceptor to the pupil, there may be an element of self-interest. But there is no selfishness in the bounties which the divine showers on mankind. God has no self-interest or selfish purpose to be-achieved. He expects no return from anyone. God is conferring on mankind countless benefits which no human being can offer. Can all the man-made lamps in the world equal the light coming from the sun? Can all the pumps you may install produce the amount of water that came down in last night's downpour? 'Who has given you the life-giving air that pervades everywhere?

Various benefits conferred by God on mankind

Thus, innumerable superhuman benefits are conferred by God on mankind. Even electricity is an expression of the Divine. From magnetism to electricity, heat and light, all these various forms of energy are considered as different forms of matter. This is not so. God is the source of all energy. If this is not realised, we will be failing to appreciate the true source of the air we breathe, the light we enjoy and the heat that sustains life.

For the power we consume or the water we use, charges have to be paid for their supply. That being the case, do not we owe gratitude to the Divine who has provided the world with air, water and light free? As the beneficiaries of the benefits provided by the five basic elements (ether, air, fire, water and earth), we should show our gratitude to them as manifestations of the Divine. The five elements are the source of five qualities experienced by the five senses: Sound, Touch, Vision, Taste, and Smell. Man makes use of these five elements but shows no gratitude to them. Gratitude should be an essential quality in man.

Unfortunately this is not very evident in man today. Everything is treated lightly. The result is disorder and discontent in the nation.

Every action has its reaction

Students should understand the relationships between cause and effect. Every action has its reaction. Every word has its resound. Every thought has its reflection in one's conduct. No one can avoid the consequences of one's actions.

Man is a reservoir of all potencies. The eternal principle of divinity is present in man, but he is not able to recognise it as he is deluded by the external world. A man produces a brilliant diamond out of piece of rugged rock, but more value is given to the diamond than to the man who fashioned it.

The educational system today has failed to bring out the spiritual effulgence in man. This really means that man is oblivious to his own real nature. Students have not learnt to use their faculties in the right way. They rely on others for forming their opinions. This is a kind of blindness. Of what use can such persons be to the society? Students should equip themselves to serve society and to promote its well-being.

Students might know about some of the great intellectuals of Bengal like Bipin Chandhra Pal, Rabindhranath Tagore, Aurobindo Ghosh and others. But very few remember them today except through books. But the name of an almost illiterate person like Swami Ramakrishna Paramahamsa is remembered and cherished by millions because of his spiritual eminence.

Education which is not based on ethics, morality and spirituality is utterly worthless. All education, all wealth, all ritualistic worship or penances are of no value without genuine devotion to God. Devotion can elevate the lowly to the highest level. Without faith in God, even an eminent person gets degraded.

The culture of Bharath lays stress upon ethics, righteousness and spirituality. True culture consists in the recognition of the unity that underlies the diversity in mankind. The basis of that culture is love, which is essentially

divine. Love is a much abused word today. What is called love is only attachment of different kinds based on relationships.

Culture and spirituality are not different

Love of the Divine is the only pure, unsullied, unchanging, enduring love. It is free from the taint of selfishness and self-interest. This is the love that is glorified in Bharatheeya culture. There should be no unfair comparisons between different cultures. All of them essentially are one. What is important is people should learn to live and strive in harmony for achieving things in common and sharing their benefits equally. This is the attitude that should be promoted among students in educational institutions.

Students should also develop steadfast faith in God so that they can face with fortitude any of the vicissitudes of life. Prahladha is a supreme example of such faith. He bore with calmness and faith in the Lord all the persecutions to which he was subjected.

Culture and spirituality are not different from each other. Ekatma bhava (Oneness of spirit) is culture. Students should combine spiritual education with academic studies. Moreover, cultivation of good conduct is equally important.

Good behaviour should be maintained even after leaving college. Students of the Sai Institute should bear the stamp of morality and good behaviour wherever they go. They should act according to their conscience. Students should prove themselves exemplary citizens.

The Vice-Chancellor has requested that from this evening I should give discourses on the Ramayana during this summer course. Every syllable in the Ramayana is relevant for us today. It is pregnant with moral and spiritual teachings. Humanity will be redeemed when the lessons of the Ramayana are learnt and put into practice.

Develop Prema (Love) towards the Lord, the Parama-Prema (Highest Love) of which He is the embodiment. Never give room for doubts and hesitations, for questions, to test the Lord's Prema.

- Sathya Sai Baba

16. Infinite potency of the Raama principle

Date: 20 May 1996 / Location: Brindavan

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! Man is endowed with all potencies. Forgetting the divinity inherent in man, people behave as if the body, the physical instruments, is everything. The truth about man is taught as a secret in the Ramayana. In the following discourse in this series you will learn more about Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha, Kausalya, Seetha and other characters in the Ramayana. Only then the true significance of the Ramayana will be properly understood. The Spirit that is the indweller in all of them, is one and the same. Because they appear in different forms they are considered different.

Embodiments of Love! The Rama Principle is a mystery. There is nothing that cannot be accomplished in this world with faith in the Rama-thatva (Rama Principle). It is a mighty force. That is the reason why the Rama Principle has survived in the hearts of Bharatheeyas even after thousands of years. Despite the efforts of foreign conquerors, this faith in the Rama Principle has remained firm. It remains as fresh as ever. It is infinitely mysterious. It is present in everyone. It survives as the imperishable nectar though the form went out millennia ago. We should not go by name and form alone. The Rama principle has infinite potency. Its true form is beyond description. The Rama Principle continues to illumine and inspire the hearts of men. When students grasp this truth, they will understand what is meant by manavathvam (humanness).

Do not mistake the cotton fruit for the mango

If you wish to lead an ideal human life, you have to follow the example of the avathars (Divine advents). Avathars can come in human form. But you should not be misled by this phenomenon. Avathars may appear in human form, but you should not equate yourself with them. In physical form both may appear alike. But there is a fundamental difference. You should not mistake the cotton fruit for the mango.

God comes in human form because man has strayed away from the path of righteousness. To reform man and bring him back to Dharma, God has to take the human form. Birds, beats and insects lead lives according to their specific nature. They do not need avathars. Today, only man has given up all righteousness, forgotten his divine essence and degraded his humanness. To reform man in this state, God has to come in human form. The avathar has to protect the good parithranaya sadhuunam reform the erring and punish the wicked. The role of the avathar will be explained in detail in the ensuing discourses.

Ramayana has life-giving message for all

The Ramayana should not be treated merely as the story of Rama. It has a life-giving message for every human being. People lead artificial lives today. When they understand the Ramayana they will know how to lead true lives. The first requisite is to know what is right. Then it has to be practised. There is no meaning in merely repeating the name, "Ram, Ram, Ram." The Rama Principle has to be fully understood. And one has to live up to it. This is possible only if there is love. Through love, one realises the Rama Principle and is transformed into an image of Rama. All scholarship and religious observances are of no value without such a mental transformation. The mind should be divinised. Faith in the name of the Lord is the basis for this transformation.

17. Greatness of Vibheeshana

Date: 26 May 1996 / Location: Brindavan

THE lives of two noble, meritorious and righteous personalities stand out in the Ramayana. One is Sugreeva. The other is Vibheeshana. The lives of these two are very sacred. Rama sought the association with Sugreeva. Vibheeshana came seeking Rama only. After securing the friendship of Rama, Sugreeva realised the greatness of Rama. But Vibheeshana realised the compassionate nature of Rama even before coming to him. Rama was supremely pleased that he had been able to secure such noble friends.

The Mahabharatha war lasted 18 years, but the war in Lanka between Rama and Ravana lasted 75 days. These battles have become memorable. But even today in the heart of every individual the Kurukshethra battle is being fought between the forces of evil (as represented by the Kauravas) and the forces of God (as represented by Pandavas). Equally the battle between Rama and Ravana is going on symbolically in everyone. This means that the war between truth and falsehood, between good and evil, is a perennial one. In the battle in Lanka many died on both sides. I do not relish dilating on wars. What we should seek to understand is the nature of the forces ranged against each others, what forces stood for truth.

Even among Rakshasas there are good people

Even in Lanka (ruled by Ravana) there was no lack of good people. While the battle was going on, one Rakshasa woman was running along, carrying a child in her arms. Hit by an arrow released by Lakshmana the child fell from her arms. Abandoning the child to its fate the woman continued to run. Seeing this Lakshmana remarked to Rama: "Brother! look at the callousness of these Rakshasas. Without caring for the fate of her infant child, the Rakshasa woman is running away to save herself." The all knowing divine Rama told Lakshmana: "Lakshmana! you are making a mistake. That woman is not selfish. She is full of devotion." Immediately Lakshmana sent a monkey to

fetch the woman. He asked her: "How is it you went on running, caring only for your own safety, without bothering about the fate of the child that fell from your arms?" The woman replied: "I was not running for the sake of saving myself. It is not as if I had no love for my child. I am clinging to my life with the sole desire 'to serve Rama if he takes us to Ayodhya after the destruction of Ravana. I pray for the advent of Ramarajya. I want to serve Rama." Then Rama remarked: "Do you see, Lakshmana, how mistaken you were? Even among Rakshasas there are good people. Vibheeshana is the supreme example. Such persons do not need any protector. They are protected by their own Righteousness."

The next day, the battle started in the morning. Both sides blew their trumpets. That day Ravana's son Indhrajith used all his magical powers to inflict injuries on the monkey hordes. Vibheeshana knew well the wizardry of the Rakshasas. He shattered all the special missiles used by Indhrajith and infused courage among the monkeys. Noticing this, Rama observed: "When Vibheeshana came to me seeking asylum, all kinds of objections were raised against our accepting him as one of us. Do you see how helpful he is to us now?"

Indhrajith and Vibheeshana in the battlefield

Indhrajith began performing a yajna to destroy Rama, and Lakshmana. Earlier, in the battle between Indhrajith and Lakshmana, the latter had fallen unconscious after being hit by Indhrajith's Asthra (missile). Lakshmana regained consciousness after the application of a herb from the Sanjivini mountain brought by Hanuman from the Himalayas. Lakshmana resumed the battle with Indhrajith, carrying himself on the shoulders of Hanuman. Vibheeshana took both of them to the place where Indhrajith was performing his Yajna. Indhrajith was offering many human beings as sacrifice at the Yajna that was being performed at the foot of a blackberry tree. So long as Indhrajith remained under that tree he could wield extraordinary powers. Vibheeshana told Hanuman and Lakshmana to see that Indhrajith was kept away from that tree as much as possible. Hearing this, Indhrajith got very

angry. He burst out: "Oh Vibheeshana! Are you betraying my secrets and the secrets of Lanka to the enemy? You are a traitor to your race." He went on berating Vibheeshana in this manner.

Vibheeshana makes Indhrajith understand the Truth

Vibheeshana retorted indignantly: "Indhrajith! It is natural for Rakshasas to be abusive as they like. But, remember that Rama is the very embodiment of peace. He is pure of heart, utterly free from selfishness. It is not possible for Rakshasas to understand the truth about such a Divine Being. Rama has entered Lanka for rescuing Seetha and not for seizing the country. How can one who gave up Ayodhya itself voluntarily covet Lanka? Rama has no desire for anything. For a long time I had been warning Ravana that is a grievous sin to kidnap another, man's wife and appealed to him to restore Seetha to Rama. However, Ravana, paid a deaf ear to my word. He is destroying by his own hands his kingdom and his clan. Who is to be blamed for this? Is it me or your father?"

Indhrajith asked, "If my father did not listen to your words, you should have remained silent and not allied yourself with our enemies. Is this kind of treachery justified?"

Vibheeshana gave a fitting reply: "Indhrajith! You are an ignorant fool who knows nothing about truth and untruth, right and wrong. I am one who is well aware of the rules of right conduct. It is unworthy for a person to remain silent in the face of wickedness. Such inaction can destroy an entire society."

A comparison of Bheeshma and Vibheeshana

In this context, it is interesting to study the conduct of Bheeshma and Vibheeshana in similar situations. It is clear Vibheeshana is a greater person than Bheeshma. Why? Knowing that the Kauravas were committing a grievous wrong, Bheeshma remained silent without condemning them.

Moreover, he accepted the role of Commander-in-chief of the Kaurava armies in the Kurukshethra battle. Vibheeshana acted differently. He roundly condemned the wrong action of his brother. He advised Ravana to return Seetha to Rama. Ultimately he renounced everything and sought surrender at the Feet of Rama.

Lanka had many such high-minded persons besides Vibheeshana. But cowed down by the wickedness of the Rakshasa, they were unable to protest against the bad persons.

When Hanuman entered Lanka he noticed Vibheeshana. Vibheeshana told Hanuman: "Hanuman! I am living in the midst of the wicked Rakshasa like the tongue surrounded by sharp teeth, How long am I to live like this? How will I secure the grace of Rama? When will I be blessed with the bliss of being in His Divine presence? I have long been waiting for that great moment." Vibheeshana lamented in this manner.

Hanuman gave a significant message to Vibheeshana then, "Vibheeshana! Do not think that you are alone in being subject to these ordeals. There are many great souls who experience similar troubles.

The Rakshasas constantly harass the Sages, the Avathars and all good men. However, take note of one fact. The tongue came first and the teeth emerged later. The teeth which emerged in the middle drop away in due course! Likewise these Rakshasas also will fall away soon. Do not have any doubt on this score.

Hanuman then went on: "Vibheeshana! You have been attracted to the Lotus Feet of Rama. Cling to them firmly. Either He should bless you because of your perseverance, or your should merge in Him in course of time. There is no other way. It is wrong to give up the Lord in the middle. This is not the mark of a true devotee. What is devotion? It is not mere repetition of Rama's name endlessly. While contemplating on Rama, you must take part in service to Rama."

Vibheeshana desired only to promote the prosperity of Lanka and the welfare of the Rakshasas. He was not interested in getting the crown. Ravana and Indhrajith derided such a high-minded noble person.

The three boons granted by Brahma

Once Ravana, Kumbhakarna and Vibheeshana performed a severe penance to invoke the presence of Brahma. Brahma appeared before them and asked them what they wanted. He said he would grant them whatever boon they wanted. Kumbhakarna wanted to ask that he should be never at anyone's mercy - nirdhaya. But by a slip of the tongue he asked for nidhra (sleep). Brahma declared: "So be it." Ravana asked freedom from death at the hands of all deities, but did not ask for freedom from death by, humans because he considered them trivial beings. Vishnu then decided to come in human form to put an end to Ravana. What did Vibheeshana pray for? "Oh Lord! Fill my heart with compassion and make me lead a righteous life." Because of this boon, Vibheeshana remained totally unaffected in spite of all the raillery and abuse by Ravana and his sons. Vibheeshana always remained compassionate, never yielding to hatred or anger. Because his heart was full of compassion, he secured God's grace and proximity to the Divine. One without compassion is a demon and not a human being.

Scriptures are endless; Sadhanas are countless; opportunities are few; time is already overstocked. But you can easily win the battle of life, in spite of these handicaps, provided you arm yourself with Love, which is the essential teaching of all Scriptures, the goal of all varieties of Sadhana, the best use to which all opportunities can be put and the most profitable way of utilising the precious capital time.

- Sathya Sai Baba

18. The greatness of Raama-Raajya

Date: 29 May 1996 / Location: Brindavan

That Day Alone Is A True Day When All Good Devotees Gather
To Pray To The Lord;
When People Serve The Poor And The Needy
In A Spirit Of Brotherliness; When A Feast Is Offered To The Servants
Of The Lord Who Sing His Glories; When Holy Men Visit Our Homes And Relate
The Exploits Of The Lord;
All Other Days Are Days Of Mourning.

IT WAS the great day of Shree Rama's Coronation. The City of Ayodhya was en fete, with the people rejoicing in the festive celebrations. The crown that was first worn by Manu, had been worn by successive emperors according to hallowed tradition. That day the sages Vasishta, Vamadheva and Jabali earned the crown for the coronation of Shree Ramachandhra.

To participate in the historic ceremony several kings, chieftains and lesser rulers were entering the Durbar Hall, along with many sages. At the main entrance gate, a gigantic message was blazoned across the gate in a novel manner. The message read in Sanskrith: "Sathya Dharmabhih yukthanam nasthi mrithyu bhayam" (Those who adhere to Truth and Righteousness will have no fear of death). The message declared that for the one who adhered to Truth and Righteousness there was no fear of rebirth. This means that such a one need have no fear of death again after this life because he will have no re-birth. Without birth there can be no death.

Adherence to Sathya and Dharma in Rama-Rajya

The Ramayana brought home to one and all this significance of Truth and Righteousness. The glorious story of Rama spread the name and fame of Bharath to all countries. In the Rama Rajya (reign of Rama) the two words,

Sathya and Dharma, (Truth and Righteousness) reverberated everywhere in the Kingdom. Dharma prevailed everywhere and young and old, men and women, scholars and illiterates, one and all adhered to these two principles.

As is the ruler, so are the ministers. As are the ministers, so are the administrators. As are the administrators, so are the common people. The ministers strictly adhered to Truth and Righteousness. Lakshmana, Bharatha and Shathrughna were assigned the duty of enforcing Shree Rama's orders in all parts of the Kingdom. They kept a close watch over what was happening in every nook and corner of the realm, how far the people were adhering to truth and righteousness and how they were getting on in dally life. For this purpose a large body of officials were employed to go round the country. These messengers gathered all information everyday about the difficulties experienced by the people and their conduct. This system prevailed as long as Rama reigned over the Kingdom.

Rama performed a hundred Ashvamedha yagas (horse sacrifices) and many other sacrifices. Together with these sacrifices Rama propagated among the people the qualities of truth and right conduct.

The golden days of Rama-Rajya

In Rama's reign, all married women were Sumangalis (whose husbands were alive). Widowhood was unknown. It is natural for parents to die before their children. But it is unnatural for children to die earlier than their parents. In Rama-Rajya there was not a single case of premature death. Death of young people was not known. There were none suffering from disease. There was no sign of poverty. The rains came in the right seasons. The harvests were bountiful. There was no shortage of food. Unrest was unknown. All people were happy and peaceful.

Comparing those days with the present times, we realise what apathetic plight is ours. Bharath will enjoy Rama-Rajya only when it has rulers like Rama, ministers like Sumanthra, saintly advisers like Vasishta and

Vamadheva and brothers like Lakshmana, Bharatha and Shathrughna. During Rama's reign there was no conflict anywhere. People did not indulge in mutual recrimination. Everyone in the Kingdom was grateful for any act of help and was eager to repay the act of kindness.

Rama expresses gratitude to all who helped Him

The first pronouncement which Rama made on the occasion of the coronation is remarkable. He said: "Who is it that is primarily responsible for making today's celebration possible? Hanuman was solely responsible for the successful search of the whereabouts of Seetha and helping me to recover her. Hence, at the outset I express my deep gratitude to Hanuman."

Rama then expressed his gratitude to Jatayu, who sacrificed his life in fighting against Ravana while he was carrying away Seetha.

Next, Rama expressed his gratitude to Sugreeva, who had helped him in organising the search for Seetha and in providing the hordes for the war on Ravana. He next expressed his gratitude to Vibheeshana, who had come over to him, despite the suspicions of Rama's companions, and who had revealed to Rama many of the secrets of the enemy.

Above all, there were the huge hordes of monkeys, who had no direct connection with Rama or Seetha, who endured many hardships and even laid down their lives for his sake and he expressed his gratitude to all of them. In this manner, Rama expressed his gratitude to one and all who had helped him in the epic Rama-Ravana battle.

The supreme lesson to be learnt from the Ramayana is that one should be grateful all his life to anyone who has helped him in a crisis. Only the man who shows such gratitude can be termed a human being. The ungrateful man is a demon. The human and the demonic are not different in external appearance. It is by his actions that one is called human, demonic or divine. All those who indulge in bad thoughts, bad speeches and wicked acts are

described as demons. Equally, those who do harm to those who have helped them were regarded as demons. So also, those who renounce Truth and Righteousness and cherish falsehood and wickedness as their life-breath were treated as demons.

Every substance has its inherent quality

Today men have a fascination for untruth. Ignorant of what is meant by Righteousness they practise unrighteousness. Our Vedas teach: "Speak the truth: follow righteousness." Men today are not qualified even to utter these words, much less to practise them.

Every substances has its Dharma (inherent quality). This quality is independent of one's belief. It is its inherent nature. For instance, that which has the quality of burning has been called Agni (fire). The natural quality of fire is to bum. This quality is not based on anyone's faith or opinion. Whether you are aware of this quality or not, when you touch fire it will cause a burn. Likewise, the quality of ice is coldness. This, again, is independent of anyone's belief. If coldness is absent, it is no longer ice. It has forfeited its nature. Similarly, the sun's nature is to shed light. One may fail to see the sun because it is covered by clouds or one is blind. But that does not detract from the sun's dharma of shedding light.

Likewise man has a dharma. This dharma (natural trait) is to perform all actions with Thrikarana Suddhi (purity in thought, word and deed). Man's natural function is to behave with harmony in thought, word and deed (unity of body, speech and mind). Where there is divergence between thought, word and deed, the resulting action is unrighteousness. It is because today there is no harmony between thought, word and deed in the conduct of human beings, unrighteousness is rampant. This triune unity is not prevalent among the educated or the illiterate.

One who lacks faith, but acts as if he has faith, is bound to face ruin. He is of a demonic nature.

Today Truth and Righteousness have declined alarmingly. The first task is to produce young men and women who are wedded to Truth and Righteousness. Only a nation where the men and women adhere to these two principles will be prosperous and happy. When Bharath has such men and women it will achieve great prosperity.

Rulers are to be blamed for today's troubles

Bharatheeya culture gave to the world spirituality and proclaimed the message: "May all people everywhere be happy!" In ancient times, the rulers, the sages, the householders all strove to practise Truth and Righteousness. The rulers set the example and all others followed them. Today we see that as are the rulers, so are the people. The people are not to be blamed at all. The faults lie entirely with the rulers.

Because of the lapses of the rulers, the people are subject to all troubles. Each one pursues his own self-interest and selfish gain. Each is after power and pelf. There are no leaders who are concerned about the people's needs and their well-being. If the nation's progress is to be promoted, the rulers must follow the advice of high-minded leaders in society.

Bharath's survival even in its present condition is due to the fact that in the past the rulers accepted the guidance of great sages. The sages had no personal interest of their own. Why did sage. Vasishta come to Emperor Dhasharatha? He was not interested in wealth or pomp. He wanted to be there when the Lord incarnated as Rama. Seetha esteemed Hanuman in the same manner. She said that even if she were to offer him lordship of the three worlds, she would not be discharging her debt to him. "You are the embodiment of sacrifice. You exemplify pure devotion. Because of these two qualities, you are entitled to move freely in all the three worlds. All the three worlds will experience prosperity through your presence."

Restoration of Sathya and Dharma is the primary need

What we need today is the restoration of the supremacy of Truth and Righteousness. There are some who cavil at the use of these two terms. If they do not know what Truth and Righteousness are, they cannot be deemed human beings at all. Truth and Righteousness are the inherent natural qualities of human beings. Human life is based on Truth and Righteousness. What folly is it to declare that one does not know what they are?

Truth is utterance of what you think. Righteousness is acting according to your words. The unity of thought, word and action is essential. Truth and Righteousness are not qualities to be acquired, as was suggested by Narasimha Murthy (in his speech prior to Swami's discourse). They are inherent in man, born with him even as his limbs and his life-breath. There is no need to search for them elsewhere. They emanate from one's heart. They dwell in everyone. What is necessary is to see that these inherent qualities are not lost. No one is entitled to live in this world if he does not practise truth and righteousness.

Treat ups and downs of life with equanimity

It has been declared that for the practise of these two qualities, Vairagya (renunciation) is essential. Renunciation does not mean giving up hearth and home. True renunciation consists in treating happiness and sorrow alike. One must have the spirit of equanimity in facing pleasure and pain, profit and loss. Do not get elated over 'happiness or depressed by sadness. Treat praise and censure alike. This is true renunciation or detachment. Treat the ups and downs of life with equanimity.

Consider the example of Seetha. She was a prisoner in the Ashokavana of Ravana. He had enhanced its beauty in many ways to make it alluring to Seetha. But Seetha had no interest in these allurements at all. But she was deeply moved when a small monkey sang in praise of Rama from the top of the tree under which Seetha was sitting (Swami sang the song of Hanuman in praise of Rama).

Seetha found more beauty in the monkey than in all the flowers in Ashokavana. It was the chanting of Rama's name which lent beauty to the monkey's face. She was full of bliss at that moment. The name was alike nectar to her. Bliss without beauty is sterile. Ramayana taught the integral relationship between beauty and bliss.

Wherein lay the bliss of Seetha and Rama? It was in the well-being and happiness of the people. They sought nothing from the people. They were interested only in giving and giving what was good for the people. This applies to all Avathars from Rama to the present day. What is it that I am asking frown you? I do not ask even for a small shell. Free education is given to the students. Free treatment is offered in hospitals. All that is offered by Swami is free. The students bear only their mess charges. Where can you see such free provision of education and medical aid? Nowhere else. I do not ask for anything from anybody. This is the bliss I shall experience if you lead good lives and stand forth as noble citizens.

The mistaken attitude of people

In the world today you find that only when students pay a heavy price for education, they show greater interest in studies. People have greater confidence in hospitals where they pay heavily. In private hospitals you are asked to deposit in advances Rs. 2 lakhs for a heart operation. The patients feel that they will get high-class treatment because of the heavy charges they pay. This is sheer folly. Little attention is paid to the patients after the operation is over.

In the Sai Super-Speciality Hospital everything is done free, the best facilities are provided and loving concern is shown for the patients. All this is taken for granted because no fees are paid to the doctors. This is a totally mistaken attitude. No doubt the value of what is offered free will be realised in due course. But I am sorry that such wrong impressions should exist. If even students feel in this way, what is the benefit they derive from their education in Sai institutions? Is it for merely earning a livelihood that you are pursuing

your studies? Earning money is no great thing. Even dacoits make money. Even beggars are known to have amassed large sums by beggary. Education should be sought only for the acquisition of Vijnana (wisdom), not for acquiring wealth. The one who is interested only in money will never be able to foster good qualities. All our Institute students should be concerned only with fostering virtues. Many Kings have enjoyed wealth and passed on. Where are they now?. Only their wicked deeds are remembered.

Character matters more than riches and affluence

During the past ten days you must have heard a great deal about Ravana. There was no limit to his riches. Kubera (the god of wealth) was his cousin. His fort and city were paved with gold. What was the use of all his riches and affluence? He had no character. Ultimately he lost everything.

Hence, promote your character. Acquisition of good qualities is the mark of true education. What matters how much wealth a man has if he has no morals? A rich man hardly enjoys peace of mind.

No doubt money is necessary for carrying on one's life. But excessive money is harmful. You owe a duty to your family. For that purpose you have to earn an income. Excessive wealth is the cause of all bad thoughts and feelings. You can see that in most cases it is the children of the rich who go astray.

People should always remember that the ultimate end may come at anytime. One should reform one's life well before the end comes. Greatness consists not in wealth but in virtue. A true human being is one who recognizes the Divine within him. He should lead a godly life. Everyone should strive to recognise the Indwelling Spirit within, which is the master of the body and the senses. The highest education is Atma-Vidhya (Self-Knowledge). The Spirit is invisible like the roots of a tree. But it is the basis of real bliss, just as the fruits of a tree are derived from the roots. The external pleasures you enjoy are based on the power of the Spirit within. The air you breathe, the light you see, the water you drink are all derived from the Divine.

Stand by your plighted word

Students should recognise the Divine power that sustains everything in the universe. It was the faith in the Divine that sustained Seetha during the ten months she lived alone as a prisoner in the Ashokavana. The divine power that sustained Seetha in her captivity is in everyone. Rely on that power. All that you have to do is to turn your vision inward. Follow the dictates of your conscience. Education should teach you good qualities, right thinking, right conduct, discipline and devotion to duty.

Students should develop unwavering faith in truth and Righteousness. Stand by your plighted word. That is the message of Rama's life. "One word, one wife, one arrow." Rama exemplifies these three signs. You must experience the Rama Principle residing in your heart.

Rama is not the remote son of an emperor. He is the Eternal Spirit in one's heart. Live upto your conscience and you will please God.

Every human being has to develop faith in Sathya and Dharma, practise them in daily life and lead worthy lives.

Students! Boys and girls! You are likely to assume positions of leadership in the nation in future years. The nation's future depends on how you conduct yourselves. Go forward to serve the nation, whatever trials you may have to face, do so with faith in God. Follow the divine injunctions. It will contribute to your welfare and the welfare of the nation and the world.

See in Me yourself, for I see Myself in you all. You are My life, My breath, my soul. You are My Forms all; when I love you. I love Myself, when you love yourselves, you love Me! I have separated Myself from Myself so that I may love Myself. My beloved ones, You are my own Self.

- Sathya Sai Baba

19. Render unto God what is His

Date: 30 May 1996 / Location: Brindavan

Without Sathya, Dharma, Shanthi And Prema All Knowledge Is Useless;
Without These Four, All Charity And Righteous Acts Are Of No Use;
Without These Four, The Value Of All Good Deeds Is Zero;
Without These Four, The Exercise Of Power Is Profitless.
For The Edifice Of The Ancient Dharma
These Four Qualities Are The Main Walls.
What Else Can I Convey To You,
Virtuous And Noble Minded Students?

STUDENTS! Wherever you turn, you see in the world only unrest and disorder. There is little trace of unity, harmony and brotherliness.

Unrest and confusion prevail at every level from the individual to the nation as a whole. There is discord between man and man, from family to family, village to village, district to district and province to province. These conflicts are due to the craze for power, insatiable desires and intense selfishness. Moreover, the growth of unrest and chaos in society is also due to the weakness of government, the decline of truth and righteousness and the failure of people in the mass to discharge their respective duties.

Everyone talks about the presence of the Divine, who is the embodiment of Truth and Righteousness. People speak about the omnipresence and omniscience of God. But few care to understand what this means, to experience it and to live according to it. A few drops of nectar on the tongue will work wonders, but of what use are barrels of nectar which remain untouched?

To preach without practice is repugnant to spirituality

Many lectures are given today about the Divine as the embodiment of Truth and Righteousness. How many have direct experience of this? How many practise Righteousness? Have they tried to practise even a small fragment of this teaching? Have they made the slightest attempt to secure a vision of this Truth? To preach without practice is repugnant to spirituality.

Devotees like Potharaju, Thyagaraju and Goparaju (Ramdhas) experienced bliss by their spiritual austerities. They sought no positions of power. They were content to seek the grace of the Divine. Their sole objective was to earn the love of God.

Owing to the influence of the Kali age today, even spiritual seekers are eager to earn wealth and positions, forget the Divine and lead unworthy lives. People should not pray to God for any position. In the pursuit of pleasure men today spend any amount of money. But they hardly try to spend even a fraction of this money on charity, good deeds and service to the Divine. Many people grudge to give even small amounts of money to the women in the house for the performance of worship with joss-sticks, flowers and fruits. They even question the usefulness of such offerings. It may well be asked what benefit such persons derive from their lavish expenditure on their pleasure and comforts. These sensual pleasures confer fleeting happiness. But acts of charity, goodness and sacrifice confer divine benefits.

Pleasure and pain contribute to the beauty of life

Man should learn to treat pain and pleasure alike because both contribute to the beauty of life like the variety of flowers in a garland. People should also learn not to sneer at the traditional practices of the common people who do many simple acts out of reverence for what they regard as sacred. A young man travelling in a train ridiculed the act of a simple village woman who piously offered a few coins to the Krishna river when the train was going over the bridge. The woman asked him of what use was the money he was spending on smoking, which was ruining his health. She said that the few coins she had thrown in the river was an offering to Krishna. It happened once

in a way. "But how much are you wasting everyday on your smoking? What will you gain from it except lung cancer or T.B? Without realising the grievous mistake you are committing, you are ridiculing my simple action," she said.

Pothana's dedication to God

The life of Pothana, the immortal author of the Telugu Bhagavatham, shows the difference between the God-oriented poet and a poet who seeks the favours of rulers and wealthy patrons.

Once, Pothana's brother-in-law, the poet Shreenatha, told Pothana that if, instead of relying on Shree Rama, he dedicated his Bhagavatham to a local chieftain, the latter would offer him gifts of land and properties which would relieve his poverty. Pothana declared: "Brother-in-law! You are making a serious mistake. Our real protector is Rama and not any Raja (ruler). How many have been helped by these rulers and for how long?. I revere my mother Earth. My life will be redeemed by my trust in mother Earth and by my faith in Shree Rama." (Bhagawan recited a poem of Pothana in which the poet firmly declared that he would prefer to live on what he got from the soil rather than offer his sacred work to unrighteous rulers for the sake of a mess of pottage). Pothana told Shreenatha, "My poem is the very embodiment of the Goddess oÂ£Wisdom, Sarasvathi. Such a work should be offered to Brahma and none else. How can I offer such a sacred work to wicked rulers?"

Shreenatha was displeased with Pothana's attitude. He conveyed Pothana's sentiments to the local ruler, who also felt slighted. In his bitterness, he sent his minions to set fire to Pothana's house. The entire house was burnt down except the shrine where Pothana worshipped Rama and kept his Bhagavatham. While the flames were burning, Pothana prayed to Rama as the Lord of everything. When a person believes whole-heartedly, in God, he will not come to grief. With their interests primarily in worldly benefits and material gains, men pray to God with their lips and not their hearts. Rather than pray with lips, it is better to serve with the hands. This was the lesson which Hanuman taught to Vibheeshana, when the latter was disappointed

that he had no vision of Rama.

Men are engaged in the pursuit of wealth and position, but not in the quest of the Divine. They forget that lasting happiness and peace cannot be got by wealth, scholarship or position. Only good qualities can confer happiness because a good man finds a place in the Lord's heart.

Sacrifice is the essence of Rama Principle

The ancient sages and savants offered all their knowledge and scholarship as an offering to God. They did not regard knowledge as a means of acquiring wealth. In the days of Rama everyone was filled with a spirit of sacrifice. Rama set the example by His readiness to sacrifice the kingdom for life in the forest as an exile. Before leaving for the forest, Rama gave away all his personal possessions as gifts. Sacrifice is the essence of the Rama Principle. To develop the spirit of sacrifice the first requisite is firm faith in God.

Students should realise that their only true friend at all times is God. He will be with them wherever they go. No others will accompany them like God. Hence, they should cultivate love for God. There is nothing greater than that love.

There is no living being without the spark of love; even a mad man loves something or somebody intensely. But, you must recognise this love as but a reflection of the Prema Svaruupa (the Embodiment of Love), that is your reality, of the God who is residing in your heart. Without that spring of Love that bubbles in your heart, you will not be prompted to love at all. Recognise that spring, rely on it more and more, develop its possibilities, try to irrigate the whole world with it, discard all touch of self from it, do not seek anything in return for it from those to whom you extend it.

- Sathya Sai Baba

20. Love Propels Man Toward God (Alternative Translation)

Date: 18 June 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This is the alternative translation of the discourse originally published in Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 29.

The Moon Gives Light During The Night And The Sun During The Day.
The Light Of Dharma Illumines The Three Worlds.
A Noble Son Is The Light Of The Entire Clan.
(Telugu Poem)

You know the difference between full moon night and dark night (purnima and amavasya). There is total darkness on the night of amavasya. Good people do not like darkness. Darkness causes fear.

Dharma upholds and sustains mankind

Not only that, it is the cause of wicked thoughts and deeds, which are responsible for the suffering of people. Only the wicked and evil-minded people like darkness, not the good people. Bad people such as thieves like darkness because it helps them to perform evil deeds.

Those who have good thoughts and noble demeanour like only light because it helps them to perform noble deeds. When we see moonlight, it makes our heart pure and peaceful, and our thoughts become noble. Even small children like moonlight and feel happy to see it. Moonlight also creates sublime feelings in poets and inspires them to write beautiful poetry. On full moon day, man's heart also is full of effulgence.

We should also enquire into the intimate relationship between the moon and the human mind. The moon was born out of the mind and the sun out of the

eyes of the Supreme Being (Chandrama manaso jatah chaksho suryo ajayatah). The mind is the reflection of the moon. In the moonlight, the mind attains peace and develops noble feelings and thoughts. The full moon night (purnima) drives away one's darkness of ignorance, frees one from fear, and develops in one peace, bliss, noble thoughts, and a sense of well-being.

During daytime, the sun brightens up the world

with its light. The world cannot exist without the sun. In reality, the sun is the manifest God on earth. It is the sun that provides sustenance to the entire creation; without the sun, there can be no crops, no vegetation, no air, no food, and no living beings. The sun makes the crops ripen and rivers flow. It is because of the sun that there is plenty, prosperity and happiness on earth. Its light is the source of all life on earth. Man's heart attains purity and sacredness due to the effect of the sun. Hence, the sun is verily God on earth.

Hydrogen and helium are the constituents of the sun that are the source of its energy. It is due to the presence of helium in the sun that oxygen maintains its level in the atmosphere.

There are many large holes on the surface of the sun. These holes are so big that even the entire earth can go into them. Such holes are not one or two, but in thousands.

The presence of helium in these holes is responsible for the increase in the volume of hydrogen and oxygen on the surface of the sun. Scientists are aware of this. Hence, the sun is like the third eye for the earth.

Dharma (righteousness) illumines the three worlds. What is the meaning of dharma? T that which upholds is dharma (Dhruyate iti dharma). It sustains everything. Without dharma, the world cannot exist.

Dharma is the life principle of humanity. Without the life principle of dharma, one cannot live. Everything in this world functions according to its dharma.

For example, the dharma of fire is to burn. Bereft of the power of burning, it no longer remains fire; it becomes charcoal. In the same way, cooling is the dharma of ice. If it does not cool, it cannot be called ice.

Similarly, dharma upholds and sustains humanity.

That which sustains is dharma (Dharayati iti dharma). What does it sustain in a person? It sustains the heart, speech, and body. Unity, purity, and sacredness of thought, word, and deed is the dharma of man. That is why it is said: The proper study of mankind is man.

One should maintain the sacredness of one's actions. Only then can one's conscience be at peace. Moreover, there should be purity in speech. That is why Jayadeva said, "Oh sacred tongue! You are endowed with the power of recognising the taste. You are so very great and totally selfless!" We make this pure and sacred tongue dirty and impure by speaking untruth. Therefore, always speak the truth.

In what way should we speak truth? Speak only truthful, pleasing, and well-intentioned words, words that are beneficial to others (Anudvegakaram vakyam sathyam priyahitham cha yat). The truth thatwe speak should not agitate anyone. Speak the truth that pleases and benefits others. Never speak truth in harsh words. Do not speak too much. Speak sweetly and softly. Then only can it be called truth in the true sense of the term.

Truth remains unchanged in the three periods of time - past, present, and future (Trikalabadhyam sathyam).

There are two words for truth: sathyam and nijam. Ordinarily, people do not observe any difference between these two. But, in fact, they so not have the same meaning. There is a subtle difference between the two.

Nijam is that which is true only for the time being. For example, today you are wearing a shawl, but tomorrow you may not wear it. That you are wearing a shawl is true only for today.

But if you wear the shawl tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, and in all three periods of time, then only can it be called truth (sathyam). Therefore, truth is that which is changeless, abiding, unvarying, and immutable in all the three periods of time; it has no death or destruction.

That which changes and varies may be called nijam; it cannot be called sathyam. Nijam is that which appears to be true only for the time being; but truth is that which remains the same at all times.

In the language of Vedanta, this truth is called ritam (the highest truth). It does not comprise mere knowledge of things; it includes power of discrimination also. Truth assumes the form of ritam when it has both knowledge and discrimination together.

What is the dharma of humanity? To speak truth. This is real humanness. One should adhere to righteous conduct. This gives real value to humanness.

One cannot see the heart of a person. However, one can recognise the type of heart a person possesses by observing truth and righteousness in them. Actions and speech are the reflection of one's inner being.

Love is the life principle of humanity

What are one's divine values? These are: love for God, fear of sin, and morality in society (daiva preeti, papa bheeti, and Sangha neeti). When we develop love for God, we will have peace and truth. Love for God is the result of fear of sin. Without love, there can be no peace. We will attain the value of nonviolence (ahimsa) when we practise morality in society.

As we develop and nourish love for God in us, peace, righteousness and nonviolence will come to us on their own. People with love never indulge in unrighteousness and violence; they are always full of peace. Hence, love is verily the life principle of humnanity.

All the human values like truth, right conduct, peace, and nonviolence (sathya, dharma, santhi, and ahimsa) are immanent in love (prema). Love propels man to turn toward God.

Love is like the mariner's compass. Wherever you place the mariner's compass, its needle will always point toward north. In the same way, love will always direct people toward God. Love is the special grace that God bestows on a person. Therefore, the first and foremost human value is love.

Love is present in everyone. The Vedas declare that God is present in all. God is the indweller of all beings (Easwara sarva bhutanam).

Who is God? Love is God, God is love (Prema Easwar Hai, Easwar Prema Hai). That is to say, God is present in every being in the form of love. That is why, it is said: Love is God; Live in Love.

Once, Jesus performed penance on a mountain after securing the permission of his mother. As a result of this, he realised his Self. He then prayed to God, "Oh Father! Grant me three boons." What were the three boons he prayed to God for? The first boon was, "You have given me this life. I should use this life to serve all without causing harm to anyone. I should always be ready to forgive. But I should never endorse untruth. Lead me to the path of truth." This was the first boon he prayed for.

The second boon he prayed for was, "People may criticise me, make fun of me, hurt me, ridicule me, or harm me out of their jealousy; grant me the heart that can hear all this with fortitude; grant me the boon that my heart should remain peaceful even if jealous people subject me to any number of sufferings." People become jealous to see the progress, prosperity and happiness of others. This is the sign of narrow-mindedness. The heart that harbours jealousy cannot truly be called a human heart. Even animals don't bear so much jealousy as does modern people. Since selfishness today has increased enormously, jealousy has also become too much.

The third boon he asked God was, "Oh Lord! Fill my heart with love, so that I

can share my love with all and devote my life to serve You and love You wholeheartedly. You are the embodiment of love; I should also become full of love like You." That is full, this is full.

When The Full Is Taken Out Of The Full, What Remains Is Again The Full.
Poornamada Poornamidam, Poornat Poornamudachyate,
Poornasya Poornamadaya, Poornamevavashishyate.
(Sanskrit Verse)

Jesus prayed thus: "Oh Lord! You are full. Make me also full like You, so that this full may join with That full and become one with It. This will enable me to impart fullness to those who lack it." Since God is the embodiment of fullness, it is imperative for us to offer our full love to Him. These were the three boons for which Jesus prayed to God.

Work, worship, and wisdom are the milestones of humanity's journey

When Jesus was born, three Arabian kings came to offer their salutations to him. On seeing this divine child, one of them said, "He will love God," The second king remarked, "God will love him." The third king said, "He is God Himself." That is why it is said, you are not one person but three: the one you think you are, the one others think you are, and the one you really are.

In the same way, Jesus first said, "I am the messenger of God." Then He said, "I am the son of God." Ultimately, he declared, "I and my Father are one." The one you think you are refers to the physical body. It is only with reference to the body that he said, "I am the messenger of God." The one others think what you are refers to the mind. What you really are refers to the Self and indicates the divine form of humanity. That is to say, a person has three identities: physical, mental, and spiritual. The person's spiritual identity indicates oneness with God.

In the same way, Hanuman said to Rama, "Oh Lord! At physical level, I am Your servant; at the mental level, I am a part of You; and at the Atmic level, You and I are one." Every human being should think in this manner. First, they should consider themselves as a messenger of God and should take to the path of work-action (karma) to serve God. While doing work for the Lord, they should wholeheartedly engage themselves in actions that are good and noble.

Thereafter, comes the path of worship. This is the path of spirituality. It includes serving, singing, chanting, and penance. The path of knowledge, which leads to wisdom, is the ultimate path. The three W's denote Work, Worship, and Wisdom. But wisdom should be the ultimate goal.

The boy who spoke some time ago asked these questions: Where is God? What does God do?

Even an ordinary person knows that God is present in all as the indweller (antaryami). But intellectuals these days are full of all sorts of doubts. Therefore, illiterate people today are better than so-called intellectuals.

God is present everywhere, like butter in milk. When a doubting Thomas asks, "Where is the butter in milk?" we can say, the butter is present in every particle, every drop of milk. But, how can it be seen? It can be seen when you follow the proper procedure. Make curd out of milk and churn it. Then the butter that is present in every part of the milk will come on its surface.

Your heart is the vessel, and love is the milk. Offering this love to God is the process of churning. When you do accordingly, God will become manifest before you.

Butter was present in every particle of milk, but it could not be seen. When did it become visible? It became visible when we made effort and followed the proper procedure. Similarly, God is immanent in everything, but He will become manifest when we make proper efforts.

Divine grace depends upon the capacity of your heart

You may question: On whom does the look of God's grace fall? You have certain doubts as to where to look for it. You see an electric bulb. There is light in it. In what direction does its light fall? It falls on all sides. God's look is like the light of this bulb; it falls on everyone. He is seeing everyone in this hall. He is seeing those who are sleeping; He is seeing others who are not listening to Him because they are engaged in talking or absorbed in their own thoughts. People may be absorbed in many types of thoughts, but ultimately this light is their basic refuge.

Once, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was delivering a nice talk on a pleasant evening. Rani Rasmani was also sitting in this assembly of people. Ramakrishna Paramahamsa was a priest in the temple built by her. He was giving an illuminating spiritual talk.

Rani Rasmani was nodding her head as if she was listening very attentively, but Ramakrishna knew where her attention was. He got up from his seat,

went near her, and slapped her hard on her cheek. All were surprised to see this and started thinking thus, "What is this foolishness? He is working on the job provided by her and serving as a priest in her temple, yet he has insulted her in this way amidst this assembly of so many people. Has he got a fit of madness?" Then Ramakrishna asked, "What have people sitting in this gathering come for? You should listen to what is being said with total dedication and put it into practice after listening it. But having come here, you are thinking about your tomorrow's court case while sitting in this assembly. If you want to think about your court case, you can sit in your house and do so. Then why have you come here?" There is a great lesson in this saying of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. Many people come to listen to talks on spiritual subjects and take part in such assemblies, but they do not know who said what because they are lost in their own thoughts. Such people should not take part in these spiritual congregations. If they take part in such congregations, they should listen to what is said there and make efforts to put it into practice.

Ramakrishna Paramahamsa taught this truth in a practical way during those days.

All systems of philosophy lead to One God

Dharma is very sacred and illumines not only this world (loka) but all three worlds known as bhu, bhuva, and Suvaha, which are represented in a person by their body, mind, and Atma. Dharma illumines the actions done at the physical level, their thoughts, which are the product of their mind, and bliss, which is radiated by their Atma.

What is the nature of the bliss radiated by the Atma? The Atma is the embodiment of eternal bliss, wisdom absolute (Nityanandam, parama sukhadam, kevalam jnanamurtim). It is dharma that imparts bliss at the physical, mental, and Atmic levels. The body, mind, and Atma shine by its effulgence. All these three are under God's control.

As has been said earlier, a good son is the light of his clan. Who is a good son? Good son means God son. Good is spelt as GOOD.

There are two zeros between G and D. Zero denotes the world (jagat). If you take out one zero from the word 'Good', it becomes God. Brahman alone is real, the world is unreal (Brahma sathyam jagan-mithya). Hence, God son is good son. It means to say that a good son is one who is constantly engrossed in the contemplation and thoughts of God and whose actions and conduct are divine.

The prefix 'su' means good; so 'suputra' means good son. A good son loves his parents, obeys their command always and makes them happy. He gives satisfaction to them by expressing gratitude to his parents who nourished him for so many years and brought him up. Not only that; he earns a good name in society. When does a son become great?

Just As A Sandalwood Tree Spreads Its Fragrance All Around In The Forest,

A Virtuous Son Illumines The Entire Clan By His Virtues.
(Telugu Poem)

A sandalwood tree spreads fragrance in all directions, even if it is in a big forest. In the same way, the entire clan gets a good name when a good son is born in it.

Today, we distribute sweets as soon as a son is born in our family. When you ask someone, "Why are you distributing sweets?" he replies, "I am blessed with a son." But it is with the passage of time that you come to know what type of son has taken birth in your house. Mere birth of the son is not the occasion for celebration.

When Your Son Earns A Good Name In Society, Then Is The Occasion To Celebrate.
The Father Does Not Feel The Joy Of Having A Son Merely Because The Child Is Born.
Only When People Praise His Son For His Good Deeds And Achievements Does The Father Feel Joyful!
(Telugu Poem)

When people say, "Aha! How good your son is!", then the father feels great happiness. In fact, this is divine bliss for the father. The son who earns the appreciation of one and all does illumine the entire clan.

There are, in fact, three types of illuminations. In the house, a bulb lights only the room in which it is fixed. At night, the moon spreads its light everywhere, though its light is dim. But during the day, the sun illumines the whole world with its bright light.

The light of the bulb in the house signifies selfishness (swartha). The light of the moon denotes doing good to others (parartha). Only the sunlight connotes reality (yathartha). That is truth. Truth is God. Hence, the sun is the true God

on earth. That is why the Indians (Bharatiyas) have been worshipping and venerating the sun, considering it the manifest God, which sustains all life on earth.

The moon is the source of illumination in the night, while it is the sun in the day. But for the three worlds, the source of illumination is dharma. However, it is the good son who illumines the entire clan in which he is born.

It is not the high education or big titles that make a son good. What makes him good is his conduct. A good son should have good behaviour, good manners, good discipline, and good devotion. Good devotion is most important. All good things come to a person with good devotion.

There are three systems of philosophy, namely, dualism, nondualism, and qualified nondualism (dwaitha, adwaitha, and visishtadwaitha). In dualism philosophy, there are two separate entities. But there is not much difference between nondualism and qualified nondualism.

Truth is one for all communities, religions, cultures, and nations. God is one without a second (Ekameva adviteeyam Brahma).

The stem of sugarcane is divided by many knot, but the same juice is present in all its parts. There is no difference of taste in its different parts. Juice is extracted from sugarcane. This juice represents what we call nondualism (adwaitha). Sweetness is the same in every part of the sugarcane. There is no other taste.

But how long can we keep the sugarcane juice? We cannot keep it for a long time. Then what should we do? Convert the sugarcane juice to sugar. After being converted to sugar, it can be used in all preparations anywhere and at anytime. Hence, juice represents nondualism while sugar stands for qualified nondualism (visishtadwaitha).

Sankaracharya propounded the system of nondualism and Ramanuja the system of qualified nondualism. Madhwacharya, however, propounded the

theory of dualism (dwaitha). What did he say?

He said, "Oh Lord! I want to become neither sugar nor sugarcane juice. Make me an ant so that I can enjoy the taste of sugar. Sugar does not know its own taste. Only those who eat sugar can know its taste. You are the embodiment of love. I do not want to become love. I want to be one who can experience Your love. You are God (Daiva) and I am an individual (jiva). Both should be different from each other so that the individual can experience God." This is the system of dualism, wherein there are two separate entities, the individual and God.

When the individual eats the sugar of God (Daiva), thoroughly digests it, and understands and experiences the sweetness of Divinity, then only can the individual become sugar, i.e. God Himself. The knower of Brahman becomes verily Brahman Himself (Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavathi).

People waste their time discussing the merits and demerits of dualism, nondualism, and qualified nondualism. In the final analysis, all three are one. Sugarcane juice is nondualism, sugar is qualified nondualism, and tasting sugar is dualism.

You can see yourself - sugar is the same in all sweets whether it is Mysorepak, gulab jamoon, Burfi, or Palakova. The names of the sweets are different, but the sweetness of sugar is the same in all. Similarly, there appears to be differences in the names and forms in this world, but the divinity is the same in everyone. One Atma dwells in all beings (Ekatma sarva bhutantaratma). God is present in everyone.

Bulbs are many but the same current flows through all of them. This current is the divine power. This divine power is present in you, Me. and everyone.

Then, where does the difference lie? Bulbs may be of different colours - blue, red, white. Some of them may be dim and others may be bright. But it does not denote any defect in the current. It shows only the difference in the bulbs.

The capacity of your heart is responsible for the light to be dim or bright. This difference is due to the wattage. If you are always engaged in the contemplation of God, you can have the maximum wattage. You can change the bulbs and the wattage, but there is no need to change the current.

If you want to make your heart bright, develop love! Develop love! Develop love! Once you fill your heart with love, it will shine with full effulgence. The more you develop love, the more your heart becomes light and bright.

Here is a small example. This is a piece of wood. If you put it in fire, the wood will change into charcoal. When you touch the wood, your hands do not become dirty. But when you touch the charcoal, your hands will become dirty. What is to be done to make the charcoal white again?

Innocent and ignorant people may wash it with soap to make it white. But when you apply soap to charcoal, even the soap will become black but the charcoal will not become white. You may even try to make it white by putting it into milk. The charcoal will not become white even then, but the milk will become black.

What do we learn from this? How did it become charcoal? Why did it become so?

It became charcoal when it came in contact with fire. Therefore, it should again be put into fire to make it white. When it completely gets burnt in fire, it will turn into white ash. When the piece of wood was half burnt, it became charcoal. But when it was completely burnt, it became bright and white.

In the same way, if you have part-time devotion then you will become like charcoal. Only when you have full-time devotion can you become light and bright. Immerse yourself in love. Then the fire of your devotion will make you pure, light, and bright.

Get rid of lust, anger, and greed

A piece of wood, when dropped, will fall down. When the same wood is burnt and converted into ash, it will rise up. Hence, the lighter you become, the higher you rise. When you have more weight, you go down. Therefore, if you want to rise higher in life, you have to reduce the weight of your desires. Less luggage, more comfort, makes travel a pleasure. But it is not enough to you merely reduce your desires. You should also give up the evil qualities of attachment, hatred, and jealousy.

Humanity three main enemies, namely, lust, anger, and greed. Lust destroys devotion; anger destroys knowledge; and greed destroys good actions. These enemies also affect one's work, worship, and wisdom.

When we are overpowered by anger, we lose our sense of discrimination. Anger creates many types of enmities. One who is in the grip of anger will lose their sense of discrimination as to what to speak, when to speak, and where to speak. Hence, do not allow anger to come near you. Do not give room to greed at all.

There may be cure even for cancer, but not for lust, anger, and greed. Then how can you get rid of them? When you put them into the fire of divine love, they will turn into ash. Even hard iron can be melted by putting it into fire. When you can change hard iron into liquid, can't you change your evil qualities?

Spiritual practices like meditation are of no use to destroy these evil qualities. Many people practise meditation. What type of meditation? Their meditation is just for show. They sit as though they are posing for a photograph. They say that they are meditating. But sitting cross-legged with closed eyes cannot be called meditation. Mere practice of body postures does not give you the realisation of truth. Fill your heart with love. Then everything will become true.

Better Indeed Is Knowledge Than Practice. Better Than Knowledge Is Meditation On God.

But Better Than Meditation Is Renunciation Of The Desire For The Fruits Of Actions, For, There Follows Peace Immediately.
Sreyohi Jnanamabhyasat, Jnanaddhyanam Vishishyate, Dhyanat Karmaphala Thyaga, Thyagat Santhiranantaram.
(Sanskrit Verse)

Practice is required in all walks of life. You should practice in such a way that it becomes a part of your life. You have to do walking practice, reading practice, writing practice, and practice in all chores of life. This practice has to be done daily and regularly.

Do not undertake evil practices. In fact, no effort is required for evil practices. If you push a stone with your foot from the top of a hill, it will come down, but it requires a lot of effort to carry a stone from the foot of a mountain to its top.

Bad qualities can be acquired without any effort, but it requires a lot of effort and practice to cultivate good qualities. You all know when a loaded lorry or bus goes uphill, it cries 'gee, gee, gee'. Poor thing! Climbing up is very difficult. But it comes down a hill quite easily.

Do not take to a path merely because it is easy. Always look up and follow the higher path even if it is difficult. Low aim is a crime. We should not commit such a crime. Look up. Always aim high. This is true spiritual discipline (sadhana).

Do not give scope to doubts like, "Is He God or not? How can we say He is God? Where does God live?" Those who entertain such doubts are, in fact, foolish. They are no doubt fools and fools only.

God is present everywhere and in all, but you cannot see Him because of the evil qualities that are present in you. Due to these evil qualities, everything appears evil to you. Everything will appear to you of the same colour as that of the glasses you have put on.

God is immanent in all. In fact, you yourself are God. But you cannot see the God that is present in you. What is the reason? You have become the victim of selfishness, which has fully blinded you.

Consider the divine name as your greatest wealth

It is very necessary for man to have proper food and proper habits. What type of habits should he have? Show reverence to your elders and treat them with humility and courtesy. Revere your teachers. Worship your parents and obey their command.

How did Rama become so great and attain such an exalted position? He attained greatness because He obeyed the command of His father. Not only that, He was the friend and well-wisher of all. Moreover, He had great love for His brothers and interacted with His subjects in a peaceful manner. He wished the welfare of all His subjects and worked for it.

Today, we recite the prayer: May all the beings of all the worlds be happy (Samasta lokah sukhino bhavantu)! But our real intent is that we alone should be happy; what happens to others is not our concern. This is no prayer at all.

We should wholeheartedly pray for the welfare of all. Why should we do that? We should do that because we are also included in all. Our welfare lies in the welfare of society. When all others attain peace and progress, we will also acquire the same. It is sheer selfishness to think that we alone should be happy and that what happens to others is not our concern.

Selfishness is a great sin. Of course, you have to look to your self-interest to some extent. But never give room to limitless selfishness.

Develop love for God. There is no better spiritual practice than this. You may not do any other spiritual discipline; it is enough if you love God wholeheartedly.

Mira also said: "I have found the jewel of divine Name (Payoji maine nam ratan dhana payo)." She considered the jewel of divine Name as her greatest wealth. She sang, "My true teacher (Sadguru) has given me this precious thing (Vastu amoulik dee mere sadguru)." Who is a Sadguru? What is Sat? Sat is that which is permanent. That is, God. Sat means being.

When Mira's husband told her to leave the temple, she became very worried. She thought, "How will I go, leaving my Krishna here?" Immediately, she made a decision: "These temples are all constructed by people. They are not permanent. The temple constructed by God is my heart." Then she sang, "Oh mind! Go to the banks of the Ganga and Yamuna (Chalore mana Ganga Yamuna teer)." "Oh mind! Go only there. Wherever else you go, there is no peace." The centre of the forehead is the confluence of the Ganga and Yamuna rivers, which represent the subtle channels, the ida and pingala, in a person. Both the Ganga and the Yamuna meet there, where lies the central subtle channel (sushumna nadi).

How is the water of the Ganga and Yamuna? The water of Ganga and Yamuna is very cool and pure, which will make one serene and peaceful. Therefore, oh mind! Go to the bank of the Ganga and Yamuna (Ganga, Yamuna nirmal pani, sheetal hota sareer. Chalore mana Ganga Yamuna teer).

We don't require any ticket to go to the banks of the Ganga and Yamuna. The Ganga is the right subtle channel and the Yamuna, the left subtle channel. The process of inhalation and exhalation is associated with these. The meeting point of these two is the centre of the forehead (Bhrumadhya) where lies the central subtle channel (sushumna nadi).

When we breathe in and breathe out, we hear the sound, Sohum (That I am). The science of breath control (pranayama involves three processes: inhalation, holding, and exhalation (puraka, kumbhaka, and rechaka). To fill the breath in is inhalation; to release the breath is exhalation; holding the breath both in and out is kumbhaka.

But this practice is only at the physical level. When you fill your heart

completely with love for God, that love itself is enough to earn the grace and love of God. Therefore, develop the principle of love and attain God through love.

(Bhagavan brought His discourse to a close with the bhajan "Govinda Gopala Prabhu Giridhari ....")

20. The four beacons

Date: 18 June 1996 / Location: Brindavan

Pradoshe deepakas-chandhrah Prabhathe deepako Ravih Thriloke deepako Dharmah Suputhrah Kuladeepakah PRADOSHE deepakas-chandrah (At night the moon illumines the world). Prabhathe deepako Ravih (At daybreak the sun is the illuminator). Thriloke deepako Dharmaha (For the three worlds Dharma is the beacon-light). Suputhrah Kula Deepakah (A virtuous son is a beacon for the whole family).

The difference between Amavasya (New Moon light) and Puurnima (full moon light) is between darkness and light. During Amavasya, the night is pitch dark. People do not relish this darkness in any way. Darkness invokes fear. It also breeds evil thoughts and provides opportunities for evil deeds.

Darkness is welcomed only by evil minded persons. No good-intentioned persons will welcome darkness. Darkness is a valuable ally for thieves and rogues. Hence only the evil-minded will hail the advent of darkness. The good-intentioned and righteous persons will welcome the advent of the full-moon. The hearts of good persons .filled with good feelings, are cool like the moon. Children delight in the sight of the moon. Poets are inspired to pour forth the joy in their hearts at the sight of the moon. On the day of the Puurnima (full-moon) man's heart is also pure and bright. People should recognise the relationship between the fullmoon and the mind. The Vedas declare that the moon emerged from the mind of the Virat-Purusha (Cosmic Person) and the sun emerged from his eye. The human mind is a reflection of the moon and when there is the full moon the mind blossoms effulgently. Moonlight dispels the darkness of ignorance, drives away fear and confers peace and joy.

Reasons for the worship of sun

During the day, the sun affords light to the world. Without the sun, the world will cease to exist. The sun is the visible deity for the world. Without the sun

there can be no life on earth. Crops cannot grow. There will be no air, no food and no means of sustenance for living creatures. It is only because of the sun that rivers flow, crops are grown, life is sustained and there is happiness and comfort. It is the power of the sun that helps to purify the heart. Hence, for the planet earth the sun is the visible manifestation of God. The earth receives its life-sustaining oxygen from the sun.

Thriloke deepako Dharmah (The light that illumines the three worlds is Righteousness). What is this Dharma? "Dharayathe ithi Dharmah" (Dharma is that which upholds .everything). This means that without Dharma the Cosmos cannot exist. Dharma is the lifebreath of all actions. There can be no life without the sustaining power of Dharma. Every object in the universe is governed by its Dharma (the law of its being). For instance, there is fire. What is its Dharma? The capacity to bum is the basic trait of fire. When the burning power is lost, it ceases to be fire. It becomes mere charcoal. Likewise, the Dharma of ice is coldness. When ice loses its coldness, it ceases to be ice. For man, the Dharma is Righteousness.

Righteousness implies harmony in thought, word and deed. The unity of body, speech and mind promotes purity and sacredness in man. This triune purity constitutes humanness. All actions should be pure and according to the dictates of the conscience. The tongue is sacred organ endowed on man to chant the glories of the Lord. But today it is being misused to utter untruth. The dharma of man is to speak the truth and adhere to righteousness.

Three maxims for primary obligations of man

Three words describe the primary obligations of man: Preethi, Bheethi and Neethi. Preethi pertains to the Dhaiva Preethi (love of God). Bheethi is related to the Papabheethi (fear of sin). Neethi is related to Sanghaneethi (morality in society). If these three are observed, there will be peace and. non-violence. Dhaiva Preethi (love of God) is the basis for all human values. This love is inherent in all human beings. It is the index of man's divinity as proclaimed by the scriptures.

How is God to be experienced? God is present in everyone like butter in milk. Your heart is the container. Love is the milk present in the heart. When this love is offered to the Lord, it acts as the churning process for getting butter. There is then the direct experience of the Divine.

Some devotees fall asleep during the discourses or brood over some extraneous matters without listening to the discourses. Ramakrishna Paramahamsa once chided Rani Rasmani for thinking about her court cases while appearing to listen to his talk. Persons who are not interested in the discourses should keep away from the meeting.

Man's dharma is threefold. It relates to his body, his mind and his Atma. Good deeds, good thoughts and Godly experience of bliss are the expressions of this triple Dharma. The reference to the light that illumines the three worlds should be understood in this way.

Who is a good son?

"Suputhrah Kula deepakah" (A good son is a beacon for the family). Who is a good son? He is a good son, who is always immersed in the contemplation of God, in sacred activities and leads a godly life. A good son is one who reveres his parents, pleases them by rendering service, and is grateful for all that he has received from them. Nor is that all. A good son earns a good name in society. A good son sheds greatness on the family like the fragrance of a jasmine creeper in a forest.

Nowadays, parents distribute sweets on the birth of a son. But it is not the birth that is the right occasion for celebration. The right moment for celebration is when the son earns a good name in society.

"The father will not rejoice on the day a son is born. He will rejoice when he hears the praise of the virtues Of his sort by others," says a Telugu poem.

God also will be happy when a son earns such a good name. A son should be

called a good man by one and all. Such a Suputhra (good son) is a beacon-light for the entire family.

The four illuminators

There are three kinds of light. The lamp in a house illumines only the house. The moon at night gives his light to the world, although it is. a dim light. But the sun who illumines the day sheds his effulgence everywhere. The light that burns inside a home is comparable to svartham (self interest). The light coming from the moon may be compared to Parartham (for the benefit of others). The light of the sun is Yathartham, the effulgence of Truth. Truth is God. The sun who illumines everything is verily God. For this reason, from early times Bharatheeyas were worshippers of the Sun-God. They offered Suurya-namaskar (salutations to the Sun). They regarded the Sun as the visible manifestation of God.

Thus, what people need today are moonlight at night, sun-light during the day, and the light of Dharma which illumines all the three worlds, and a good son who is the beacon-light for the family.

Education alone does not make one a good son. One should be good in his actions and behaviour. The marks of a good son are good behaviour, good manners, good discipline and good devotion. These are the most important things. If there is devotion all other things will come easily.

Three sects, but one truth

Today there are three schools of philosophy prevalent in Bharath. Dhvaitha, Visishta-adhvaitha and Adhvaitha (Dualism, qualifies Non-dualism and Non-dualism). In the Dhvaitha philosophy, there is dualism, separation between jeeva, the individual self and Supreme Omni Self. There is no great difference between Visishta-Adhvaitha and Adhvaitha.

Whatever the creed, whatever the country or nationality, Truth is one. "Ekam eva Adhvitheeyam Brahma" (The Omni Self is one only, without a second).

The variations between the three systems of philosophy can be explained by an example. You have sugarcane, with a number of knots. Whatever the shape of the sugarcane, the juice in all of them is the same. Adhvaitha (non-dualism) may be compared to the juice which is one and the same irrespective of the cane from which it is extracted. The juice drawn from any cane has the same sweetness. There is no other taste.

Ramanuja (founder of the Visishta Adhvaitha system) conducted his own enquiries and came to the conclusion that the sugar cane juice cannot be preserved indefinitely and therefore it should be converted to sugar. The sugar can then be used, any day at any time. This is qualified non-dualism.

Madhvacharya was the exponent of Dualism. Madhvacharya viewed the problem in this way. He declared: "Oh Lord! I do not want either sugarcane juice or sugar. I wish to be born as an ant that relishes the juice or the sugar. The sugar does not know its own sweetness. Only the one who consumes sugar can know its sweetness. O Lord! You are the very embodiment of love. I do not wish to be mere love. I want to be one who enjoys love. You should remain as God and I should remain as Jeevi (individual soul). It is only when the individual is separate from God that he can enjoy the Divine." This is the essence of dualism - -the distinction between God and the individual self. When the individual self starts enjoying sugar (the Divine), in due course he becomes the Divine itself. "The knower of the Divine becomes the Divine."

Common truth proclaimed by all philosophies

Magnifying the differences between the three systems of philosophy, Bharatheeyas are wasting their time. All the three are essentially one. Adhvaitha is like the sugarcane juice. Visishta Adhvaitha is sugar. The consumer of sugar is a Dhvaithin (dualist).

The truth is that sweetness is common to all, though the names and forms may vary. Similarly, in the world the different nations and countries have diverse forms and names. But the Divine in all of them is one and the same. The Indwelling Spirit is the same in all beings. The Divine energy is common to all, like the current which activates all bulbs, fans etc. God is present equally in everyone. The differences among human beings are the result of the differences in their capacities. When one is immersed in thoughts of God, his capacity will grow.

Develop greater love in your heart. As your love grows, the Spirit in you will shine brighter. Spiritual growth calls for restraint on desires. In addition, you have also to get rid of-bad qualities like attachment and aversion. The three great enemies of man are kama (desire), krodha (anger) and lobha (greed). Desire destroys devotion, anger annihilates wisdom and greed poisons every action. These three vices are destructive of Sath-Karma (good deeds), Upasana (devotion) and Jnana (spiritual wisdom). All the three have to be totally given up. The only cure for them is to burn them in Premagni (the fire of Divine Love).

Example of Rama for being a good son

Good qualities can be acquired only by practice. The practice may be difficult, like moving an object uphill. But the effort has to be made. The sadhana (spiritual practice) must be done with full faith and no doubts. God is omnipresent. To experience God certain disciplines are required. This is the significance of the term Suputhrah (a good son). To realise God you have to be good. This means that one has to cultivate good qualities like reverence for parents, humility, respect for teachers and elders.

How did Rama achieve such greatness? By carrying out the injunctions of his father. Rama also exemplified friendliness and brotherliness. He moved among the people with. a sense of endearment. He identified the people's welfare with his own well-being.

When you utter the prayer "Lokas-samasthas-sukhino Bhavanthu!" (May all people in all the world be happy), you should pray whole-heartedly with the conviction that the same Divine dwells in everyone.

Cultivate love for God. There is nothing greater than that. That is the message of Thulasidas and Meerabai. Realise God through Love.

It is on account of the mutual help, the collaboration that the Gopis of Brindhavan were able to attain Moksha; their Bhakthi towards Lord Krishna endowed them with the Highest Jnana also. Now the essence of Bhakthi as well as Jnana is Shanthi. The highest type of Shanthi, Prashanthi. Prashanthi leads one on to Prakanthi, the Glory of Spiritual Effulgence, and thence to Paramjyothi, the Super-effulgence, of the Highest Revelation.

- Sathya Sai Baba

21. Discipline is the Life Principle of Man (Alternative Translation)

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Birds And Animals Do Not Have Any Type Of Education, Yet They Lead A Life Of Discipline.
But, Alas, Man, Who Is Endowed With All Intelligence, Does Not Lead A Disciplined Life.
What Else Can I Convey To This Assembly Of The Noble And Saintly People?
(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Discipline is like the primordial life principle for every living being. For all human beings, it is like their backbone. Discipline means to follow certain rules and regulations implicitly. These rules regulate the life of a person and lead them on the path of goodness. Otherwise, the person will meet their downfall.

Without discipline, there can be no well-being (Na sreyo niyamam vina). Humanness cannot survive in the absence of rules and regulations. The entire human race will be wiped out if there is no discipline.

No society or nation can exist without discipline

Discipline cannot be acquired from books, nor can it be taught by a teacher. Discipline should become the habit in one's day-today life in a natural manner. It is essential to follow discipline every moment of one's life from morning to evening. It is necessary for every community, every society, every

race, and every country.

Even in the field of politics, discipline is very necessary. No society or nation or political system or race can exist without discipline. It is discipline that brings about unity between person and person, person and society, and one society and the other. Therefore, discipline is the hallmark of human life.

It is essential to follow discipline not only in our speech but also in games, sports, and other activities.

We devotional singing (bhajans). There may be any number of people singing bhajans in chorus, but they should all sing at the same pitch. If each person sings at a different pitch and octave (sruthi), it will not be pleasing to the ear. Therefore, singing in chorus requires great discipline.

While playing games, the referee tells the players to follow certain rules. Every player, including the captains of the teams, should follow these rules implicitly. At times, the players are so much absorbed in the game that they forget themselves and commit certain mistakes. They may not be aware of their mistake, but the referee who observes this will at once blow the whistle. As he does so, every player should stop where they are. When the whistle is blown, the entire play comes to a standstill. Those who continue to play without caring for the whistle violate the discipline.

Since there is lack of discipline in all fields of human activity, life has become a nightmare. Therefore, discipline is very essential in every field of human activity and in all professions like business, agriculture, etc.

People who occupy positions of authority should also follow discipline and should not misuse their power. Just because they have a pen in their hand, they should not write anything they like. Since the tongue has no bone and can be twisted in any manner, one should not speak as one pleases.

Observe appropriate limits in your writing and speech. Before saying anything, enquire whether what you are going to say is proper or not. Do not

write anything arbitrarily, because it may cause great danger to you in the future. Therefore, take proper care while writing something.

The only way to safeguard your position is to follow proper discipline. When you have the protection of discipline, you will not need any other protection. Your discipline itself will provide protection to you.

Discipline in sitting

Discipline is also necessary in walking, sitting, and even in laughing. Some people walk in such a way that even a forty-feet-wide road is not sufficient for them to walk. They keep walking this way and that way as they like.

The proper way of walking is to walk on the footpath without causing any obstruction to traffic. On the other hand, if you think that the entire road is for your individual use and walk this way and that without following discipline, you would not only violate the traffic rules but would also become the cause of harm to others. Take care not to cause any inconvenience to others.

Therefore, it is said: Help Ever, Hurt Never. You should observe discipline that will not only benefit you but will be beneficial to others also.

Observance of discipline should be started at an early age. Start early, drive slowly, reach safely.

Discipline is absolutely necessary for students. In fact, it is necessary not only for students but also for officers, teachers, and all citizens. When you come across your elders, know how to offer respect to them. Always sit in a proper posture, keeping in mind in whose presence you are sitting. Even in such small matters, follow proper discipline.

When small children sit, they sit with their backs bent like a bow. They should not bend their spine in this manner. They should sit properly, keeping their spine straight. When you keep your spinal column straight, your thoughts will

directly reach your intellect. In this way, you can attain concentration of mind in a short time.

Our spinal column encases the central nerve current (sushumna nadi). When you keep the spine straight, the serpent power or spiritual power located at the base of the spine (kundalini sakthi) will rise through the central nerve current directly to the thousand-petaled lotus in the head (sahasrara chakra).

What does "serpent power" mean? People who know yoga say that the serpent power (kundalini sakthi) lies at the coccygeal plexus (mooladhara chakra) in the form of a serpent and gradually rises upward and ultimately reaches the sahasrara chakra.

During the practice of yoga, the flow of oxygen is blocked in the process of doing breath control (pranayama). This is also called "holding the breath (kumbhaka). When the flow of oxygen to the coccygeal plexus (mooladhara chakra) is blocked in the process of holding the breath, the the serpent power, or spiritual power located at the base of the spine (kundalini) will slowly rise upward for the sake of oxygen.

Kundalini is not a serpent; it is a type of energy, and it rises upwards crossing all the chakras in the spine. Therefore, you should keep your backbone straight so as to enable the kundalini shakti to rise upwards smoothly. That is why people who practise yoga sit straight.

This is a very good practice. It gives you memory power and develops the power of concentration. Therefore, sitting is also a great discipline.

In order to follow this discipline properly, certain purifications are also necessary. First of all, purify your body. What does purification mean? It is not mere cleaning of the body with soap and water. You should engage yourselves in good deeds to purify the body. It is only the good deeds that can purify it.

Good deeds give mental purity (Chittasya shuddhaye karmah). Purity of heart

is possible only through good deeds. You should purify your mind with good thoughts. When the body and the mind are purified in this manner, the intellect will always remain pure.

What is the primordial sound that emerges from the body? Soham, Soham, Soham (That I am). From where does this I (aham) emerge? It emerges from the Atma. The mind is born out of this I (aham).

Speech is born out of the mind. Therefore, this I is the son of the Atma; the mind is the grandson, and speech is the great grandson. Hence, the great grandson, the grandson and the son, all belong to the same family.

Therefore, the mind should be as pure as the Atma. Likewise, speech should also be as pure as the mind. There is an intimate relationship between the I (aham), mind, speech, and the Atma. Fill these with sacred feelings.

Discipline in speech

At times, we go back on our words. There is no greater sin than this. Emperor Bali said, "Is there a greater sin than going back on one's own promise?" Therefore, protect the purity of your speech.

When Baba was in Shirdi, many devotees went for His darshan. In Bandra, Mumbai, there lived a person by name Tarkhad with his wife and a sixteen-year-old son. His wife and son had immense faith in Baba. Tarkhad would never put any hurdle whenever they wanted to go to Shirdi.

Since Tarkhad was associated with the Prayer Society (Prarthana Samaj), he did not like going on any pilgrimage. Therefore, in spite of repeated requests of his wife, he never visited Shirdi. This also was a sort of weakness. What does it matter if you are associated with a particular religious sect? You may belong to any religious group, you should realise the truth that God is one.

Some people take to wrong path in the name of caste and religion. Tarkhad

told his wife and son, "I will not come. You can go." His son said, "Father! I don't want to go." The father asked, "Why you don't want to go?" The son replied, "In my daily worship, I follow a certain discipline implicitly. Every day, I offer sugar candy to Baba as a food offering (naivedyam). Having the faith that Baba has accepted this food offering, I partake of it as sanctified food (prasadam) of Baba. I don't want this practice to be disrupted. Therefore, I don't want to go to Shirdi." The father loved his son very much. Since he did not want any hurdle to come in the way of his son's pilgrimage to Shirdi, he said to him, "My dear! I will perform this task. You go." The son emphatically asked his father, "Will you really do it? Will you worship Baba as I do everyday and offer the sugar candy to him and partake of it as sanctified food? Give me a promise. Then I will go to Shirdi. Otherwise, I won't go." Observing the deep devotion of his son, the heart of the father melted. "How noble is this boy who follows discipline religiously! Though I am much older than him, I lack this sense of discipline", he thought. The father promised his son that he would do it.

The mother and son left for Shirdi. The father performed the worship in a befitting manner as per the promise he gave to his son. Just as his son would do, he would offer sugar candy as naivedyam to Baba and partake of it as sanctified food (prasadam) before his lunch in the afternoon. He followed this daily routine for a few days.

Next day was Tuesday. That day morning, he had a bath, performed worship, had his breakfast, put on his dress and went to his office. When he returned from his office in the afternoon for lunch, he asked his cook to bring the sanctified food.

The cook said, "Sir, as you were in a great hurry, you forgot to offer sugar candy as naivedyam to Baba in the morning." The father felt very sorry for having broken the promise given by him to his son. He was worried not only because he had not offered sugar candy to Baba but also because he had not kept his word.

Next day, Tarkhad's wife and his son came to Baba to offer their salutations

to him. Baba said to Tarkhad's son, "My dear son! Yesterday, I went to Bandra but nobody offered food to me. Even the sugar candy that you used to offer daily was not offered. I came back very hungry. Will you give me something to eat now?" Tarkhad's son was shocked to hear these words of Baba. When he went back to his room, he buried his head in the lap of his mother and started shedding tears. He told his mother, "Father did not keep his promise and did not offer sugar candy as naivedyam to Baba, so Baba returned to Shirdi hungry and disappointed. Mother, I will not stay here any longer because I don't want to violate my discipline. I will return to Bandra at once." As he was saying this, Baba sent a person by name Jog to him with a message. What was the message? "You don't need to go back now. It is your father who has not kept his promise, not you. Therefore, my immense grace is there on you. You can stay here as long as you want." The son stayed in Shirdi for ten days, more but all the while he was full of disappointment and dissatisfaction.

When he returned home after ten days, his father apologised to him. "Though you are young and I am older than you, I request you to forgive me", said his father. Then the son replied, "Seek forgiveness from Baba, not from me." Whatever community or culture you may belong to, always keep your word. You may belong to Brahmo Samaj, I may belong to Arya Samaj, someone else may belong to Daiva Samaj, but everyone should observe the sanctity of his speech.

Truth is one. It is very essential to adhere to truth. You argue in a court before a judge. If you yourself do not adhere to truth, you will become the cause of ruin of many individuals and families.

You may have studied law. Emperor Manu taught many sacred codes of conduct in his treatise. All that you have studied in law will become useless if you do not adhere to truth. You can have the direct manifestation of divinity when you follow the code of conduct implicitly in your life.

Discipline in eating

We should observe discipline in eating also. We should eat only as much as it is necessary. When we eat in excess, we will suffer from indigestion. But many a time, we don't observe this discipline. We don't listen to the voice that comes from within us.

Before Eating Food, We Chant This Prayer:
Brahman Is The Ladle As Well As The Oblation.
He Is The Sacrificial Fire As Also The Sacrificer.
He Is The Goal Of One Who Is Engaged In The Act
Of Sacrifice.

Brahmarpanam Brahma Havir Brahmagnou Brahmanahutam Brahmaiva Thena Ganthavyam Brahma Karma Samadhina.

A religious reform movement of people who worship Brahman as the highest reality. Arya Samaj and Daiva Samaj are other such movements.

When you pray in this manner before you partake of your food, God immediately responds thus:

I Am Present In All Beings In The Form Of Digestive Fire.
United With The Exhalation (Prana) And Inhalation (Apana),
It Is I Who Consume The Four Kinds Of Food.

Aham Vaishvanaro Bhutva Praninam Dehamasrita Pranapana Samayukta Pachamyannam Chaturvidham.

"I am present in you in the form of digestive fire (vaishvanara). Give me food only as much as is necessary." This is the command that comes from within us.

But you eat much more when the food is tasty. Then the digestive fire present

in your stomach starts cautioning you repeatedly, "Be careful. Be careful. Do not put anything more." But you do not listen to this. You go on loading your stomach with tasty food items, thinking whether you would get them again or not. Ultimately, the stomach becomes weak and you suffer. Therefore, you should observe proper discipline in eating.

If you do not follow this discipline, you will suffer from indigestion. Indigestion is the root cause of so many diseases. All diseases stem forth from bad stomach. Therefore, you should fill only three parts of your stomach and leave the fourth part empty. If you do so, you will be following the proper discipline in eating. Follow this discipline religiously everyday.

Discipline in actions

Whatever you do from dawn to dusk, perform all your activities with proper discipline. Be it worship or walking or sitting or eating, everything should be done in a disciplined way. Then your life will become exemplary.

Discipline in whatever you do is verily karma yoga (the path of selfless service). This karma yoga will lead to perfection in action. People have right only on action. Even our President often quotes this verse from the Gita,

You Have Right Only To Action, Not To Its Fruit.
Karmanyevadhikarasthe Ma Phaleshu Kadachana.
We Should Always Keep Ourselves Engaged In Action (Karma).

What type of actions should you perform? Perform only sacred actions. First and foremost, purify your body by performing noble deeds. That is the primary discipline. Since the time you wake up in the morning till you go to bed at night, always befittingly follow the discipline.

Oh People!
You Struggle Hard In Life Merely For The Sake Of

Filling Your Belly.
You Acquire Myriad Types Of Knowledge From
Various Fields.
Examine And Enquire For Yourself What Great
Happiness You Have Achieved
By Spending All The Time From Dawn To Dusk In
Acquiring Worldly Knowledge And Earning Wealth While Forgetting God.
(Telugu Poem)

Obey the divine command. Whatever discipline you observe in your daily life, never give it up. Then only can you call yourself truly educated.

What is the meaning of vidya (spiritual education)? What does 'vid' mean? It means knowledge (jnana). This is the path to attain knowledge.

Oh People!
Do Not Feel Proud Of Your Education.
If You Do Not Offer Your Salutations To God And
Do Not Think Of Him With Devotion, All Your Education Will Become Useless.
(Telugu Poem)

Do not be proud of your bookish knowledge, thinking that you have read so many books. Join both your hands in reverence and offer your salutations to the Lord. This is the first step in spirituality.

What is meant by bringing the ten fingers together? It means namaskar (respectful salutation). What is the inner meaning of namaskar? It is to bring about unity in the five senses of perception and five senses of action. That is unity in diversity. Namaskar connotes unity of everything.

The Atmic principle is, in reality, one. Therefore, namaskar has a great significance in the field of spirituality.

Namaskar has a deeper meaning: "Na-mama", meaning "I am not." It signifies destruction of ego. "Mama" means "mine". "Na-mama" means "nothing is mine." Therefore, offering everything to the Lord with total sense of surrender saying, "Oh Swami! Everything is Yours" is the principal inner meaning of namaskar.

Disciplining the senses

People today do not know what discipline really means. Nor do they know what sense control means.

Your eyes see anything and everything. You should tell your eyes, "Oh eyes! What are you looking at? Do not look at anything that is bad." See no evil, see what is good; Hear no evil, hear what is good; Talk no evil, talk what is good; Think no evil, think what is good; Do no evil, do what is good; This is the way to God.

Therefore, think good, do good, be good, see good, and say good. You should develop discipline to follow this noble path. People may talk to you in any manner, but you should observe a certain limit in your speech.

Students!

Even birds and animals observe certain discipline. But people, who are highly educated and intelligent, do not observe any discipline.

You can see yourself. There are monkeys near your hostel and college. Every day, they observe silence at least for one hour. Even birds observe silence for one hour.

But poor humanity! The tongue gets no rest even for a minute! The tongue keeps making noise all the time like a drum. It does not observe silence at all.

On the other hand, we make fun of those who observe silence. Instead, we

should follow this discipline of silence enthusiastically saying, "This person is observing silence. Let us also follow the same." It is said that silence is God (Nisshabdam Brahma). In fact, the sound that is there in silence is Brahman.

There is immense greatness in observing limit in speech. When you control your talk, you are able to control everything.

How is it that God gave so much power to the tongue? Our eyes have only the power to see and no other power. Similarly, our ears have the power to hear and no other power. The nose has no other power except the power to smell. But the tongue has 'double promotion'. It has two powers; it has the power of taste as well as the power of speech. Since it is endowed with two powers, it has to be controlled in the first instance.

Teaching according to the learner's capacity

Teachings should be imparted according to the situation and circumstances. It is not possible to give the same type of teachings to everyone. Each one can absorb these teachings according to his capacity.

There is unlimited water in the Ganga. But each one can take water from it according to the capacity of his container. All cannot take the same quantity of water.

On the path of spirituality also, God gives each one the amount of power depending upon the discipline they follow and the capacity they possess.

If we want to increase our capacity, we should observe discipline properly. Here is a small example.

Swami Ramakrishna Paramahamsa lived in an ashram with his young disciples. He used to impart the knowledge of spirituality to them through many stories of God. Unfortunately, due to the influence of the present age (the Kali Yuga), people today discourage young children from following the

path of spirituality and make fun of those who follow it. Even parents disapprove of their children's spirit of devotion, saying: "Where is the need for such intense devotion at this young age? First enter into some profession and do some work. You can contemplate on Rama, Krishna after your retirement. Why do you want to follow the path of devotion at this age?" But during the times of Ramakrishna, many young men gathered around him to seek spiritual knowledge from him. These disciples used to go to Kolkata turn by turn to purchase articles of daily need by crossing the Ganga in a boat.

(Here, Bhagavan narrated the story of how Swami Ramakrishna Paramahamsa imparted different types of teachings to his two disciples, Brahmananda and Vivekananda, when they reacted differently on hearing his criticism by the people in the boat, because the former was very gentle and docile while the latter was very energetic and high-spirited.) We cannot attain divinity without discipline. If you follow a certain routine on one day, and on the next day you follow a totally different routine, that is not correct. Here is a small example.

Suppose you do devotional singing (bhajans) or meditation everyday at 6 o'clock in the morning or evening. Sometimes, you may have to go on travel. During this travel, you may be in a bus at 6 o'clock. Some people say that you should not change the place and time of your spiritual practice. We should never forget our duty even if there occurs a change in the place. You may be in a bus, but 6 o'clock is 6 o'clock wherever you are. When you are in a bus at 6 o'clock, think about the place where you do bhajans at that time. Then your mind will reach that place. You need not go to the place, the place will come to you.

You should follow the discipline without any break. If you follow the discipline, the time and the place will come running to you.

What can death do to us who are under the protection of the Lord of god of death (Kalakala prapannanam kalah kim na karishyathi)? What does this mean? Time swallows human beings whereas God swallows time itself.

Who is Kala (Time)? God Himself. People think Kala means Yama (god of death). No, no. It is not correct.

Salutations To Time,
To The One Who Is Beyond Time,
To The One Who Has Conquered Time,
To The One Who Transcends Time,
To The One Who Is The Embodiment Of Time, And To The One Who Ordains Time.
Kalaya Namah, Kala Kalaya Namah, Kaladarpa Damanaya Namah, Kalateetaya Namah,
Kalaswarupaya Namah, Kalaniyamitaya Namah.

Everything is Kala. Time is God.

Some children have some doubts. Our sacred texts say, Kala (Time) is the son of Surya (Sun). Children may consider it a laughable story. They may ask how the sun can have a wife, a son, and a family? Where do they live? The children may consider it as a concocted story. No, no. It is all truth. How?

Who is Kala? Kala is time. How is time born? How does it walk? Time is born because of sunrise and sunset. That is why Kala is considered as the son of Surya. Suppose, in the morning the sun rises at 6 o'clock and in the evening it sets at 6 o'clock. From 6 o'clock in the morning to 6 o'clock in the evening, it comes to 12 hours.

What is the source of this time of 12 hours? How is this time of 12 hours born? It is born from the sun. Therefore, Kala is called the son of Surya. When we consider the inner meaning of it, we find that all this is true and true only. In fact, it is truth of truths (sathyasya sathya).

There is no scope for untruth to find place in our sacred texts. Many such words are there in our mythologies and epics (Puranas and Itihasas). But because of our worldly outlook, we do not believe them. This is a mistake. We

should enquire into the inner meaning with patience. Then only will we get the proper answer.

The Puranas contain eternal truths

Lord Vishnu, goddess Saraswati, and goddess Lakshmi are depicted as though they have emerged from lotus flower. Here, the lotus signifies the heart. It means: everything emerges from the heart.

Good and bad emerge from us only. That is why it is said: As are the feelings, so is the result (Yad bhavam tad bhavathi). Never brush aside these things as untruth without knowing their inner meaning. Take some time and get rid of your doubts. Become free from worries. But don't spoil your mind with doubts. There is no scope for doubting the Puranas.

Who are the authors of these Puranas? These are not written by ordinary writers. These are written by great saints and rishis like Valmiki and Vyasa. They were great scholars. There are no other scholars greater than them.

Only such great people can be called poets. Not all can become poets. The Ramayana was written by Valmiki and eighteen Puranas were written by Maharshi Vyasa. Both of them were great sages. Therefore, there is no possibility of even a small untruth to find place in these texts.

Some people may call them untrue stories on the basis of their own feelings, but the reality is that they are true and nothing but true. You may believe it or not, but all that is written in them is true.

They set great ideals. They have not shown wrong path to anybody nor have they spoilt anyone. They show the path of truth. They are ideal texts. You should follow these ideal texts and make your life ideal.

If you want to make your life ideal, talk less. Obey the command of God and follow discipline. Whatever be the circumstances, never give up discipline.

You can see from the example of sixteen-year-old son of Tarkhad, who extracted a promise from his father because he did not want to break the daily discipline he followed implicitly.

There may be difference in age between a father and his son, but the Atma in both of them is the same. Truth is one. It is not that this truth is for children and that is for elders; this truth is for Brahmins and that is for Sudras. Truth is one for all. Truth is one, not two.

God is one without a second (Ekameva adviteeyam Brahma). Truth is only one. This is the type of truth that has been proclaimed and propagated by the culture of Bharat (India) . Bharatiya (Indian) culture is endowed with noble ideals in all fields and it has been imparting the knowledge of these ideals to the entire world. There is absolutely no defect in this culture. We should never forget such a divine, glorious, and ever-new culture of Bharat.

Do not be carried away by the vagaries of your mind. Put a check on your mind and bring it back when it wanders hither and thither. Direct your mind in such a way that it follows your command. The mind is your servant; you are not the servant of your mind. Hence, use your mind as your servant. Do not become its slave.

Whose slave should you become? Slaves of God. That is why Ramdas sang, "Oh Lord! I should become the servant of Your servants. I should serve Your devotees. Right from dawn to dusk, I am Your servant. Not only that, I am the servant of Your servants." Love is Krishna, Krishna is Love There is a great teaching in the Bhagavatha. Kuchela took to Lord Krishna a few fistfuls of beaten rice, tied in an old cloth. Krishna opened the cloth bundle with His own hands. Seeing this, Kuchela felt quite embarrassed. "My cloth is so old and dirty that nobody would even like to touch it. I am very poor, but Krishna is the emperor of emperors. What a great sinner I am that I have made Him touch this old cloth!" He felt so sorry thinking in this manner.

Meanwhile, Krishna took a fistful of beaten rice from the bundle and put it in His mouth. There was still some rice left in the cloth.

When Krishna was about to eat that also, Rukmini came running and caught hold of Krishna's hand. Seeing this, Kuchela thought that Rukmini was trying to prevent Krishna from eating rice because it was tied in a dirty cloth. But Krishna knew the heart of Rukmini and Rukmini knew the heart of Krishna.

In order to make Kuchela know the truth, Krishna said to Rukmini, "Rukmini! Why have you caught hold of My hand? I am a servant of Kuchela. Hence, whatever he has brought, I am taking it as a sacred offering (prasadam)." Rukmini said, "Krishna! You are Kuchela's servant, but I am Your servant. I also have a right to have a share in this prasadam. Therefore, whatever is left, give that to me." You can see yourself how broad and noble are the feelings, thoughts and resolves (sankalpas) of God. But you doubt them due to lack of your understanding.

God is very broad-hearted. He does not have a narrow mind. No other person has such a broad heart. The broadness of God's heart is incomparable.

Then Kuchela could comprehend this truth. When Kuchela went back, he found a very big mansion in the placeof his hut. His wife and children were richly attired and looked very wealthy. His wife came running and caught hold of his feet. "Oh master! God is the embodiment of grace. He has such a broad heart. Nobody can match His glory and grandeur. Did you meet Him? Did you talk to Him? What did He say?" In this manner, she started asking question after question.

Kuchela replied,

As Soon As He Heard Of My Arrival, He Ordered His Guards To Take Me Inside.
He Got Down From His Throne, Came Near Me, Looked At Me From Top To Toe
And Embraced Me Tightly, As If He Was Pining For Me For A Long Time.
How Can I Describe His Compassion For A Poor Brahmin Like Me!
Who Else Can Confer Such Abundant Wealth On Poor Kuchela,
Who Could Offer Him Only A Fistful Of Beaten Rice?
He Is Love Personified.

(Telugu Poem)

Love is Krishna, Krishna is love. It is not possible to describe Him in any other way. You can see how broad God's heart is. Divinity signifies expansion of love. But people today suffer from contraction of love. They have become narrowminded.

Develop broad-mindedness

Here is a small example. A short while ago, I was talking to the hostel warden and the teachers in the interview room. All the teachers got a special chair made and offered it to Me yesterday. In fact, they had intended to offer it on 70th Birthday, but they failed to do so because the chair was not ready then. Only yesterday did it arrive. All of them came, caught hold of My feet and prayed to Me to accept it.

I said, "My dear ones! My practice is only to give and not to take. Tell Me how much money you have spent on this chair?" They did not tell.

But I said, "This is the amount that you spent on this. Take this. Then I will accept this chair." They felt distressed, started shedding tears and prayed, "Swami! We cannot accept money from You. Kindly grant our prayer and accept the chair." In this manner, they prayed earnestly. I was moved by the noble feelings of their sacred heart. They had taken great pains to get this chair made. Therefore, I accepted this chair and started using it.

Our students are also very good and full of devotion. They have great love for Swami. But sometimes evil thoughts enter their mind and spoil it.

Today morning, I told the warden, "I have a stock of Basmati rice. There are three hostels here - primary school hostel, higher secondary school hostel, and university hostel. Take two hundred bags of rice for each hostel tomorrow." The warden relied, "Swami! We have got money. Outside each

bag of rice may cost one thousand to eleven hundred rupees. Therefore, we will give money." I said to him, "Oh madcap! Is it how you have understood Me after staying here for such a long time? When I am giving these rice bags with so much love and broad-heartedness, your heart is so narrow that you want to offer money for it. What a great blunder it is!" I am giving this rice for students because students are My property. Do you think I will take money from students?

"On festive days, father goes to the market and gets some dresses stitched for his children. Will the father say: 'Look here, I have got a shirt made for you. Give me a hundred rupees'? When even the worldly father does not do such a thing, how can Swami, who is the father of the entire universe, ask money from you? It will never happen." Swami has such a broad heart. You should also have a broad heart like Swami. I consider you as Mine. You also should say, "We are Yours." You have every right to say, "Our Swami, our Swami, our Swami." You should become deserving to have this right. That is what I expect from you.

When you limit yourself to coming here, studying, and going back, without earning this deservedness, then what is the use of all your education? This education is utterly useless. This is not what you have to learn. What you have to learn is to broaden your heart and follow the command of Swami in letter and spirit. Then only will you attain bliss. Till such time, you will not experience total bliss. The day you start following Swami's command, from that very day, you will start experiencing nectarine bliss.

I am always ready to confer bliss on you, but you are not ready to receive it.

When a photographer wants to take your photo, he will say 'ready' before clicking. You may move this side and that side before this, but when the photographer says, "sir, ready", you should be steady. Only then will you have a good photo. Prior to that, it does not matter even if you move. You should be ready when he says 'ready'.

We may be ready when the worldly photographer asks us to be ready. But the

divine photographer will not say, 'ready'. So, we should always be ready.

When He will click? We do not know! Only when you are always ready will your picture be imprinted in His heart properly. God is the greatest photographer. But He will not say, 'ready'. He may click at any moment. Therefore, be always ready. That is the quality of a true devotee.

(Bhagavan concluded His divine discourse with the bhajan, "Chittachora Yashoda Ke Bal ...")

21. Importance of discipline

Date: 19 June 1996 / Location: Brindavan

While uneducated birds and beasts Know how to lead regulated lives, Alas! Man endowed with intelligence Does not lead a disciplined life.

EMBODIMENTS of love! Discipline is vital to every living being. For man it is even more important like the spinal column. Without discipline mankind will be ruined.

Discipline means the observance of certain well-defined rules. Without such regulation it is not possible to maintain humanness. Such regulation contributes to the glory of human existence.

Discipline cannot be acquired from books. Nor can it be learnt from teachers. It has to be as natural component of one's daily life in the discharge of one's duties. Discipline is essential from the moment of waking to the time of going to sleep.

Discipline is essential in everyday life

Discipline is essential for every group, for every society and for every political institution. Without discipline there can be no society or Government. No nation can exist without discipline. It is discipline that unites man to man, and one society to another. Hence discipline is one of the basic insignia of social life.

Discipline has to be observed in speech, in sport and in every kind of relationship. For instance, during bhajans, all those singing in chorus have to maintain the same tune. Discordant singing will jar on the ears. Singing in unison in bhajans is a form of discipline.

In games, you have an umpire to enforce the rules of the game. Every player

has to observe the rules strictly. Sometimes while playing, in their enthusiasm, the players fall to observe the rules. The umpire, however, sees to it that the rules are enforced and the players have to obey him implicitly. Any player who does not obey will be violating the rules of the game.

Today it is because people do not observe the rules, whether in sports or elsewhere, life has become intolerable. Some persons hold positions of authority in business, in administration or in other institutions. Here also discipline is essential, dust because one holds an office, he cannot behave as he likes. He cannot be free with his tongue. In his words and his writings he should observe restraint. In the use of words, whether in speech or writing, care should be observed regarding their future implications. Your discipline will protect you in whatever you do. Even in a simple matter like walking on the road, many do not observe the rules. They choose to walk on the middle of the road instead of using the pavement. Jaywalking on the road is not only harmful to oneself but is a hindrance to others. Your motto in life should be: Help ever; hurt never.

Discipline must start from the early years, But it is needed not only by students but by elders and all persons in authority.

Students should learn the right way of doing things even in ordinary actions like sitting or reading. They should sit erect and keep the spinal column straight. This enables the Kundalini shakthi (coiled energy) to move up from the base of the spine - Muuladhara - to the top of the head. Sahasrara - through the vertebral column. This movement takes place during the yogic exercise known as Pranayama (breath control). This exercise is also useful for improving one's memory and powers of concentration.

Important elements of discipline

One of the important elements of discipline is physical purity. This does not merely mean keeping the body clean by a good bath. Real bodily purity calls for involvement in good actions. Good actions and good thoughts lead to

purity of mind and the intellect.

Another important aspect of discipline is keeping one's plighted word. The importance of this is illustrated by an incident in the life on Shirdi Baba. There was a sheristadhar by name Tharkad. His wife and 16-year-old son were ardent devotees of Shirdi Baba. Tharkad did not object to their worship of Baba. One day when they wanted to go to Shirdi, he gave them his consent. But Tharkad himself did not go to any shrine as he was a Brahmo Samajist. He did not go to Shirdi despite many appeals from his wife.

Tharkad's son told his father that he would not go to Shirdi because he was performing regular worship to Shirdi Baba in their house. This worship would be affected if he went to Shirdi. The lad told his father that every day he was making an offering of sugar candy to Baba and he was partaking part of the candy as prasadh (blessed offering) out of the conviction that Baba was receiving the candy. He declared: "I do not want any break in this practice. Hence I do not want to go to Shirdi." The father had great affection for the son. He told the son: "Babu, I shall perform that duty. You better go to Shirdi." The boy wanted an assurance from the father that he would carry out the promise. "Will you offer worship to Baba as I have been doing? Will you offer candy to him and later eat part of it as prasadh?" The father was moved by his son's determination and gave him the promise to carry on the worship during his absence. The mother and son left for Shirdi.

The father's lapse

The father kept the word given to his son and performed the worship in the manner of the son for a few days. Offering candy to Baba, he took a part of it after the worship before taking his meal. On a Thursday, Tharkad had some urgent business in the court and left the house in a hurry after performing puuja (worship). Returning for his meal, he asked the cook to bring the prasadh. The cook informed him that he had not offered any offering of candy that day. Tharkad felt very sad over his lapse in failing to keep the promise he had given to his son. He was sorry that he had failed to make the offering to

Baba.

At Shirdi, when the mother and son went to see Baba on the following Friday, Baba told the son: "Babu, yesterday I had been to Bangra, but no one gave me any food. Even the candy which you used to offer daily was not available. I have come back very hungry. Will you give me something to eat?" The boy was shocked on listening to Baba's words. He returned home and wept over his mother's lap. "Father gave me a promise, but he has not kept it and Baba was disappointed. I cannot stay here any longer. I must adhere to my daily routine. I shall go back to our place." At that time, Baba sent a chit to the boy through one dog. In his message, Baba said: "There is no need for you to go now. Your father failed to keep his word, but you have not failed in your duty. You have all my Grace. You can stay here as long as you wish." The boy stayed on for a few more days feeling very depressed and frustrated.

Truth is one. You must adhere to Truth

When the boy returned home, the father rushed towards him and begged his pardon. He said, "You. are young and I am old. But I am seeking your pardon because I failed to keep my promise." The boy said: "You must seek pardon not from me but from Baba. Whatever the Samaj (society) to which you may belong, whatever your beliefs, the promised word must be kept. Truth is one. You must adhere to truth. This is your duty as a lawyer. You have studied the law. You know very well how Emperor Manu upheld Dharma. If you do not adhere to Truth, you are violating the law."

If discipline is observed in this manner, one can experience the Divine directly. The first requisite is purity of the body.

What Is It You Gain, Oh Man, From Waking To Sleeping
If You Seek Only Bodily Comforts, Forgetting God? (Telugu Poem)

Restraint has to be observed even with regard to eating. Excessive eating is

the cause of many ailments. One fourth of the stomach should remain empty.

Discipline should govern every action of yours all through the day. Then it becomes Karma Yoga - the Yoga of Action. You must be the master of Karma and act according to Divine commands. This is the way to make education fruitful.

Be silent yourself; that will induce silence in others. Do not fall into the habit of shouting, talking long and loud. Reduce contacts to the minimum. Carry with you an atmosphere of quiet contemplation, wherever you happen to be.

- Sathya Sai Baba

22. Sacrifice and Selflessness are the Hallmarks of True Love (Alternative Translation)

Date: 20 June 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This is the alternative translation of the discourse originally published in Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 29.

The Heart That Is Bereft Of Love Is Virtually The Habitation Of Ghosts.
This Is The Apt Description Of Such A Heart.
Can We Call Blacksmith's Bellows A Living Entity
Just Because It Takes In Air And Throws It Out? (Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Sacrifice is the goal of love. Love does not desire anything. It does not criticise or harm anybody. It is selfless and pure. Not able to understand this principle of love, people crave love in many ways.

You should have faith that selflessness and the spirit of sacrifice are the hallmarks of true love. There is some element of selfishness and selfinterest even in the love between mother and child, husband and wife, and between brothers and friends. Only God's love is without any trace of selfishness and self-interest.

Realise the principle of unity

True love can bring close to you those who are distant or separated from you. It can transform a person with animal tendencies into a divine being. It can gradually change worldly and physical love into divine love.

People who wish to understand the principle of love should give up their selfishness and selfinterest. They should develop purity, steadfastness, and

other divine qualities to understand divine love. They should try to lead their life keeping their focus on the love of God, without paying heed to their difficulties and sufferings.

Even the principle of Brotherhood of Man does not reflect the true unity of mankind because there is a trace of selfishness and self-interest in this. Therefore, those who want to cultivate the spirit of brotherhood should have faith in the principle of oneness.

Today, there are differences even between brothers, due to which they are leading a life full of conflicts and difficulties. Therefore, brotherhood cannot connote true love.

When you realise that the same Atma is present in you, in Me, and in everyone, only then can you have the experience of true love. Individuals may be different, names and forms may vary, but the Atmic principle is the same in all. Therefore, one should realize the principle of unity in everything.

Jewels Are Many But Gold Is One.
Cows Are Many But Milk Is One.
Beings Are Many But Atma Is One.
Flowers Are Many But Worship Is One.
(Telugu Poem)

We should visualise unity in everything. Only then can we understand the love principle in its fullness. We should fill our heart with true love. Those who keep evil thoughts in their heart and pretend as if they are full of love deceive themselves. One who is endowed with true love will never give it up under any circumstances, at any place, and in any of their actions.

True love is selfless and changeless

Some students are full of love and purity as long as they are studying in the

university and staying in the hostel. The moment they enter the outside world, many changes occur in their mind. They say that the changes are due to the influence of their company, family, and circumstances, but this is not correct. If you really have pure, selfless, and steady love in your heart, there is no question of any change in you, wherever you may go. No company can cast any evil influence on you.

Here is a small example to illustrate this. You draw a creeper with many flowers on a piece of paper. When the wind blows, the paper will flutter but not the creeper drawn on the paper. Likewise, your mind may waver due to the influence of bad company, but your heart will remain steady when you are endowed with true love.

Nobody can change the true love that is present in your heart. Love should find place not just in your mind but in your heart. The mind is nothing but a bundle of thoughts. The love that is sustained in your mind by thoughts will be driven away by another current of thoughts. Therefore, preserve love and sacred feelings in your heart.

True love has three qualities. First, it knows no fear. Second, it does not beg anything from anyone. Third, it is love for love's sake and not for any material gain. These three qualities are the very core of love. This type of sacred love is actually true love.

Here is a small example. Once a king went to a forest to hunt. After some time, he felt tired and thirsty. He saw a small hut at a distance. He went to that hut, expecting somebody to be there. He found a sage engrossed in deep meditation. He sat there waiting patiently, since he did not want to disturb his meditation.

After a while, the sage opened his eyes and asked, "Sir, who are you? What makes you come here?" The king replied, "I am the ruler of a kingdom. I came to the forest to hunt. Since I felt tired, I entered your hermitage to take some rest." The sage was very happy to hear this and offered fruits and cool water to the king. The king was very pleased with the hospitality offered by the

sage. At the time of his departure, the king prayed to the sage, "Swami! My kingdom is quite nearby. Kindly come to my kingdom and accept my hospitality as a token of my gratitude." The sage, who had renounced everything, did not accept his invitation. But the king persisted, and ultimately the sage agreed just to satisfy the king.

After coming to the palace, both of them had their bath and entered the worship (puja) room. The king started praying, "Oh God of gods! I have become a king due to my great good fortune. But this small kingdom is not enough for me. Therefore, I want to extend my kingdom by annexing the nearby small kingdoms. Cast Your benevolent look on me and shower Your grace." On hearing these words of the king, the sage quietly got up and started to leave without saying anything.

"Swami! Will you go without eating anything? Kindly stay for some time," prayed the king.

The sage replied, "I did not come to beg from a beggar. You yourself are a beggar, and you are begging from God for petty gains. You are begging God to make your kingdom big. If I want anything, I will pray to the same God to whom you are praying. I don't require anything from you." It means to say that a person who has true love does not beg anything from anybody. There is even no need to ask anything from God. He gives you what you require at the appropriate time.

Do Not Ask, Oh Mind, Do Not Ask.
The More You Ask, The More You Will Be Neglected.
God Will Certainly Grant You What You Deserve
Without Your Asking.
Did He Not Grant The Wish Of Sabari, Who Never
Asked?
Did He Not Redeem Jatayu, Who Never Asked But
Sacrificed His Life For His Cause?
(Telugu Poem)

Did Sabari ask anything from Rama? Did Jatayu want any favour from Rama? No, not at all. When you call God with a pure, steady, and loving heart, He will come running to you. There is no need for you to ask anything from Him. This is the true quality and value of love for God.

Since you forget this divine principle of love and run after worldly gains, you are caught up in many difficulties and problems.

Leave everything to the will of God

Begging and asking something are related to worldliness and connote the path of worldliness (pravritti marg). True and sacred love relates to the path of spirituality (nivritti marg). When you adhere to the path of spirituality, all the tendencies of worldliness will vanish on their own.

Nobody knows how many precious and valuable things there are in God's treasury. You may be asking for glass pieces, but God may want to give you precious diamonds. You may be asking for petty things, when God would have resolved to give you something very precious. Therefore, leave everything to the Will of God. Only then will He give you what you really require.

You do not know what you really require and what you do not require. You also do not know what is good for you and what is not good for you. He will give you on His own what is good for you, what is beneficial for you, and what is ideal for you. It all depends upon His Will when and what to give.

When you offer everything to God with a steady mind and do all actions to please Him, He Himself will look after all your requirements. But people today do not have that firm faith. God is not able to fulfill their resolves because they lack faith. Faith is essential for everything.

You talk about devotion and faith. One should have faith in the principle of love. But, unfortunately, people do not have faith in their own love. Then how

can they have love for God? Your love is worldly, but God's love is pure and transcendental. God's love is limitless. In order to become the recipient of God's love, gradually reduce your worldly love.

When the examinations draw near, students start praying more and more. For what do they pray? They pray for passing the examination. But this is not the correct prayer. It is like begging. Do not become a beggar. A devotee should never resort to this type of begging.

When you give up all your desires and aspire only for God, then He will give you everything. However, all may not be at that high level in the beginning itself. Therefore, you have to ask God for certain things initially. If you do not ask, even your mother will not give you food. But she is only your worldly mother.

The divine mother has no worldly relationship with you. Her relationship with you relates to spirituality (nivritti). It is natural to ask and receive in the worldly path (pravritti marg). But in the spiritual path (nivritti marg), there is only the experience of bliss. Thereafter, there is nothing more to ask.

Accept what God gives you. Accept whatever He does. Do not question whether it is good or not. What you may be considering as bad may turn out to have good results.

When you suffer from malaria fever, the doctor will give you a quinine mixture, which is very bitter. The medicine may be bitter, but its effect will be good on you because it will cure your disease. Initially, you may find devotion very difficult. But you give up your resolve due to fear of difficulties.

Many noble persons underwent many difficulties and performed intense penance to attain divinity. Pleasure lies between two pains. Without pain, there can be no pleasure. You will experience real happiness only after you undergo difficulties.

Will the sugarcane give you jaggery on merely asking for it, without you

crushing it and extracting the juice? The diamond will gain real value only after many cuttings; without cutting, it will have little value. You can prepare beautiful jewels only when you put the gold in fire and beat it with a hammer. Likewise, you can experience divine bliss only when you develop divine love without caring for criticism of others and bearing all difficulties.

Attain unity of thought, word, and deed

Do not belittle the importance of God's love. It is highly sacred. It may appear to be worldly and ordinary, but in reality it is transcendental.

Every person should cultivate love for God. As I told you yesterday, the Knower, I (Aham), is born out of the Atma, the mind is born out of Aham, and speech is born out of the mind. Therefore, speech is the son of the mind, the mind is the son of Aham, and Aham is the son of the Atma. Father, son, grandson, and great grandson - all four belong to the same family of the Atma.

The Atma is immanent in all, and that is nothing but love. A person may be devoid of anything, but no one can be without Atma.

What is the principle of unity, which is present in all? It is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss (Sat-ChitAnanda). You can also call it conscience.

You are unable to see or catch air that is all around you, but can you say there is no air merely because you cannot see it or catch it? There is air. Similarly, you cannot deny the existence of consciousness (chaitanya) merely because you are unable to see it and experience it. Consciousness does exist.

The same is called 'being'. The 'being' is nothing but Sat, which is ever present, which does not come and go. There is nothing like coming and going for Sat. It is a great mistake to think it comes and goes.

People say, "God came and gave me darshan when I was meditating." This is

a worldly feeling. Wherefrom did He come to give you darshan? And where did He go after giving you darshan? He neither came from anywhere nor went to any particular place. He was there only.

You could see Him because your heart was pure. You cannot see Him when your heart is impure. But He neither comes nor goes.

As you all know, Dhruva was a child of five years. He had no worldly knowledge. Such a young lad entered a dense forest, performed intense penance, and contemplated on God by the power of his faith and the encouragement of Sage Narada.

You should have faith in the words of your elders. Dhruva wholeheartedly put his trust in the words of Narada, who was the mentally conceived son of Brahma (Brahma's manasa putra).

Dhruva's faith itself manifested in the form of Lord Vishnu before him. Lord Vishnu asked him, "My dear! What do you want?" Young Dhruva replied, "Oh Lord! You know where I was, how I was, and on whom I was contemplating. Having known all this, you have come to the place where I was sitting. Therefore, you also know very well what I want." When a young lad like Dhruva had so much knowledge, how much more knowledge should God be having? In fact, God has more knowledge than anybody else. He said, "My dear! No doubt, I knew where you were, and I also know what you want. However, I follow a certain system. I am ready to fulfill your desire only when there is harmony between your thoughts, words, and actions. While coming from your home, you told your mother that you would pray to God for the boon of sitting on your father's lap. You performed penance in accordance with your thoughts. Now I want to test whether your words are in harmony with your thoughts and actions." Dhruva replied, "Because I was beset with worldliness, I came in search of glass pieces - that was the desire to sit on my father's lap. Now I have found a precious diamond in the form of your darshan. It is my great good fortune that I have found a precious diamond while I was searching for glass pieces." Vishnu pointed out his weakness and said, "My dear! Your thoughts and actions denote something else while your

words convey a totally different thing. Your thoughts and actions are on one side while your speech is on the other. The majority lies with your thoughts and actions. Hence, go back to your kingdom and rule over it." Saying this, Vishnu sent him back to his kingdom.

In all your endeavours, God wants unity of thought, word, and deed (trikarana suddhi). To say one thing and do something else is not proper.

Even after performing such intense penance and ultimately attaining darshan of the Lord, Dhruva could not get what he wanted. What is the reason? It was due to the lack of unity of thought, word, and deed.

Cast off the veil of evil qualities

Therefore, always maintain the sacredness of your speech. Speech is born out of the mind. Vagaries of the mind make it impure. Since speech is the son of the mind, the impurity of the mind is reflected in speech, just as the son inherits the qualities of his mother. Truly speaking, the mind should have divine feelings, but it does not always happen.

The father and son can be totally different from each other. Take, for instance, Prahlada and Hiranyakasipu. Prahlada was a great devotee whereas Hiranyakasipu was totally evil-minded. A gem of a boy like Prahlada was born to such a wicked demon like Hiranyakasipu. Prahlada loved Lord Narayana, but Hiranyakasipu hated him.

Prahlada was the one who was not deluded by name and form whereas Hiranyakasipu put his faith only in name and form. You should get rid of the feelings of attachment to name and form.

Some day or the other, you have to leave your body. Therefore, give up body attachment. What you have to give up is not wife and children and property but the evil qualities of hatred and jealousy, which cover up your humanness. When you cast off this veil of evil qualities, you can attain bliss.

You develop a cataract. It is enough to get the cataract removed; then your eyesight will be restored. You need not make any special efforts to get back your vision.

In the same way, one's heart is covered with the evil qualities of attachment, hatred, and jealousy. To gradually give up these evil qualities is real sacrifice. When you give up your evil qualities, you will easily realise your Self. This, in fact, is your right.

The individual (manava) comes from God (Madhava). In spite of the fact that you have come from God, you forget God Himself.

The clouds are born out of the sun. The same clouds cover it up, but the sun does not develop any hatred toward them because all these are passing clouds. Why should one hate the clouds, which will move away in a short while? Likewise, the clouds of evil qualities and evil feelings cover up the bright sun of love (prema) in the heart of a person.

In such a situation, maintain your quietude. When you keep your poise, these clouds will move away on their own. The wind that brought them will also take them away.

What people have to do is to develop love more and more in their hearts. There is no task in this world that cannot be accomplished by love. Other qualities may not help you to achieve something, but if you have love, there is nothing that you cannot achieve. In fact, you can achieve everything with love. God is love, love is God (Prem Easwar Hai, Easwar Prem Hai). You should understand the unity of both and develop the principle of love. Develop the feeling that the suffering that causes pain to you causes the same pain to others also.

You should also understand the truth that others also love themselves as much as you love yourself. In every situation, put yourself in the position of others and then compare. This is self-enquiry. This is not comparison in the physical sense.

Develop the understanding that the type of feelings, difficulties, and sufferings that you have others also have. Similarly, others' love is also as pure as your love. This is what you have to compare lovingly with sacred feelings. Then there will be no room for hatred and jealousy in you.

In order to drive away the evil qualities of attachment, hatred, and jealousy, develop pure and selfless love devoid of ego. This is real devotion. All other spiritual practices like worship, soft repetition of the name, and meditation are merely steps toward controlling the wavering of your mind.

When you want to go onto the terrace of your house, you use a ladder. The ladder rests on the ground, but its upper end is supported by the wall. The support of the ground at the lower end of the ladder is faith, and the support of the wall at the upper end of the ladder is love. Therefore, with the help of both love and faith, you can reach any height.

Without these two supports, you cannot climb at all. It is impossible. You should have the support of both. You should have deep faith and sacred love. When you develop these two, there is no need to perform any spiritual practices like repetition of the name and meditation.

Sacrifice leads to everlasting bliss

What is the aim of repetition of the Name and meditation? Only to attain love and faith. When you have already attained these two, where is any need left for repetition of the Name and meditation? Where is the necessity to search for something that is already with you?

Many people think that they are in search of God. Why search for God, who is everywhere? Do you search for yourself anywhere? No, no. You do not search for yourself. You would be considered a madcap to go in search of yourself.

Searching for God is like searching for yourself. God is in you, with you, around you, above you, and below you. In fact, you yourself are God. Only

due to your attachment and identification with your body do you say that you are such and such.

That is not the reality.

In all the mythologies, epics, and other sacred scriptures that our ancient sages (rishis) have written, the question 'who am I?' is of utmost importance. What is the significance of asking you to know the answer to the question "who am I?' in preference to all other things to be known in this world?

When someone comes to you, you ask them, "Who are you? Where did you come from?" You ask everyone all these questions. But you never ask yourself, "Who am I, and where have I come from?" When you know who you are, you will know everything about others also.

What do you require for this? First and foremost, you require self-confidence. It is from self-confidence that you will have self-satisfaction. When you have self-satisfaction, you will undertake selfsacrifice. Only by self-sacrifice can you attain self-realisation. Therefore, self-confidence is the foundation, self-satisfaction are the walls, selfsacrifice is the roof, and self-realisation is life.

Without the foundation, there can be no walls, and without walls, you cannot have the roof. And if you don't have a roof over your head, how can you live? Therefore, see to it that your selfconfidence does not shake at all. Whatever may be the circumstances, even at the cost of your life, do not allow your self-confidence to waver.

You should develop such deep faith. When you develop faith, bliss will come to you on its own. When you attain this state of bliss, you will renounce everything. In this state, there will be no differences like mine and thine.

Sacrifice leads to immortal and everlasting bliss. But you are unable to take to the path of sacrifice. What is the reason? You are caught in the snare of ego and attachment, which take you to hell.

It is said that Yama, the lord of death, casts his noose around the neck of everyone and takes away their life. Where has Yama set up his rope factory to prepare the nooses for taking the life of all living beings? There is no such rope factory. There is no need to bring the noose from anywhere. Your ego and attachment are verily the noose that holds your neck tightly and causes your death.

Love for God will make you immortal

Do not think that your joys and sorrows are given to you by God. Your thoughts are the cause of both good and bad, happiness and sorrow. No one else is responsible for them.

It is a mistake to think that this or that person is the cause of your difficulties. You yourself are responsible for everything good and bad, happiness and sorrow, praise and blame.

When anybody else is the cause of your happiness and sorrow, then you have a reason for fear. But when you understand that you yourself are the cause of everything, then there is no scope for fear.

When do you become fearless? You become fearless when you fill yourself with love. You will be fear-stricken only when there are defects in you. Therefore, give no room to defects at all.

Before performing even a small task, enquire whether it is good or bad. Develop the discrimination to distinguish between good and bad. Take time to make this enquiry. Do not make haste. Haste makes waste. Waste makes worry. Therefore, do not be in a hurry. Maintain your poise in all situations and contemplate on God.

Develop love for God. This love will make you immortal. It will remove all your sorrows and bestow bliss on you. This is the education that you have to acquire.

Acquire both secular and spiritual education

You may acquire worldly and secular education, which forms the basis of your worldly life. Worldly education is meant for happiness in this world, and knowledge of Brahman (Brahma vidya) is for self-realisation.

Lead your life by integrating both the worldly and the spiritual education. Both are essential. They are like negative and positive charges, both of which are essential for the electric current to flow.

But people today acquire only secular education and fill their hearts with negativity. At the same time, they want positive results. This is impossible.

What is the reason? When you have filled your heart with total negativity, how can you expect anything positive? You lose the right to have anything positive. Therefore, fill your heart with positive feelings. Then you will attain everything.

Secular education is related to the world, but knowledge of Brahman (Brahma vidya) is related to the Supreme Being. When you acquire it, there will be no obstacles on your path.

Dear Students!

Many of you play football in the stadium. In the game of football, there are eleven players on one side and eleven players on the other side. There is a goal at the end of each side. The goal has two goalposts. When the ball goes through these goalposts, only then it is considered goal.

In the game of life, desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride, jealousy, etc. kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada, matsarya, etc.) are on one side and truth,

righteousness, peace, love, nonviolence, etc. (sathya, dharma, santhi, prema,

ahimsa, etc.) are on the other side. Both sides kick the ball of life. One of the poles of the goalpost is secular education and the other is spiritual education. The ball of life has to pass through these two poles. If the ball goes this side or that side, it will be considered out and not goal.

Do have secular education. Develop proficiency in that also. Making secular education as the basis, you should acquire spiritual education. Spiritual education is true education (Adhyatma vidya vidyanam).

Secular education is like a small river or a canal. Spiritual education is like an ocean. All rivers have to ultimately merge in the ocean. You may acquire any type of secular education, but ultimately you have to reach the ocean of divine grace.

Do not waste your life merely in the pursuit of worldly education. Make efforts with faith to develop the principle of love. Do not discard or ignore nature because nature is also the manifestation of God. God is the cause, and nature is the effect. The world is the manifestation of cause and effect. Therefore, see God in nature also. You can see Him in every atom.

22. Selfless love and firm faith

Date: 20 June 1996 / Location: Brindavan

A Heart Without Love Is Lifeless; Can You Call That Life
Merely Because There Is Breath In The Body?
It Is Just A Pair Of Bellows.

EMBODIMENTS of Love! The hall-mark of love is thyaga (selfless sacrifice). Love seeks nothing from anyone. It bears no ill-will towards anyone. It is utterly selfless and pure.

Failing to understand the true nature of love, man yearns for it in various ways. Love has to be cherished with feelings of selflessness and sacrifice. In what is deemed as love in the world - whether it be maternal love, brotherly love, or friendship - there is an element of selfishness. Only God's love is totally free from the taint of selfishness. Divine love reaches out even to the remotest being. It brings together those who are separate. It raises man from animality to divinity. It transforms gradually all forms of worldly love to Divine love. To experience this Divine love, men must be prepared to give up selfishness and self-interest. They must develop purity and steadfastness. With firm faith in the Divine, they must foster the love of God re gardless of all obstacles and ordeals.

However, even the feeling of universal brotherliness is not the same as the experience of Ekathvam (oneness). Even in such a fraternal feeling there is an element of self-interest. Those who really wish to promote universal brotherhood should develop the consciousness of the one Spirit dwelling in all beings. Even brothers are often found engaged in mutual bickerings and hatred. What is described as fraternity may not be real and unsullied love. True love should express itself in the awareness of the presence of the Divine in one and all. Names and forms may differ but the indwelling Spirit is the same in all.

One filled with Divine Love will be fearless

Fill your hearts with love. One will be betraying himself if he entertains evil thoughts, but pretends outwardly to be full of love. No one having Divine love will ever fail to manifest it anywhere at any time. Students, who behave well during their stay in the Institute, should maintain the same behaviour wherever they may live or work after leaving the Institute. There should be no room for any outside association or circumstances to change their conduct. Love should be firmly implanted in their hearts. One filled with Divine Love will be fearless, will seek nothing from others, and will be spontaneous and selfless in expressing his love. There is no need to pray for gifts from God. God will give of His own accord what is good for any devotee. Did not Shabari and Jatayu get the grace of Rama even without their asking for it? God will decide what to give, when to give, and where. Hence, all actions should be dedicated to God and He should decide what the devotee is fit to receive. When everything is left to God out of pure love and total faith, God will take care of the devotee. People today lack such firm faith. In the path of devotion many ordeals have to be overcome. Great devotees in the past faced such ordeals with faith and fortitude. Ultimately they secured the grace of the Divine and experienced bliss.

Dhruva's example

For example, take the case of Dhruva. He was a five-year old boy, who knew little about the affairs of the World. He acted upon the advice of Naradha and through severe penance was able to have a direct vision of God. His faith enabled him to secure this experience. But, when Vishnu appeared before him and asked him what he wanted, Dhruva said: "Lord! You came to me, knowing where I was doing my penance. Is it conceivable that you could not know what I want?" The Lord said: "I know what for your performed the penance.. When you set out from your home you took a resolve that you will perform penance and secure a boon from the Lord that you should be enabled to sit on the lap of your father. I want to know whether your words

and actions are in harmony." Dhruva said: "It is true that I came to perform penance for a small favour, a piece of valueless glass as it were. But, experience of your Form is like a diamond to me. What good fortune is mine that while seeking a glass bead I had found a brilliant diamond. I have no use for that glass piece." The Lord saw the contradiction between Dhruva's original resolution, his penance and his present desire. The Lord told him that he should stick to his original wish for which he had performed the penance and therefore return to the kingdom with the Lord's Blessings. This emphasizes the need for unity in thought, word and deed.

Recognise the Divine in the entire cosmos

For achieving anything in life, two things are essential: firm faith and pure love. People should not think that pleasure and pain are caused by some external forces. It is not so. They are the result of one's own thoughts. There is no meaning in blaming others. If you develop love of God, that love will banish all sorrow and evil tendencies like attachment, anger and envy. Students should pursue both spiritual education and secular studies.

You have to realise that Nature is also a manifestation of God. Hence, Nature should not be ignored. Nature is the effect and God is the cause. Hence you should recognise the imminence of the Divine in the entire cosmos.

23. As you sow, so shall you reap

Date: 30 June 1996 / Location: Brindavan

ALL the pains and pleasures man experiences are the results of his own actions and not due to any act of the Divine. God is only a witness. God is like a postman. He delivers to you whatever letter is addressed to you. The grief or joy you derive from the contents of the letter are your own. Likewise the suffering or happiness one experiences are the results of one's own bad or good deeds and are not derived from God.

However, there is the operation of special grace on certain occasions. When you pray to God with a pure heart, without a trace of selfishness and with sacred feelings, God confers special favour. Moreover, when a person has done some unique act of sacrifice in a previous life or at any time in the past, the Divine confers an appropriate reward for it at the proper time.

Krishna came to the rescue of Dhraupadhi when Dhuryodhana attempted to disrobe her, by making her sari endless, in return for the readiness with which Draupadi tore off a piece from her sari to bind the bleeding finger of Krishna.

The spontaneous magnanimity of Karna

Even a noble and large-hearted hero like Karna became an accomplice of the wicked Kauravas because of his association with them. Students should avoid bad company. To illustrate the spontaneous magnanimity of Karna I would relate an episode where Krishna had contrived to bring home to Arjuna the extent to which Karna was prepared to sacrifice himself to satisfy any one who came to him for help. Krishna assumed the form of a Brahmana and came to Karna on the battlefield asking for some gold. As the only way he could satisfy the Brahmana was to pull out his two golden teeth to give them to him, Karna did not hesitate to do so. He got them washed in Ganga water aiming an arrow at the ground and making the river spout forth. Arjuna, who had a high opinion of his own prowess and devotion to Krishna, felt humbled

at the sight of Karna's boundless generosity.

The ways of the Divine should be properly understood. God exists not for one nation or one community. God incarnates on earth for the benefit of all mankind. Each one gets the reward according to his deservedness. As are his actions, so are the fruits thereof. Hence before doing anything, one should consider whether it is right or wrong. One should see that no harm occurs to anyone on account of one's actions. This is not easy for one who is attached to the pleasures of the body. All sorrow is related to the body and worldly desires. You experience desires in the waking state. In the sushupthi (deep sleep) state one is totally unaware of even the body and of the phenomenal world. Hence there is no sorrow in that state.

Rely primarily on the power of the Divine

By constant contemplation on God the mind should be turned away from mundane desires That is the way to get rid of both pain and pleasure. Man has to make up from the sleep of ignorance and realise his divine essence Sath-Chith-Anandha. To the extent worldly desires are reduced, to the same extent bliss will be experienced. Simultaneously with the control of desires men should also get rid of Ahamkara (egoism).

Men today are filled with fear because they have no confidence in themselves. A bird can brave a storm because it has faith in its wings. But man succumbs to the slightest reverses of fortune because he does not rely on the power of the Spirit. People must rely primarily on the power of the Divine. With confidence in the Self, they should devote themselves to good deeds. This is the purpose of life. Every step you take must bring you nearer to God.

24. Not salaries but service

Date: 01 July 1996 / Location: Brindavan

EMBODIMENTS of Love! The educational system today prepares students for pursuing worldly gains and comforts, but makes no attempt to cultivate in them the qualities of righteousness, love of peace and promotion of social welfare. Both students and educationists are mainly concerned about using education for getting jobs and earning large incomes. What kind of life do they lead in their earning, career? After a so-called hard day's work, they spend their evenings in clubs, imagining that they get peace and rest there. If they wanted real peace they should have it in their homes. In the clubs they spend their time playing cards and having "bottles." Is this commendable? Does this befit persons calling themselves educated? Far from it. Not only do they ruin themselves this way, but also ruin their families.

Instead of falling a prey to such pernicious habits, the educated should use their knowledge for the improvement of society and thereby redeem their lives. Addiction to drink makes a man ultimately a slave of the bottle.

Man's debt to God

Man is the beneficiary of innumerable gratuitous gifts of God: wind, rain, sunlight and so on. What gratitude is man showing to God for all these, while he his paying a big price for every small benefit he derives from services like water supply and electric power? God is the provider of all that is essential for life. What recompense is man making to God? On the contrary he goes on praying for more benefits. This insatiable desire is the cause of all man's evil qualities. The truly human qualities are calmness, forbearance and compassion. Man should lead a contented life.

God has given to man a wonderfully beautiful world, with mountains, forests, rivers and the glorious moon. Above all, God has endowed man with a compassionate heart. But he is polluting it. What is it that man owes to God

for all his gifts? The ancient sages called it bali (sacrificial offering). The term bali has been misunderstood as the offer of an animal as sacrifice. The right meaning of bali is tax.

Many such terms are often given wrong meanings in common usage. For instance, the term Shikhandi is interpreted as referring to a hermaphrodite (one who is neither a man nor a woman). The true meaning, however, is "one who wears a peacock feather." The term is applied to Krishna.

What is the bali (tax) to be paid to God? Only the expression of our gratitude by a heartfelt prayer. That prayer is an expression of one's joy and thankfulness. The hands should be lifted in prayer and the words should come out full-throated. It is unfortunate that even those who are gifted with good voices do not sing aloud in bhajans. Man has been endowed with a tongue to sing the praise of God. If he falls to do so, he remains indebted to God.

The right attitude of the devotee should be one of total surrender. As one devotee declared: "I am offering to you the heart which you gave me. I have nothing I can call my own. All are yours. I offer to you what is yours. What else can I do?" This was the spirit in which Lakshmana served Rama. As long as this spirit of total surrender is not developed, man will have to be born again and again. One should offer one's heart to the Divine, and not be content with offerings like flowers, and fruits.

You should offer your knowledge for the benefit of the people. You should set an example to your fellowmen. Cultivate the spirit of oneness of all mankind. It is to teach this message that the Sai advent has taken place. Sai has come to indicate the omnipresence of God. The Avathar has come down to declare that God is present everywhere. This is as necessary as the need for some one to light a lamp even if you have a lamp holder, oil and wick. The Avathar comes not only to proclaim the eternal virtues but also to shower His love on all mankind. But each one will get the benefit according to the size of the vessel he holds.

25. Adherence to truth

Date: 02 July 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

THERE is an eternal Truth which transcends the categories of time and space and is beyond the three gunas - Sathva, Rajas and Thamas. This Truth is God. All creation has emanated from this Truth and merges in it. The phenomena perceived by the senses are by their very nature transient and ever changing. The Spiritual reality is unchanging. The three letters in the term Sathyam represents Prana (life), Annam (food) and the Sun, who is the sustainer of all life. All the three represent the Brahmam. Another meaning of Sathya is control of the outward and inner senses. When there is such sense control combined with purity in thought, word and deed, one experiences the Divine.

Dharma is based on Sathya. The Upanishathik saying is: "Sathyam vadha; Dharmam chara" (Speak the Truth and practise righteousness). Today the number of persons adhering to truth is one in a thousand or so. Most of one's life is spent in untruth. A true being should lead a life based wholly on truth. Man is in desperate search of bliss in the external world, forgetting that the source of bliss is within him. Ignorance of his inherent Divinity makes a man miserable. When the ignorance goes, his blissful nature reveals itself. Man has to realise this basic truth.

Overcome difficulties by adherence to Truth

Students! You should realise that whatever difficulties you may encounter in life, you can over come them by steadfast adherence to truth. You must carry out your promise at any cost. You have the example of Emperor Bali, who honoured his pledge to Vamana even at the cost of his kingdom and against the warning of his preceptor. Bali declared that there is no greater sin than going back on one's plighted word.

Even ten persons who adhere firmly to truth can save the world. How many today are prepared to sacrifice all theirs for truth? People listen to endless

discourses, meet noble personalities and read all the scriptures. Of what use is all that when there is no practice of the teachings?

Man has evolved from the animal to the human and he must progress towards the Divine. Unfortunately today he tends to revert to animality. Man should realise the infinite preciousness of human birth.

26. Bhagawan deplores devotees' lapses

Date: 03 July 1996 / Location: Brindavan

Without Giving Up Thamasik Tendencies How Can The Truth Be Realised?
Without Giving Up Rajasik Qualities Bhakthi Cannot Be Promoted.
The Practice Of Bhakthi
Is The Sathvik Quality.
Hearken! Oh Valiant Son Of Bharath!

THIS entire phenomenal universe is an expression of three qualities - Sathva, Rajas and Thamas. Every human being is an embodiment of these three qualities. How can such a being transcend the three qualities? It is only when man recognizes these qualities that he can go beyond them. For all ordinary persons, all the three qualities are essential. Man cannot live without sleep. Man cannot perform any action without prior enquiry. Thought must precede any action. Sleep, enquiry and mentation are Thamasik qualities.

Man cannot carry on his normal daily life without Rajasik activities. All desires arise from the Rajasik quality. Even the yearning for God is a Rajasik quality. There is a Telugu saying: "No one can have the desire for liberation without experiencing other desires." Desires may be diverse, but their essential nature is the same. Qualities like anger, jealousy, hatred, pride and pompousness are Rajasik in nature. Even in the Rajasik quality there is an element of the Sathvik quality. Like the river Sarasvathi which is said to flow unseen between the rivers Ganga and Yamuna, the Sathvik quality is also present in a subtle form as the undercurrent between the Thamasik and Rajasik qualities. As one examines each of these qualities individually, it will be found that there is a substratum of the Sathvik quality in the other two.

To develop the Sathvik quality, the Thamasik quality is an accessory and the Rajasik quality is a necessary stage. When one goes beyond these two, the full nature of the Sathvik quality manifests itself.

From highway man to sage

How does one get over the Thamasik quality? There is the example of Rathnakara, who was originally a highway robber harassing and plundering wayfarers. Absence of compassion and consideration for others is the mark of Thamasik nature. Such a person was transformed into a great sage by the contact and teaching of the Seven Sages (Vasishta and others). Not only did he become a sage, he also became an immortal poet, the author of the Ramayana, the epic story of the Rama Avathar. The term Kavi (poet) signifies one who has a vision of the past, the present and the future. The so called poets of today can hardly be called poets in the ancient sense of the term.

Valmeeki and Vyasa, by their penance, transcended the three qualities, experienced the Divine and acquired the capacity to envision the three categories of time - the past, the present and the future - thereby they became immortal poets. The company of the good was responsible for the transformation of a totally Thamasik person like Rathnakara into the totally Sathvik sage, Valmeeki. This shows that no one need feel that a Thamasik person cannot become a Sathvik person. For every transformation Divine Grace is the cause. It is possible at one jump to proceed from the Thamasik to the Sathvik nature by Divine Grace and association with Godly persons.

From emperor to Brahmarishi

Coming to the Rajasik quality; it is characteristic of persons belonging to the Kshathriya (warrior) caste. Hatred, jealousy, ostentation, egoistic pride, are some of the traits associated with the Rajasik quality. The sage who exemplifies the transformation from the Rajasik to Sathvik quality is Vishvamithra. Vishvamithra, who was steeped in Rajasik tendencies, became a great Rajarishi and later a Brahmarishi. His antipathy to sage Vasishta went to the extent of even contemplating the destruction of the sage. Vishvamithra was hovering near the ashram when he overheard a conversation between Vasishta and his spouse, Aurndhathi. Arundhathi expressed her admiration for

the beautiful unblemished light the fullmoon was shedding that night. Immediately Vasishta observed: "Tonight's fullmoon is shining untainted like the pure penance of Vishvamithra."

On hearing these words, Vishvamithra realised how mistaken he was regarding Vasishta and rushed into the ashram, fell at the feet of Vasishta and prayed to him to forgive him. Vasishta lifted Vishvamithra and hailed him as Brahmarishi (a sage who has realised the Supreme Self). Vasishta, who had previously described Vishvamithra as a Rajarishi (a royal sage), spontaneously hailed him as a Brahmarishi. Vishvamithra could not contain himself and asked Vasishta on what grounds he was calling Vishvamithra a Brahmarishi. Vasishta said: "Vishvamithra! Hitherto you were filled with self-conceit. You are born with ego, grew with ego, and never bowed your head to any one. Today you put an end to your ego and fell at my feet. This is the significance of egolessness. A Brahmarishi is one who is free from egoism, acquisitiveness, pride and arrogance.

A true rishi is one who is free from evil tendencies

A rishi is not one who is a great scholar or a ritualist, but one who is free from evil tendencies.

The transformation of Rathnakara from a highwayman to a sage, who could compose the Ramayana, was possible because of his association with great risihis. But association alone was not enough. He practised wholeheartedly what the sages taught him. He lost his body consciousness in the contemplation of the name of Rama to such an extent that an ant-hill rose over him from which vibration of Rama's name could be heard.

A similar transformation occurred in the case of Vishvamithra also. From a Rajasik King he became a Brahmarishi by sacrificing all earthly pleasures and performing severe penance.

Coming to the Sathvik quality, it should be noted that its main characteristic

is a perennial state of peace. Other traits related to Sathva are forbearance, compassion, truth and similar virtues. The Sathvik quality gives no room for vices like lust, anger, greed and envy. The Sathvik person converts any action of anger into an act of love. If one cannot effect such a change, all his austerities are useless.

Devotees' failures to practise love

Now, I wish to refer to a matter which you should consider without any misunderstanding. I have been propagating the message of love for many years. In every discourse Prema (Love) is repeatedly mentioned. How many of you are comprehending this love or practising it? If any comes to you with a query, can't you give a loving answer? I have not seen a single individual giving a loving reply. Either in the Mandhir, or in the canteen or in the Book Stall, or in the Accommodation Office or in the Hospital or in any other establishment there is not a hint of the word 'Prema.' Why, then, should you listen to these discourses? If any newcomer asks about how to have dharshan of Swami he is rudely brushed aside with a "get away!" Cannot you tell somebody calmly what you know? If educated persons are approached, they dismiss the seeker of information with a curt: "No, this is not my duty." Should answering a question be prescribed as a duty? What does anyone lose if he gives a calm and loving answer?

Whether it be women or men devotees who have been staying here for over two decades, no one has a loving heart. They profess to perform sadhana, or japa or meditation, but what for are they doing all this? What has happened to the love in them? They seem to be stifling it. They are developing ill-feelings. If you are really serious about listening to Swami's teachings, why don't you put them into practice? People live in the ashram, but their practices are unbecoming.

Is anyone doing any duty assigned to him with dedication? Are they uttering truth? Are they speaking pleasantly? I have neither seen nor heard such things.

If anyone wants to talk to you, you can excuse yourself if you want to avoid any talk. You can explain sweetly: "Swami disapproves of excessive talk. I have to adhere to His injunctions."

Open your hearts for God's love

I do not find any teachers or students, doctors or nurses talking lovingly. There should be some benefit from your listening to the discourses. But there is nothing of the kind. During bhajans the women are engaged in mutual recrimination. They quarrel over seats. "This seat is mine. That is yours." They compete for front seats. Cannot they experience Bhagawan wherever they are? You have plenty of time and are receiving plenty of love. But you don't avail yourself of it. If you keep your pots topsy turvy, how can you collect any water even if there is a downpour? Today those who listen to the discourses are keeping the pots of their hearts upside down. Hence not a drop of love gets into your hearts. Why, should you come here? Cannot you live elsewhere? What is the use of your coming here? What are you achieving from your stay? What bliss are you deriving? Nothing at all. It is sheer waste of time.

Treat patients with love

At least from now on, reply with love to anyone who comes to you. Those functioning in the Accommodation Office or Public Relations or other places in the ashram should not behave like bull-dogs or Alsatian hounds. We are spending crores of rupees on the hospitals. Why should not the patients be treated with love? Many patients will get well merely by kind and sweet words. But many of them are turned away rudely. This is totally unbecoming of persons claiming to be devotees. If they have come to serve Swami, they should cultivate love as the first quality. Swami is the embodiment of love from head to foot. I offer love. You accept it, but do not make good use of it.

Embodiments of love! I continue to call you as such though you are lacking in

love! You need not cultivate anything but love. That will be equal to any amount of penance you can possibly do.

When new devotees come to the ashram you must welcome them as the air-hostesses do on a plane. In the Institute also, freshers who join in the new year should be welcomed and treated with special regard and affection. They should be made to forget the separation from their parents. In outside colleges, new entrants are subjected to ragging by the old students.

This conduct is demonic. Is this the way to treat the new entrants, who should be made to feel happy and comfortable? Likewise new entrants to the hostel should be welcomed with love and helped to adjust themselves to their new life. It is only when you show them due consideration that you would have really understood Swami's Prema-thathva (Love Principle).

Stony devotion

Learn to respect all. Only then will you earn the grace of the Divine who is the Indweller in all beings. Harming living beings and worshipping inanimate idols, what kind of devotion is this? Bullocks which work night and day are whipped, but a stone idol of Nandhi is adored by going round it. This is stony devotion! Not devotion from the heart.

At least from now on, make your hearts pure. Fill it with genuine compassion instead of talking about compassion ad nauseam.

You have been in this ashram for many years. Ashram means a place where there is no stress or strain. Many devotees feel that they are being driven about like street dogs outside the ashram and pray for at least a few quiet moments in the interview room. But, how many can be taken into the interview room? It is not possible to give an interview for all at one time. Hence, this open interview for all! All are being treated alike. Develop love. From tomorrow you must speak to one another lovingly. Get rid of your animal qualities. Love all. This is the true Sathvik quality.

Manifest your humanness and progress towards the Divine. Get rid of animality and demonic qualities. To acquire Swami's grace the path of love is the only royal road.

Youth is the stage in life when the slightest turn towards wrong will spell disaster. Thoughts shape the careen You plan to earn much wealth, because you imagine that rich people are very happy. The rich have plenty to eat, but they have no appetite. The rich wield power over others but they are held down by disease. The rich can have many servants but they cannot live in peace. So, plan to be rich in virtue, in devotion and dedication to good causes. Be rich in sovereign character.

- Sathya Sai Baba

26. Love is the Royal Road to Attain Swami's Grace (Alternative Translation)

Date: 03 July 1997 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This is the alternative translation of the discourse originally published in Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 29. This discourse appears in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared again in Sanathana Sarathi, January 2011.

How Can You Realise The Atmic Principle Without Giving Up Your Slothful (Thamasic) Quality?
It Isn't Possible To Develop Devotion Without Leaving The Passionate (Rajasic) Quality.
Cultivation Of The Pure-Serene (Sathwic) Quality Is The Real Means To Develop Devotion.
Listen To This, Oh Valiant Sons Of Bharat (India)! (Telugu Poem)

The three qualities of sathwa, rajas, and thamas (serenity, passion, and sloth)1 are the basis of the visible world. Every human being has these three qualities. How can one escape from the influence of these three qualities in daily life? One can transcend them only when one develops the wisdom to discriminate which among these qualities is good and which is bad.

Develop the quality of purity-serenity

The quality of thamas, which denotes dullness, ignorance, illusion, cruelty, sleep, etc., is the lowest quality. Sathwa, on the other hand, is the highest quality because it represents peace, calmness, knowledge, harmony, etc. in humanity. The rajasic quality indicates desire, passion, action, agitation, restlessness, etc.

All desires of humanity arise out of the rajasic quality. Even desire for God is also a type of rajasic quality. One without desire will not desire even

liberation. Anger, hatred, jealousy, ego, ostentation, etc. are all rajasic qualities. Desire may be of any type, but the basic nature of the desire remains the same.

Generally, we minimize the amount of Sanskrit in order to make a discourse as easy to read as possible. But the three words sathwa, rajas, and thamas have no suitable one-word translations. Further, in this discourse, Sai Baba discussing these three words extensively, giving various meanings and the effects these qualities have on people. Therefore, we will use the Sanskrit words throughout this discourse.

The sathwic quality is the undercurrent of both rajasic and thamasic qualities, just as the river Saraswati flows as the undercurrent of both the Ganga and the Yamuna rivers. The sathwic quality will manifest in you when you shed your rajasic and thamasic qualities one by one, gradually.

Transcend the qualities of thamas and rajas

The qualities of thamas and rajas are like stepping stones to the quality of sathwa. Only when you transcend these two can you develop the sathwic quality.

What does the quality of thamas denote? Wayside robber Ratnakara is an example of thamasic quality. Without any kindness and compassion, he used to waylay travelers, kill them, and rob them of their money for his selfish ends. Lack of kindness and compassion denotes thamasic quality.

Such a wicked person like Ratnakara was transformed into not only one of great penance but also a great poet by the vision, touch, and conversation of seven sages (sapta rishis). He dedicated his poetry to the glorification of God.

Who is a real poet? A real poet is one who has realised their true Self and has the knowledge of the three periods of time: past, present, and future. But due to the impact of Kali Age (the age we are now in), today, all those who can

compose a few rhyming lines are considered poets. But they are not poets in the real sense of the term.

Sages like Valmiki and Vyasa were real poets; they could know the past, present, and future by the power of their penance. Not only that, they even transcended time and had the vision of God.

The main cause of Ratnakara's transformation from a totally thamasic individual into a completely sathwic one was the good company (sathsang) of the seven sages and the grace of God. In fact, God's grace is most important for one's transformation. Nobody can say when, where, and how God will shower His grace on us. Therefore, a thamasic person need not remain a thamasic person forever but can directly become a sathwic person.

It is not necessary to first be transformed from a thamasic to a rajasic person and then from a rajasic to a sathwic person. By the grace of God and the teachings of noble souls, a thamasic person can directly become a sathwic one, just as Ratnakara became a purely sathwic person by the teachings of the seven sages and attaining the grace of God by performing intense penance.

The second quality is rajas. Hatred, jealousy, ostentation, ego, anger, etc., are all rajasic qualities. Sage Viswamitra exemplified this quality. All his life was beset by the rajasic quality, but ultimately, he was transformed into a great sage.

Sage Vasishtha was considered a divine sage (brahmarshi), but Viswamitra was considered only a royal sage (rajarshi). This was the main cause of Viswamitra jealousy and hatred toward Vasishtha. To what extent did this hatred develop in him? His hatred reached to such an extent that he resolved to put an end to Vasishtha's life.

On a full moon night, Vasishtha was engaged in a conversation with his wife, Arundhati. During the course of their conversation, Arundhati appreciated the brightness of the moon, saying, "Today the moon appears to be without any

blemish." Vasishtha replied, "It is verily true. The moon is shining without any blemish, like the penance of Viswamitra." Viswamitra, who was hiding in a nearby bush with the intention of killing Vasishtha, heard this conversation. It was an eye-opener for him. He said to himself, "Sage Vasishtha is extolling the greatness of my penance before his wife. Fie on me that I harbour hatred against such a noble person! This is a great mistake. This is due to the evil influence of the rajasic quality on me. This quality can make a person commit any heinous act." Thinking thus, he threw away his sword, ran to Vasishtha, and fell at his feet. As soon as Viswamitra fell at his feet, Vasishtha blessed him without even looking at his face, saying, "Viswamitra! Oh divine sage! Get up!" Vasishtha, who till then had addressed him only as "royal sage", now called him a divine sage without any hesitation.

Viswamitra was overjoyed and asked Vasishtha, "So far, you were calling me only a royal sage. Why did you now address me as 'divine sage'?" Vasishtha replied, "Viswamitra! Till now, you were beset with ego. You were born in ego, grew in ego, and led a life full of ego. You never bowed your head before anyone. But today you fell at my feet, shunning all your ego. This is the sign of egolessness. That is why you have now attained the status of a divine sage." The principle of divine sage (brahmarshi) denotes egolessness. A divine sage is one who is totally devoid of ego, attachment, and ostentation.

Howsoever educated, learned, or high ranking person one may be, one should always think, "I am just a puppet in the hands of God. Everything in this world is the play of God. Whatever way He pulls the strings, the puppets dance accordingly." When such feelings develop in a person, they become truly deserving to be called a divine sage.

One who develops ego and attachment, thinking, "I am the doer; this is mine, that is yours," becomes a rajasic person. The feelings of I and mine denote ego and attachment. The moment one roots out one's ego and attachment, one rises to the level of a divine sage.

The term sage (rishi) does not denote a person of high learning or great penance; it denotes the quality of sathwa. The change from the thamasic and

rajasic qualities to the sathwic quality denotes saintliness and divinity.

Never leave truth and righteousness

Have love for God, fear of sin, and morality in society (Daiva preeti, papa bheeti, and sangha neeti). These are natural qualities of a human being. They impart great value to humanness.

Since people today has forgotten truth (sathya) and left righteousness (dharma), their value as human beings has declined. Birds and animals follow their natural qualities; it is unfortunate that humanity has devalued itself by not following its natural qualities. Rather, mankind is resorting to qualities that are unnatural to mankind.

The student who spoke earlier talked about one's own dharma or duty (swadharma) and someone else's duty or business (paradharma). Your own dharma is related to the Atma, and someone else's dharma to the body. Paradharma leads to the path of worldliness and swadharma to the path of spirituality.

Today people have forgotten their own duty and are following only other people's business. That is why today the value of a person is on the decline, whereas the value of all commodities and even of vegetables like eggplant and even lady's fingers (okra) is on the rise.

What is the main cause of humanity's downfall? The main cause is that people have forgotten truth (sathya) and righteousness (dharma). Because humanity has forsaken dharma, dharma has forsaken humanity.

Protect dharma, and dharma will protect you (Dharmo rakshati rakshitah). Dharma protects those who protect dharma. Those who destroy dharma are destroyed by dharma.

People should speak truth and follow righteousness. Today, people only talk

about dharma but don't follow it. What is the value of merely speaking without practice? Standing on the platform, people give long lectures on dharma. But they do not practise dharma even till such time they get down from the platform. How can dharma protect such people?

Many people today only preach and propagate dharma, but they themselves never put it into practice. Preaching and propagating is not important; practice is most essential.

Can merely reading the names of delicious dishes in a book fill your stomach? You may read the names of many sweets like gulab jamun, burfi, palkova, etc., but you can experience their sweetness and know their taste only when you put them into your mouth. In the same way, people today speak about truth and righteousness on the basis of bookish knowledge. Merely speaking about truth and righteousness is not enough; put them into practice in your life.

Ratnakara, who was beset with thamasic qualities, did not merely listen to the teachings of the seven sages. He put them into practice by constantly repeating the Lord's Name. By his deep contemplation, he lost his body consciousness. In fact, he gave up his ego and body attachment to such an extent that he had no awareness when an anthill grew over his body.

Pride of education, wealth, family status, and attachment to body are the cause of bondage. The day Ratnakara gave up all these types of attachment, he was transformed into a great sage. Not only that, he even earned the deservedness to write the story of Lord Rama.

He was transformed into a great sage by the vision, touch, and conversation (darshan, sparshan, and sambhashan) of the seven sages. All his evil qualities were transformed into virtues by his good company (satsangha) with these sages.

Similar is the case of Viswamitra. In the beginning, he was a king by name Kaushika, who was the epitome of all rajasic qualities. When he renounced his

kingdom along with all its comforts and performed intense penance, he became a royal sage (rajarshi). By following the teachings of Vasishtha, he ultimately became a divine sage (brahmarshi).

Talk to devotees with love

The third quality is the quality of sathwa. What does sathwa really mean? Peace, forbearance, empathy, adherence to truth, etc., are the qualities of a sathwic person. Such a person does not give any room to the six evil qualities of desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride, and jealousy (kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada, and matsarya).

A sathwic person can even transform hatred into love. What is the use of performance of penance if one cannot do this?

I want to give you an example to illustrate this point, but you should not think otherwise. Swami has been constantly teaching the principle of love. In every Discourse, He keeps on repeating, love, love, love ..., but, how many of you follow this teaching and experience love?

If a devotee comes to you and asks a question, do you reply to him with love? A person who gives a reply with love is nowhere to be seen. Nobody speaks with love wherever one may go - in temple, canteen, accommodation, book stall, or hospital. Then, what is the point in listening to Swami's discourses?

Is there at least one person who speaks with love? If a new devotee comes and asks, "When is Swami's darshan?" he gets a curt reply, "Go, go, I do not know". Even if you don't know, shouldn't you reply with humility and courtesy? Even educated persons give a blunt reply, saying, "This is not my duty. Go away." Isn't it a matter of duty to give a proper reply? What do you lose if you speak softly and say with love whatever you know?

A number of men and women have been residing in the ashram for the last twenty, thirty, and even forty years. But has even one of them a heart full of

love? They undertake various spiritual practices like chanting God's name, penance, and meditation. Why do they sit in meditation? Where has their love gone? They have literally killed love and developed only hatred. When they listen to Swami's discourses, why don't they put them into practice? They reside in the ashram but if you see their deeds, it is all evil. Do they perform any task with earnestness? Do they speak truth anywhere? Do they utter even one word with love? I don't see or hear anything spoken with love and truth.

When somebody comes to you with a query, talk to them with love. Even if somebody asks you unnecessary questions and tries to prolong the conversation, reply to them with love, saying, "Kindly forgive me. Swami does not like too much of talking. Therefore, I don't like to prolong this conversation, since I am following Swami's command." What is wrong in replying in this manner?

I don't find even one person among students, teachers, doctors, nurses, and workers who speak with love. Then what is the use of your listening to Swami's discourses? When there is a heavy rain, doesn't the ground become wet? Having listened to My discourses, should My teachings not be reflected in your conduct?

Everyone tries to occupy the front seat during darshan, bhajan, and discourses. In the bhajan hall, ladies quarrel with each other for a front seat. Where is the need for such ego clashes? Why does it matter where they sit? Shouldn't they be happy and satisfied that they are able to enjoy namasmarana?

Fill your heart with love

Fill your heart with compassion and love.

When there is a heavy rain, you can collect as much water as you like if you keep your pot outside with its mouth up and straight. On the other hand, if

you keep the pot upside down, you can't collect even one drop of water even if there is a downpour.

Similarly, people listen to Swami's discourses but keep the vessel of their heart upside down. That is why they don't develop even an iota of love in their heart.

Why have all of you come here? What is the use of your living here? Is there no other place for you? What benefit do you derive by coming here? What have you achieved? What are you achieving? What are you experiencing? Are you experiencing bliss?

No, not at all. You are simply wasting your time. Understand this truth and at least from today onward, speak with love to all those who come to you for help.

Many places like the accommodation office, information office, canteen, hospital, and bookstall involve dealing with the public. Some people behave like bulldogs and Alsatian dogs while dealing with public.

I don't find kind-hearted persons anywhere. What is the use of leading such a life? We are spending crores of rupees on hospitals. Why don't you treat the patients with love?

Some doctors do treat the patients with love. When they talk to the patients sweetly and softly, half of their disease is cured. But some others drive the patients away, saying, "Now there is no time." They don't merely say "get out" to the patients but say much more!

Such persons cannot be called doctors and devotees. In fact, they are not human beings at all. If you have really come for Swami, you should develop love. Swami is the embodiment of love from top to toe. I give only love. You receive My love but you do not make use of it.

Compassion is the hallmark of a true devotee

Embodiments of Love!

You may not have love in you, yet, I address you as "Embodiments of Love".

There is no need for you to develop anything else except love. When you develop love, you will acquire enormous power of penance.

What did Sage Vasishtha say to his wife, Arundhati? He praised Viswamitra in his absence and said, "How beautifully the moon is shining, without any blemish. just like the penance of Viswamitra"! Viswamitra's heart melted on just hearing Sage Vasishtha's words suffused with love.

When a new devotee comes to the ashram, people working in the ashram departments should welcome them with all cordiality and courtesy, like a good host. Students in the Institute should behave in the same way. When new students join the Institute, they should treat them like their own brothers so that they overcome the feeling of gloominess caused by separation from their parents.

In outside colleges, the newcomers are put to the severe ordeal of ragging, in the process of which some of the newcomers even lose their lives. Those who behave with newcomers in this manner are verily demons. Will they harass a newcomer if he happens to be their brother? Instead of giving the newcomers courage and happiness, senior students create fear and anxiety in them.

This is no education (vidya) at all. This is only ignorance (avidya). This is not the sign of discrimination (viveka) and compassion (daya). This is the sign of foolishness and cruelty.

Newcomers should be welcomed with great love. You should offer them a seat by your side. with all love and care. But, unfortunately, this is not happening today. People reserve their seats, saying, "This is my seat." They

don't allow the newcomers even to sit near them. This is not good.

All should live unitedly. Only then can you understand Swami's principle of love. Whomever you speak to, speak with love. If you are not able to answer any question, say with humility, "I don't know. Kindly forgive me." But, unfortunately, you chase them away like animals, saying, "Go, go, I don't know." This is not at all the correct behaviour.

All are human beings. Therefore, respect and love everybody. Only then will you become deserving of love of God, who is the indweller of all beings.

What sort of worship is this if you worship the inanimate idol of God and cause suffering to living beings, who are the manifest forms of God?

Bullocks do hard work day and night, and you beat them with a whip. But when you see the stone idol of Nandi in a temple, you do circumambulation (pradakshina) and offer your obeisance to it. It is the worship of a stone and not the real worship of God. How can such stone-hearted people be called devotees?

At least from today onward, fill your heart with compassion. Everybody says 'compassion, compassion, compassion', but where is compassion? There is only fashion but no compassion.

Some people always cause suffering to others. This is not good.

You have been staying in the ashram for a long time. What is an ashram? An ashram is a place where there is no shrama (distress or suffering).

Devotees who come here are put to a lot of suffering and they feel, "If Swami gives us an interview, we can be happy at least for some time in the interview room because outside we are being treated like dogs." To how many people is it possible for Me to give interview? Can I give interview to all the people who come here? No. That is why I am giving this big interview to all of you together.

Love is the highest sathwic quality

Develop love more and more. From tomorrow onward, talk to everyone with love. Reply to everyone with love. If you know the answer to the question asked, tell it properly. Otherwise, say, "Excuse me, I don't know." I have told you many times: You cannot always oblige, but you can always speak obligingly.

Talk less. Only then can you get rid of animal qualities. How can you behave like a human being if you harbour animal qualities? First and foremost, give up animal qualities.

Love, love, love. Share your love with everyone. That is true sathwic quality.

But you are leading a life full of rajas, which is a demonic quality. You are a human being. Ask yourself and give the answer also to yourself, "Who am I? I am not an animal or a demon; I am a human, I am a human, I am a human." You are neither an animal nor a demon nor a wicked person. You are a human being. Always keep on reminding yourself, "I am a human being, I am a human being." Only then can you rise to the level of the Divine. When you question yourself in this manner, immediately the answer will comes to you from within you only.

People today lack compassion and love. They do not give proper reply to anybody. At least from now onward, give a proper reply. Talk with love to the patients who come to the hospital. Give them the correct medicine after thorough examination.

But, unfortunately, cruelty is on the rise in human beings today. Why? The reason is the impact of modern education, which promotes ego and degenerates people to the level of an animal.

Illiterate villagers behave with great humility and obedience. They seem to be more cultured. Unfortunately, educated people today have lost their culture. They are full of agitation.

Educated people should get rid of their ego and agitation. Devotion is not limited to doing bhajans and worship. Real devotion lies in developing love for God. When you develop love, your humanness will be transformed into Divinity. Love is the royal road to attain Swami's grace.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "Prema Muditha Manase Kaho ...".)

27. Forget the Non-Self and Contemplate on the Self (Alternative Translation)

Date: 04 July 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This is the alternative translation of the discourse originally published in Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 29. A condensed version of this discourse appears in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. This version appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, February 2011.

Oh Man! Lead Your Life By Performing Meritorious Deeds,
Undertaking Acts Of Sacrifice, Developing Love,
Curbing Demonic Tendencies, And Taking To The Path Of Devotion.
(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Human birth is very rare to attain. It is all the more rare to attain peace in human life.

From birth to death, one's life is subject to many changes. But it is strange that one does not realise this truth.

In Childhood, One Develops Absorbing Interest In Play
And Enjoys The Company Of One's Playmates.
In Youth And Middle Age, One Is Engrossed In Cultivating
Worldly Relations And Earning Money.
In Old Age, One Repents For Not Having This And That,
And One Still Craves For Money Without Contemplating On
God Even At That Ripe Age.
In This Way, One Wastes Their Precious Human Birth.
(Telugu Poem)

Consider your duty as a spiritual discipline

People are endowed with great power of intelligence. Since they do not know how to make proper use of it, they take to the wrong path.

They know what is right and what is wrong. When you ask someone why they took to the wrong path, they would give excuses such as, "All this is due to the influence of illusion (maya)." People think that all the delusion that prevails in this world is the play of maya. What is maya? It is only a name but has no real existence. Learned people and scholars call maya a dancer (nartaki). Who makes them dance to her tune.

Then, how can you bring this dancer under your control? If you reverse the letters of the word nartaki, you get the word kirtana (singing the glories of God). That is to say, you can subjugate illusion (maya) by taking to the path of devotion and singing the glories of God.

A person who is totally immersed in love cannot describe their experience, just as a person totally submerged in water cannot say anything. Only the one who experiences love at superficial level can talk about love. It is very funny that people who have never tasted love and never experienced it give lectures on the principle of love.

What spiritual discipline (sadhana) should one undertake to experience love? What really is the meaning of sadhana? Real sadhana means to forget the non-self (anatma) and contemplate on the Self (Atma), forget ignorance (avidya) and pursue knowledge (vidya), forget all that is ephemeral and think only of that which is eternal.

Spiritual discipline (sadhana) is not just limited to performance of chanting, penance, meditation, and sacrifice.

Many women perform their household duties with dedication and look after the needs of their husband and children. Some of them feel bad that they are

not able to participate in spiritual activities like satsang (being in good company) and listening to spiritual talks because they have to spend all their time in the performance of their household duties. What is the great merit that accrues when you take part in spiritual practices when your household duties are neglected? The real spiritual discipline for a woman lies in look ing after her children, making her husband happy, keeping the house clean and leading an ideal family life. Preparing food for the husband and children in the morning and evening, sending the children to school and helping the husband to go to office, and looking after the house well is also a great spiritual discipline.

Perform spiritual disciplines for spiritual growth

Even the performance of day-to-day household duties like cooking can become the highest spiritual practice. Picking out small stones from the rice and making the rice free from impurities can be compared to the yoga of discrimination between the field (or life) and the knower of the field (kshetra kshetrajna vibhaga yoga) and the yoga of classification of the three qualities of purity, passion, and sloth, as described in the Bhagavad Gita. This can also be considered as the yoga of discrimination between the Atma and the anatma.

In this context, the stones that are separated from rice stand for field or life (kshetra) and rice represents the knower of the truth of life (kshetrajna).

Women in the house also cook vegetables. While cutting vegetables with a knife they should think, "I am not cutting the vegetables but cutting the evil qualities that are present in me with the knife of wisdom." Thereafter while washing vegetables, they should think that they are washing them in the water of love. While putting them on fire and adding salt and spices, they should think that they are putting them on the fire of discrimination and adding the salt and spices of steadfast faith and devotion. This is the spiritual exercise (sadhana) that can promote their spiritual growth.

The mother in the house prepares light meal (tiffin) of puris (light, fried wheat cake) for children in the evening. While preparing puris, she need not feel bad that she is unable to go for devotional songs (bhajans) and that all her time is spent in the kitchen. While pressing the ball of flour for making it flat in the shape of puris, she should have the sacred feeling that she is broadening her heart. Similarly, while sweeping the house, she should think, "I am not merely cleaning my house but am making my heart pure and clean". The body is a temple and the indweller is God (Deho devalaya proktho jivo Deva Sanathana). To develop sacred feelings is the real spiritual exercise.

There is no use going to spiritual congregations, listening to spiritual talks, and forgetting everything on reaching home. Instead of that, staying at home and performing household duties in a sacred way is the best spiritual exercise (sadhana). To perform one's duty is the highest spiritual discipline. What else can be the greater spiritual discipline than following this sacred path?

Don't you come across so many people who don ochre robes and pretend that they have renounced the world but are unable to get rid of their ego and attachment?

Giving up evil qualities is true renunciation

During the course of his triumphant tour of the country to disseminate the knowledge of the Vedas, Adi Sankara met a great vedic scholar, Mandana Misra, and had a debate with him.

Mandana Misra's wife was also a great scholar and a woman of great wisdom. Living in an ashram, she used to teach the principles of righteous conduct to her disciples.

One day, she was going along with her disciples to the river Ganga for taking bath in the river. On the way, she observed a renunciant (sanyasi) lying in the shade of a tree, keeping a dried bottle gourd under his head, which he used for storing drinking water. He was preserving it very carefully so that nobody

should take it away.

Ubhayabharati (Mandana Misra's wife) saw this renunciant's attachment to the bottle gourd and said to her disciples, "Look! This man calls himself a renunciant, but he has great attachment to a bottle gourd. How can a person with so much attachment attain renunciation?" The renunciant heard this comment but did not say anything then. While Ubhayabharati and her disciples were returning from the river, he threw the bottle gourd in front of them in order to demonstrate that he was not attached to it.

Observing this, Ubhayabharati aptly remarked, "I thought he was beset only with attachment (abhimana), but he also has ego (ahamkara)." Throwing away his bottle gourd does not show his sense of renunciation; it demonstrates his ego. How can one with attachment and ego become a wise person (jnana) and a renunciant? What benefit can such a person derive by performing spiritual practices?

Ubhayabharati said to the renunciant (sanyasi), "When you have renounced everything in life, why should you have ego and attachment? This is not good." In this way, she imparted the knowledge of true renunciation to the renunciant and showed him the path of wisdom. The renunciant fell at her feet and promised her that he would henceforward give up his ego and attachment and would lead a life of true renunciation.

In the same way, many people are deluded to think that they have renounced everything. But, what have they renounced? What is the real meaning of renunciation?

Renunciation Does Not Merely Lie In Giving Up
Wealth And Family And Going To The Forest.
Real Renunciation Lies In Giving Up Evil Qualities.
This Is Real Renunciation (Thyaga) And Yoga.
(Telugu Poem)

Many people renounce certain worldly and material possessions. But that is not renunciation in the true sense. Instead, give up evil qualities, evil practices, ego, and unsacred feelings that are present in you. This is true renunciation.

It is quite easy and not very difficult to leave one's hearth and home. What you should give up is your evil qualities, which take you to the wrong path and cause immense suffering.

People worry about the effect of the nine planets (navagrahas) on their life. But what really causes suffering are not the navagrahas but only the two grahas of attachment and hatred (raga and dwesha). People can attain peace when they give up these two.

There is no need for you to undertake any special spiritual practice for the sake of peace. You will attain peace when you discharge your duties with earnestness. If you are a householder), discharge the duties prescribed for a householder. If you are a celibate (brahmachari), follow the principle of brahmacharya. In this manner, all should adhere to the duty (dharma) prescribed for their stage of life and sanctify their time by contemplating on God.

But strange are the ways of the people in this world. They are not receptive to talks on sacred and ideal matters, but they listen with great interest to talks on all sorts of evil matters. Two ears are not enough for them to listen to evil talk. They even borrow the ears of others to listen to it.

People Do Not Listen To Good Words Spoken Wholeheartedly.
On The Other Hand, They Are All Ears When Evil Words Are Spoken.
How Can Such People Comprehend My Divinity? What Is The Use Of All Their Education?
(Telugu Poem)

This is the way in which people conduct themselves today. They have no

liking for seeing anything good; they crave to see all that is bad. Their minds are not receptive to anything good but are ever ready to get engrossed in all that is evil. If asked to think of something good, their minds become totally blank. On the other hand, no effort is needed on their part to entertain evil thoughts; they come to them automatically.

What is the reason? People have become accustomed to this type of behavior in their lives. Therefore, they should change their ways and develop good practices.

The body undergoes changes, not the Atma

The principle of Divinity is one, but it is seen in many diverse forms. See this garland of flowers. There are flowers of many colours in it, but the thread in them is one. The thread does not undergo any change. It was the same thread yesterday and will be the same tomorrow. But the flowers were buds yesterday, they have blossomed today and they will wither away tomorrow.

The human body is like these flowers. Today you are young, like a fully blossomed flower, but tomorrow you will become old, like a withered flower.

The body undergoes all these changes, but the principle of the Atma in the body is changeless in all the three periods of time.

The principle of Brahman (Brahma Sutra) is like the single thread that runs through all the flowers of the garland. It is present in all beings. Beings undergo change, but the principle of Brahman remains the same always.

Do not worry about the body, which is subject to continuous change. Try earnestly to attain that which is eternal. This is the spiritual practice (sadhana) that you should perform. Make proper use of the mind and the intellect given to you by God to perform this spiritual practice.

Suppose, there is water in a tumbler and there is sugar at its bottom. You

cannot have the taste of sugar when you drink water from the surface of the tumbler. When you thoroughly stir the water with a spoon, the sweetness of sugar will permeate the entire water.

In the same way, the sugar of Divinity is present at the bottom of your heart. If you stir the water of your thoughts with the spoon of intellect (buddhi), Divinity will permeate your entire heart. This is the spiritual practice that you have to perform.

You need not go anywhere to perform this spiritual practice. The vessel of heart is with you; so is the sugar of Divinity and the spoon of intellect. Then, where is the need to search? Where to search? Where has one to go? It is mere ignorance to search for Divinity elsewhere.

God resides in your heart

Thyagaraja was in search of Lord Rama everywhere, but ultimately he realised that there was no need to search for the One who was always with him.

The king of Thanjavur invited Thyagaraja to his court to play his compositions. Thyagaraja noticed so many eminent personalities in the court and, in all humility, he started his concert with the composition, "There are many great souls; I prostrate before all of them (Endaro mahanubhavulu, andariki vandanamulu ...)". Listening to his sweet song, the entire assembly was spellbound.

In order to reward him, the king offered him some money. Seeing this, Thyagaraja asked himself, "Oh mind! Tell me whether there is happiness in money or in the divine proximity." After due reflection, he declined to accept the money offered by the king. Then the king sent him back to his village in a palanquin, with due honours.

Seeing Thyagaraja going in a royal palanquin, some thieves followed him,

thinking he must be carrying a lot of money with him. Noticing the thieves, the bearers of palanquin told Thyagaraja, "Swami, we are being chased by thieves. They might even kill us." Thyagaraja said, "Why should you be afraid? You don't have any money, which is the cause of fear. Only those who possess money have fear. Why should those who have only the wealth of virtues be afraid of thieves? You have only virtues and no money. Therefore, have no fear." After a while, the thieves came running to Thyagaraja, fell at his feet, and prayed, "Kindly protect us, protect us." Thyagaraja asked them, "From whom should I save you? Why do you ask me to save you? What calamity has befallen you?" They told Thyagaraja that two young men armed with bows and arrows were threatening to punish them.

On hearing this, Thyagaraja, who had earlier gone in search of Rama here and there, realised that Rama was always with him. He sang this song in praise of Rama, "Oh Rama! You are in front of me, behind me, and on my either side (Munduvenaka iruprakkala todai unnava, oh Rama)". Rama made him realise His omnipresence by giving him this experience.

God is always with such noble souls and protects them in every way in times of difficulties. Extolling the compassion of Rama, Thyagaraja sang this song and was lost in ecstasy, "Rama, please be my protector (Rama nannu brovara)".

Till the time a spiritual seeker realises the truth that God is within him, the seeker keeps on searching for Him in the external world. Once one realises that God is in one, there is no need to perform any spiritual practice.

Everyone should try to understand this principle of omnipresence of God. In fact, you yourself are God. Your body is the temple of God and your heart is the sanctum sanctorum. God is the resident of your heart. You should realise this truth.

You Commit Sin When You Criticise Others.
You Can Never Escape From Its Consequences,
Because Others Are None But God Himself. (Telugu Poem)

Those whom you consider as others are not really so. They are verily the embodiments of Divinity. Therefore, do not criticise, abuse, or disrespect anyone. Why? God is present in all. Once you realise this principle of Divinity, you will have no worry. Whoever you come across, love and respect him. Here is a small example.

All powers are immanent in love

The boy who spoke earlier is from Shimla. When he joined our primary school ten years ago, he was a small child. His brother is also studying here. Their father brought their mother to Brindavan on a stretcher from Himachal Pradesh. I told their mother, "From now onward, they are My children. Do not worry about them." Handing over these children to Me, their mother said, "Oh Sai Ma! I leave my children under Your care." Saying so, she closed her eyes and breathed her last.

I brought these children to Prasanthi Nilayam and admitted them in primary school. At that time, this boy said, "Sai is my real mother." Their father also was happy to put them under My care.

Right from that day, these boys never shed tears. Though they are tender-hearted, they firmly adhered to the promise they made to Swami.

Once you offer yourself to God, you will never come to grief in life. That is true surrender. Their mother died. Even their father does not come here often, because he knows that Swami is taking care of them.

Every day, I see them, talk to them, and ask about their welfare. Their tender hearts are full of firm faith.

Today this boy spoke very well on the topic of faith because his heart is suffused with faith. They do not suffer from the pangs of separation from their

mother.

Once when this boy remembered his mother and started crying, the warden brought him to Me. She said, "Swami! He is not eating food, and he is crying all the time." At that time, he was in First Standard. Swami took him into the interview room, created a ring for him, spoke to him sweetly, and made him happy. From that day onward, he always has a smiling face (prolonged applause).

Children have a sacred heart, and that is why they are able to experience divine love. Elders, on the other hand, are not able to experience this love. Love is highly sacred, and it can impart immense courage and fortitude.

These boys have been able to stay here happily because they are with Swami. Would they be happy if they had to stay somewhere else? No. Swami gives them more than the love of a thousand mothers.

Even those who call themselves renunciants are not able to understand this truth. They perform spiritual practices like chanting and meditation, but what is the use? Their mind is overpowered by ego and attachment.

A person can lead life in this world without any worries by adopting one principle. What is that principle? It is the principle of love. If you have love, you can have everything. You will have physical prowess, intellectual power, and all other powers. All types of powers that you require in this world are present in love.

When you have gold with you, you can get any ornaments made out of it. Similarly, when you have God's grace, you can attain everything. When God becomes your own, what else do you require? What is there greater than that? Therefore, understand this principle of Divinity and act accordingly.

It is enough if you give up all your evil qualities. If you do so, you do not need to do any spiritual practice. Develop the faith that the God whom you worship is present in all.

Students should cultivate the principle of oneness. When you develop the principle of oneness, you can achieve everything. Wealth and riches are like passing clouds; they come and go. However, they are also required to some extent to live in this world.

I take personal care of all matters, whether big or small. You feel bad that Swami has not spoken to you because you are not aware of this truth. I call the warden and discuss with him even small matters. Though I have got so many other responsibilities, I ask about each and every student (loud applause).

But those students who are narrow-minded think, "Alas! Swami has not spoken to me, He has not looked at me." But I see all and ask about their welfare.

The boy who spoke earlier said, "I lost one mother but gained the love of a thousand mothers." How many can have such great good fortune? How many can speak in this manner with such conviction? That is why he addressed Me as "My Mother Sai" in the beginning of his speech.

People who are endowed with such firm faith are protected by faith. Their faith alone confers on them all types of success. Similarly, love bestows all types of success. Therefore, develop love. You will be victorious in all your endeavours if you develop love alone.

Observe silence and maintain discipline

I want to tell you another important thing. That is, you should observe discipline. As I told you yesterday, always speak sweetly with love. I have also told you not to use harsh words while talking to others.

But during the last few months, there has been some laxity in discipline at Prasanthi Nilayam. People make a lot of noise as they get up after the bhajan is over. After I select devotees for interview and take them inside, people on

the verandah and also outside get up and create a lot of commotion, as if it is a marketplace. After the programme is over in the temple, you should go back silently, contemplating on what Swami has said, instead of indulging in unnecessary talk with each other.

On one side, the ladies make a lot of noise, and on the other, gents do so. All along, they are talking, talking and talking!

Not only here in this temple (mandir) or Prasanthi Nilayam, even on the road or wherever you are, do not indulge in excessive talk.

Discipline should be like your shadow. It should follow you wherever you go. Not only in this campus, even while you walk on the road outside, adhere to discipline.

Most importantly, what God expects from you is discipline. At the conclusion of the programme or bhajans, go back to your places silently. You can talk only after you go back to your homes.

Whether you are at Prasanthi Nilayam or anywhere else, you have no business indulging in excessive talk. You waste a lot of energy by talking too much. Listening to unnecessary talk also disturbs your peace of mind. You suffer from nervousness when you talk too much. You also suffer from loss of memory. Therefore, strictly observe discipline and remain silent.

Men and women should not talk to each other in the temple (mandir). They may do so after going home, but do not talk to each other unnecessarily either in the bazar or in the temple or anywhere else.

Not only this. Some elders indulge in unnecessary talk in front of students and set a bad example to them. Elders should conduct themselves in an exemplary manner. You can hear cosmic sound (sabda Brahman) when you observe silence. Therefore, at least from today onward, observe silence and follow discipline. Moreover, don't use harsh words while talking to others, as I told you yesterday.

Lead your life with love, considering love as your life-breath. Have faith that love is God. Forgetting love amounts to forgetting God. Suffuse your speech with love. Lead your life with compassion and forbearance. Attain the state in which you even forget time in the contemplation of God.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Govinda Krishna Jai...".)

27. The human adventure

Date: 04 July 1996 / Location: Brindavan

Through Meritorious Deeds And Acts Of Sacrifice, Developing Love In The Heart,
Suppressing Demonic Traits,
Fostering Devotion To God,
Lead Your Daily Life, Oh Man!
In Boyhood Man Is Immersed In Sport;
In Youth He Is Lost In Sensual Pleasures;
In Old Age, Unaware Of The Divine Lord,
He Pursues One Thing Or Another;
Unable To Give Up Evil Tendencies.
Incapable Of Taking To The Path Of Devotion
He Wallows In The Cesspool Of Karma
And Makes Human Life A Clod Of Earth. (Telugu Poem)

Man intelligent being, but does not know how to utilise his intelligence. Some persons, even though they know how to use it, pursue wrong paths. If they are asked, why they behave like this, they glibly answer that the whole thing is Maya, an illusion. Maya is only called by the name illusion, but it has no existence in reality. People imagine that it is Maya which produces the phenomenal world and makes it appear as real in all its varied forms. Scholars have described Maya as a Narthaki (dancer). This Maya is said to make every man dance. How is Maya to be controlled? Read the word Narthaki in reverse and you have the answer Keerthana. This is proclaimed as the path of devotion.

Misconceptions about Sadhana

There are several misconceptions about Sadhana (spiritual exercise) for Self Realisation. For instance, some women devotees feel sad when they are

unable to attend Bhagawan's discourses because of their preoccupation with domestic duties and attending to their spouses and children. What is the service they render by taking part in a Sathsang or a discourse? To attend to one's household duties, look after the children and attend to the needs of the husband and others at home constitute the right type of sadhana. Even the preparation of meals in the home is a great sadhana. To remove the stones from the rice before it is cooked is one kind of yoga - gunathraya vibhaga yoga - the yoga of division of the three qualities. Every stage in the cooking of vegetables may be deemed a spiritual exercise. Likewise every household chore can be sanctified without a sense of regret that you are missing a bhajan or a discourse. Even the sweeping of the house may be considered as a process of purifying the heart. All such thoughts are spiritually exalting. Such actions are better than listening indifferently to a discourse and forgetting the teachings thereafter. Doing one's duty is the highest spiritual endeavour.

Giving up bad qualities is true renunciation

There are many ochre-robed persons going about flaunting their so called renunciation while they are full of pride and possessiveness. During an encounter between a renunciant and Ubhaya bharathi, wife of the scholar Mandana Mishra, she made the renunciant realise how he was filled with attachment and egoism in spite of his having renounced everything. The ascetic fell at the feet of Ubhayabharathi and sought her forgiveness. He assured her that thereafter he would practise renunciation in the true sense of the term.

Thyaga (Renunciation) does not mean giving up hearth and home but giving up bad qualities. That alone is true sacrifice and real yoga. It is enough if man gives up raga (attachment) and dhvesha (hatred). If everyone adheres to his Ashrama-Dharma (the code of conduct pertaining to one's stage in life), devotes his time to meditation on God, he will be redeeming his life.

There is no need to go in search of Divinity elsewhere. The Divine is the

Indweller in every heart like sugar at the bottom of a tumbler filled with water. If the water is stirred with the spoon of Buddhi (the intellect), Divinity will be experienced in the heart.

Have the conviction that God is within you and in every being. Hence bear no ill-will towards any-body. Show your love and esteem for everyone.

Sai is the Mother for the motherless

Let me refer to something, which I am not anxious to reveal. A young boy who gave his word to me years ago continues to stand by it to this day. The student who spoke first this afternoon is a boy from Shimla. I am seeing him today. Ten years ago he came as a small boy. He was studying in the primary school. A younger brother of his (who was in the Mandap) is also studying in the primary school. Their mother was brought in a stretcher from Himachal Pradhesh to Brindhavan. I drew both the boys close to me and told the mother: "They are my children. Don't worry about them. Have no worry on their account." The mother gave her word to Swami. "I am entrusting my children to you, Sai Matha!" Uttering these words, she closed her eyes.

I brought the two boys from Brindhavan to Prashanthi Nilayam. They were very young at the time. The elder boy said at that time: "My mother is Mother Sai". The father also affirmed the son's words.

From that moment these two boys have not shed a single tear. These children at that tender age held fast to their words. In life once a promise has been made to the Lord there will be no room for grief. That is the meaning of Sharanagathi (surrender to the Lord).

The mother was no more. Even the father appeared rarely. The children were left totally in the care of Swami. Morning and evening I used to speak to the boys and enquire about their welfare. Their tender hearts were filled with total faith in Bhagawan. Today the elder boy spoke well about faith. He is full of that faith. They did not feel at any time the loss of their mother.

One day the warden brought the boy to me from the primary school, saying that he was feeling the absence of his mother. She told Swami that the boy is not taking food and is weeping incessantly. He was five years old at that time. He was in the first standard. I took him inside the interview room, gave him a ring and spoke pleasantly to him and made him forget his loss. From that moment he has always been smiling and laughing.

What is needed is total faith

The hearts of the children are so pure. Today elders are unable to understand such pure love. Love is so sacred. It confers limitless courage and forbearance. What would have been the plight of these children in any other place? They could get on here because they were with Swami. Swami takes care of them with the love of a thousand mothers. This truth is not being understood even by many renunciants. They perform Japa and sit in meditation. But to what end? They are immersed in their egoism and attachment.

What is needed is total faith; in a simple word: Love. Abide by it and lead a worthy life. Love will confer every kind of strength you need to sustain you in life. If you recognise the Divine in all, you will be blessed with everything.

Swami's boundless love

Students should understand that I take interest in the welfare of every child. I constantly enquire about all of them with the warden. Students who are not aware of Bhagawan's boundless love, feel depressed when they think Swami does not speak to them. But I am having my eyes on all of them. The boy who spoke earlier said that he had lost one mother but found a thousand mothers. How many will make such a declaration? He began his speech with an appeal to Mother Sai. It is this faith which is sustaining them and making them overcome all problems.

Hence, develop this Love Principle. Moreover, you have also got to develop discipline. In recent months, there appears to be a falling off in discipline in Prashanthi Nilayam. As soon as the bhats are over, the devotees get up and make a lot of noise. Similarly, when the people called for interview, go into the interview room, the people in the Mandhir verandah and outside get up after the door is closed and indulge in noisy talk as in a market-place. After Bhagawan's discourse is over, devotees should ruminate over Swami's speech and not indulge in idle talk. It is all one cacophony frown both the men's and women's wings of the Mandap. There should be no such talking, not only in Prashanthi Nilayam but outside also, in the bazars. Discipline is like a shadow. It should follow you wherever you may go. Bhagawan desires from all of you only discipline. Hence, when the discourse is over or when the bhajans end, you should go out in silence. When you get back to your apartments you may discuss your private affairs. But as a rule observe restraint in speech everywhere. It helps to conserve energy. Excessive talk affects the nerves. You are liable to forget what you have heard.

Moreover, elders set a bad example to students by talking in front of them. You should realise that the voice of the Divine is heard in the depths of silence.

Restraint in speech also calls for the avoidance of harsh words. Speaking lovingly and ever thinking of God, you will be oblivious to all worldly things.

The very first lesson of the Primer of the spiritual text is Control of Speech. The speech is the armament of man; other animals have fleetness of foot, sharpness of clam, fang, horn, tusk, beak and talon. But man has sweetness of speech which can disarm opposition and defeat all the designs of hatred. Sweetness makes
you Pashupathi - Divine; harshness makes you Pashu beastial. Mere outward politeness or sweetness is hypocrisy; sincere speech must flow from real sweetness of heart, a heart full of love.

- Sathya Sai Baba

28. Love Is The Greatest Binding Force

Date: 05 July 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, March 2011.

What Is The Use Of All Spiritual Practices Without The Control Of Senses?
What Is The Use Of Doing Yoga Without Forbearance?
What Is The Use Of Chanting His Name Without Inner Peace?
All This Is Futile, Like Ploughing A Barren Field. (Telugu Poem)

Students!

Any task can be accomplished in this world with proper effort. In order to achieve victory in any field of activity, one has to make necessary effort. Even a tiny ant can walk miles together if it makes effort.

On the other hand, an eagle cannot move even a step forward if it does not make effort. People cannot perform even a small task if they do not have the will or do not make effort in the proper direction.

Make love the basis of all spiritual practices

With his strong will power, Dhruva attained the vision of God even at a tender age by performing intense penance, overcoming all difficulties and sufferings with courage and fortitude. It was because of his strong will power that he attained immortality and became shining pole star. In the same way, any person can achieve success when they perform actions with full confidence, no matter what their age, strength, or capacity is.

You must have heard the life stories of many great sages who had to ultimately face frustration and disappointment in spite of performing intense

penance for a number of years because they lacked forbearance.

Viswamitra is an example in this regard. He lost all his power of penance due to his lack of forbearance and sense control. He had to restart his penance from the very beginning.

Self-Effort Is Most Essential In Every Field Of Activity.
Your Rendition Of A Tune Becomes More And More Melodious With More And More Practice.
Even A Neem Fruit Tastes Sweeter If You Keep On Chewing It More And More.
(Telugu Poem)

It is because of their strenuous effort and intense practice that boys are able to sing bhajans melodiously.

Though Sage Durvasa was one of great penance, he lacked self-restraint. He was full of anger and totally devoid of inner peace. That is why he could not attain any exalted status. Though he performed intense penance and attained great powers, he lost everything due to his lack of inner peace.

Along with inner peace, one should also have forbearance. Forbearance is like the very eye of man.

Forbearance Is Truth,
Forbearance Is Righteousness,
Forbearance Is The Teaching Of The Vedas,
Forbearance Is Nonviolence,
Forbearance Is Sacrifice,
Forbearance Confers Happiness And Heavenly Bliss.
In Fact, It Is Everything In All The Worlds.
(Telugu Poem)

Love is the very life of all spiritual practices. There can be no life without love.

You have to make efforts to understand this principle of love and make it a part of your life.

The boy who spoke earlier said, "Life is love, enjoy it. Life is a dream, realise it." What is a dream? The entire life of a human is a dream.

Now it is daytime, and you are sitting here, listening to Swami's discourse. You think it is not a dream because you are seeing it with your eyes, hearing it with your ears, reflecting on it with your mind, and experiencing it in your heart. You think that you are directly experiencing all this.

But how long will this experience last? At night, when you go to sleep after your dinner, this experience will vanish.

Similarly, you experience happiness and sorrow in your dream, but, how long does this experience of sorrow and happiness last? It lasts as long as the dream lasts. As soon as you are awake, all your dream experiences become untrue. Your night dreams do not exist during the day.

Similarly, you don't remember your daytime experiences in your sleep. Hence, one is night dream and the other is day dream. Day dreams do not exist in the night dream, and night dreams do not exist in the day dream. But you are present in both. Therefore, you are omnipresent.

Since both your day-time and night-time experiences are just dreams, it is said, life is a dream. You have to realise it. That is true religion.

Religion means to realise. Understanding the truth is true religion.

In everything, love is most important.

Sages (rishis) do penance in dense forests where fierce beasts roam about freely. These rishis don't have guns, swords, or any other weapons with them. Yet, they and fierce beasts live together in harmony in these forests.

The rishis are not afraid of the beasts, nor are the beasts afraid of the rishis. Why? The reason is that rishis are full of love, due to the effect of which even the wild beasts are transformed into loving animals.

Hence, whatever the type of company you have, it will have the same type of effect on you. That is why it is said, "Tell me your company, I shall tell you what you are." When you associate with good company, you will imbibe good qualities.

In everything, love is most important. Love is the form of God. Live in love.

Perform all actions to please God

There lived in Italy a great violinist named Antony, who earned a great name as the maker of violins. But he used to take one year to make one violin. His friends used to tell him, "Antony! You are a householder. If you make only one violin in a year, how much income will you get out of it? How will you meet the needs of your family? How can you lead a happy life?" Antony told them, "My friends! God is the embodiment of perfection. Therefore, even a small task that one performs should be perfect. Only then can he please God. I don't make these violins merely for the sake of my family, nor do I make them for my own pleasure. I make them to please God, who is the embodiment of perfection." Whatever work a person undertakes, they should do it to please God. Do all actions to please God (Sarva karma Bhagavad preetyartham).

There is no use doing any spiritual practice without inner peace. Similarly, if you lack forbearance, whatever yogic practices you undertake will be mere physical exercises and will not confer peace of mind on you. If you lack inner peace and contentment, the chanting (japa) that you do will become merely artificial and will not be pleasing to God. Everything that you do, do it to please God.

Even a small task is enough if it pleases God. God sees quality, not quantity.

Even a spoonful of cow's milk is better than a barrel of donkey's milk.

You think you are doing great spiritual exercises. You sit for meditation for one hour. But during this one hour of meditation, how long does your mind remain steady? When your mind is not steady even for a second, what is the use of wasting time in this manner?

Whatever work you do, consider it as God's work. This is the most correct and easy path. Why do you subject yourself to so much hardship leaving this easy path?

Even your household work is God's work. How can we say that? God is the indweller of your heart. It is only due to the presence of God within you that you are able to perform all actions. Your eyes can see and ears can hear only because of the power of God that is within you. In fact, all your sense organs are governed by divine power.

Therefore, any work that you perform with any of your sense organs is in reality performed by God and for God.

For whose satisfaction do you perform a particular task? You may say that you are performing it for your own satisfaction, but what does 'you' refer to? Are you the body? No. If you are the body, how can you say, "This is my body?" If you think you are the mind, how can you say, "This is my mind?" When you say, "my body, my mind," whom does 'my' refer to?

You are not the body, you are not the mind. You are the master. Body, mind, and senses are mere instruments.

It is God in the form of Atmic consciousness who makes these instruments function. This consciousness is present in everyone. There is none in this world without consciousness. Hence, God is present in everyone in the form of consciousness.

The entire world is permeated by God (Isavasyam idam jagat). The entire

world is the manifestation of God. God is the indweller of all beings (Easwara sarva bhutanam).

If you ask, "In whom does God reside?" the answer is, "He resides in all." Then why is He not visible?

You may be aware that there are many types of rosaries, such as rosaries made of basil (tulasi) seeds, rudraksha (a tree whose berries are used to make rosaries), and crystal beads. The thread is the same in all these rosaries, but it can be seen only in crystal-bead rosary, and not in those made of basil seeds or rudraksha.

Similarly, God as the principle of Brahman (Brahma Sutra) is present in all but can be seen only in those hearts that are pure and transparent like the crystal beads. Therefore, make your heart pure in order to see God. God can be realised only by those who have a pure heart.

Get rid of desire, anger, and greed

People perform many spiritual practices like chanting and meditation. They also perform yoga postures and physical exercises. But what is the use of doing all this when you are not able to get rid of your evil qualities, wicked thoughts, and mean mentality?

The Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and the Bhagavata are the main source of teaching for mankind. What do they teach? They teach that one should not harbour the wicked qualities of desire, anger, and greed (kama, krodha. and lobha).

Ravana's evil quality of desire was the root cause for the story of the Ramayana. Similarly, Hiranyakasipu's anger was responsible for the Bhagavata, and Duryodhana's greed was responsible for the Mahabharata.

Due to his anger and hatred toward God, Hiranyakasipu became bereft of the

power of discrimination and lost everything. Due to his greed, Duryodhana was not prepared to give to the Pandavas the land even equal to the point of a needle. What was their ultimate fate?

What did Ravana get in the end? Though he was endowed with all types of powers, Ravana lost his kingdom as well as his entire clan because he became the victim of desire.

Hiranyakasipu harboured anger against Hari, lost his power of discrimination, and without even a trace of kindness and compassion subjected his own son to untold suffering. What happened to him ultimately?

He was endowed with all powers and could control even the five elements. In spite of that, he earned a bad name and ruined himself because of his anger. What was the use of his acquiring so many powers? In the end, he achieved nothing.

Due to his greed, Duryodhana suffered a devastating defeat and lost all his brothers. He harboured hatred toward the Pandavas, who were the very embodiments of righteousness (dharma). He pretended he had faith in Krishna but in fact he had no faith. He even developed hatred toward Krishna because He supported the righteous Pandavas.

Ravana, Hiranyakasipu, and Duryodhana bore hatred toward God.

Those who harbour such evil qualities - the doors of liberation are always closed for them. Evil qualities are the greatest obstacle in the path of liberation (moksha). What is moksha? Is it attaining Kailasa or Vaikuntha or Swarga (heaven)?

Moha kshaya is moksha, i.e. giving up of attachment is liberation. When you gradually reduce your attachment, that itself leads you to liberation.

Once upon a time, Narada asked Lord Vishnu, "I always come for Your darshan, wherever You are. But sometimes there is an emergency, and I want

to meet You for an urgent work. Where is Your head office, so that in such a situation I am able to come to You immediately and convey the message? Is it heaven (Vaikuntha, Kailasa, or Swarga)?" Vishnu replied, "Narada! Write down My address. I reside where My devotees sing My glories, Narada (Mad bhakta yatra gayanti tatra tishthami, Narada). Vaikuntha, Kailasa, and Swarga are only My branch offices. But wherever My dear devotee sings My glory, I install Myself there permanently. That is My head office. In all other places, I am like an idol meant for taking out in a procession (an utsava vigraha). They are My temporary dwelling places. But you find Me installed permanently wherever My devotees sing My glory." God is the resident of every heart. Therefore, do not be deluded to think that you are mere mortals. All are the embodiments of God.

You think, you are mere mortals and observe differences on the basis of name and form due to your attachment to physical body, which is made up of five elements. Forget all differences of names and forms and realise the truth. Contemplate on the eternal principle of Divinity. Do not waste your life in the pursuit of mundane, physical, and worldly endeavours.

Love is the ornament of a devotee

God is love personified. Everything is the manifestation of His love. One who has a form has attributes. But God has no form and hence no attributes.

Love is God, God is Love. Love has no form. Love is love, that is all. The ocean has a limit, the sky has a limit, but love has no limit.

There was a devotee by name Mallamma in Karnataka. In one of her compositions, she sang, "Oh Lord! Lotus is the ornament of a lake. Without a lotus in it, the lake has no beauty. Similarly, houses are the ornaments of a village. Moon is the ornament of the sky. Waves are the ornaments of the ocean. Likewise, love is the ornament of Your devotees. There is no greater ornament than Your love." Just as the ocean without waves, the sky without the moon, and the lake without lotus have no beauty, likewise life bereft of

love has no meaning.

Love is the greatest ornament of humanity. Love is God, Live in Love. Love all. Even if the other person lacks love, share your love with them.

As I told you earlier, love is like the needle of a mariner's compass. Wherever you place it, the needle of a mariner's compass always points toward the north only. Similarly, direct all that you think, all that you desire, and all that you do toward God. Just as you earn money by doing business or undertaking a job, earn the wealth of love in each and every activity that you perform in your daily life. Love represents fullness.

That is full, this is full.When the full is taken out of the full, What remains is again the full.

Poornamada Poornamidam, Poornat Poornamudachyate,
Poornasya Poornamadaya, Poornamevavashishyate.

Love always maintains this quality of fullness. It neither increases nor decreases. It is from the fullness of love that Divinity manifests. Where there is total love, God will manifest then and there.

Follow the easy path of love

You do not know how easy it is to attain God. It may be a little difficult to crush the petal of a flower or press a ball of butter, but attaining God is much more easy than this.

However, you do not follow this easy path. The reason is your wrong notion. You think that God is very difficult to attain because He is somewhere far away, and one has to perform intense penance and conduct spiritual enquiry to attain Him. This wrong notion is the cause of your delusion.

God is not far away from you. Wherever you look, God is there. With hands, feet, eyes, head,

mouth, and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe (Sarvatah panipadam tat sarvathokshi siromukham, sarvatah sruthimalloke sarvamavruthya tishthati). Where is the need to search for someone who is everywhere? There is no such need.

You see the world with your physical eyes. This world itself is the manifestation of God. He is a fool who sees yet does not recognise the reality (Pashyannapicha na pashyati moodho). All that you see is the form of God. All heads that you see belong to the cosmic form of God.

You see only the external names and forms and consider them as mere mortals. When you change your outlook, you will realise that all are divine. The defect lies in your vision, not in the creation.

Whatever the colour of your glasses, the world will appear to be of the same colour. If you see the world with hatred, you will find hatred everywhere. On the other hand, if you see the world with love, you will find love everywhere. Therefore, as are the feelings, so is the result (Yad bhavam tad bhavathi). What you see outside is the reflection of your own feelings.

All are the embodiments of God. Develop this feeling of oneness. Nothing in this world has more power than love. Love is more powerful than even an atom bomb, a hydrogen bomb or any other bomb. If you have only love, you can achieve everything.

So many of you have gathered here. What is the reason? It is love. It is because of Swami's love for you and your love for Swami that so many of you have come here. Did anyone send you an invitation? No. Love is the greatest binding force.

Therefore, develop love, talk to each other with love, perform all actions with love, and always contemplate on the principle of love. There is no easier path

than this.

Many people close their eyes, tell the beads of their rosary, and think that they are doing japa. They hold the rosary in their hand, but their mind wanders to the house of a washerman or a barber. They sit for meditation but their mind goes to the kitchen when they get the smell of an overfried curry.

Can you call this repetition of the name or meditation (japa or dhyana)? What is the meaning of japa? Real japa is when you think that God is in you and you are God. Then, what is meditation? Thinking I am Brahman, I am Brahman (Aham Brahmasmi, Aham Brahmasmi) is real meditation.

No Veda teaches any easier path than this. All the Vedas declare, I am Brahman, That Thou Art (Thattwamasi), Brahman is Supreme Consciousness (Prajnanam Brahma), and This Self is Brahman (Ayam Atma Brahma).

The consciousness present in you is Brahman. Therefore, everything is in you. The great aphorism Ayam Atma Brahma signifies that I am Atma and Brahman. These words convey the truth.

But scholars create confusion in you and destroy your faith by misinterpreting these words. Do not give room to this confusion. Do not spoil your mind by the jugglery of words. Follow the path of love. The easiest, sweetest, most sublime, and blissful path is love, love, and love alone.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "Prema Mudhita Manase Kaho...".)

28. Saadhana and sense control

Date: 05 July 1996

Of What Use Is All Sadhana Without Sense Control?
Of What Avail Is Practice Of Yoga Without Forbearance?
Of What Use Is Japa Without Peace Of Mind?
It Is Like Ploughing A Barren Field.

STUDENTS! "By diligent efforts success can be achieved, says the adage. An ant can cover miles by continuous movement. But even Garuda (the celestial eagle) cannot soar two feet if it has no will to fly. Likewise, without good thoughts and good deeds based on them, a man cannot accomplish anything good. The child Dhruva could achieve what he desired because of his firm determination and the spiritual austerities he observed, despite the ordeals he had to go through. By his sublime thoughts, he achieved the status of a star in the sky. Likewise, any man irrespective of age or abilities, who has faith and determination, can accomplish what he wants. You are aware of the stories of many sages who embarked on severe penances but failed to complete them because of lack of faith and determination. Vishvamithra was repeatedly foiled in this way by either loss of self-control or succumbing to temptation.

In every field Sadhana (steadfast performance) is essential. For instance, the participants in the bhajans have improved their singing by constant practice. The sage Dhurvasa, despite all his penances, could have no peace because he could not control his temper.

Together With Peace, The Quality Of Kshama (Forgiveness) Is Also Essential.
Forgiveness Is Truth, It Is Dharma,
It Is The Essence Of The Veda,
It Is Non-Violence And It Yajna,
It Is The Source Of Joy And Everything Else
Says A Telugu Poem. Kshama (Forbearance) Is For Every Man A Third Eye.

Entire Life Is A Dream

For all these, the primary quality that is necessary is love. Without love there can be no life. A student who spoke earlier said: "Life is a dream, realise it." What is a dream? Entire life is a dream. During the day you sit here and listen to Swami's discourse. This is not a dream. You see with your eyes, listen with your ears, absorb with your mind and chasten your heart. All these are apparently proofs of Prathyaksha Pramanam (direct perception). But how far is this real? When you go to sleep at night, all this direct perception vanishes. In your night dreams you experience joy and sorrow. How long do they last? Till you wake up. Then all the dreams become unreal. In the waking state, the dream world has no existence. In the dream state the waking world does not exist. So, what we have are a day-dream and a night dream distinct from each other. But you are present in both the states. Hence you are omnipresent. When both the waking and sleeping states are experienced as dreams life itself becomes a dream. Realise it. That means, you must realise the true nature of these states.

The student said: "Life is love, enjoy it." Verily love is God. Purandhara-dhasa sang about the glory of the devotee's love for God. "Even as a lotus adorns a lake, the moon adorns the sky and waves are the adornment for the ocean, for your devotees. Oh Lord! love is the greatest adornment." Nothing lends greater beauty to a devotee than his love for the Divine.

Love is like mariner's compass

Hence love is Divine. Have love for all. Impart your love even to those who lack love. Love is like mariner's compass. Wherever you may keep it, it points the way to God. In every action in daily life manifest your love. Divinity will emerge from that love. This is the easiest path to God realisation. But, why are not people taking to it? This is because they are obsessed with misconception relating to the means of experiencing God. They regard God as some remote entity attainable only by arduous spiritual practices. God is

everywhere. There is no need to search for God. All that you see is a manifestation of the Divine. All the human beings you see are forms of the Divine. Correct your defective vision and you will experience God in all things.

Love for Swami has brought you here

Develop the sense of the spiritual oneness of all beings. The power of love is immeasurable. $o many of you have assembled here. What has brought you all here? Love alone is the primary reason. You have gathered here in such large numbers because of your love for Swami and Swami's love for you. You have all come of your own accord. The binding factor is love.

Speak lovingly, act lovingly, think with love and do every action with a love-filled heart. There is no need for counting beads or sitting in meditation, while your mind is preoccupied with worldly matters. The japa you have to perform is constantly to remind yourself of the Divine within you. This is the supreme message of the Vedas.

Realise that the path of divine love is the easiest, the sweetest and surest path to God.

Whatever I do, it is for you, not for Me. For what is it that can be called Mine ? Only you.

- Sathya Sai Baba

29. Love for the divine transcends all kin

Date: 27 July 1996 / Location: Brindavan

Happiness emerges from total love; Truth and renunciation lead to peace; Without love there is no well-being; Hearken! oh valiant son of Bharath!

STUDENTS! There can be no human being who is unaware of love. The universe is permeated with love. Love is beyond description. It is beyond the grasp of the mind and speech. Naradha declared: "Love is beyond the scope of words."

How can an ordinary man, living in this phenomenal world, understand such love? This love is an expression of Divinity. Like the mariners compass, it always points to the Dime wherever it may be present. As oil makes a lamp burn, love illumines life itself.

What is termed love in ordinary worldly life is not real love at all. It is only one or other form of attachment based on human relationships in the family or in society.

True love is pure, selfless, free from pride, and is full of bliss. Such love can be got only through love. All worldly attachments are not real love at all. They are transient. The everlasting, pure love arises from the heart. In fact, it is ever-existing and all-pervading. How is it that man is unable to recognise such all-pervading love? It is because man's heart today has become barren and is polluted. The heart is filled with all kinds of desires and there is no room in it for pure, unsullied love to enter. It is only when the worldly attachments are expelled from the heart that there will be room for real love to abide in it and to grow.

Quality of true love is to give and not to receive

As a man grows from childhood to manhood, his attachments change from

the mother to friends, to wife and children, and then to the acquisition of wealth. In the ups and downs involved in the pursuit of wealth, he begins to feel the need for God. This perpetual alternation of attachment and separation cannot be called real love which is spiritual and enduring.

The quality of true love is to give and not to receive. How many are to be found today in the world who love to give? Even a father hesitates to part with his property to his children. Only God can be the infinite giver. Hence love is a divine quality. Although inherently love is present in every cell of the human being it does not manifest itself because of the pollution of the heart. A man without love in his heart is as good as dead.

Make the preceptor's message part of your being

Once a preceptor summoned all his disciples and told them that he was going to give them something extremely sweet which they should protect from insects and rodent. The disciples resorted to various devices to safeguard the guru's gift. However, one of them ate the sweet, digested it and derived considerable strength and energy from it.

What is the lesson to be drawn from this story? It means that the teachings learnt from the preceptor are not to be merely preserved in safety. The nectarine message of the preceptor should be enshrined in the heart. It should be made part of one's being. Then the recipient acquires vigour and strength.

In the same manner, whatever you see or hear or read should be taken to heart and then put into practice. Only then you have the full satisfaction of benefiting from the teachings. Hearing is not enough. You must take in and digest what you have listened to. It must be put into practice in daily life. This was the prayer which the gopikas addressed to Krishna that the nectarine music flowing from His flute should fill their dry hearts with divine love. A pure heart is essential for progress in the spiritual or other fields.

Divine love is all-compassing and the whole cosmos is contained within it. Hence it is essential for man to comprehend the nature of this love. Today, the world is riddled with disorder, violence and unrest.. Injustice, exploitation, corruption and immorality are 'ubiquitous. All these are the very antithesis of love. Only through the divine love can the world be transformed.

Athmik love (Spiritual love) has to be distinguished from love or attachment related to the body, the mind or the intellect. These latter attachments are related to the world and they are the source of sorrow.

Four types of love

Love of the Divine is of four kinds. One is Svartha-Prema (love based on self-interest). The second is Samanjasa-Prema, the third is Parartha-Prema, and the fourth is Yathartha-Prema.

Svartha-Prema is like a lamp kept in a room. The lamp illumines only the room. This kind of selfish love is confined to a limited group and does not extend to others.

Samanjasa-Prema may be compared to the light from the moon. This moonlight is visible both outside and inside. It is, however, not very effulgent. The light is dim. This kind of love extends to a wider group but is not very intense.

The third is Parartha-Prema. It is like sun-light. It illumines both inside and outside with brilliance. But it is not continuous in the sense that the sun is not visible at night. But this is not a permanent absence, because the sun rises again. Actually, the sun is always there. Likewise, this selfless love may appear to be absent some times, but it will appear again.

The fourth one is Yathartha-Prema or Atma-Prema This love is present always, inside and outside, in all places and at all times, in all circumstances. This is Divine Love. It is imperishable. It is eternal. It is immanent in everyone. When

this love is manifested by a person, he achieves the peace that passeth understanding.

Supreme example of Vibheeshana

How the love of the Divine manifests itself in a devotee is illustrated by the example of Vibheeshana, the younger brother of Ravana. Vibheeshana submitted himself to many indignities at the hands of Ravana out of the love he had for Rama. In the battle against the Rakshasas in Lanka, Rama and Lakshmana destroyed many of the great Rakshasa warriors on the first two days. On the third day a formidable warrior stood before them. Vibheeshana told Rama: "If you conquer this warrior, the whole of Lanka will be yours. He is a greater warrior than even Ravana." Rama fought with this mighty Rakshasa the whole day, but could not vanquish him. Rama was on the point of giving up the battle for the day. At this stage-, Vibheeshana, who was behind Rama, said: "This is not the time to give up the fight. You must rally all your strength and destroy the enemy. You should not miss this chance. I am telling this out of my love for you." Egged on by Vibheeshana, Rama continued the fight and destroyed his opponent.

The formidable warrior fell on the battlefield. The moment he learned that the warrior was dead, Vibheeshana also collapsed on the ground. Recovering himself after chanting the name of Rama, Vibheeshana got up and confessed to Rama: "Swami! This is a mark of weakness on my part. I should not have succumbed to such weakness. Having filled myself with your love, how could I succumb to such weakness?" Rama observed: "That's all right. But why did you collapse so suddenly?" Vibheeshana replied: "Swami! This happened because of bodily attachment. It was due to parental affection. That mighty warrior was my son."

He was Vibheeshana's son! See what Vibheeshana did. To ensure the victory of the Lord, Vibheeshana did not. hesitate to get even his son killed in battle.

God is greater than son

Rama asked Vibheeshana: "Why did you do this? Is it not wrong on your part? Why did you not tell me at the beginning itself that he was your son?" Vibheeshana replied: "When you are facing an enemy, you should not worry about any kind of relationship on the battlefield. In this war there is no room for considerations of relationship. When anyone takes up arms against you, he ceases to be a relation. Whether it is mother, father, son or anybody else, when he figures as an enemy especially against God, there can be no question of relationship. I have completely surrendered to you. I am your servant. I must be primarily be concerned about your victory and not about any temporary kinship. The only truth for me is your will."

It is this abounding love of Vibheeshana for Rama, which contributed to Rama's victory. Love for the Divine should be inextricable bond. All other worldly attachments are impermanent. Thamasik bonds are like iron chains. Rajasik bonds are copper chains. Sathvik bonds are like chains of gold. But, whether the chains are of iron, copper or gold, they are chains all the same. The nature of the metals may vary, but the chains are shackles nevertheless. Vibheeshana declared: "I have no use for any of these bonds. I am content with the pure love of Rama."

It is to demonstrate to the world the supreme quality of total love for the Divine that Vibheeshana acted in this manner.

Vibheeshana is a sathvik (Supremely sacred) friend of Rama. Despite his long intimacy with Rama, Lakshmana was not in the same category. He was a sathvik brother, not a sathvik friend. Sugriva was a Rajasik friend. Jambhavan was a thamasik friend. Vibheeshana, though he belonged to the Rakshasa brood, stands out as a sathvik friend (pure and selfless). It is in this unalloyed purity that love shines. It is utterly invaluable.

Divine Love as glorified by the Vedas

About Divine love the Shruthi (Veda) declares: "It did not originate from the firmament. It did not grow from the earth. It has no birth and .death. It is all-pervading. It emerges from the heart when the knots of ignorance are broken." This is how the Vedas glorified Divine Love. Even Naradha, the author of the Bhakthi Suthras, could not describe the nature of Divine Love. He described in various terms the state of mind of the devotees filled with love of the Lord, but he could not describe prema (love) itself. He compared Prema to a priceless gem. Likewise Tulasidas also referred to Rama's name as a precious gem.

Where is this love to be found? It can be got only from Bhagawan Himself, who is the very embodiment of love. Do not treat lightly this infinitely valuable love, which is eternal, pure, sacred and powerful beyond words.

Do not miss this opportunity given to you by Sai. It is only devotion to His feet that will redeem you. Do not be swayed by anyone's words.

My desire, if I can put it that way, is this: More and more should yearn for me. That desire can be realized only if I assume this form and come among you. Those of you who have been following the unfolding of my story will have discovered this by now ... My purpose can be understood in a general way only by earnestly and vigilantly watching, trying to get to the meaning of every word and action with patient attention.

- Sathya Sai Baba

29. Peace is Possible Only Through Love (Alternative Translation)

Date: 27 July 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This is the alternative translation of the discourse originally published in Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 29.

Only In Supreme Love Do You Attain Supreme Happiness,
Love Endows You With The Virtues Of Truth, The Spirit Of Sacrifice, Peace, And Forbearance,
Without Love, There Can Be No Well-Being, Listen To This, Oh Valiant Sons Of Bharat!
(Telugu Poem)

Students!

There is none in this world who does not know the word love. The entire universe is contained in love. Only love equals love. There is no language to describe love. Howsoever one may try, it cannot be expressed in words. Love is beyond mind and speech, just like Brahman.

The Vedas declare: Whence the words along with the mind rebound in futility without comprehending Brahman (Yatho vacho nivarthanthe aprapya manasa saha).

Sage Narada described love as: That which cannot be defined in words (anirvachaneeyam).

It is not easy for an ordinary mortal leading a worldly life to understand and attain this transcendental principle of love, which is beyond mind and speech.

Know love through love

True love is vested only in God. It is like a mariner's compass. Wherever you place the compass, its needle will always point toward the north. Similarly, the principle of true and eternal love always flows toward God under all circumstances. Just as oil makes the lamp glow, love gives effulgence to life.

People in this world consider worldly love as true love. But it is not love; it cannot be called love. Love between parents and children, wife and husband is nothing more than attachment (anuraga); it is not true love. In fact, worldly love is only physical attachment; it is not related to the Self. It can be called a sort of delusion (moha).

People love the physical body, position, and power. But how long do all these last? Since they are temporary and transient, love related to them is also momentary. In fact, it cannot be called love. But, unfortunately, people waste their lives considering it as true love.

True love is highly sacred, selfless, egoless and full of bliss. It is possible to understand such divine and sublime love only through love. Remembering, thinking, and contemplating worldly and physical relationships does not constitute love. All these worldly relations come and go.

True and eternal love blossoms in the heart. It is not something that emerges from somewhere; it is all-pervasive and ever-present. Then how is it that one is not able to recognise this ever-expansive principle of love in one's heart?

People's heart today have become barren, dirty, and polluted. What is the reason? The reason is that they have filled the heart with worldly and mundane feelings. Therefore, there is no scope for true and eternal love to find place in it.

First of all, one should get rid of all that is worldly and transient. Only then will true love blossom in the heart and become expansive. This is what one should know today.

A person's love keeps changing constantly. During childhood, one considers the lap of the mother as the very heaven itself. As one grows up and acquires worldly education, one even forgets the love of one's mother. One considers education as everything and devotes full attention to it. After facing many types of hardships and problems, one completes education and acquires a job. When one gets married and enters the householder stage (grihastha ashram), the focus is shifted from education to family life. After having children, one turns attention to the accumulation of wealth. Then, wealth becomes the only goal of life.

When one faces many difficulties, losses, and sorrows in accumulation of wealth, one gets disgusted with life and starts beseeching God.

In this manner, one's focus keeps on shifting from one thing to the other all through life. How can such ephemeral love be called true love? It is not the infinite, eternal, and changeless Atmic love.

Divine love is changeless, whereas worldly love is ever changing and full of delusion (bhrama). So far as bhrama persists, one can never experience Brahma (the Supreme Being). Only when you keep your heart steady and sacred can you attain true and eternal love.

All that is seen is bound to perish (Yad drishyam thannasyam). All that is visible to the naked eye is bound to disappear sooner or later.

Whatever disappears or perishes cannot be called truth. True love is that which does not disappear, that which is present in the inner being and purifies the inner feelings. True love only gives and does not receive.

Do you find anyone in this world who always gives? Even a father is not prepared to give his property to his own son. Such being the case, how can you expect people to share with others what they have? Only God has this quality of giving. Such unconditional love is associated only with Divinity.

In fact, this divine love springs forth from every heart and immerses the

entire being from top to toe. One can experience this love in every cell and every atom of the body. But, unfortunately, since the heart is polluted, one doesn't find the spring of love emerging from it. One is all the time engrossed in the pursuit of physical and worldly desires. Therefore, it is necessary to get rid of worldly desires.

Even the world will not accept a person who is devoid of love. A heart devoid of love is no better than a body without life. Love is life. Love is God. First of all, everyone should recognise this principle of love.

Spiritual practices purify the heart

Whatever teachings you hear and read, you should imbibe them in your heart. Once, a guru called his disciples and said to them, "My dear ones! I am giving all of you a sweet. See to it that it is not spoilt by ants, flies, mosquitoes, cats, or rats." Most of the students tried to preserve it in many ways. But only one student ate it, digested it, and derived strength from it.

What is the inner meaning of this? It is not enough to preserve the divine teachings in books; you should imbibe those nectarine teachings in your heart, digest them, and experience them. Only then can you derive strength and happiness (pushti and santushti).

Treasure in your heart all the sacred teachings that you hear, read, and understand. Whatever you have treasured in your heart, put it into practice in your life. Only then will you have fulfilment.

Merely eating is not enough; you must digest what you eat. Similarly, merely hearing and reading is not enough; you should put it into practice and experience it in your daily life.

The cowherd maidens (gopikas) constantly prayed to Krishna thus:

Oh Krishna, Play Your Sweet Flute And Sow The Seeds Of Love In The Desert

Of Loveless Hearts.
Let The Rain Of Love Fall On Earth And Make The Rivers Of Love Flow.
(Telugu Poem)
Due To The Absence Of Love, People's Hearts Have Become Barren Like A Wasteland.
Rainwater Gets Absorbed In Sand, But It Becomes Sweet When It Falls On Clay.
However, When It Falls In An Oyster, It Becomes A Pearl And Shines Brilliantly.
Similarly, Devotion Shines In A Person Depending On Their Deservedness.
(Telugu Poem)

Be it the worldly, scientific, or spiritual path, you get the desired result only when your heart is pure. All spiritual practices are meant to purify your heart. Everyone must endeavour to realise this sacred principle of love.

Love does not connote Nature; it is beyond Nature. Love is not contained in Nature; Nature itself is contained in love. Similarly, it is not love that is contained in the universe; it is the universe that is contained in love.

When I hold this handkerchief in My hand, what does it mean? It means My hand is bigger than the handkerchief. But if you say that love is contained in this universe, it would mean that the universe is bigger than love. But, in reality, it is not so. The reality is that love is bigger than the universe.

Love is not subservient to this visible world; this world itself is under the control of love. Creation, sustenance, and dissolution, time,

cause, and effect - all are contained in love. Other than love, everything else in this world is physical and fleeting.

How long will this body last? It is temporary. Love that is related to this ephemeral body is also momentary and transient. Only the principle of Atma, Brahma, or Hridaya (the heart) is true and eternal. It is the foremost duty of man to recognise this true and eternal principle of love.

Pure love is nothing but Atma

Today, the world appears to be like a sick person suffering from some incurable disease. Wherever you look, you find unrest and agitation. Wherever you go, you find injustice, betrayal, unrighteousness, and evil practices. All these are contrary to the principle of love.

Only love is true, permanent, all-pervasive, and the bestower of bliss to all. Therefore, if you want to experience eternal bliss, it is possible only through love. Love is the unifying principle of body, mind, and spirit.

Worldly love is related to the body, mind, and to some extent intellect. But Atmic love transcends the body, mind, and intellect.

What is Atma? It has no form. It manifests in the form of bliss. In fact, love that is sacred, pure, selfless, attributeless, egoless, and formless is nothing but Atma. Such love can only be experienced.

Consider sugar. What is its form? It looks like white sand. But if you ask what is the form of its sweetness, none can give a proper reply. Sweetness has no form; it can be experienced only by tasting.

We experience love in many ways in this world. However, true and eternal love is also immanent in this worldly love. That which is temporary will vanish soon, and that which is eternal is the innate reality.

You have to enquire into this principle of love in a number of ways. True love is related to the inner Self, whereas worldly love is related to body, mind and intellect. Due to union and separation, this worldly love causes happiness and sorrow. Even if it is love for God, it causes sorrow to you when you feel separation from Him. But when you develop Atmic love, you will not feel grief even in separation.

Attain peace through love

There are four types of love (prema): swartha prema, samanjasa prema, parartha prema, and yathartha prema.

Swartha prema can be compared to an electric bulb in the room. Its light is limited only to that room; it can't give light outside the room.

Samanjasa prema can be compared to moonlight, which is present everywhere but it is not so bright.

But Parartha prema is like sunlight, which is very bright. However, it is not permanent because when there is sunset, we cannot see the sun and think that it is not there. In reality, the sun neither rises nor sets.

In the same manner, it is wrong to say God incarnates on earth only when righteousness (dharma) disappears from the face of the earth. Dharma never disappears.

Oh Arjuna! Whenever there is a decline in dharma and rise in a-dharma, I incarnate on earth.

Yada Yada Hi Dharmasya Glanir Bhavati Bharata, Abhyutthanamadharmasya Tadatmanam Srujamyaham.
(Sanskrit Verse)

Here, decline in dharma means not its disappearance but decline in its practice.

What is the meaning of glanir bhavati? It means that dharma is not visible. But it does not mean that it ceases to exist. When the sun sets, we think sun is not there. The fact is that it does exist, but it is not visible to us; it is visible in another part of the world. Similarly, as dharma becomes invisible, people

think it has ceased to exist.

The fourth type of love is yathartha prema. It is present within and without at all places, at all times, and under all circumstances. This is what the Vedas describe by: That all-pervasive God is present within and without (Antarbahischa tatsarvamvVyapya Narayana sthita).

This type of love illumines the inner and outer world equally. This Atmic love neither comes nor goes, neither increases nor decreases. It never perishes; it is eternal. Try to experience this love.

You need not go in search of this love. You cannot receive it as a gift from others, nor can it be purchased anywhere. It is very much present in you and all over. This is described as: With hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth, and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe (Sarvatah panipadam tat sarvathokshi siromukham, sarvatah srutimalloke sarvamavruthya tishthati).

When you experience this eternal and immortal principle of love, you will experience peace at all the three levels - physical, mental and spiritual. You can attain peace only through love.

There is a prayer describing Lord Vishnu:

> Lord Vishnu, Having A Lotus Emerging From His Navel, Reclines Peacefully On Adisesha ...
> Santhakaram Bhujaga Sayanam Padmanabham Suresham ...

What is the inner meaning of this? Though the Lord reclines on the thousand-hooded serpent, he is ever peaceful. How is he able to remain in this state of peace? He is able to experience peace because he has subjugated the thousand-hooded serpent.

But today, people have placed the serpent of worldly desires on their heads.

That is why they are always fear-stricken. Therefore, it is essential to keep desires and materialistic tendencies under check.

Where does Lord Narayana dwell? He dwells in the heart of everyone. So, there should be no place for desires in the heart.

Then, what is it that entertains desires? It is the mind. It is the mind that indulges in all types of mischief. Therefore, first of all, turn your mind toward the heart.

How can this be done? It can be done only through love. There is no other way to do it. All other ways will prove futile before the tricks of the mind.

The mind appears to be all-pervasive. That is why the Vedas said: The mind is the basis of the entire world (Mano moolam idam jagat). The mind is subservient to the world, whereas the world is subservient to love. When you follow the master, i.e. the path of love, you can conquer the entire world.

Worldly relations are only bondages

Sugriva devised many plans to conquer Vali. His minister Hanuman was not an ordinary one. He was one of great intelligence. He used all his intelligence and enquired how they could conquer Vali. He understood that in order to win over Vali, they had to make friendship with someone who was more powerful than Vali. There was no point in befriending someone who was inferior to Vali in power.

That is why Sugriva subjected Rama to a test in order to determine whether He was superior to Vali in power. Since Rama proved that he had much superior power than Vali, Sugriva at once made friendship with Rama. He firmly believed that he could easily conquer Vali with the help of Rama.

Once, Ravana went to Vali to invite him for a duel. At that time, Vali was doing prayers during dawn and dusk (sandhya vandanam). So that these

prayers would not be disturbed,

he put Ravana under his armpit and continued his ritual. Such was the power of Vali, who could keep the mighty Ravana under his arm and subdue his ego.

Vibhishana underwent much suffering and hardship for the love of Rama. His love for Rama endowed him with great strength.

During the war between Rama and Ravana, Rama and Lakshmana killed most of the demon (rakshasa) warriors, including Kumbhakarna and the valorous sons of Ravana.

When they thought only Ravana remained to be conquered, a mighty demon came to the battlefield. Vibhishana said to Rama, "If you can subjugate him, you can easily win over Lanka. He is much more powerful than Ravana himself." Rama waged a fierce battle with him for a long time but could not conquer him. He was tired. Noticing this, Vibhishana counseled Rama from behind. "Rama, this is not the time to relax. If You delay further, it will be impossible to conquer him. I am telling You all this out of my love for You." Enthused by the counsel of Vibhishana, Rama continued the fight and ultimately killed the demon. When the mighty demon fell to the ground, Vibhishana fainted at the same time.

Some time after this, he got up, chanting the Name of Rama. He repented and said, "Swami, this is my weakness. Fie on me. Having filled my heart with Your love, it was not proper on my part to display this weakness." Rama asked, "Well, why did you faint? What is the reason?" Vibhishana said, "Swami, that mighty warrior was my son. Due to grief arising out of physical attachment, I displayed my weakness." As you can see, Vibhishana was prepared to sacrifice the life of his own son for the victory of Rama.

Rama asked, "Vibhishana, why did you do this? Is it not a mistake on your part? You should have told me in the beginning that he was your son." Vibhishana replied, "Swami, whoever he was, he had come to wage a war against You. In a war, there is no scope for entertaining thoughts of physical

relationship and attachment." Relationships like mother, father, brother, sister, and friend are not real.

House and wealth are also illusory. Hence, beware! Beware!

Matha Nasthi, Pitha Nasthi, Nasthi Bandhu Sahodara,
Artham Nasthi, Griham Nasthi, Thasmath Jagrata Jagrata.
(Sanskrit Verse)

"Do we observe physical relationship in a war? If any of our relations comes and wages a war against us, we have to treat him as our enemy and not as our relation. Be it father or mother, friend or relative, whoever they may be, if they are against God, we should have no relationship with them.

"I have surrendered to You, and I am Your servant, so I must strive for Your victory."

"All worldly relationships are momentary, like water bubbles. They are bound to perish in a moment. Your love alone is true and eternal." With such deep love for Rama, Vibhishana tried hard for His victory.

There should be an inseparable bond of love between you and God. Whatever value you may attach to worldly relationships, they are only bondages.

Dull or ignorant (thamasic) relations are like iron chains, passionate or emotional (rajasic) relations are like copper chains, and pure or good (sathwic) relations are like gold chains. The chain may be iron, copper, or gold, but a chain is, after all, a chain, which binds you.

Materials like iron, copper, and gold may have some value, but bondage has no value. There should be no bondage, even if it is a pure (sathwic) one. One should aspire only for the love of Rama, which is pure and unsullied.

Vibhishana propagated this divine principle of love, setting his own example.

He was the pure (sathwic) friend of Rama, whereas Sugriva was His passionate (rajasic) friend and Jambavan was his dull-ignorant (thamasic) friend.

Though Vibhishana belonged to the demon clan, he surrendered to Rama with pure (sathwic) feelings. You find the radiance of love only in such pure feelings. Such sacred love cannot be measured; it cannot be described. No language can express it.

Love Has Not Dropped Down From The Sky. Nor Has It Emerged From The Earth Or The Nether World.
When Ignorance Is Destroyed, Love Blossoms In The Heart. This Is The Teaching Of All The Sacred Texts.
(Sanskrit Verse)

Attain the priceless gem of love

Love has no birth and no death. It is everpresent. It shines in the heart when all worldly feelings are driven away from it. This is the main teaching of the Vedas. It is not possible to describe this love.

Narada used many adjectives to describe love, but he could not give full description of it. He said: Having attained that, man gets total satisfaction, fulfillment, ecstasy, and bliss (Yallabdhwa puman ichchharamo bhavati trupto bhavati matto bhavati Atmaramo bhavati).

Love is like a priceless gem. None can estimate its value.

Mira sang: I have found the jewel of the divine Name (Payoji maine nam ratan dhana payo).

Where can you find this priceless gem? In which market can you find it? Even ordinary gems are not displayed outside. Only fish are kept outside in the

market. Gems are kept safely in an iron safe and are shown only to those who can buy them. Where is this priceless gem of love available? You cannot buy it like any other commodity in a market.

This gem of love is available only with God, who is the embodiment of love. It is available only in the bazar of love and in the shop of love. God is the sole owner of this love. It is possible to get it only from Him.

One may estimate the value of all the jewels in the world, but no one can estimate the value of the gem of love. It is impossible to describe this glorious, eternal, sacred, and priceless principle of love. Therefore, do not undervalue love, and do not consider it as an ordinary thing and thereby lose it. Once it is lost, it can never be regained.

Having attained the proximity of Sai, do not fritter away this golden opportunity, but make best use of it.

If you lose this chance to serve the Lotus Feet of the Lord of Parthi, you will never get it again.

He develops devotion in you, confers strength on you, and ultimately grants you liberation.

Do Not Ruin Yourself By Paying Heed To The Evil Talk Of Others.
Come To Him And Receive His Love. (Telugu Poem)

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Prema Mudita Manase Kaho...".)

30. All Are Embodiments of Brahman (Alternative Translation)

Date: 30 July 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This is the alternative translation of the discourse originally published in Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 29. This more complete version appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, April 2013.

Stars Are Brahman, The Sun Is Brahman,
The Moon Is Brahman, Water Is Brahman, Heaven Is Brahman,
Vaikuntha Is Brahman, Mother Is Brahman, Father Is Brahman,
All Wealth Is Brahman, Love Is Brahman, Living Beings Are Brahman,
Individual Souls Are Brahman,
Creator Is Brahman, Protector Is Brahman Destroyer Is Brahman, Housewife Is Brahman,
Karma Is Brahman, Kayam (Physical Body) Is Brahman,
Prakriti (Nature) Is Brahman, Prana (Life Principle) Is Brahman,
Everything Is Brahman, This Assembly Is Brahman,
Sai, Who Is Declaring This Truth, Is Also Brahman.
(Telugu Poem)
A Tree Born Out Of Soil Is Same As Soil In Its Nature.
Similarly, The Creation Born Out Of Brahman Is Not Different From Brahman,
But It Appears To Be Different To The Naked Eye.
This Is The Mystery Of This World.
(Telugu Poem)
Embodiments Of Brahman!

When seed is sown in the soil, it sprouts as a sapling and grows in due course into a big tree. In the tree, the branches, sub-branches, flowers, leaves, and fruits all appear as distinct from each other. Moreover, each of them has a specific purpose. But all of them are different forms of the soil from which they originated. The branches, sub-branches, leaves, flowers, and fruits are all essentially different forms of the same soil.

Everything is a manifestation of Brahman

Seeing a rope at a distance in darkness and suspecting it to be a snake, a man shouts in fear. Soon, another person arrives and assures him that it is not a snake but a rope. The moment he knows the truth that it is only a rope and not a snake, his fear is gone. It was a rope before he saw it, it was a rope when he mistook it for a snake, and it was only a rope when he realised the truth.

The rope symbolises Brahman (Impersonal Supreme Being, God, Atma), which, due to delusion, humanity mistakes for nature. One realises the truth when a person of true knowledge (a jnani) comes and tells one that it is not nature but the manifestation of Brahman itself.

All that we see in the visible world is nothing but Brahman. But people, out of ignorance, think, "Where is Brahman, and where are we! We are ordinary mortals, whereas Brahman is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient." It is a mistake to say so.

You are verily the omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient Brahman. But because of a worldly outlook created by delusion, you think you are a mere mortal. You aspire to see God, thinking He is different from you. All that you see around you, all that you experience is Brahman. But still you want to see Brahman.

One is a fool who sees yet does not recognise the reality (Pashyannapicha na pashyati moodho). What a great delusion it is! But nobody believes this truth so easily.

There are endless waves in the ocean. Due to the movement of waves, foam is created. When you see the ocean, the waves and foam appear to be different from each other. But, in fact, all three are one and the same. Both the ocean and the waves have the same attributes of coolness and wetness.

Just as there is an intimate and inseparable relationship between the ocean and waves, the same type of relationship exists between individual souls (jivas) and Brahman. From the infinite and unfathomable ocean of ExistenceKnowledge-Bliss (Sat-Chit-Ananda), innumerable living beings emerge like waves. While Brahman is the embodiment of truth, wisdom, and eternity (sathyam jnanam anantham), mankind is the embodiment of ExistenceKnowledge-Bliss.

The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman

Embodiments of divine Atma!

The colour of glasses that you wear determines the colour you see all around you. Similarly, when you fill your vision with love, the entire creation will appear divine to you. As the feelings, so is the result (Yad bhavam tad bhavati).

In the visible world you find diversity, but in reality there is no diversity. You should make efforts to know this divine principle of unity. Both Brahman and illusion (maya) are immanent in every individual.

Parvathi and Parameswara are not different from each other. Parvathi symbolises faith (sraddha), and Iswara symbolizes confidence and trust (viswasa). Every man is endowed with faith and confidence. [Parameswara and Iswara are names for Siva; Parvathi is Siva's consort.] Similarly, illusion (maya) and Brahman are both present in every individual. In this way, every person is the embodiment of Ardhanareeswara (a composite form of Sakthi and Siva, i.e. Parvathi and Parameswara).

You must enquire: What is Brahman and what is illusion? A person is a combination of Existence, Knowledge, Bliss (Sat, Chit, Ananda), name, and form. Sat, Chit, Ananda signify Brahman, whereas name and form signify illusion (maya). Name and form are visible to the naked eye, which is the cause of delusion.

The water of the ocean takes the form of waves, due to the effect of wind. Without the help of wind, there can be no waves.

Just as waves are formed in the ocean with the power of wind, the waves of individuals originate in the ocean of Sat-chit-ananda due to the effect of illusion (maya). Wind is illusion, individuals are the waves, and the ocean is Sat-Chit-Ananda. Therefore, the individual that has originated from Sat-chitananda is also an embodiment of Sat-chitananda.

When you recognise this truth, you become divine, as stated in the Vedic dictum: The knower of Brahman becomes verily Brahman (Brahmavid Brahmaiva bhavati).

Today, you are carried away by the diversity of names and forms. You think of diversity and experience diversity. The principle of SatChit-Ananda is joined with illusion (maya). However, this illusion gradually disappears. The same power that separates waves from the ocean will again make them merge with the ocean. Whatever emerges from the ocean is bound to merge with it.

Only name and form have birth and death, but Brahman has neither birth nor death. That is why Brahman signifies infinity. It has no end. Wherever you look, Brahman is present there. There is nothing in this world that is not Brahman. The entire cosmos is Brahman.

Due to the limitations of your intellect and understanding, you are unable to understand this eternal and infinite principle. Just as you create a snake in the rope, likewise, you create diversity of beings in the unity of Brahman and thereby subject yourselves to misery.

All are embodiments of Brahman. Do not belittle yourself, saying you are a mere human being based on differences of names and forms. To see diversity in unity is a sign of ignorance. Not being able to understand the truth is also ignorance.

Knowledge lies in the realisation of truth. Both knowledge and ignorance are

not present in books. Everything in this world is permeated with knowledge (Sarvam jnanamayam). Every individual, every society is endowed with knowledge. This knowledge is the very form of God. That is the truth.

That is why it is said: Brahman is the embodiment of truth, wisdom, and eternity (Sathyam jnanam anantham Brahma).

Illusion does not catch you, you catch illusion

Air is all-pervasive, but you cannot see it with your eyes or catch it in your hands. However, you cannot deny its existence just because you cannot see it or hold it. Without air, we cannot survive.

This air can be compared to illusion (maya). You think maya is harmful to you, but in fact, maya does not harm anyone. People criticise maya, saying that it holds them tightly in its grip and troubles them. But how can maya catch anyone? It has no hands and no legs.

You have hands and legs. Therefore, you have caught maya, and maya has not caught you.

Instead of catching maya, you should catch Brahman. It is the wind of maya that creates the waves of various beings in the ocean of Brahman. In fact, maya is responsible for the entire creation.

People are born and brought up in maya but are so foolish that they do not understand what maya is.

Life Is Maya, Worldly Attachments Are Maya, Family Is Maya, And Even Death Is Maya.
Knowing Full Well That Life Is Full Of Maya, One Still Gets Trapped In Maya.
How Strange It Is!
(Telugu Poem)

Ignorance is the root cause for your getting trapped in illusion (maya). What is the root cause of ignorance? The root cause of ignorance is actions performed with attachment. From this action (karma), one gets birth (janma), and birth gives rise to delusion (bhrama), which in turn leads to ignorance. Therefore, action is the basis for everything. As your action, so is the result.

Oh Man, Is It Possible To Escape The Consequences Of Actions?
You May Study The Scriptures And Worship Your Family Deities,
You May Go To A Forest And Perform Intense Penance,
But It Is Impossible To Escape The Consequences Of Your Actions.
You Will Get Only As Much Water As Your Vessel Can Hold,
No Matter Whether You Dip It In A Small Lake Or In A Mighty Ocean.
(Telugu Poem)

Good or bad depends on the way of your thinking. You are always filled with external and worldly thoughts and feelings. Right from the time you get up from bed, you spend all your time in worldly activities.

It is wrong to think that it is natural for a human being to lead such a life. Instead, give up worldliness (pravritti) and enter the path of spirituality (nivritti).

You perform various types of spiritual practices to attain Brahman. In fact, Brahman cannot be attained through such practices. Only through enquiry can you understand the principle of Brahman. Use your sense of discrimination and enquire.

But even enquiry is not a proper term in this context. You may enquire about something that is not present before you, but why should you enquire about something that is everywhere? Brahman is present in you, with you, and around you. Why should you enquire about it? It is a sign of ignorance. All spiritual practices are performed only for mental satisfaction.

The mind is like a lotus flower. A large black bee (madhukara) enters the lotus and drinks its nectar. How does a lotus flower sustain itself? It draws its sustenance only from 'madhukara'.

How can you understand this? Divide this word madhukara into two parts, madhu and kara. Madhu means water and kara means rays of the sun. Sunrays from above and water from below provide sustenance to the lotus flower. Just as bhramara (madhukara) enters the lotus flower, bhrama (delusion) enters the lotus of the mind.

This delusion gives rise to desire. Desire is the cause of your happiness and sorrow. Do not pursue mind's cravings. When you follow the vagaries of your mind, you will be a victim of illusion (maya).

One Who Follows The Vagaries Of The Mind Will Become Worse
Than An Animal And Ruin Themself.
When You Follow The Dictates Of The Intellect, You Become God On Earth.
(Telugu Poem)

Therefore, do not follow the mind; follow the intellect.

The mind is a combination of positive and negative thoughts. It has no form. (Bhagavan showing His handkerchief.) What is this? It is a cloth. It is not a cloth but a number of threads woven together. It is not a number of threads but cotton. When you enquire along these lines using the process of negation, you realise that desire is nothing but an illusion.

Students!

You have to understand a subtle principle. You say, "My body, my mind (Na dehamu, na manasu"). What does it mean? Here, na means no. Therefore, na dehamu, na manasu means "I am not the body, I am not the mind." Similarly, when you enquire deeply, you will realize: I am not the intellect (buddhi), I am not the senses (indriyas), I am none of these. Then who am I? I am I.

There are four profound aphorisms (mahavakyas) in the four Vedas:

Brahman Is Supreme Consciousness (Prajnanam Brahma),
I Am Brahman (Aham Brahmasmi),
That Thou Art (Thathtwamasi),
This Self Is Brahman (Ayam Atma Brahma).

Though these aphorisms convey the highest truth, they speak of duality. In fact, the entire Veda conveys only duality. Then where can you find non-duality (advaita)?

The purpose of the Vedas is to teach one what one is supposed to attain in this world. How can one attain happiness? What path should one follow? How should a celibate (brahmachari), a householder (grihasta), a recluse (vanaprastha), and a renunciant (sannyasi) conduct themselves? This is all that the Vedas teach. Therefore, the V edas convey only duality.

But Vedanta teaches non-dualism. The Upanishads constitute the Vedanta. The Upanishads do not support the statement, "I am Brahman" as the ultimate truth because it speaks of two entities, namely I and Brahman.

When there are two entities, it is dualism and not non-dualism. God is all-pervasive, but people, out of ignorance, are unable to realise this truth and become victims of many types of suffering.

God alone is the true guru

You say that today is Guru Purnima, but truly, this is not the correct name of this sacred festival. Some fake gurus, in order to receive some favours from their disciples, may have given the name Guru Purnima to this festival.

The real name of this festival is Vyasa Purnima, because it is the birthday of Sage Vyasa. It is on this day that he classified the Vedas into four parts and

gave them the names: Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda, and Atharvana Veda. He is also the composer of eighteen Puranas. However, the name Vyasa Purnima was changed into Guru Purnima with the passage of time. Sage Vyasa was one of great knowledge.

It is not possible for an ordinary human being, with their limited life span, to study the infinite Vedas. Therefore, he exracted the riks (sacred verses, chants) from the Vedas and called it Rig Veda. Riks are the mantras that protect one when one chants them with steadfastness and devotion.

Manana trana sammilitam iti mantra. It means: contemplation on what is heard and putting it into practice.

Sage Vyasa extracted all the yajus, which are useful for the performance of rituals (yajnas) and sacrifices (yagas), and called it Yajur V eda.

He put together all the samas (sacred hymns) from the Vedas and called it Sama Veda, since it is related to music and literature.

Finally, he compiled all the mantras relating to weaponry and health sciences and called it Atharvana Veda.

Because Sage Vyasa did a great good to humanity by this classification of Vedas, he is considered guru. You find many teachers in colleges, each of them teaching a particular subject like chemistry, mathematics, botany, etc. Likewise, in the field of spirituality, one who imparts spiritual teachings is considered a guru.

What is the inner meaning of the term guru? One who dispels the darkness of ignorance is a guru (Gukaro andhakarasya rukaro thannivaranam).

Not only this, the term guru has another meaning: One who is attributeless and formless is the true Guru (Gukaro gunateeta, rukaro rupavarjita). Only Brahman is beyond attributes and forms. Therefore, Brahman is the only true Guru.

Avatars don't give initiation into a mantra (mantropadesha) to anyone. What is the need for such initiation when you are established in the Self (in the Swadesha)? You yourself are Brahman. Where is the need for you to have a separate initiation in a mantra?

Only those who don't realise this truth give mantra initiation. Such gurus in turn received mantra initiation from their own gurus.

In Fact, A True Guru Is One Who Has No Other Guru. God Alone Is The Real Guru.
Guru Is Brahma, Guru Is Vishnu, Guru Is Maheswara.
Guru Is Verily The Supreme Brahman. So, Salutations To The Guru.
Gurur-Brahma Gurur-Vishnu Gururdevo Maheswara;
Guru Sakshat Param Brahma Thasmai Sri Gurave Namaha.

In this modern age, people are being taught that the guru is Brahma, the guru is Vishnu, and the guru is Siva. No, no. These modern gurus are not Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswara.

Then who is the Guru? Brahma himself is the Guru, Vishnu himself is the Guru, and Siva himself is the Guru.

Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswara represent the three qualities (gunas), namely passion, serenity, and sloth (rajas, sathwa, and thamas), respectively. In fact, the entire world is made up of these three qualities.

Every human being is endowed with these three qualities. Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswara are present in everyone's heart in the form of these three qualities. So far, no one has seen Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswara with their physical eyes.

Who is your Guru? You yourself are your Guru. Your mind itself is your Guru. The moment you realise this truth, there will be no need for you to have any other Guru.

Giving up such an easy path, people are wasting their lives by following a wrong path due to their misunderstanding and doubts. The so-called gurus of today give a mantra to their disciples and ask them to worship the guru. I don't want to criticise anyone, but the truth has to be revealed to you. They whisper a mantra into the ears of their disciples and extend their hand before them for money as an offering to the guru (guru dakshina). This is not proper for a guru.

What is an offering to the guru? The real offering is to know that you yourself are the Guru. You are the Guru, you are Brahma, you are the divine power, everything is in you.

That is why from time to time I tell you the significance of the Gayatri Mantra, Om Bhur Bhuvah Suvah...

People think these three terms connote three different worlds, namely earth, space, and heaven (bhuloka, bhuvarloka, and suvarloka). The reason for this wrong thinking is that today there are no great scholars capable of dispelling the doubts of people by giving their true meaning.

Bhu refers to bhuloka, the material world. This represents materialisation. Bhuvah is the life-force, which makes the material world vibrate. Therefore, it represents vibration. Suvah represents the knowledge for which the Vedic statement Prajnanam Brahma stands - this is called radiation. Materialisation, vibration and radiation, all three are within us. They are not present elsewhere in some other world.

Follow Me

There is nothing else to do if you perform good actions and do good to others. What should be your attitude when you help others? You should have the feeling that the one who helps is Brahman and the one who receives the help is also Brahman.

That is why in Bharat (India), people use the term Daridra Narayana seva while feeding the poor. Lord Narayana has two forms: Daridra Narayana (poor) and Lakshmi Narayana (rich). Lakshmi Narayana has no dearth of wealth and has a lot of people to serve him. But Daridra Narayana has neither wealth nor people to help him.

You should help and empower such poor people so that they also become Lakshmi Narayanas. That's why I always say, "Help Ever, Hurt Never," which is the essence of eighteen Puranas. Help everybody.

Helping others amounts to helping yourself. Whatever you do to others will come back to you manifold. That is why the Vedas declare: Whomsoever you salute, it reaches God (Sarva jiva namaskaram Kesavam pratigachchhati).

What is the inner meaning of this? The inner meaning is that all are Brahman. One who offers salutation is Brahman, and the one who receives is also Brahman.

Embodiments of Love!

Having taken a wrong path for a long time, your life is in turmoil due to many doubts and disbeliefs. You are unable to judge what is right and what is wrong. The reason is that you think you are a separate entity (vyashti).

But, in fact, you are not an individual (vyashti) but a part of society (samashti). Further, society is a part of creation (srishti), which is nothing but the manifestation of the Creator (Parameshti). Hence, you yourself are Parameshti. Therefore, all are embodiments of God.

No one is greater or lesser than the other. You may think, how you can attain the powers that Swami has? Follow Me. Certainly you will be endowed with such divine powers. In fact, all the powers are already present in you, but you do not realise it.

All of you want bliss. If you follow Me, you will be always in a state of bliss. In

fact, bliss is in you, with you, around you, above you, and below you. You are the embodiment of bliss.

Why should you search for bliss outside when it is already present in you? You are deluded into thinking that you can get happiness from worldly objects. There is no happiness in this world.

Everything is in you. Everything is the reflection of your inner being.

You are the embodiment of Brahman. Consider yourself as Brahman. Always live in the constant awareness, "I am Brahman, I am Brahman." When you develop this awareness, you will become Brahman.

When you focus a camera on Me and press the switch, you will get My picture in it. Your body is the camera, your mind is the lens, your feelings are the film, and your intellect (buddhi) is the switch. When you focus the lens of your mind toward God with all concentration and press the switch of the intellect, God will manifest in you. Then your vision will become divine vision and you will become a divine being.

Swami always advises you, "My dear, do this, don't do that." What for? It is not for My sake; it is only to make you divine. It is only to teach you the truth of Brahman and to make your life ideal and divine.

Everyone should become an ideal person. Just as God is the eternal witness, you should also become the same. It is not possible for anyone to understand the divine mystery that is hidden behind the veil of illusion (maya). You see only the effect, but the cause is hidden from your view.

In order to understand the relationship between cause and effect, follow the path of devotion. Sanctify your life by developing devotion.

Embodiments of Love!

How happy one would be if the entire world were pure, sacred, and full of

divine feelings! You would not have hatred toward anyone. You would realise that criticising others amounts to criticising God. Whomsoever you criticise, it reaches God (Sarva jiva tiraskaram Kesavam pratigachchhati).

Consider God as your only Guru. In fact, He is the Guru of all Gurus (Guror Guruh). Why should you worry about anything when you have such a great Guru?

When You Have The Wish-Fulfilling Tree (Kalpavriksha) Right In Front Of You, Why Do You Desire Trivial Things?
When You Have The Wish-Fulfilling Cow (Kamadhenu) With You, Where Is The Need To Buy A Cow?
(Telugu Poem)

When the wish-fulfilling tree (Kalpavriksha) and wish-fulfilling cow (Kamadhenu) are with you, why should you extend your hand before others and seek their help? All are children of God. All are aspects of God. All are embodiments of God.

Lord Krishna propounded the same truth in the Gita: The eternal Atma in all beings is a part of My Being (Mamaivamsho jivaloke jivabhuta sanathana).

There is nothing in this world that is not Brahman. That is why the Bhagavad Gita declared: His hands and feet are everywhere (Sarvatah panipadam ...).

Scientists say that everything is made up of atoms; there is no place without atoms. Vedanta propounds the same truth when it says: Brahman is subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the vastest (Anoraneeyan mahato maheeyan). Just as atoms are everywhere, so also is Brahman all-pervasive.

Embodiments of Love!

There is no need to think about anything else. Always have divine feelings. There is nothing greater than this. You will have everything when you have

divine feelings, and ultimately you will attain Divinity.

All names and all forms belong to the same God. One God has many names (Ek Prabhu ke anek nam).

There are many sweets like Mysore Pak, Gulab Jamun, Burfi, etc., but the same sugar is present in all, which provides sweetness to them. People may have different tastes, and the sweets may have different names, but there is no difference in the sweetness of sugar.

It is only the delusion of the mind that creates differences, but there is no difference in Divinity. Man is the embodiment of God.

The word viswam has an important meaning associated with it. Viswam actually means that which has innumerable limbs and innumerable hands. That is why it is said: Viswam Vishnu Swarupam (The entire universe is the embodiment of Lord Vishnu). Never give scope to differences.

The same Lord is worshipped in different names and forms

On this occasion of Guru Purnima, I want to tell you something very important. Because of differences, you are deluding yourself and becoming victims of ignorance. Here is a small example.

You consider Vishnu as the one who wields the conch, discus, mace, and lotus (sankha, chakra, gada, and padma). What is the inner meaning of this?

There are eight attributes of Divinity: embodiment of sound, mobility and immobility, light, speech, eternal bliss, perfection, delusion, and wealth (sabda brahmamayi, characharamayi, jyotirmayi, vangmayi, nityanandamayi, paratparamayi, mayamayi, and sreemayi).

Vishnu's conch symbolises sound, the discus signifies time, the mace signifies strength, and the lotus stands for heart. Therefore, God is the master of

sound, time, all the powers, and the heart of all beings. This is the inner meaning of depicting Lord Vishnu as the one who carries conch, discus, mace, and lotus. Devotees, out of their innocence, take the literal meaning of these attributes without understanding their inner meaning.

Here is an example. Vaishnavites worship Lord Narayana; Saivites worship Lord Siva and chant the Siva Panchakshari Mantra. Both groups go to Tirupati to have the darshan of the Lord of seven hills. Vaishnavites worship him as Venkataramana; Saivites as Venkateswara. The names are different, but the Lord whom they adore is the same.

Ramana means one who pleases. This is a Vaishnavite name. The Saivite term Easwara means the master of all types of wealth. Out of their imagination, devotees attribute names such as Venkataramana or Venkateswara for their own satisfaction.

Lord Easwara is described as Pashupati, meaning the master of all living beings. The equivalent term for Pashupati is Gopala according to Vaishnavism. Both Gopala and Pashupati are one and the same. Since cows were dear to Lord Krishna, He is described as Gopala. Here, both cows and pashus symbolise all living beings.

Siva is considered to be one who wields the damuru and trishul, which symbolise sound and time respectively. Just like Vishnu's conch, Siva's damaru symbolises sound. In the same way, Siva' trishul and Vishnu's chakra symbolise that they are the masters of time. Siva's trishul symbolizes the unity of three periods of time - past, present, and future.

In this manner, the same Lord is worshipped by different people in different names. Do not find fault with anyone in this regard.

Never observe differences between religions

Respect all religions. Here is a small example. Students can understand this

well.

The musical instrument veena has a number of strings. Each string gives out a particular sound. If even one string is not in pitch, the music is not pleasing to the listeners. Strings are many, but veena is one. Music will be pleasing to the ears only when all the strings join together in harmony.

The nation is like the veena, and different religions are like strings. Only when there is unity and harmony between various religions can there be peace and harmony in the country. You should develop faith in the principle of unity.

Shirdi Sai Baba used to ask for an offering (dakshina) of two rupees from devotees who came for his darshan. Here, two rupees symbolise faith and devotion. They are like two shoots of the same seed. Only when the two shoots join together can the seed grow into a sapling. When the shoots are separated, the sapling cannot grow. Similarly, steadfast faith (sraddha) and devotion (bhakti) should join together like the two shoots of a seed. Only then can you get the sapling of happiness. Never observe differences between religions.

Religions Are Many But The Goal Is One.
Clothes Are Many But Yarn Is One.
Jewels Are Many But Gold Is One.
Cows Are Many But Milk Is One.
Beings Are Many But Breath Is One.
Castes Are Many But Humanity Is One.
Beings Are Many But Atma Is One.
Flowers Are Many But Worship Is One.
(Telugu Poem)

You perform worship of idols with various types of flowers such as jasmine, rose, and marigold. But is there any difference in worship? Worship is the same. All the differences are created by the delusion (bhranti) of the mind. Therefore, give up delusion and develop the principle of Brahman

(Brahmathathwa).

All are embodiments of Brahman, all are embodiments of God. Everyone has ultimately to merge with the Divine. Develop such broad-mindedness. Do not observe differences such as 'I am different, you are different, and others are different.' People talk of the Brotherhood of Man and Fatherhood of God. What does this Brotherhood of Man mean when one brother fights with the other and goes to Supreme Court to settle property disputes? Today you don't find unity even among real brothers.

Therefore, you should go beyond this state of Brotherhood of Man and develop the feeling of oneness (ekatma bhava). The same Atma is present in you, Me, and everyone. Once you realise this, you will not observe any differences whatsoever.

However, this is not so easy. But continuous and constant practice will help you realise this oneness. Walking, talking, reading, writing and eating - everything comes only by practice. Similarly, you can realise your true Self only by constant practice. When you follow the command of God, you will certainly attain Divinity. Accept and practise the precepts of sacred texts as divine commands. Attain God's love. Then you will attain everything.

30. Seek the guru within you

Date: 30 July 1996 / Location: Brindavan

All The Stars Are Brahman;
The Sun Is Also Brahman;

The Moon is Brahman; Water is Brahman; Svarga is Brahman; Vaikunttha is Brahman; Speech is Brahman; the individual is Brahman; Birth is Brahman; Sustenance is Brahman; Death is Brahman; All actions are Brahman; the body is Brahman; The whole of nature is Brahman; Life is Brahman. This assembly is Brahman. The Sai proclaiming this Truth is Brahman.

The tree growing out of the soil returns to the soil; The individual arising from Brahman returns to Brahman; This truth is not easily perceived That is the mystery of this marvellous creation.

EMBODIMENTS of Brahman! When a seed is sown in the earth, it sprouts as a sapling and grows in due course into a big tree. In the tree, the branches, the leaves, the flowers and the fruits all appear as distinct from each other. Moreover, each of them is used for a specific purpose. But all of them are different forms of the mud from which they have originated.

Seeing a rope at a distance, suspecting that it may be a snake, a man develops fear. Soon another person arrives and assures him that it is not a snake but a rope. The moment he realises that what he feared was a snake, was only a rope, he gets rid of his fear. During all the stages, the rope was only a rope.

Likewise, the ignorant man mistakes the phenomenal world for the Brahman, till a jnani reveals to him that what he thought was Nature is in reality Brahman. All that one sees in the entire universe is a manifestation of the Brahman. Some people declare: "Where is Brahman and what are we, petty human beings? How can we be equal to the all encompassing Brahman?" This

is not correct. You are that omnipotent, all-pervading Brahman. Because of your worldly attitude, you are not recognising the Reality. You are separating yourself from the Divine. All that you see is Brahman. To search for God as something different from you is a delusion. But this truth is not easily recognised by man.

When you look at the ocean, its endless series of waves and the foam from the waves, they all appear separate from each other. But the truth is they are all one. The water in the waves and in the foam comes from the same ocean and has the same qualities.

Likewise, from the infinite ocean of Sath-Chith-Anandha (Being-Awareness-Bliss), innumerable living creatures emerge like waves. While the Divine is in the state of Sathyam Jnanam-Anantham (Truth-Wisdom-Infinity) man is in the state of Sath-Chith-Anandha.

Fill your vision with love

Embodiments of Divine Atma! When you fill your vision with love, the whole creation will appear divine to you.

The cosmos appears to you as a manifestation of diversity, but in reality there is no diversity. No one makes any effort to discover the unity that underlies the diversity.

In every human being, both Divinity and the Maya principle are immanent. How is this to be comprehended? Sath-Chith-Anandha represent the Divine in man. The names and forms which man perceives are expressions of the Maya principle.

On the ocean, the wind is the cause of waves, on the ocean of Sath-Chith-Anandha, the wind of Maya gives rise to the innumerable living creatures. Therefore, the individuals who have emerged from the ocean of Sath-Chith-Anandha are manifestations of the Divine. Divinity is everywhere. But

because of man's ignorance, man is a prey to numerous troubles. Here is an example:

Today is described as Guru Puurnima day. This is not quite correct. The day got its name because of some gurus who wanted to have an occasion for receiving offerings from their disciples. The right name for this day is Vyasa Puurnima.

Vyasa was born on this full-moon day. He completed the codification of the writing of the eighteen pure has on this day. Owing to the passage of time Vyasa Puurnima came to be called Guru Puurnima.

The Trinity and the three gunas

The true meaning of Guru is "one who dispels the darkness of ignorance". Another meaning of the word is "one who is beyond attributes and forms, namely, the Supreme Self (The Brahman)". When this Self is within you where is the need to search for someone to teach you? A teacher who teaches others has had a teacher himself. The one who has no Guru above him is the true guru. The Sanskrith stanza which hails the guru as Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshvara and as Parabrahman is misinterpreted. The right approach is to consider Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshvara as the guru. These three are symbolised by the three gunas: Brahma is Rajas, Vishnu is Sathva and Shiva is Thamas. The whole cosmos is constituted by the three gunas. The three gunas are present in man. The Trinity are present in the form of the three gunas in every human heart.

Hence, you are your own guru. You need not seek him elsewhere. The so-called gurus of today seek to impart some manthras and receive fee-offerings as Guru-Dhakshina on Gum-Puurnima day. The manthra is whispered in the ear and the palm is stretched for an offering. This is what happens today. It is not the proper sign of a guru.

You are a guru unto yourself. All potencies are within you. This is indicated by

the Gayathri Manthra.

You have to feel at all times your inherent divinity, which is also present in everyone. When you help or feed someone you must feel that the Divine in you is feeding the Divine in others.

Follow Swami to get the powers

Embodiments of Divine Atma! For many years you have been pursuing wrong paths because of the feeling of separateness. The truth is you are part of the Samashti (collective). This collective is a part of Srishti (creation). Beyond creation is Pushti (the cosmic energy).. Transcending that energy is Parameshtthi (the Supreme Omni Self). You are all these as an embodiment of the Divine. You have to proceed from the individual to a realisation of the Omni Self.

All are manifestations of the Divine. You may ask whether you can ever acquire the powers possessed by Swami. Follow me. You are bound to get that power. That power is latent in you. But you are not aware of it. You want to experience bliss. If you truly follow Swami, you will discover that bliss within you. Nor is that all. You will find that bliss all around you, wherever you go. You cannot find that bliss in the physical world. It is wholly within you. Consider yourself as Brahman (Divine) at all times and in all situations. You will thereby become one with the Divine.

Turn your mind Godward and you will experience the bliss of the Divine. It is for this reason that Swami gives you advice from time to time as to what you should do and what you should avoid. All this is not for my sake but for your own good, to make you take to the path of God Realisation, to teach you the Supreme truth about the Brahman and to make your sacred life an ideal one.

Every man should strive to become an ideal human being. This means that every one should testify to his Divinity. Imagine how happy everyone would be if the entire world was filled with this pure, sublime and sacred ideal.

Recognise that God is your preceptor. He is the preceptor of preceptors. When you have such an all-pervading guru, why should you hanker after gurus of lesser breed?

Names vary but the Lord is One

All are children of God. All are embodiments of the Divine, as declared in the Geetha. Vishnu is described as the Lord carrying in His four hands the conch, the discus, the mace and the lotus. These four represent the cosmic power of sound, the wheel of Time, the puissance of the Lord and the heart in which the Lord dwells.

There is a certain naivety about the way in which Vaishnavites and Shaivites adore the same deity, Venkateshvara. Vaishnavites hail Him as "Venkataramana," while Shaivites hail Him as "Venkateshvara." The votaries of each sect derive some special satisfaction from using a particular name, though the Lord they worship is one and the same. The names vary but the Lord is one.

Shiva is called Pashupathi (the Lord of cattle). Krishna is worshipped as Gopala (the Lord of cows). The emblems of Shiva and Vishnu have common characteristics. Sectarian differences are out of place in the worship of the Divine.

Students should learn a lesson from a musical instrument like the Veena. It has different strings producing different vibrations. But if the vibrations are discordant the music jars on the ears. Just as there should be harmony in playing on the Veena, there should be harmony among people in a country professing different faiths.

Shraddha and Bhakthi

Shirdi Baba used to ask for two rupees from devotees who came to him. The

two rupees symbolised Shraddha (earnestness) and Bhakthi (devotion). These are the two qualities he expected from the devotees. The combination of the two is essential for spiritual progress. Only then bliss will emerge like a plant from a seed.

From this day onwards, give up all differences and concentrate on realisation of the Brahman (the Omni Self). All are embodiments of Brahman. In due course all will realise this truth by eschewing narrow-minded differences. Develop the sense of spiritual oneness by continuous practice. This sense .is bound to grow if you act upto Swami's injunctions. The primary requisite is love for God.

31. The message of Vedhaantha

Date: 31 July 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

One May Master The Scriptures,
Or Be A Great Composer Of Poems, But Without Purity Of Heart
These Accomplishments Are Valueless.

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Atma! From ancient times Bharath has been famous for its exposition of the four Purusharthas (the four goals of life - Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha) and the teachings of the Vedas and Vedangas. The Vedas embody the sublime truths experienced by the sages and the seers.

Veda is derived from the root 'vidh.' It means knowledge. The Veda proclaims the truths, which are valid for all time, for all the three worlds, relating to the well-being of mankind and the divinisation of human life. The Vedas taught the principles of daily life and how people should order their lives. Their approach is dualistic, being concerned about how men should achieve the four goals of life in the world.

The Vedas, which originally constituted a single body of hymns, were later divided into three sections: Rig-Veda Yajur-Veda and Sama-Veda. The Yajur-Veda later got subdivided into Shukla and Krishna Yajur-Veda. Then came Atharvana-Veda.

The nine Vedas

The Vedas are known by nine names. The first is Shruthi - that is, what is learnt by listening. This was necessary in ancient times when printing of books was unknown. The others are: Anushravana, Amnaya, Samamnaya, Chandhas, Adhyasa, Gamana, Nigama, Agama. Nigama and Agama refer to the breathing process of the Divine.

All the Vedas relate to the affairs of the phenomenal world. Each Veda has a Samhitha (collection) made up of Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanishaths. All these lay down the practices that should be observed in the stages of Grihastha (householder) and Vanaprastha (hermit leading an ascetic life). The practices were intended to control the mind. They are not designed to enable one to have direct experience of God.

It is Vedantha that deals with the question of Self-Realisation. For the spiritual journey, it is the guide-post and the destination.

There are three essential things to be understood regarding Vedantha. First is Tharakam. Second is Sankhya. Third is Amanaskam.

Tharakam calls for the understanding of four, principles: Kesari, Dhesari, Madhyama and Bhagavathi. Tharakam calls for the investigation of five mudhras (ritualistic hand gestures) and after realising their spiritual insignificance, concentrate on Sath-Chith-Anandha and merge the mind in the bliss of that experience.

Sankhya envisages twenty five entities made up of the five sense organs, the five sheaths, the five life-breaths, the five elements, the mind, the body, the intellect, the inner motivator and the individual soul. This system of yoga calls, for an enquiry into the reality of each of these entities leading to the discovery that the Reality, Sath-Chith-Anandha, is beyond all these and to recognise one's identity with this transcendental Atma. This calls for an exploring of both the external world and the internal world of mind and spirit.

Amanaskam means the realisation that the entire universe is nothing but Brahman, which is the only Reality. When there is this realisation of Brahman the one without a second - even the mind ceases to exist. It is only the operations of the mind that result in the perception of diversity in the universe. When oneness is experienced, there is no mind at all. All is Brahman in that state of consciousness. There is room only for Prema (Love) in this state. That love is Truth.

Power of love experienced in the state of oneness

The power of that love is illustrated by an episode in Bhagavatham. Once Yashodha went in search of Krishna and could not find him anywhere. She met Radha and asked her whether she had seen Krishna. Radha closed her eyes and meditated intensely on Krishna. That very moment Krishna appeared there. Yashodha realised that the love of a devotee like Radha for Krishna was infinitely greater than her own maternal love for him.

This is how the Divine reveals Himself to devotees. Krishna appeared instantaneously before Radha because of her pure, selfless love. If the heart is polluted or filled with pride, God cannot be experienced even if one tries for endless years.

Yashodha confessed to Radha that her devotion had removed the veil of ignorance and pride clouding her vision all along. She admitted that there were many who loved Krishna more than she did and requested Radha to teach her how to love Krishna. Radha told Yashodha that this love cannot be taught by others. Each one has to develop it by one's own pure and total devotion.

After Krishna came home, Yashodha chided him for going to others houses to steal butter while refusing to eat what was available in plenty at home. The lesson to be drawn from Krishna's action is that He preferred to enjoy the devotion and love of His devotees rather than the maternal solicitude of Yashodha.

How to realise the presence of Divine within

This means that if you have pure, sacred, selfless love for God, the Divine will appear at that very instant.

How do you realise the presence of the Divine within you? Your body is made

up of physical constituents like iron, water, phosphorus and lead, the value of all of which totals barely a few rupees. And yet within the body there is a power which can make millions. Wherefrom does that power come? Does it come from the mother who gave birth to the child? No. Till the child in the womb is four months and nine days old, the foetus is just a round mass of jelly. Then a force of vibration enters the embryo. Wherefrom does that vibration come? That is the Brahma-Thathva (Brhaman principle). That is the Prana-Thathva (Life Principle). From that moment the child in the womb starts moving. Simultaneously the Brahman Principle enters the foetus. The combination of the two in the body is Tharakam. This is one of the secret doctrines of Vedantha. This process is treated as a human phenomenon. It is not something human. It is a manifestation of Brahman.

When I speak through the mike you are able to hear me. But without the current the mike cannot function. The mike is matter. The current is energy. Their combination enables my voice to reach all of you.

Likewise, the coming together of Brahman and Maya results in emergence of the Brihath Svaruupa (the cosmic form of the Lord). Brihath-Svaruupa is the all-pervading energy.

How to realise the Self

You must realise that whatever scriptures one may master or whatever power and wealth one many acquire, without love one cannot achieve liberation. All .of you are looking at the external world. Turn your vision inward. The external vision is useless. It is when you look inward that you will recognise your true form. The master of a house throws out all the useless things but safeguards what is most valuable inside an iron safe in the house. Each of you should realise what is most precious within you. The three processes of Tharakam, Sankhya and Amanaska are extremely precious spiritual gems. They are within you, but you are not aware of their existence, because you have not related yourself to the owner, the Master within you. That owner is the Paramatma (Supreme self). How to relate yourself to the owner and

cultivate his friendship? To enable the students to understand this I am explaining this truth of Vedantha in simple temps.

Neutralise Maya to reach the Paramatma

The master resides in the upper floor of the house. You are outside the gate, guarded by a mastiff called Maya. How, then, are you to approach the master, the Paramatma? You shout His name. He comes down, recognises you and takes you inside. Maya does not trouble you.

To neutralise Maya, you have to prove your oneness with the Divine. This has been proclaimed in the Upanishathik saying: "Adhvaitha dharshanam Jnanam" (The Supreme knowledge is the perception of the non-dual unity). This is the path of knowledge The other path is that of devotion. The Lord comes down to help you when you chant His name at all times. You may ask how this can be done when one has to attend to many other things everyday, including study of books etc. There is no room for this doubt. Consider every act of yours as an offering to God. Do what is appropriate for each action. All this is necessary till you secure God's grace. Thereafter, they are unnecessary.

Awareness consists in the conscious remembrance of God on all occasions.

In the presence of evil actions, the Godly man should not remain a silent spectator. He has to stand up for truth. Because of their failure to do so when the Kauravas were attempting to disrobe Dhraupadhi, Krishna accused Bheeshma. Dhrona and other Acharyas of being accomplices in Dhuryodhana's sinful act. Because of this grievous lapse on their part all these preceptors came to a sad end.

Lord's name should be remembered with total faith

Vedantha declares that three kinds of attachment - attachment to wealth, wife and children - are the cause of a great deal of sinful deeds. Hence, Krishna enjoined Arjuna to remember the Lord always and fight the battle. That will ensure his victory.

However, the Lord's name should be remembered with total faith. This is what the students should bear in mind. Krishna sought to instill such faith in Arjuna through the Geetha. Whoever it may be, if he carries out Swami's commands with total, unwavering faith, he will have direct vision of the Divine in a moment. This principle is taught by Sankhya Yoga.

Vedantha in its essence is extremely simple. It is easier to grasp than butter. God is softer and sweeter than butter. To experience God you have to apply the heat of Jnana-Agni (the fire of spiritual knowledge) to the heart filled with love. You must come near to God and become dear to Him through your love. When that happens desires disappear.

Vedantha is replete with such profound truths expressed in short aphorisms. Dr. Jumsai (who had spoken earlier) said that all are children of God. In fact all are the Divine itself. Instead of being a lover, whose love is confined to a few, become love itself so that you can love all. This is the supreme truth proclaimed by Vedantha (Vedhic metaphysics).

What exactly is the aim and purpose of all the sastras, the Bhagavatam, the Puranas, these discourses and the harikathas? It is to tell man the truth about himself. There is no plot to mislead you. That is not the desire of the Sages who wrote down these annals and their own experiences. You know only the present and what is happening before your eyes. You do not know that the present is related to the past and is preparing the course for the future. It is like the head-lines and titles of a film on the screen; as the letters gleam one after the other, you read them and pass on to the next that comes to view. Each new letter or word wipes out the one already before your eye, just as each birth wipes out the memory of the one already experienced.

- Sathya Sai Baba

31. Vedanta is Very Easy to Practise (Alternative Translation)

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You May Master The Vedas And Vedanta,
You May Be An Expert Composer Of Beautiful Poems And Prose,
But If You Lack Purity Of Heart, You Will Ruin Yourself.
Never Forget These Good Words.
(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments divine Atma!

Since ancient times, Indian culture has been propagating the principles of four objectives of life (*purusharthas*), namely righteousness, wealth, desire, and liberation (*dharma*, *artha*, *kama*, and *moksha*), and also the principles of the Vedas and their auxiliary sciences. The word Veda is derived from the root *vid*, which means knowledge. This knowledge teaches one how to lead a meaningful and noble life in this world by performing good deeds to attain the four main objectives of life.

The Vedas are infinite

Sages and seers, in their state of deep contemplation, received the knowledge of the Vedas directly from Brahman. Initially, the Veda was one.

Veda is one
Ekam Veda

It constituted a single body of hymns. It was also said that,

Veda is infinite
Ananto vai Veda

Only the sages and seers were the repositories of this infinite knowledge.

Later, Sage Vyasa classified this knowledge into three Vedas, namely, the Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, and Sama Veda, with the objective of establishing great ideals in human life through the teachings of the Vedas.

Thereafter, Yajur Veda was divided into two parts: Krishna Yajur Veda and Shukla Yajur Veda. The fourth Veda, Atharvana Veda, was added later. These four Vedas are now being practised and propagated.

The Vedas have nine names. The first one is *Sruti*. What does it mean? Because the Vedas were received by sages (rishis) through hearing in a state of deep meditation, they are called Sruti, meaning orally transmitted sacred knowledge.

In those days, there was no paper, no books, and no printing machines. Vedic knowledge was imparted to disciples by the guru, by word of mouth. Hence, the Vedas were called *Anusrava* (that which is heard repeatedly).

The third name is *Trayee* (meaning three), the *fourth* is Amnaya (sacred tradition handed down by repetition), the fifth *Samamnaya* (similar), the sixth *Chhandas* (hymns, guide), the seventh *Swadhyaya* (self-learning), the eighth *Nigama*, and the ninth *Agama*. They are called Nigama and Agama because the Vedas are nothing but the inhalation and exhalation of the Divine.

The Vedas are related to man's life in this phenomenal world. They deal with duality. Every Veda has three divisions: *Brahmanas*, *Aranyakas*, and *Upanishads*.

Brahmanas are compilations of mantras used for the performance of rituals and sacrifices (yajnas and yagas).

The name Aranyaka signifies that one is supposed to study this part of the Vedas when living in the forest as a recluse (vanaprastha), along with one's wife, after completing the householder stage (grihastha ashram). The rules that govern this stage are very hard. Only when one adheres to these rules steadfastly as a recluse will one earn eligibility for the renunciant (sannyasa) stage.

Both husband and wife should leave their house and live like brother and sister in a hermitage in the forest. They should bear all the hardships of forest life with patience, unmindful of severe heat or cold and other vagaries of weather. Not only that, they should observe great discipline in their food. From the day of full moon, they should go on reducing a morsel of food each day from their regular intake so that they observe complete fast on the new moon day. Again, from the next day onward, they should go on adding one morsel of food each day to their intake until the day before new moon day.

If some householders, out of compassion, offer them food, they should accept it only on a leaf and not on a plate. They should never enter the house of a householder and eat there.

In those days, people used to observe such hard discipline of recluse stage of life. In fact, all four stages of life, namely celibate, householder, recluse, and renunciant, are related to the worldly life. These four stages are prescribed so that one gradually gains control over the mind.

There is a stage called *maha purushartha*, which is beyond these four stages. It is called supreme devotion (*parabhakti*).

The essence and goal of Vedanta

Then comes *Vedanta* (the doctrine of nonduality), which is the ultimate goal of spirituality. In fact, the beginning and end of spirituality is contained in Vedanta. Vedanta leads to three types of yoga, which has immense importance for everyone. Even students should listen to this with full

attention.

The first type is *tarakam*, the second is *sankhyam*, and the third is *amanaskam*. These three are the essence and also the goal of Vedanta.

What is tarakam? Tarakam consists of understanding and experiencing the principles of subtle yogic postures (*mudras*) like *khechari*, then going beyond these postures and, concentrating on the centre of the eyebrows (*nada bindu*) and the I-am-God (*soham*) principle, and ultimately experiencing Existence-Knowledge-Bliss (*Sat-Chit-Ananda*).

Tarakam essentially means the merging of one's mind in the supreme principle of Sat-Chit-Ananda Absolute and attaining total wisdom.

The second type of yoga is sankhyam. Since it deals with numbers (sankhya), it is called sankhya yoga.

The human body consists of:

1. Five Sheaths Of The Soul,
2. Five Senses,
3. Five Elements (Earth, Water, Fire, Air And Ether),
4. Five Airs (Life Breath, Downward Air, Diffused Throughout The Body, Upward Through The Throat, Digestive Air),
5. Mind, Intellect, Subconscious Mind, Ego, And Individual Soul.

1. Pancha Kosas,
2. Panchendriyas,
3. Pancha Bhutas,
4. Pancha Pranas (Prana, Apana, Vyana, Udana, Samana),
5. Manas, Buddhi, Chithta, Ahamkara, Jivatma,

Which Together Are 25 In Number.

Sankhya consists of understanding that you are none of these and, going beyond them, thereby realising that you are the Atma, which is the embodiment of Sat-Chit-Ananda.

The third type of yoga is amanaskam (blissful state of realization). What does it mean? There is nothing else in this visible world made of five elements except Brahman. That is why the Vedas say:

Brahman is one without a second
Ekameva adviteeyam Brahma

The entire creation is the manifestation of Brahman. There is no second entity.

Once this truth is realised, the mind ceases to exist. You see diversity in this world only due to the thoughts and counter thoughts of your mind. When unity is realised in this diversity, then there is no mind. Everything is Brahman.

Whatever you see, hear, think, speak, and do and wherever you go, everything is Brahman. Only when there is a second entity, is there scope for thoughts and counter thoughts. But when there is only unity, and that is Brahman, there is no scope for thoughts and counter thoughts. This is the state of amanaska, meaning a state devoid of mind.

There is only love in this state. That love is the truth. In fact, truth and love are one and the same. When truth and love unite, the world loses its identity for you and you see Brahman everywhere.

Radha's love for Krishna

Here is a small example. Once, Yashoda searched for Krishna, "Where is Krishna, where has He gone?" She was searching for Krishna because she

identified Him with His physical form. Once you realise that Krishna is everywhere, then you don't need to search for Him.

While Yashoda was searching for Krishna, Radha came. Yashoda asked Radha, "Oh Radha! Have you seen my child? Did my Gopala come to your house? I searched in all streets and have gone to all houses, but I couldn't find Him. Did you see Him anywhere?"

Radha closed her eyes and chanted the name of Krishna with heart full of love. At that very moment, Krishna appeared there.

This incident was an eye-opener for Yashoda. She said to Radha, "All along, I thought Krishna was my son and I was His mother. I have been thinking that no one else has more love for Krishna than me. I had this pride that none other in this world gave such unlimited love to Krishna as I do. But, so far, I never realised that your love for Krishna is much superior and is endowed with great power. There is so much power in your love that the moment you remembered Him with love, He manifested before you."

What was the type of Radha's love for Krishna? It was pure, unsullied, and totally devoid of ego. That is why Krishna manifested before her then and there. If there is even a small trace of impurity and ego in your heart, God will never manifest before you, no matter how many hours, days, and even eons (yugas) you may pray to Him.

Yashoda caught hold of Radha's hand and said, "I was under the influence of ego and ignorance. You removed them and opened my eyes. Many in this world love Krishna more than I do. But due to my ignorance, I thought my love for Krishna was the greatest. This was my mistake. Kindly teach me the path of love that you follow."

Radha replied, "Mother, this is not something that someone can teach you or give you. Once you realise your true Self and have total faith in Krishna, this love will automatically develop in you."

Once when Krishna returned home, Yashoda complained to Him:

Oh Krishna! You Don't Eat What I Serve You At Home.
But You Go To The Houses Of The Gopikas And Steal Their Butter.
Oh Dear Krishna! It Spoils Our Good Name.
(Telugu Poem)

Yashoda said, "Krishna, there is so much butter in our house, but You don't eat it. On the other hand, You go to other houses and steal their butter even when they try to chase You away. What is the inner meaning of this?"

The inner meaning is that Krishna does not steal butter; He steals the hearts of cowherd maidens (gopikas), which are full of love. If you develop pure, selfless, and egoless love, God will manifest before you immediately. You don't need to wait even for a moment. Only due to their delusion arising out of body attachment do people undergo suffering.

Jumsai just now said, "Helium was formed due to the fusion of hydrogen atoms in the sun." Jumsai is a great scientist and has a scientific temper. He also told how the stars and the Milky Way were formed. That which has form has birth and death. But that which remains permanently even after the dissolution of the form is truth.

Here is a small example. Cow is the name of an animal. Even after the death of the cow, the word cow remains. Similarly, after the death of an individual, their name remains. When Atma assumes a form, the form may disappear with the passage of time but Atma remains forever.

Matter and energy combine to form the human body

Jumsai also said that one should search for truth. But where is the need to search for truth when it is everywhere? The body that utters truth may die, but truth is never destroyed.

Similarly, the principle of Brahman is eternal and changeless. Brahman is present everywhere in the form of sound, light, vibration, conscience, consciousness, etc. How is it possible to attribute a specific form to it? Truth is immanent in all forms. This is the reality that is propounded by the Vedanta.

A great yogi named Brahmam Garu, belonging to Andhra Pradesh, explained the principle of tarakam thus:

Without Coming Under The Veil Of Forgetfulness,
Always In The Waking, Dream, And Deep Sleep States,
One Should Constantly Be Aware Of The **Soham Mantra**
That Will Enable One To Realise The Atma Principle.
(Telugu Poem)

Tarakam is not associated with the five sheaths, five senses, or five airs. All these are related to the physical body. The principle of tarakam has nothing to do with these.

Brahman is all-pervasive and is present in all forms and in all matter. Everything is matter. Even the physical body is matter. How can we explain this? You may even verify this truth by enquiring from doctors.

The human body is made up of constituents such as water, iron, phosphorous, lead, zinc, etc. The value of these materials put together is only a few rupees. With material of such meagre value, the priceless human body is made. However, it assumes value only when there is vibration in it.

Where does the vibration come from? It comes from Brahman. When the foetus is four months and nine days old in the mother's womb, vibration enters it.

Before the entry of vibration, the foetus is a round mass of jelly. When the vibration enters it, it starts rotating and assumes an oval shape.

How does this vibration start? Does the mother send it inside? It is not sent by anyone. It starts inside when energy combines with matter.

The human body is formed by the combination of matter and energy. It means to say that Brahman and Maya, both are present in the body. Here, Maya should not be referred to as illusion. It is Maya only. This is the secret of the Vedanta.

We consider this body as human but, in fact, it is not human but Brahman. Here is a microphone. When I speak into it, all of you are able to hear My voice. But if there is no electricity, you will not be able to hear anything even when I speak into it.

This mike is the matter, the electric current is the energy. When these two combine, all of you can hear My voice. In the same way, Brahman and Maya combine to assume the form of brihat, which means the ever-expansive energy.

Realise your identity with God

Embodiments of Love!

All of you are looking here. But do not look here, look within.

He is a fool who sees yet does not recognise the reality
Pashyannapicha na pashyati moodho

You do not gain anything by looking outside. Every moment you are seeing only the outside world. Instead, internalise your vision. When you turn your vision inward, you will see your true form. You have look not outside but inside. Whatever you see outside has no value.

The owner of the house keeps things like a broomstick, plates, baskets, etc., outside. But he keeps the valuable items like diamonds in a steel cabinet

under lock and key. The servants of the house can see only the items that are kept outside in the house; they cannot see the valuable items that are kept in the steel cabinet. Only the owner of the house knows what is inside; the labourers and servants see only those things that have little value. Likewise, you are no better than a servant if you see only all that is outside.

Most precious gems like tarakam, sankhyam, and amanaskam are present within you, but you are not aware of them. What is the reason? You haven't established a relationship with the owner. You can see all these precious things only when you develop relationship with the owner.

Who is the owner? God is the owner. What should you do to develop friendship with God? This is thoroughly explained in Vedanta. However, in order to make the children understand this, I am coming down to your level to explain this.

Consider that the owner of the house, God, stays at the upper story of His mansion. You want to meet the owner of the house. But there is Illusion (Maya) in the form of a big Alsatian dog at the entrance, which does not allow you to enter the house. What should you do?

There are two alternatives. Either befriend the Alsatian dog of Maya to gain entry into the house or loudly call out the name of the owner, who will come down to take you with Him, saying, "Hello, you have come." When the owner Himself takes you inside the house, the dog will not bother you. When you go alone, it will not allow you to go inside.

God is at a higher place and has kept Maya as the watchdog at the entrance of His mansion. To befriend Maya is wisdom (*jnana*).

How can this be done? Who has kept Maya at the entrance? God has kept it. Once you realise your identity with God, the owner of the mansion, then Maya cannot stop you from entering the mansion.

The realisation of your identity with God is the state of non-dualism (advaita).

That is why it is said:

Experience of non-dualism is wisdom
Advaita darshanam jnanam

On the other hand, if you call out the names, Rama, Krishna, Govinda, Narayana from below, the owner will come down and take you inside with Him. When you are with God, Maya will not trouble you. Therefore, you should have either the wisdom (jnana) or devotion (bhakti) to enter the mansion of liberation and be with God.

Be in constant communion with God in all the three states: waking, dream, and deep sleep (*jagrat*, *swapna*, and *sushupti*).

You may be wondering how it is possible to cook food, do household work, or discharge your duties as a householder if you think of God all the time. Students may wonder how they can study, remember the lessons, and pass the examinations if they think of God always. There should be no room for such a doubt. Consider all the work you do as God's work.

Do all work with divine feelings

When you cook food, the quantity should be proportional to the volume of the vessel used for cooking; also, suitable heat should be provided for cooking. If you have a small vessel, you should put only half a kilogram of rice in it. Then the cooking will be proper. If you put two kilograms of rice in a small vessel, you will not be able to cook.

Not only that, you should supply only as much heat as necessary while cooking food. If you put a small vessel on a big flame, the vessel will get charred. When the food is getting cooked, gradually reduce the flame.

In the same manner, you should enquire what is temporary and what is permanent in every aspect of your life. Once you cross a river, you don't need

the raft any more. In the same way, when the food is cooked, you don't need the flame any more. So far as you are hungry, you require food. When your hunger is satiated, you don't require any more food.

But this does not mean that you should waste or destroy something after fulfilling a need.

Just Like Burning The Raft After Crossing The River,
One Forgets God After One's Desires Are Fulfilled.
Such Is The Ingratitude Of Modern Humanity.
(Telugu Poem)

The raft that has helped you cross the river should be kept at a safe place so that others can make use of it. In this manner, you should always do good to others. What is the use of burning the raft after crossing the river? It serves no purpose.

After experiencing the bliss of contemplation on God, remain constantly immersed in it. Whatever you do - reading, writing, walking, talking, etc. - do it with divine feelings. Do not indulge in unnecessary talking, which is useless, useless, useless! Instead why don't you talk about God? Don't give scope to any useless talk.

It is correct to spend your time in studies. Use your leisure time to do good deeds. That is true awareness.

What does awareness signify? Awareness is chit, which means knowledge. But due to excessive talking, students are not able to attain true knowledge. Not only that, the power of vibration and radiation is wasted by too much talking.

Therefore, never indulge in unnecessary talk in any matter. Your mind may not waver by such talk, but listening to you, the minds of others may waver. Therefore, always keep in mind the feelings of others.

Watching a sin being committed is also a sin

You may say that the person next to you is committing a sin but that you are not doing anything wrong. But you are watching the other person commit the sin as a mute spectator. Therefore, you will get half the share of the sin. There are many such subtle secrets in Vedanta.

When Duryodhana tried to disgrace Draupadi in the Kaurava court, at that time she asked all the elders like Bhishma, Dronacharya, Kripacharya to save her, but none of them came to her rescue. Later on, Krishna told Bhishma, "You are one of great wisdom. Dronacharya is one of the greatest preceptors. But none of you opened your mouth to prevent Duryodhana from committing this great sin. Therefore, Duryodhana alone is not the sinner; you are also a party to it because you saw this sin being committed before your eyes."

When you know what is being done is a sin and you do not try to prevent it, you also get a share of the sin. If you watch someone indulging in violence, you cannot escape the blame. One who commits the sin, one who watches it, one who encourages it, and one who enjoys it being committed - all four are sinners.

Therefore, all the elders like Dronacharya and Bhishma were equally to be blamed for the sinful act of Duryodhana.

What was their fate ultimately? Bhishma had to lie on a bed of arrows for 56 days before he ultimately died. Why should a man of great wisdom meet such an end? Though he knew a sin was being committed, he did not try to prevent it. This was the cause of his suffering in the end.

The great preceptor Dronacharya taught the art of using weapons to both Kauravas and Pandavas. But what happened to him ultimately? On hearing Dharmaraja utter the words,

An elephant by name Aswatthama is dead
Aswatthama hatah kunjarah

he was so overpowered by his attachment to his son that he thought his son Aswatthama had been killed. Consequently, he threw away his weapons and was killed in the battlefield.

People suffer from three types of attachments: desire for money, wife, and progeny (*dhaneshana*, *dareshana*, and *putreshana*). This has been explained in Vedanta at great length. People commit many sins due to these three types of attachments. One has to get rid of these three to realise the principle of tarakam.

Develop love and faith to attain God

The divine principle of Brahman is immanent in all. When you contemplate on Brahman with the feeling of oneness, you will certainly realise Brahman.

Krishna said to Arjuna, "You may be wondering how you can think of Me in the midst of battle. Remember Me and fight the battle (Mam anusmara yuddhyacha). When you fight the battle while remembering Me, you will certainly attain victory. When you remember Me, I will take care of everything." One should have total faith in the words of God. Here is a small example. I have told this to My students many times.

The Mahabharata war was to start on the new moon day (amavasya). Arjuna was totally dejected and depressed on seeing the formations of Kaurava and Pandava armies a day prior to amavasya, i.e. Chaturdasi. Earlier, it was Arjuna himself who had insisted that they were ready to fight the battle with the Kauravas and said that Krishna should not go to the Kaurava court on a peace mission. The same Arjuna was very nervous when the war was actually to commence.

Krishna wanted to impart the knowledge of the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna to

instil courage and enthusiasm in him. But before imparting this knowledge, Krishna wanted to test Arjuna, to see whether he had total faith in Him.

Krishna took Arjuna to a forest. While returning, it became dark. Krishna pointed to a bird perched on a tree and said, "Arjuna, see how beautiful this peacock is!" He started this conversation to see the state of Arjuna's mind.

Arjuna replied, "Yes, Swami, the peacock in really beautiful." Krishna said, "Oh madcap, that is not a peacock. Don't you see it is an eagle?" Arjuna replied, "Yes, Swami, it is an eagle."

Krishna slapped him on his back and said, "What a fool you are, Arjuna, that you are unable to make out whether it is a peacock, an eagle, or some other bird. Look carefully. It is neither a peacock nor an eagle. It is a pigeon." Arjuna replied, "Yes, Swami, it is a pigeon."

Pretending to be a little angry, Krishna said, "Don't you have common sense? Don't you have discrimination power? What are you thinking? You don't seem to enquire whether it is a peacock or an eagle or a pigeon. You are blindly saying yes to whatever I say."

Arjuna replied, "Oh Krishna, if I say it is not a peacock, You may change it into a peacock. Similarly, if I say it is not an eagle or a pigeon, You may turn it into any of them. You can do anything. Your word is important for me. What does it matter to me whether it is a pigeon or a peacock or an eagle?"

Krishna was very happy that Arjuna had so much faith in His words. He placed His hand on Arjuna's head and blessed him, saying, "Now you are My true devotee." Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, offer obeisance to Me and worship Me.

Truly, I Promise That You Will Come To Me, For You Are Dear To Me.
Manmana Bhava Madbhakto Madyaji Mam Namaskuru Mam Evaishyasi Satyam
Te Pratijane Priyo Asi Mey.

Only after confirming Arjuna's full faith in His words did Krishna impart the knowledge of the Bhagavad Gita to him. What is the use of imparting the knowledge of the Gita to someone who has no faith?

Similarly, you should have total faith in the teachings of Vedanta. Only then can you conduct yourself accordingly. If you obey Swami's command with total faith and contemplate on Him incessantly, you will have the vision of Swami in a moment. Truly, He will manifest before you instantly.

In this manner, you have to enquire into the teachings of Vedanta and understand their significance. In fact, it is very easy to understand Vedanta.

People get confused because they aren't able to understand the real meaning. There is no harm in getting confused, but some people even get depressed. A person who has both confusion and depression loses balance of mind.

If you make real effort, it is easy to understand Vedanta. It may be a little difficult to crush the petal of a flower or a ball of butter, but to understand and follow the teaching of Vedanta is much simpler.

Students!

Understand this clearly. Butter is very soft, but it does not melt unless you heat it a little. Similarly, God is very soft and sweet, but in order to experience Him, you need the fire of spiritual wisdom (jnana).

This can be illustrated by the life of a couple living in a forest during the recluse (vanaprastha) stage. The wife arranges three bricks in the form of a hearth and places a vessel on it. She pours rice and water in the pot and lights fire under the vessel.

Her husband, always immersed in the contemplation of Brahman, sees this and gives a spiritual interpretation to it. He compares the three bricks to the three qualities (gunas) of serenity, passion, and sloth (sathwa, rajas, thamas), the vessel to human body, rice to desires, water to love, and fire to the fire of wisdom.

Do you heat the rice directly on the fire? No. The fire heats the vessel first, which in turn heats the water and boils the rice. Similarly, you should keep the body in contact with the fire of wisdom, i.e. near God. Then the water of love will be heated and boil the rice of desires.

Therefore, keep the body and mind near and dear to God. When you do this, all your worldly desires will disappear. This is the essence of Vedanta.

How simple it is to practise it in your daily life! You don't need to study any sacred texts. Nor is there a need for you to perform any spiritual practices. People in those days understood the essence of Vedanta in such easy and simple ways.

Many small words propound great truths of Vedanta. One can write 300 books, taking three words from Vedanta. How is it possible? There are only 26 letters in the English alphabet, with the help of which any number of books can be written. There are only four strings in the violin, which can produce any number of tunes.

Similarly, if you have only faith and love, you can achieve anything. In fact, God Himself will become a puppet in your hand. You will not be in the hands of God, but God will be in your hands when you have love and faith.

Jumsai said that, though each person looks different from the other, the same Atma is present in everyone. All are one, be alike to everyone. He said, all are children of God. But according to Me, all are not children of God but are God Himself.

Love is the divine essence

Students! I am telling you something subtle and significant. Try to understand its import. If you become a lover, you may love one or two individuals. But if you become love itself, you can love anyone and everyone. By being a lover, you put yourself in a low category. So, don't become a lover, be love itself.

When you become love, you will be loved by all. Then you will realise the principle of feeling of oneness (*ekatma bhava*). The same principle of love is present in everyone. Vedanta gives great importance to this principle of love.

What type of love should one develop? This love is not related to the body or the mind. One should love God in every way. Then automatically all unwanted attachments will be dispelled. Only then will you experience the principle of non-duality (advaita).

Sugarcane has many joints, but its juice is uniformly sweet. Similarly, there may be many modulations in your thoughts, but if you add the sweetness of love to your thoughts, they will become sublime. This is denoted by the Vedic dictum:

God is in the form of essence
Raso vai sah

Love is divine; it signifies the principle of Brahman. God is in the form of love, and love is the divine essence.

Here rasa does not mean *padarasa* (mercury) but *prema rasa* (essence of love). Mercury does not mix with any element; it always maintains its distinctness. But prema rasa is not like that; it mixes and gives sweetness to whatever it comes in contact with.

One may be a highly accomplished scholar having mastered the Vedas,

Sastras, and Puranas,

One May Be A Great Emperor Ruling Over A Vast Kingdom,
But None Can Equal A Devotee Who Has Sacrificed Everything For The Lord.
Without Love For God, One Cannot Attain Liberation.
(Telugu Poem)

Today we have started teaching Vedanta in a small way. Truly, each and every mantra of Vedanta is pregnant with deep meaning. Vedanta is easy to practise. It is not possible for anyone other than Divinity to explain the principle of Vedanta in such simple terms.

Seeing My physical form, you may be deluded into thinking that I am also a human being like you. You may love Me but may not attach due importance to My words because of this delusion. But I am neither the body nor the mind nor the intellect (buddhi) nor the subconscious mind (chitta). I am none of these. I have assumed this body only for your sake.

This can be illustrated by a small example. There is water in this tumbler. A tumbler is required in order to hold water.

There Is A Lamp, Oil, And A Wick. But Can The Lamp Light Itself?
Shouldn't There Be Someone To Light The Lamp?
There Are Flowers, A Needle, And Thread. But Can A Garland Be Made On Its Own?
Shouldn't There Be Someone To Stitch The Garland?
(Telugu Poem)

There is knowledge and there is intelligence, but can you experience the knowledge unless there is a guru to impart the knowledge? Similarly, this body has come to demonstrate what is truth, what is unreal (mithya), and what is Brahman.

Realise your oneness with Swami

Embodiments of Love!

Don't think I am speaking out of ego. I am only revealing the truth about Myself. You have not understood even a fraction of My Reality. None can describe My nature as this or that. I am a man among men, a woman among women, a child among children, and when I am alone, I am Brahman. This is My Reality (loud applause).

I conduct Myself according to the group of people around Me. When I am among elders, I have to behave like an elder. When among children, I have to act like a child.

If an old man plays with toys, children will laugh at him. If a child uses a walking stick like an old man, elders will be amused. It is natural for an old man use a walking stick and for a child to play with toys.

Similarly, when I am with children, I make them happy by giving them this and that. But when someone comes to Me with a desire for spiritual knowledge, I teach the same to him.

When a householder comes to Me, I teach him the dharma of a householder.

Similarly, I teach everyone what they require. Why do I do all this? It is only to make you realise the ultimate reality of your oneness with Swami. You have attained this opportunity out of your great good fortune.

No other Avatar has provided this type of opportunity to human beings (loud applause). Having attained this golden opportunity, if you conduct yourself in accordance with My teachings, your life will be certainly sanctified and redeemed.

You will see the rise of My glory with the passage of time when even the blind

people and ignoramuses will say, "Swami is God." God subjects human beings to tests every now and then. Do not become a victim of Maya. Emerge victorious from God's tests. When you immerse yourself in love, you will relish God's tests.

Nobody can describe love is like this or that. More than the Vedas, it is very essential to understand the teachings of Vedanta. The path of love is much easier than the practice of soft repetition of the Name (japa), meditation, yoga, etc.

God is not interested in knowing how many bags of rice and how many saris you distributed to the poor. You may send this list of items to the income tax department. What I am interested in is only your feelings. Even if you perform a small act of charity, I see your feelings behind it. I am not interested in the number of saris and bags of rice that you distribute. Swami values only quality.

Rukmini could earn the grace of Krishna by offering only a leaf of tulasi. Kuchela could earn the grace and love of Krishna by offering Him a fistful of beaten rice. What did Draupadi do when she had to feed Sage Durvasa and his one thousand disciples when she had nothing with her? She offered a grain of rice left in the cooking pot to Krishna and prayed to Him, "You are our only refuge." When Krishna put that grain of rice in His mouth, immediately the hunger of Durvasa and his disciples was satiated.

In the times of every Avatar, there are such instances of devotees earning the infinite grace of the Lord by making small offerings with devotion and love. Therefore, get rid of the impurity of your mind. Destroy your ego. Learn to make offerings of love. Only then will you have the good fortune of experienceing Bliss (*Ananda*).

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Sathyam Jnanam Anantham Brahma ...".)

32. Man’s true kith and kin

Date: 15 August 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Truth Is The Mother;
Wisdom Is The Father;
Right Conduct Is The Brother;
Compassion Is The Friend;
Peace Is The Spouse;
Forgiveness Is The Son;
These Six Alone Are The Real Relations For Everyone.

IN THIS vast phenomenal universe, we consider the body as the mother. But the body is perishable by the very name given to it - Shareeram - that which decays. The bodies of the mother and the son are both impermanent. Hence for every human being the real mother is Truth - Sathyam Matha. Truth is that which remains unchanged for all time. Truth is eternal and changeless. Hence from ancient times the sages esteemed Truth as Divine. Truth, therefore, should be considered one's real mother.

Pitha jnanam (Wisdom is the father). Is the one who fosters and protects your body the father? He is only a guardian. The true father is wisdom, which is Divine. The Upanishaths hailed Truth and Wisdom as Divine.

Dharmo bhratha (Righteousness is the brother). The uterine brothers who are elder or younger than one are not one's real brothers. From the worldly point of view they are one's brothers. But one's true brother is Dharma (Righteousness), which is Divine.

Compassion is one's true friend

Dhaya Sakha (Compassion is the friend). People look upon associates with bodies as friends. This is not correct. One's true friend is Compassion.

Shantham Pathni (Peace is the spouse). One's true spouse is peace, without which no existence is possible. Peace is a shining ornament for man. It is Divine.

Kshama puthrah (Forgiveness is the son). This is not obtained easily by everyone. Today, because of the influence of the Kali age, sons are more keen on getting at the properties of their parents than on rendering them service or looking after them. Shri Rama was a son who had such supreme regard for the honour and good name of the father that he willingly chose to go into exile to the forest and face all difficulties. Hence Rama is hailed as the very embodiment of Dharma Ramo vigrahavan Dharmah. Such a son is verily the Divine. To have Kshama (forgiveness) as one's son is to possess the Divine.

These six qualities are the right relations for every man. Human birth has been conferred on humanity to acquire these relationships.

Today these basic human values have been forgotten. People remember what happened yesterday or today, but do not remember the great truths inherited from the past. With the result that man is plunged in misery and worry perpetually.

Men have forgotten their ancient culture. They are lost in the transient values of modernism. Remembering this, you students should pledge yourselves to uphold human values.

You should become "Lovers of the Atma"

What you should seek to acquire today are not scholarship and wealth. You must acquire the supreme quality of prema (love). The Vice-chancellor (in his speech earlier) said that you should prepare yourselves to become soldiers. You should become not "soldiers" but seekers of "soul dears." You should become lovers Of the spirit. The term soldiers has a political tinge. But you should become "Lovers of the Atma" Cultivate human values. Remember that

you are born in Bharath, breathe the pure air of Bharath, live in Bharath and grow in Bharath. The denizens of Bharath have been described as Hindus. What is the meaning of Hindu? Anti Kumar said (in his speech earlier) that Hindus are those who have abjured himsa (harming others). This is not correct. Hindu stands for the five following qualities. "H" for Humanity. "I" for Individuality. "N" for Nationality. "D" for Divinity and "U" for Unity. These embody the Hindu tradition.

These five qualities are the Pancha-pranas (five life-breaths). They are the Pancha-Thathvas (five vital principles). The ancient Bharatheeyas, who have drawn sustenance from these five values, have esteemed them as the Samskrithi (essence of their culture).

Samskrithi means that which has been refined. To make a silver tumbler you have to subject a piece of silver to the process of melting, processing and shaping it into a tumbler. Only after the metal goes through all these processes can it become a tumbler. This applies to every object of utility. The raw material has to be processed before it can become a useful object.

The four goals of human existence

Men should consider, however, of what use is their ceaseless pursuit of material objects, forgetting God? All day long men everywhere are pursued by endless desires and worries. Only a proper culture can convert these desires and worries into purposeful actions.

It is for this reason that the ancient sages placed before Bharatheeyas the four goals of human existence. Dharma (Right Conduct), Artha (the acquisition of material things), Kama (satisfaction of desires) and Moksha (Liberation).

Today, people have given up the first and last of these four goals - Dharma and Moksha - and are immersed only in the pursuit of Artha (wealth) and Kama (sensory pleasures). What is necessary is to infuse Dharma

(Righteousness) into the pursuit of Artha and Kama. The acquisition of wealth and the enjoyment of sensory pleasures should be based on Dharma. The entire life should be founded on Righteousness. Only then wealth acquires real value.

Human life is related to both Artha (material) and Paramartha (spiritual) wealth. The combination of material wealth for daily life and spiritual wealth for achieving supreme bliss constitutes the meaning and goal of human life.

These basic human values have been forgotten today and human life has been devalued. Today the price of everything has gone up inordinately. Even a broomstick is very costly. But the value of man has depreciated, because men no longer possess the qualities which a human being should have.

Learn to speak sweetly and avoid excessive talk

Human values are essential for man. They are the hall-mark of his humanness. These values should be manifested in daily life. Your words should demonstrate their sacredness. Your actions should sanctify these values.

Oh Students! Pay heed to my words! Eschew harshness in speech. Excessive talk is harmful.

Idle Strolling Is A Bad Habit.
Let Your Light Shine;
Become Lamps For Others.

The first thing students should learn is to speak sweetly and avoid excessive talk. They should avoid going from room to room like rats and cats. This is part of the culture they have to imbibe.

In the culture of Bharath, there are three basic elements: Naithikam

(Morality), Dharmikam (Righteousness) and Adhyathmikam (Spirituality). These are the threefold aspects of man.

First, Naithikam (Morality). This is based on pure thoughts. When there is purity in thoughts, there is righteousness in speech. Out of righteousness ensues spirituality. There should be unity in thought, word and deed.

Love is the force that binds person to person

Whatever you may learn or do, the fundamental requisite for right living is love. Love promotes truth in speech. That speech should be both pleasing and wholesome as indicated in the Geetha "Sathyam Hitham preethikaram. "

There is love in Jnanam (wisdom). Without love wisdom is like bagasse after the sweet juice has been taken out of the sugarcane.

The dharma should be rooted in love. Of what use is charity or an act of goodness without love in it? There is love in peace and in all other qualities. It is the undercurrent flowing through truth and other qualities. Without love, there can be no genuine relationship between different beings. Love alone can foster unity. Hence love and unity are essential for mankind. Unfortunately men have become morally blind without the two eyes of love and unity.

Love is the force that binds person to person. Unfortunately today, though Bharath has achieved freedom, she is far from achieving unity. Let us have a look at the past. You know about Emperor Ashoka. The top of the Ashoka Pillar, with figures of four lions looking in the four directions, is independent India's national emblem.

A lesson from Emperor Ashoka

Emperor Ashoka had established a certain custom of giving presents to his

feudatory Kings on the occasion of his birthday. Today is India's fiftieth Independence Day. On the occasion of Ashoka's fiftieth birthday, all the feudatory rulers had assembled in the capital.

A ruler from the east submitted to the Emperor the following message: "Your Majesty! I have collected this time three, times as much revenue as in previous years and I am offering it to the Emperor's treasury." The Emperor appeared pleased with the offering and accepted it.

Then came a ruler from the western region. He said: "Your Majesty! I have cut down as much as possible the public expenditure in my kingdom, reduced the salaries of public servants and have brought six times as much tribute as I used to give in earlier years." The Emperor requested the King to resume his seat.

A ruler from the northern region made the following submission. "Oh Lord! I have been unable to bring any offering to your Majesty because of the failure of rains in my kingdom. Owing to the poor harvests I could not make any collections from my subjects." The Emperor expressed his approval and requested the king to resume his seat.

Next came a ruler from the south. He informed the Emperor: "Your majesty! This year I have had to raise the taxes, reduce the expenditure and put down unrest in different parts of the Kingdom and round up all the troublesome elements. As a result peace has been established all over the kingdom. This is the offering I am making to the Emperor." The King requested him to resume his seat.

Then the ruler of Magadha rose from his seat and approached the Emperor: "Your Majesty! My sole concern is about the welfare of my people. I have used all the taxes collected from the people for establishing schools and hospitals for the people and to provide other amenities to them. I got wells dug for providing drinking water to the people. I got tanks to be dug for storing water. Without causing any hardship to the people, I spent all the money collected from them for their own benefit. All the people are happy. I did not reduce the

emoluments of public officials. I allowed them to use the money collected from the people to be used for the benefit of the people, thereby encouraging them to discharge their responsibilities with zeal. Hence, I could bring to the Emperor only my love on this occasion. I offer the well-being of my kingdom to Your Majesty. My people are living in peace and plenty."

Emperor Ashoka was supremely pleased on hearing these words. He .summoned his attendants and offered to the ruler of Magadha presents of the kind he had not offered to anyone before.

Duty of rulers

What is the significance of this episode? This means that rulers should be .concerned solely with the well-being of their people. They should seek to provide what is essential for the people. The king built choultries, constructed roads, set up schools, built hospitals for daily life. When these are provided there will be no discontent among the people.

To ensure peace among the people, the sense of spiritual oneness should be developed, as declared in the Geetha: "Mamatma Sarvabhuutha antharatma" (I am the Indwelling Spirit in all beings). When this feeling prevails, there can be no room for any kind of differences and strife. If one sees the same spirit that is within him in all the others, how can he hate the others? If one sees his image in a mirror, will he hate it? Everyone loves his own self.

What Swami Wrote As A Boy
In This Context, I May Recall A Poem I Wrote At The Age Of Seven. It Was As Follows.
To See Your Face In A Mirror
Do You Need Anybody's Help? Why Do You Need Anyone's
Friendship For This Purpose? To View The Moon In The Sky
Do You Need A Lamp?
To Look At The Moon Shining In The Sky
Do You Require Any Other Source Of Light? To Know Your Own Atma

Why Do You Need A Guru? The Atma Is Your God,
Your Vishnu, Shiva And Brahma. One Who Has Realised This,
Why Does He Need Any Preceptor?

Therefore, everyone should realise that the same Universal Divine Spirit is the Indweller in every being. All are embodiments of the Divine. When this sacred feeling fills everyone there will be no room for conflict or chaos.

Today people have forgotten this sacred truth. Hatred alone is ubiquitous. Envy is rampant. Selfishness prevails everywhere. Self-interest is predominant. Because of these evil tendencies, pure human relations have been undermined.

The relationship which you should develop is that of spiritual oneness. "I and you are one." That is the truth you have to realise. Who is the "You"? It is also another "I." Everyone knows himself as "I." In the declaration, "I and you are one," "You" stands for God (who is in everyone). The first name of God is Aham ("I"). Then came 'Aum.' Every person, in every reference to himself, describes himself as "I" (Nenu in Telugu).

When a man declares that "I am a man," the reference to man is finite and impermanent. The "I" is permanent, everlasting.

Brahman is infinite love

Hence, the scriptures declare: "Sathyam Jnanam Anantham Brahma." The Brahman is Truth. Wisdom and everlasting. The term Aham applies to Brahman. Hence the Mahavakya, "Aham Brahmasmi." Brahma here is not a four-headed deity depicted in the films, it refers to the Universal, all encompassing Spirit. Brahman is infinite love. It is all pervading in its expansiveness. This means that there is no place in the cosmos where love is not present.

This is illustrated by an incident in the Bhagavatham. A gopika heard a knock at the door. She was in two minds whether she should open the door or not. Debating in her mind about this she realised that the one outside was the same as the one within her. "That being so, what does it matter whether the door is opened or closed?"

The Brahman is the same effulgence shining within you and within everybody else. The gopika experienced the Divine as a cosmic mansion which had no exits and entrances. "When the Lord of the Universe is with in me, where is the need for a door or a welcome?" (Bhagawan sang with feeling a song expressing the dilemma of the Gopika and the delight that fills her mind when she realises her oneness with God).

All is within us. The heart is the container of everything. It is the source of strength and of weakness. The pure-hearted man is full of courage. The man with a guilty heart is weak. Love is the source of strength. Get rid of all fear by developing love for God. Thereby the door of your heart opens and you experience Divine Bliss, which is symbolised by the term Kailash, the abode of God.

Students! Purify your hearts by the waters of love. Apply the cleansing powder of Shraddha (earnestness). The heart will shine like a star, "a diamond in the sky." Every student should be like a star, twinkling in the sky.

Develop love and cherish concern for the welfare of the people. Realise the goal of union with God. (Bhagawan explained the significance of Namaskaram and how japa should be done). Redeem your lives by loving all and serving all.

33. Ego and Attachment Lead to Bondage (Alternative Translation)

Date: 16 August 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This is the alternative translation of the discourse originally published in Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 29. A condensed version of this discourse appears in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. This more complete version was published in Sanathana Sarathi, July 2013.

God Is Love And Love Is God.
You Can Connect Yourself With God Only Through Love.
Develop Love And Achieve The Supreme State Of Non-Dualism.
(Telugu Poem)
Liberation Doesn't Drop Down From The Sky, Nor Does It Emerge From The Nether World.
It Is Not Available On Earth Either.
Only When The Veil Of Ignorance Is Removed From Your Heart Can You Attain The Sacred
State Of Liberation.
Moha Kshaya (Removal Of Attachment) Is Moksha (Liberation).
This Is The Truth Propounded In The Vedas.
(Sanskrit Verse)

Embodiments of Love!

Of all living beings, the human birth is the rarest (Janunam nara janma durlabham). Human birth is most sacred, noble, and sublime. It is the result of meritorious deeds done in many past lives. It is attained as a result of penance, prayer, and other spiritual practices.

Make proper use of human birth

Having attained such a precious human birth after such hard labour, people today are wasting it instead of putting it to proper use. What is the greatness of human birth? What is its goal and objective? Why have you assumed this human body? It is necessary for everyone to understand this.

In this vast world, birds, animals, insects, and even ants and mosquitoes discharge their duties. But humanity today has forgotten its duties and is putting this sacred human birth to improper use. Time is fleeting like a whirlwind, and the lifespan allotted to the human body is diminishing like a block of ice that keeps melting every moment. Ultimately, people meet their end before they understand their duty and why they have been given human birth. Then, what is the use of having human birth?

People say human birth is the rarest. Why is it so? They neither understand this truth nor think about it nor make any use of it. Human birth is highly sacred. Such a sacred birth should be put to proper use. But it is not happening. People are wasting their time, energy, and even their body. Why?

The reason is the rank pursuit of physical, ephemeral, and fleeting pleasures. People think that pursuit of worldly pleasures is the be all and end all of life. This tendency corresponds to worldliness (pravritti), but the real objective is spirituality (nivritti). In pursuit of physical, worldly, and ephemeral objectives, people today have forgotten the true and eternal principle of spirituality. Then what is the use of all this education?

What Is The Use Of All Your Learning When It Does Not Help You Change Your Destiny?
When Bad Thoughts Enter Your Mind, All Your Education And Intelligence Become Futile And Meaningless.
(Telugu Poem)

What does man ultimately achieve by acquiring all this worldly education? Ravana was the master of 64 types of knowledge. Even Hiranyakasipu was one of great learning. Similarly, Kamsa was also well educated.

Purify your heart and fill it with love

Ravana performed great penance and worshipped Lord Siva. But what did he attain? All this he did with the objective of attaining worldly goals. Therefore, even after mastering so many types of knowledge, performing so much penance, undertaking so many spiritual practices, and chanting many sacred mantras, his demonic quality was not changed.

You can remove the worldly feelings from your mind only by filling it with divine feelings. People today have filled their minds with unsacred and worldly feelings. They are leading their lives with momentary objectives. Then how can they attain eternal and everlasting happiness? It is not possible.

You should purify your heart and fill it with love. Only by developing love can you acquire true knowledge. It is the duty of youth today to sow the seeds of love in the hearts of mankind, love that will yield the flowers of forbearance and fruits of peace. Students should resolve to become the torchbearers of peace.

Today, there is a great need for peace in society. However, peace and security cannot be acquired from outside; they are present within you. In fact, everything is in you. But you have forgotten this truth.

People today have forgotten their true nature. Reposing their faith in worldly endeavours, they are in search of peace in the external world. But they should realise the truth that Divinity permeates the entire universe.

Verily all this is Brahman (Sarvam khalvidam Brahma). There is no place where Divinity is not present. All that you see, hear, and experience is nothing but Brahman. It is Brahman and Brahman alone that is seen by the eyes, heard by the ears, and felt by the mind; it captivates the heart and kindles humanness. When people realise this truth, there will be no scope for troubles and turmoil in this world.

Wherever you look today, you find fierce conflicts and differences. It has become difficult to know who is human and who is demonic, who is noble and who is wicked, who is human and who is animal.

Having evolved from the level of animal, humanity should rise to the level of the Divine. But instead, people are going in the reverse direction to animality. This is not what they should do. People should conduct themselves like true human beings.

Truth Is The Mother, Wisdom Is The Father, Righteousness Is The Brother,
Compassion Is The Friend, Peace Is The Wife, Forbearance Is The Son.
These Six Virtues Are The Real Relations Of Man.
(Sanskrit Verse)

That is why the Vedas exhort man to follow the principle: Speak truth, practise righteousness (Sathyam vada, dharmam chara). There is nothing greater than truth. Truth remains unchanged in the three periods of time - past, present, and future (Trikalabadhyam sathyam). Truth remains changeless at all times, at all places, and under all circumstances. Unfortunately, humanity has forgotten this today.

Modern education lacks spiritual education

No special efforts are needed to have the vision of Divinity. When you remove the veil of ego and attachment that covers your innate Divinity, you will realise the truth.

Humanity today is afflicted by two planets (grahas), namely Desire and Hatred (Raga and Dwesha). When you get rid of Desire and Hatred, you will realise that you yourself are Brahman. Vishnu pervades the entire universe (Sarvam Vishnumayam jagat). Then you will find the entire world as the manifestation of Divinity. Make every effort to at least have a glimpse of Divinity.

Students!

You are under the mistaken notion that spirituality is something difficult. In fact, it is a thousand times easier than the secular education you acquire. Spiritual education is much simpler than worldly education. You find it difficult because you do not know this truth.

When you first try to learn your ABC's, how difficult you find it! But once you gradually go to higher classes, you find learning ABC's so easy.

Today, the system of education in India is limited only to worldly education. There is a total lack of moral values in this system of education. That is why students have forgotten humanness and are neglecting dharma. Since people today have given prominence only to secular education, the Vedas and Sastras (scriptures) have been neglected.

Students consider acquiring degrees like B.A. and M.A. as something very great and do not give importance to spiritual education. What are these degrees like M.A. and B.A.? M.A. + D=Mad,B.A.+D=Bad.Isthiswhatyou should learn? Actually, the entire modern system of education misleads the students and puts them on the wrong path.

Students today acquire education to fill their belly and not for the blossoming of their heart and purification of their mind. The mind should become pure, and Divinity should blossom in the heart. This is the real goal of education.

But students today go to the employment office and register their names immediately after they receive their degrees. They waste so much time in going to the employment office time and again. This is not what you should do.

No doubt, worldly, secular education is also necessary, but it does not develop good qualities in you. What is most essential for you to develop? Truth, righteousness, peace, love and nonviolence (sathya, dharma, santhi,

prema, and ahimsa).

All Your Education, Positions Of Authority, Acts Of Charity, And Service Have Little
Value Without The Virtues Of Truth, Righteousness, Peace, And Love, Which Are Verily
The Pillars Of The Mansion Of Sanathana Dharma.
(Telugu Poem)
Values Are The Sound Foundation Of The Mansion Of Life

A house needs four walls. The mansion of human life is built on the four walls of truth, righteousness, peace, and love (sathya, dharma, santhi, prema). Today, these four walls have collapsed, and humanity has lost its real shelter. People are leading very artificial lives. Can we call this humanness?

If living is important, don't the birds, beasts, and animals live? What bank balance do they have? What type of mansions do they build for themselves? They live in the present and are happy. They are not worried about tomorrow. But people, on the other hand, prepare five-year and ten-year plans.

You Struggle Hard In Life Merely For The Sake Of Filling Your Belly.
You Acquire Many Forms Of Knowledge From Various Fields.
But You Are Not Able To Enjoy Total Bliss.
So, Take Refuge In God And Contemplate On Him.
He Will Certainly Show You The Right Path.
(Telugu Poem)
Oh Humanity! Examine And Enquire For Yourself What
Great Happiness You Have Achieved By Spending All The Time From Dawn To Dusk
In Acquiring Worldly Knowledge And Earning Wealth While Forgetting God.
(Telugu Poem)

What do we require today? First and foremost, we require moral, ethical, and

spiritual values. These are like our life breath. But moral, ethical, and spiritual values have touched the nadir today. You do not find them anywhere. Righteousness and justice are in wilderness. Today, villages have become havens of injustice, unrighteousness, and untruth. There may be a cure for any disease, but there is no cure for the diseases of desire and hatred (raga and dwesha). Why? The reason is selfishness and self-interest.

Students!

No doubt, everyone has some amount of selfishness, but it should be within limits. You subject yourself to great suffering because of your unlimited desires. What gives you happiness? Is it eating, drinking, begetting children, or earning money? No, no. You don't find real happiness in any of these. The happiness you derive from these is only momentary.

Do Not Be Proud Of Your Wealth, Progeny, And Youth;
The Tide Of Time May Destroy Them In A Moment.
Ma Kuru Dhana Jana Yauvana Garvam, Harathi Nimeshath Kalah Sarvam.
(Sanskrit Verse)

Worldly pleasures are momentary. As students, you know this.

You think you will be happy by acquiring degrees like M.B.B.S., M.B.A., M.Tech., and M.F.M. But are you really happy when you acquire these degrees? No. You want something more. What you want now is a good job.

Do you remain happy after securing a job? You are happy only for a couple of months. Then you start craving a promotion. But are you happy after getting a promotion? No. You want to get married because you think you will be happy when you are married.

But are you happy after your marriage? After marriage, you want a son, then you want a daughter. Are you happy after begetting a son and a daughter? No.

Meanwhile, husband and wife get engaged in endless quarrels. Then you remember God. You pray, "Oh God! Why am I trapped in these worries? Please come to my rescue." In fact, all this suffering is due to your limitless desires. There is no permanent happiness in fulfilling desires. The happiness derived from desires is only temporary, like passing clouds.

When will you experience real happiness? You are not even happy in your old age, after transferring all your responsibilities to your children. You start worrying that diseases may afflict you. Who will take care of you when you fall sick? When you are 90 years old and bed-ridden, even then you want happiness and comfort. When the doctor comes to give you an injection, you ask him, "Sir, please give the injection carefully so that it doesn't give me pain." In this manner, right from birth to death, you crave happiness. Where is the real happiness?

True happiness lies only in sacrifice

Thyagaraja said, Oh mind! Tell me, whether happiness lies in wealth or in the proximity of God (Nidhi chala sukhama, Easwara sannidhi vhala sukhama, nijamuga telupumu manasa). He refused to accept all the wealth and precious gifts that were offered to him by the king. Real happiness lies only in the proximity of God.

There is no harm in deriving happiness from worldly objects, but it should be within limits, and your focus should always be on spirituality. Fulfill your desires to the extent necessary, that is enough.

You enjoy eating food, but if you overeat, your stomach will be upset and you will suffer from indigestion. You inhale air, but you cannot retain it inside. As much air that you inhale, the same has to be exhaled. In the same manner, you may earn money, but you should put it to proper use and spend it on acts of charity and helping the poor and needy.

Since ancient times, the culture of Bharat (India) has been propagating this

great lesson for mankind: Immortality is attained not by action, progeny, or wealth but only by sacrifice (Na karmana na prajaya dhanena thyagenaike amrutatthwamanasu).

You may perform any number of rituals and sacrifices (yajnas and yagas), you may beget any number of children, you may earn any amount of wealth, but none of these can confer immortality on you. Immortality lies only in sacrifice. True happiness lies only in sacrifice. There is no greater happiness than what you derive from sacrifice.

What do you have to renounce? Should you renounce your house and property? God does not expect you to renounce these things. God wants you to give up your evil qualities. What should you offer to God? He is not asking you to offer your virtues. He is asking for your evil qualities, because nobody will accept them, not even your own parents.

Students!

You may think the love of your parents or the love of your wife and children as the ultimate love, but that is a grave misconception. God's love for you is the greatest.

Offer your evil qualities to God

Your parents love you because they think that you will give them happiness when you grow up and attain a good position in life. There is an element of selfishness in their love. The same is true about the love of your wife and children. Only God loves you without a trace of selfishness and self-interest. Offer your evil qualities to God, who is totally selfless.

In the interview room a short while ago with our Vice Chancellor and others, I told them about this. Suppose you have a totally crumpled and soiled hundred rupee note, which even a beggar will not accept. Even if you throw it in the garbage, the person who collects the garbage will not touch it. Nobody

will accept it. But the same hundred rupee note will be accepted by the Reserve Bank, and they will give a new hundred rupee note in return.

Likewise, nobody will accept your dirty mind, which is like a soiled and crumpled hundred rupee note. Not even your mother, father, wife, or son will accept it. Therefore, offer your dirty mind to God, who is like the Reserve Bank Chairman. He will give you a pure mind in return (loud applause).

When you offer all your evil qualities to God, they will not trouble you. You will be happy and the world will also be happy. Don't keep your evil qualities with you, and don't pass them on to others also. Offer them only to God, with the sense of total surrender.

Oh Lord!
Only You Are My Father And Mother, Friend
And Relation, Wisdom And Wealth. You Are My Everything
Twameva Matacha Pita Twameva, Twameva Bandhuscha Sakha Twameva,
Twameva Vidya Dravinam Twameva Twameva Sarvam Mama Devadeva.
(Sanskrit Verse)

What is meant by offering everything to God? It does not mean sitting idle without doing any work. Do your work, perform your duty, but offer everything to God with the feeling, "Do all actions to please God (Sarva karma bhagavad preetyartham). When you perform actions without any expectation of the fruits thereof and offer them to God, God will give you what is good for you.

You write a letter, put it in an envelope, and post it. Your duty ends there. The letter will reach its destination, whether it is America, Germany, or Japan. Once you post the letter, you don't need to worry whether it will reach its destinatio. It is for the post office to ensure that the letter reaches its destination. It may first go to Mumbai, from there to New York. Whatever may be the mode of dispatch, the letter will reach its destination.

Similarly, discharge all your worldly responsibilities and offer them to God. It is for God to decide what type of happiness He should give you.

Unfortunately, people today lack faith, which is very necessary. Faith is like the life breath of a person. A person without faith (viswasa) is like a body without life breath (swasa). Faith should be saturated with love. Life without love is useless.

Worldly relations are false

A young man, in his effort to acquire the knowledge of many spiritual subjects, used to meet his guru everyday, who lived outside the village. One day the guru taught him,

Relationships Like Mother, Father, Brothers, Sisters, And Friends Are Not Real.
House And Wealth Are Also Illusory. Hence, Beware! Beware!
Mata Nasti, Pita Nasti, Nasti Bandhu Sahodara, Artham Nasti,
Griham Nasti, Thasmath Jagrata Jagrata.
(Sanskrit Verse)
Birth Is A Misery, Old Age Is A Misery, Family Is A Misery,
And Death Is A Terrible Misery.
So, Be Careful! Be Careful!
Janma Dukham Jara Dukham Jaya Dukham Punah
Punah Antya Kale Maha Dukham, Thasmat Jagratha Jagratha.
(Sanskrit Verse)

Then the disciple said, "Swami, all these teachings may be relevant for renunciants like you, but not for people like me. My parents have so much love for me that they will eagerly await my return, standing at the entrance of the house. My wife also loves me so dearly that she does not eat food without me. Therefore, your statement of Mata nasti pita nasti, ... does not hold any meaning for me." The guru heard all this and gave him a pill, saying, "Oh dear son! I will prove my statement by giving you direct evidence. Take this pill.

After reaching home, put it in your mouth and drink some water. You will become like a dead man for some time, but you will be able to hear all that transpires around you. Then you yourself can know the truth." The student readily agreed to this test. Youths of today want to test and see for themselves before believing anything. They have a great taste for tests!

The young man went home and did as instructed. Seeing him lying unconscious, all the inmates of the house cried loudly, considering him dead. The wife wept bitterly, saying, "I am my parents' only daughter. Now I have lost my husband. What is my fate now?" Even while crying for her husband, she was worried only about her future.

Their neighbours came to sympathise with them. Since he was a very good boy and was following the spiritual path, everyone was grief-stricken at his 'death'.

After some time, the guru also entered their house on the pretext of coming that side for some work. After hearing everything, the guru said, "I will bring him back to life, but do what I say." All the people in the house told him, "Swami! We will surely do what you ask us to do." The guru said, "Look! In order to bring him back to life, one of you should be prepared to die. After chanting a mantra, I will sprinkle water on him from my water pot, and he will get up." Saying this, the guru first asked the mother of the young man, "Amma! Are you prepared to die for your son?" The mother replied, "Swami! I have other children to look after. Who will take care of them when I die? What will happen to them when I am no more?" The guru put the same question to the young man's father. He said, "I have the responsibility for the maintenance of the entire family. Isn't it? How can I die?" Thereafter, the guru asked the young man's wife. "Dear daughter! For a wife, her husband is everything. Isn't it? I think, you will have no objection to dying for his sake." The wife said, "I am my parents' only daughter. They will be very sad if I die." All three went inside the house and thought of a master plan. After some time, the young man's father came out and said to the guru, "Oh revered guru! You are the embodiment of compassion. You do not have any responsebilities. Therefore, why don't you sacrifice your life for my son? We

will construct a marble tomb for you and will worship you with great devotion and dedication." When the guru sprinkled water on his face, the disciple got up. The guru said to him, "See what your father, mother, and wife said. All of them told me to sacrifice my life. At least now try to understand that the entire world is unreal (mithya)." Nobody is related to anybody in any way.

Develop self-confidence

The love that people exhibit for each other is only body attachment. Selfishness and self-interest is the basis of this love. Only God is totally selfless.

There is nothing wrong in maintaining relationships with others, but love God wholeheartedly. Whatever work you do, consider it as God's work. Whomever you see, respect them as the embodiment of God. As propounded in the Bhagavad Gita, God is present in all: I am present as the Atma in all beings (Mamatma sarva bhutantaratma). Therefore, do not ridicule or hate anybody.

At the same time, do not put too much faith in others. Instead of having faith in others, put all your faith in God. (Swami showing His handkerchief) This cloth is made of so many threads. Since many threads came together, this cloth has become strong. If you separate the threads of the cloth, you can break them with your fingers.

Therefore, focus all your love on God. Love all, serve all, considering everyone as divine. But do not believe everyone. Have faith only in God.

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 worldliness. It is nothing but a structure of bones.

Oh Mind!
Do Not Be Under The Delusion That The Body Is Permanent.
Instead, Take Refuge At The Divine Lotus Feet.

(Telugu Poem)

In the present circumstances, in this modern age, in this Kali Yuga, make God your only refuge, with full faith. Because people have lost faith in God, the nation is in utter turmoil and chaos. Develop moral values. Tread the path of righteousness. Experience spirituality. Then you will also attain worldly happiness.

Since there is no spiritual education either in schools or colleges, students today are going astray. This is not the students' mistake; the mistake lies with the education system, which has not made any provision for spirituality in schools and colleges.

How can the mansion of life stand without the foundation of spirituality? Self-confidence is the foundation, self-satisfaction are the walls, self-sacrifice is the roof, and self-realisation is life. Therefore, develop self-confidence. That is spirituality.

You cannot perform even a small task without self-confidence. Focus your thoughts on God instead of wasting your time in unnecessary talking, entertaining evil thoughts, and taking to a wrong path. Contemplation on God is the real wealth that will secure your future. Earn such permanent wealth and good name. Only then will your life become meaningful.

Serve society and strive for its welfare. Become dear to all by rooting out your ego and giving up body attachment. Why has this body been given to you? The body is gifted to undertake righteous actions (Sariramadyam khalu dharma sadhanam).

Preserve at least one or two good teachings of Swami in your heart from what you hear every day. It may not be possible for you to remember everything, but remember at least one or two important teachings and practise them.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Hari Bhajan

Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin...")

33. God is the sole refuge

Date: 16 August 1996

The form of love is Brahman; Brahman is permeated with love; Love is bound to love alone; If one is filled with love He is eligible for union with God.

Not From The Heavens Above,
Nor From The Netherworld, Nor From The Earth, But By The Destruction Of The Knot Of Ignorance In The Heart:
One Gets Liberation, Declares The Shruthi.

EMBODIMENTS of love! Liberation will not drop from the sky. Nor can it come form the pathala (nether world). Nor can it be found on the earth. Liberation can be attained only when ignorance is dispelled. In this vast universe every creature lives according to the law of its being. Man alone, who has the gift of this extremely precious human birth, is failing to realise the purpose of his existence and ignores his duties.

Immersed in sensual mundane pleasures, man forgets his spiritual destiny. All scholarship is valueless without Self-realisation. Ravana, Bhasmasura and Kamsa were not lacking in scholarship or even religious practices. But all these were related to the Pravritthi-marga (externals) and not to the Nivritthi-marga (cultivation of the Spirit inside). Hence their basic demonic qualities did not change.

It is only when impure and unholy thoughts are expelled from the mind that sacred feelings will enter it. To experience lasting bliss the heart has to be sanctified by filling it with love. Through that love has to be secured Jnana (the highest wisdom).

The goal for youth

The foremost goal modern youth should set before themselves is to sow the seeds of love, rear the plant of forbearance and distribute the fruits of peace to society through dedicated service.

The secret of peace is not in the external world but is within each individual. He should realise that the whole universe is permeated by the Divine. Today the world is filled with strife. It is not possible to make a distinction between a human being and a demon. Man, who evolved from the animal, instead of proceeding towards Divinity, is regressing to animality. Man's primary duty is to uphold the human values of Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Love. Man today is enveloped in attachment and hatred. The moment he casts them off, he will realise his divinity.

Students! You must realise that the spiritual path is easier than the academic studies you pursue. Education should serve to refine the heart, not fill the mind with useless lumber.

(Bhagawan sang two poems deprecating the preoccupation with jobs for filling the belly, forgetting the Supreme Lord.) The country today has lost all sense of ethical and spiritual values. The countryside is rampant with evil practices. Uncontrolled selfishness and insatiable desires are the root cause of the present evils. In the pursuit of worldly objects is there enduring happiness? Not at all. (Swami sang stanzas from Bhaja Govindam to emphasize the point that youth, wealth and progeny are all ephemeral). Late in life, after going through all the experiences of family life, man even in his last years seeks a happiness that deludes him. Where is happiness to be found? The answer was given by Thyagaraja when he sang that happiness is not to be got through wealth but only through the worship of Shri Rama.

The glory of sacrifice

Worldly comforts cannot be adjured. But the spiritual goal should always be kept in mind. There should be a limit to the enjoyment of sensual pleasures. The money that is earned should be used for public good. Bharatheeya

culture has always glorified the quality of renunciation. Immortality can be got only through sacrifice, declare the scriptures.

Students should realise that God's love alone is totally selfless and boundless. Even the love of parents, wife or children is tainted by a tinge of selfishness. Dedicate all your actions to God. Surrender to God all your bad qualities. God will offer you what is good for you.

How good are relations?

In this context I would relate the story of a student who used to go to a preceptor's hermitage in a forest for his studies.

The guru used to teach the student that there is no use in depending on one's mother, father, brothers, or relations or on wealth and property. All these are transient. Therefore he should be on his guard. 'Thasmath Jagratha! Jagratha!" He also used to teach him that life is full of sorrow upto the very end and hence he should be always on the alert. The boy told the guru that this teaching might be all right for recluses like the guru, but was irrelevant for ordinary persons like himself. He told the guru: "My parents are exceptional, my wife is good, without me she will not take her food. All of them love me. How can I disown them?"

The guru said, "I shall prove to you the truth of my teaching." He gave a pill to the student and said that after taking it he will become almost lifeless, but he will be conscious of what is happening around him though others will consider him dead. "Then you will know the truth."

The lad returned home, took the pill and dropped dead (as it were). The mother came, called the father and started wailing over the death of the son. The wife came out on hearing her cries and seeing the husband's body started crying. "I am my father's only daughter. If my husband goes, what will happen to me?" Everyone wailing over the body cried: "What is to happen to me?" Other relatives also gathered and lamented on the death of a young

man who was virtuous and spiritually oriented.

At this stage, the preceptor came there. Everybody made way for him. The guru asked the mother, the father and the wife why they were wailing. They all mentioned the grievous loss of they had suffered in the death of the young man. "What will happen to me?" was the refrain of each of them. He asked the mother to fetch a glass of water. He dosed his eyes as if in prayer and then told them: "If anyone drinks this water, that person will die but the young man will be restored to life." He first offered the water to the wife as the one dearest to the young man. She said: "I am the only child of my parents. If I die they will collapse. Hence I cannot drink the water." The guru said: "Your husband will live. Why don't you give up your life?" She replied: "The dead man is no more in any case. Why should I die?"

The guru next asked the mother. She said: "My daughter has come for confinement. She is helpless. And I have two more young daughters to be married. How can I leave them?" When the father was asked, he replied: "I am the head of the family. If I go only two ladies will be left in the house, my wife and my daughter-in-law. My wife will become a widow. With no male member in the house, they will be helpless. How can I give up my life?" All the three declined to drink the water. They went inside the house and drew up a master-plan. They came out and said: "Swami! You are immensely compassionate. You have no other attachments. Please drink the water yourself and restore our son's life. We will build a samadhi in marble for you."

At that moment, the guru sprinkled the water on the young man's body. He got up. The guru asked him, "What did your wife say? And your mother and father?" He replied: "They all said, let me die."

God's love alone is unselfish

The guru observed: "The world is impermanent. Birth is a misery, old age is a misery. There is trouble with the wife. Entire life is miserable. Therefore, be careful!" says a Sanskrith sloka.

As long as one is alive, all seem to love the body. This is also for purely selfish reasons. God alone is utterly selfless. Loving that God, you can lead your lives in the normal way. There is nothing wrong. Whatever you do, treat it as an offering to God. See God in everyone. Don't have ill will towards anyone. Do not have excessive attachment for anyone. Direct all attachments towards God. Love all. But do not rely on anyone except God. Realise the impermanence of the body and place your trust solely in God. Seek refuge in Him.

The faith is what is most needed today in this Kali Age. It is the loss of faith that is responsible for all the strife and chaos in the country.

Dear students! You are the victims of a purely secular education devoid of roots in spirituality. As often as possible, when you get the chance, meditate on God. That will ensure a good future for you. Earn the esteem of society by your service.

34. Be Ever Grateful To God (Alternative Translation)

Date: 17 August 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This is the alternative translation of the discourse originally published in Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 29. A condensed version of this discourse appears in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. This more complete version was published in Sanathana Sarathi, August 2013.

Today, There Is No Fear Of Sin. Wicked Deeds And Acts Of Cruelty Have Become An Everyday Occurrence.
Their Magnitude Is Beyond All Description. Devotion To The Lord Has Become Extinct.
Oh Man! Understand That You Can Attain Peace And Happiness Only By Chanting The Divine Name.
(Telugu Poem)
Devotion Alone Elevates One To The Supreme State And Cures The Disease Of Worldliness.
Devotion Alone Stirs The Yearning For The Divine And Leads One To Liberation.
(Sanskrit Verse)

Embodiments of Love!

Devotion to God is the royal road to liberation. It is the divine remedy for the disease of birth and death and all the worldly and physical worries. There is no better path than devotion that leads man to God-realisation.

Chant the divine Name constantly

The divine and sacred land Bharat (India) has been propagating the knowledge of Vedanta contained in the Upanishads to the entire world. If only

Indians (Bharatiyas) would fill their hearts with total faith in Upanishadic statements like, "God permeates the entire universe (Isavasyam idam sarvam)," and "God permeates the entire world (Isavasyam idam jagat)," the entire country would be free of all problems.

God is all-pervasive. Any individual who has unwavering faith in the all-pervasiveness of God will be free of all worries. People should imbibe the truth contained in the four profound aphorisms of the Upanishads:

That Thou Art (Thathtwamasi).
I Am Brahman (Aham Brahmasmi).
Verily, All This Is Brahman (Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma).
This Self Is Brahman (Ayam Atma Brahma).

The entire world is engulfed by the everexpanding consciousness of Brahman. Brahman is synonymous with Omkar (Aum, or Om). This was the profound incantation chanted by the ancient sages of India. Just as there are three letters in the word God, Aum consists of three letters. In the Thretha Yuga, Lord Rama's three brothers Lakshmana, Bharata, and Satrughna represented A, U, M respectively, and Rama Himself was the embodiment of Omkar. The Atmic principle represented by Rama signified the unity of these three letters. "One who pleases is Rama (Ramayati iti Rama)." If one considers the word nama (name) from the point of view of numerology, a great truth is revealed. The word nama is the combination of three letters. According to numeralogy, the value of na is 0, that of a is 2, and ma is 5. The numbers 0, 2 and 5 sum to 7. The divine Name Rama similarly gives the number 7.

The number 7 has great importance because it signifies 7 musical notes, 7 colours, 7 oceans, and 7 great sages (rishis). That is why people conduct chanting of the divine Name for 7 days (Nama Saptaha).

Expression of gratitude is itself prayer

God is described as: The embodiment of sound, mobility and immobility, light, speech, eternal bliss, perfection, delusion, and wealth (Sabda Brahmamayi, Characharamayi, Jyotirmayi, Vangmayi, Nityanandamayi, Paratparamayi, Mayamayi, and Sreemayi).

Why does one need to chant the Name of God? Why should one pray to God? Isn't it our duty to express gratitude to God, who has created this vast world and all the living beings in it and provided them with food to eat, air to breathe, and water to drink? Not only that, He has provided everything for all living beings to carry on their life sojourn on earth.

If your handkerchief falls down and someone picks it up and gives it to you, you thank them. Even for a small help like this, you say thanks. Then isn't it your duty to express gratitude to God, who gave you so much?

Expression of gratitude is itself prayer. What does prayer do? It awakens the inner Divinity of a person, which is immeasurable, invisible, and transcendental.

In this regard, there is an exhortation in the Upanishads: "Oh people! Get up; be aware and awake! Go to noble people and learn from them the secret of attaining Divinity (Uthishta jagrat prapya varannibodhat)." Thus, the Upanishads exhort one to arise and awake from ibe's deep slumber of ignorance.

The offerings God accepts

People are always in search of happiness. In fact, their entire life is filled with happiness.

There is happiness everywhere, so where is the need to search for it? People search for happiness in the outside world because they have forgotten their true Self. This is sheer ignorance. The happiness that you seek is present within you. You can have happiness only when you love God wholeheartedly.

To love God wholeheartedly and to experience His Divinity is devotion. Prayer is essential to develop love for God. True prayer comes from the heart, not merely from lips.

Ravana repeated the Siva panchakshari mantra, "Om Namah Sivaya" continuously and performed intense penance. But there was no change in his demonic qualities. Why? Because his prayer did not come from his heart. His prayer was for a selfish motive, so how could he experience the love of God?

Only when you offer something to someone do you deserve to receive something in return. If you go to a shop to buy a handkerchief, the shopkeeper will give it to you only when you give him ten rupees. If you don't pay him ten rupees, he will not give you the handkerchief.

Similarly, you have to offer something to God. The Vice Chancellor talked in his speech about the teachings of the Upanishads. God does not expect any worldly things from you. What do you have to offer Him?

Rukmini Prayed To Krishna Thus:
One May Offer You A Leaf Or A Flower Or A Fruit Or Even Water,
But If It Is True That You Offer Yourself To One With Devotion,
Oh Krishna! May You Be Weighed By This Tulasi Leaf!
(Telugu Poem) Here, What Does Leaf Mean? It Is Not The Leaf
Of A Basil Plant Or Bilva Tree. You Don't Need
To Go In Search Of A Bilva Tree To Offer Its Leaf To God.

Your body is the leaf that has to be offered to God. What flower do you have to offer to God? You have to offer the flower of your heart. Similarly, you have to offer the fruit of your mind, and not any other ordinary fruit.

What do you do when you offer flowers to God? You don't worship God with all types of flowers. Before offering the flower of your heart to God, you should purify it by removing the germs of desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride, and jealousy (kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada, and matsarya).

Similarly, what type of fruit should you offer to God? God does not expect you to offer fruits that grow on trees. You should offer Him the ripe fruit of your mind, which is filled with the sweetness of love.

Then what type of water should you offer to God? It is not tap water or Ganga (Ganges) water or water from any other river. Offer your tears of happiness to God.

You have seen people shedding tears when they are filled with extreme happiness. Nara in Sanskrit means water, and nayana means eyes. The nara (water) that comes from the nayana (eyes) should be offered only to Narayana (God).

Do Not Shed Tears For The World. Shed Tears Only For God.
Think You Are Brahman, And Brahman You Become

Divinity permeates the entire humanity. That is the essence of two great aphorisms, Aham Brahmasmi and Ayam Atma Brahma, which mean "I am Atma and Brahman". When you constantly contemplate on the truth that you are Brahman, you become Brahman. "The knower of Brahman becomes verily Brahman Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati)." This body is just a field (kshetra), and the Knower of the field (Kshetrajna) is within. There cannot be a field without a Knower of the field. Similarly, there cannot be a temple without the idol of God.

What is the point in having an electric wire without electricity, a school without a teacher, and a temple without the idol of God? Does anyone offer obeisance in a temple where there is no idol of God? Does anyone establish a school without a teacher?

God is within you. Offer to God your heart filled with the sweetness of love. That is the true prayer.

In the same way, devotional songs (bhajans) should be sung with heart full of

love. Bhajan is not merely associated with pitch, rhythm, tune, and beat. When a bhajan is being sung, the next singer should not merely think of the pitch for their song. That is not correct. One gets real happiness only when one is totally immersed in the bhajan.

Happiness can be derived in two ways, one is through singing (kirtan), the other is through community singing (sankirtan).

There may be an element of selfishness in singing (kirtan). The singer may sing to earn appreciation, honour, and reputation. In such a case, the main consideration of the singer may be the pitch, rhythm, tune, and beat but not the feeling (bhava).

On the other hand, community singing gives happiness to one and all. How? Singing for fulfilment is community singing (Samyak kirtanam iti sankirtanam). In community singing, the focus is not only on the voice or the people who have come to participate. You should sing freely and wholeheartedly, with your heart filled with love for God. When you sing to please God, your song will automatically be pleasing to the ears.

The name of our country, Bharat (India), also signifies the harmony of feeling, tune, and beat (bhava, raga, and tala). Bha means Bhava, Ra means Raga, and Ta means Tala.

Similarly, all your actions should reflect the unity of thought, word, and deed.

The singing should have connection with the heart. There is no purpose in merely repeating Ram Ram Ram like a tape recorder. The singing should be coupled with feeling from the heart. Only then can there be harmony between your speech and heart, which leads to unity of thought, word and deed (trikarana suddhi).

In fact, your thoughts, words, and actions should be in harmony in all endeavours of life. Only then will God's heart melt, and only then will He shower His grace on you. Always sing to earn the love and grace of God, not

to earn the appreciation of others. Fill your mind with such noble thoughts.

The same Atma is present in all

The world is facing so many problems today. Wherever you look, you find restlessness, conflicts, and chaos. Why? Because people today have limitless selfishness. People have forgotten their humanness, have given up human values, and have not bothered whether their conduct befits their human birth. Therefore, they have lost their value. Today, everything has value, but people have no value. Nonetheless, humanity is the most valuable in the entire creation. Therefore, people should live like human beings.

Who accords value to precious diamonds and gold? Only people. Without humanity, gold and diamonds have no value. But humanity, who accords value to all these, has lost its own value.

People are more valuable than all the wealth of the world. Students should understand this truth and conduct themselves accordingly. Gold and diamonds acquire value only because of people.

In a city inhabited by a large number of people, the value of land per square metre is very high. On the other hand, you can buy many acres of land in a forest for the same price. Why? The reason is that human beings do not live in forests. The land acquires value only when people inhabited it.

Do not forget this truth. Always think that you are very valuable. You are not cheap, but you are the chief.

Always remember the great V edic aphorism "I am Brahma (Aham Brahmasmi). But thinking that only you are God is also a sign of ego. Always think that the Atma present in you is present in all. Taking this truth into consideration, you should respect others.

The same truth was stated by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita when He

said, "I am the Atma present in you, and you are the Atma present in Me. There is no difference between your Atma and My Atma." Suppose there are 100 earthen pots, 100 brass pots, and 100 bronze pots at a particular place, as also the pots of many other metals. You find the reflection of the sun in all of them. The value of vessels may vary, but the reflection that you find in all of them is one and the same.

Likewise, the Atma is reflected in the water of the mind contained in the vessel of the human body. When the mind wavers, it looks as though the reflection is also unsteady. But, in fact, the Atma is always steady. Only the mind wavers.

Because of the wavering nature of your mind, you think the Atma is also wavering. But the Atma is changeless. It is attributeless, unsullied, the final abode, eternal, pure, enlightened, free, and the embodiment of sacredness (It is nirgunam, niranjanam, sanathana niketanam, nitya, suddha, buddha, mukta, nirmala swarupinam). What an ignorance it is to attribute unsteadiness to such an Atmic principle!

The Atmic principle does not move, does not change, does not melt. It is sweet, pleasing, attractive, nectarine, and full of bliss. Since you are not able to understand the Atmic principle, you crave worldly and mundane things.

Keep your body pure and sacred

The human body is the basis to realise God. The body is like a car. You have to carry on your life journey with the help of this car. You are traveling in the car, but you are not the car. However, you identify yourself with the car, and that is a big mistake.

The driver inside the car exercises control over the steering, accelerator, and clutch. The four tyres of the car are dharma, wealth (artha), desire (kama), and liberation (moksha). Self-confidence is the air in the tyres. The mind is the steering, intellect is the switch, stomach is the engine, food is the petrol,

and tiffin is the oil.

Whichever path you want to take, you have to turn the steering of your mind in that direction. Tyres are outside, but the steering wheel is in the hands of the driver. Only when the air of self-confidence is in the tyres can the car move smoothly.

Students!

The car of your body should not move on the road in an arbitrary manner while performing the journey of life. You should be aware of the ups and downs that you may encounter on the road.

Similarly, you should use your discrimination and enquire how you should conduct yourself in society in a given situation with regard to your age. You should know how to conduct yourself with humility before elders, how to respect your teachers, how to love your parents, how to discharge your duty with regard to your vocation, how to pray to God.

The car can travel along a highway without any danger only when you use your discrimination. Food is essential for the body to maintain good health. You should acquire the necessary strength and capability. Never neglect the body, because the journey of life has to be performed with the help of the body. The body is very sacred. You can realise God only with the help of the body.

The body is like a temple, a chariot, and a field. Lord Krishna declared, "Recognise Me as the Knower of the field (Kshetrajnam chapimamv viddhi ...)." Also, it is said, "The body is a temple, and the indweller is God (Deho Devalaya proktho jivo Deva sanathana)." Keep the temple of the body pure, clean, and sacred. As much as you keep your body pure and sacred, so much will you be closer to God. Offer your body to God.

Whatever work you do, consider it God's work. Wherever you travel, think that you are traveling toward God. Why? "Lord Vishnu pervades the entire

universe (Viswam Vishnumayam)." Everything in this world is the form of God.

There is no place where God does not exist; there is no form that is not His. That is why the Bhagavad Gita declares, "With hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth, and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe (Sarvatah panipadam tat sarvathokshi siromukham, sarvatah srutimalloke sarvamavruthya Tishthati. Everything is God.

Embodiments of Love!

As long as you observe the difference that you are an individual soul (jiva) and God is different from you, then the soul is the soul and God is God.

Instead, have the strong faith that soul is God. Do not observe any difference between the individual soul and God. You lose peace because you observe such differences. Have firm faith in the feeling of oneness (ekatma bhava).

Perform all your worldly duties. There is nothing wrong in it. When you discharge your duties with divine feelings, there will be no scope for defects.

When you think that God is in you, you will never commit a mistake or resort to violence or hurt others. Why? "God is the embodiment of love (Daivam premaswarupam)." Where there is love, there can be no violence. Hatred enters a heart that has no love. It is hatred that leads you to the wicked path.

Become deserving of God's grace

Students!

Treasure the feelings of unity, harmony, and love in your heart. When you have unity, there will be purity in your heart. When there is no unity in your heart, enmity will enter it. You should travel from unity to purity and from purity to divinity before enmity overpowers you.

But, unfortunately, there is no unity, no purity, no divinity today. You find enmity and hostility between communities in the country. How wicked enmity is!

Whomsoever you ridicule, it reaches God (Sarva jiva tiraskaram Kesavam pratigachchhati). Offer salutations to everyone because God is in all.

One can attain divinity only through a feeling of oneness (ekatma bhava). One becomes an animal when this is forgotten. Humanity has evolved from animals. Don't go in the reverse direction and become animal again. Instead, move forward and become divine.

Lead a sacred life and become ideal students. Many in this world today have become slaves of money, power, ego, name, and fame. Our students should become slaves of ideals. They should become ideal boys. This is what they have to learn.

What types of ideals should they observe? Ideals that will make them pure and strong. They should help others and give them joy.

If you earn a good name by becoming ideal students, it is enough. Your parents will be happy, and society will be benefited. When individuals are good, society will also become good.

Students!

Right from this young age, you should develop moral, ethical, and spiritual strength and become ideal students. Help Ever, Hurt Never. This is the essence of all the Puranas (mythological texts). You can serve the world only when you observe this principle. You will not only bring credit to your family but demonstrate an ideal to the entire world also.

Consider the world as the manifestation of God. Try to know how you can become deserving of God's love. "Oh God, save me" - this is not the prayer you should offer to God. You should pray for the love and grace of God.

You will have no dearth of anything when you have God's love. That is why Thyagaraja said, "Rama, if I have Your Grace (Anugraha), what harm can the nine planets (navagrahas) do to me?" Tulsidas sang, "What are eyes that do not feast on the divine form of Lord Rama for?" He said, "I am a cripple)." The Lord asked, "When you have hands, legs, and all other limbs, how can you say you are a cripple?" Tulsidas replied, "I have hands, but I am not able to serve You. It is as good as not having hands. I have eyes, but I am not able to see You. Therefore, I am a blind person." Utilise each of your limb to do God's work and experience divine bliss. Therein lies the significance, nobility, sublimity, and greatness of human birth. That is why even Thyagaraja sang:

Come To Our House, Oh Valorous One Of The Raghu Clan, And Oh
The Tender One, I Offer My Salutations To You.
Oh Son Of Dasaratha, Come To My Rescue, I
Cannot Bear Separation From You Any Longer.
Rara Ma Intidaka Raghuveera Sukumara,
Neeku Mrokkeda Rara Dasaratha Kumara Nannelukora, Neyalalera.
(Telugu Song)

Thyagaraja addressed Rama in singular terms, asking Him to come to his house, since he considered Him his old friend. What is the inner meaning of this?

On the spiritual path, you address God only in singular terms and not in plural terms because God is your old friend. When you address an old friend, you use only singular terms such as rara and pora (come here, go there).

But when a new friend comes to your house, you observe courtesy and formality, saying, please come, take your seat, etc. As long as you observe such courtesy and formality, both will remain new to each other. There will be no intimacy between the two.

When you consider someone as your old friend, you will be free with him without observing any formalities. That is why it is said,

The End Of Wisdom Is Freedom,
The End Of Culture Is Perfection,
The End Of Knowledge Is Love,
The End Of Education Is Character.

Consider God as your own. That is real friendship. In fact, God is not different from you and you are not different from God. Both are one and the same. Truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names (Ekam sath viprah bahudha vadanti). There are millions of people in this world, but all are one.

If you ask which of the two numbers 1 and 9 is greater, even an illiterate person will say that 9 is greater than 1.

But in spiritual terminology, this is not correct. 1 is greater than 9. 1+1+1+1... becomes 9. Without the number 1, there can be no number 9. One is hero, world is zero. Hero becomes zero if he forgets God. Therefore, become heroes, not zeros. Strive to experience God's love and become a hero.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Prema Mudita Manase Kaho...")

34. Man’s debt to God

Date: 17 August 1996

Fear Of Sin Has Vanished;
Wicked Deeds Have Become Common;
Devotion To The Lord Is Gone;
Indescribable Misdeeds
Have Enveloped The World.
Oh Man! Only The Contemplation
Of The Name Of Hari, Which Is
The Refuge Of All Renunciants,
Will Confer Happiness On You. (Telugu Poem)
Devotion Alone Confers The Supreme Gift;

Devotion alone destroys the disease of mundane existence; Devotion alone stirs the yearning for the Divine; Devotion alone is the means of Liberation. (Sanskrith Poem) EMBODIMENTS of Love! To realise the Supreme, the path of devotion is the only royal road. It is the panacea for all worldly ailments and for the disease of birth and death. Devotion is the most effective means for awakening the spiritual urge.

The Upanishaths are the great spiritual legacy of ancient Bharath. "Ishavasyam idham sarvam" (The entire cosmos is the dwelling place of the Lord) declares the Upanishath. If the full import of this one aphorism is understood and practised by Bharatheeyas, the country will be free from all difficulties. Any person who has true faith in this declaration will be free from all troubles.

The Upanishaths declared: "Thath Thvam Asi" (Thou art That). This truth should get implanted in the hearts of devotees. Equally, the great saying, "Aham Brahmasmi" should get enshrined in the hearts of all human beings. "Sarvam Khalu idham Brahma (Verily all this is Brahman). The Brahman permeates everything in the cosmos.

Prayer is essential for developing love for God

Man has to realise how much he owes to God who has provided so many things for his life and comfort. Prayer is the expression of man's gratitude to God. It is also the means of awakening an awareness of the eternal Divine within him. The Upanishaths beckon man to realise the bliss within him. Prayer is essential for developing love for God.

The prayer should be heart-felt. Ravana worshipped Shiva but without giving up his demonic nature. Hence he could not get the grace of God.

What pleases the Lord

The Lord is pleased with even the simplest things offered with full devotion to Him. It is enough if the devotee offers his body, mind, heart and the joyous tears flowing from his eyes.

Students should realise the supreme value of human birth. The indwelling spirit in every one is the same Divinity. Forms may be different but the Spirit in all is the same. It is pure, unchanging and timeless. It is ever blissful. It is nectarine. Everyone should recognise this Athmik Principle.

The body is like a chariot. It is essential for the journey of life. But you are the charioteer, not the chariot. The four Purusharthas (Goals of life) are the four wheels of the chariot.

Students! In driving the vehicle, you have to be mindful of the state of the road. You have to see how the body is used for various purposes in society according to the prevailing circumstances. You should know how to behave towards elders, teachers, parents and above all, how to love God. You should use your discrimination in the discharge of your duties. Only then you can make the journey of life smooth and safe.

Look upon the body as a shrine in which the Dime is installed. Dedicate all actions to God.

Today many are becoming slaves to wealth, power, position or name. Students should not become such slaves. They should be upholders of sacred ideals. "Help ever; hurt never." Let that be your motto.

35. The Gospel of hard work

Date: 18 August 1996 / Location: Brindavan

SCIENCE and technology have advanced so much that man is able to explore space and dive into the deep ocean. But he has not learnt how to live like a human being on earth. It is more important for man to learn how to lead a good life on the earth than explore space. Man's life is based on the earth.

Man's primary aim should be to recognise the unity that underlies the diversity in the phenomenal world. To break up what is one into many pieces is easy. But it is difficult to bring them together into a meaningful unit. It is in the unifying process that the utility of things can be understood. The role of both diversity and unity in life has to be properly understood.

When a tailor has to stitch a bush coat out of a piece of cloth, he has first to cut it into various pieces and then stitch them together to make a bush coat. The scissors are used to cut the cloth. The needle is used to stitch the different pieces. Today human beings trend to behave like. the scissors rather than as the needle. With the result that all man's intelligence is being used to divide society rather than unify it.

Beyond birth and death

There is a family of three, father, mother and the son. When the father brought home his earnings the mother felt happy. Whenever he came home empty-handed the mother used to get angry. The son watched the alternation of happiness and sorrow in the home. Unable to bear the troubles at home, the father went to a temple of Kali. He prayed: "Oh Dhevi! I cannot bear these troubles. I cannot live with my wife. Please see that her life is ended soon." "Be it so!" declared the Goddess. The wife died.

Watching this, the son went to the Kali temple. He prayed intensely to the Goddess. She appeared before him and asked what he wanted. "Please

restore the life of my mother," he pleaded. "So be it!" declared the Goddess.

The father desired the death of the mother. The son desired her revival. Their prayers revolved around death and life. Have such prayers any meaning? How much more sensible would it have been if they had prayed for the gift of goodness. The father surely could have asked the Goddess, "Oh Dhevi! Confer good sense on my wife." The prayers of the father and son only brought about death and birth.

(Swami sang the Bhaja Govindam song in which Adhi Shankara deplores the human condition which is caught up in the cycle of birth and death and Govinda is the only redeemer).

What folly is it to be caught up in the endless cycle of birth and death? What is the purpose of life? It is to live for some ideals. The Vice-Chancellor (who had spoken earlier) said that there is the practice of performing annual ceremonies for one's departed ancestors. The Vice-Chancellor said that while performing these ceremonies the young people should remember the departed ones with gratitude and love. The children should show their gratitude first and foremost to their parents because they owe their life and all that they enjoy to their parents. The anniversary of their passing should be remembered with grateful tears.

Students should recognise the supreme importance of time. Most of them are wasting three fourths of the time they have at their disposal. They indulge in useless gossip and scandal. Abusing others amounts to abusing God.

Why borrow from others?

Bharath would be a land of plenty if people worked hard instead of being lazy and idle. Bharath is well endowed with land, rivers and other natural resources. Bharath has become dependent on other nations because the people do not work hard enough. We are borrowing from so many countries. Why? Let us use our resources well. We can then easily feed our people. The

people should work hard It is good for their health and happiness.

People today waste a lot of time and energy on meaningless arguments and controversies.

Students! Realise that what I think, say and do are in perfect harmony. Hence there is no loss of memory or weakness of any kind. Look at the young people in their teens. They have castor oil faces and look worn out. They should look happy and cheerful.

A lesson from history

Recall how a small nation like the British ruled over a vast country like India before we got our freedom. The British could do it because Indians betrayed the nation for selfish interests.

Every student should realise his potential strength. All of it is derived from the Divine. (Swami sang songs from Thyagaraja to point out the power of devotion to achieve the impossible).

Students should cultivate moral values. It is the decline in moral values that is responsible for the deplorable state of the country. Three things are most essential today. Fear of sin, love of God and morality in society.

Egoism is a thorny bush, which when planted and fostered, makes us suffer. It makes enemies even of close friends and does not allow men to work together. Grief follows ego like a shadow.

- Sathya Sai Baba

36. Shirdi Baba’s first miracle

Date: 20 August 1996 / Location: Brindavan

SEEN physically Nature alone is perceived. But seen with the spiritual vision the entire universe is Bhagawan alone. From the perspective of Prema (love) everything will appear Divine.

A young man who had studied Adhi Shankara's Philosophy, came to me and said: "Swami! Shankara says' Brahma Sathyam: Jagath Mithya. Please let me know what is the truth and what is unreal."

Swami told him: "You simpleton! Leave it to Nature to demonstrate what is real and what is unreal. Concern yourself with knowing your own reality. There is no need for you to enquire into the nature of Prakrithi (the phenomenal universe). Do not argue." A man who is not aware of his own true nature, how is he competent to know about the reality or otherwise of the cosmos?

A man regards his visible body as real and the invisible Spirit as unreal. He does not realise that the invisible is the cause of his pleasure and pain. "Let no one imagine that beauty, youth and vitality will last for ever. Old age is looming ahead and will bring in its train all miseries."

Dheha and Dhehi

There are two entities in man: the dheha (body) and the Dhehi (the Indwelling spirit). The body is governed by three factors: Vatha (wind), Pittha (bile) and Kapha (phlegm). The wind factor is responsible for 80 types of diseases. The bile accounts for 82 kinds of ailments, phlegm is the cause of 224 types of maladies. In all, the three account for 386 types of diseases. Recognising the multitude of disease to which the body is prone, the sages of yore sought to give up attachment to the body, while taking care of it for essential purposes.

Many of these diseases are insidious and hence may not be noticed in an apparently strong person. Disease lies hidden in almost every action of man from breathing to eating. The body by its nature is perishable. But the Dhehi (the Indwelling spirit) is undying. Through the impermanent body, the eternal spirit has to be experienced. Men are immersed in seeking the passing pleasures of the senses forgetting the lasting bliss to be derived from the spirit. People should realise that true happiness can be got only by union with God.

Some people imagine that God bestows excessive grace on a few, appears to be indifferent towards some others, and totally to ignore some others. All these are only the aberrations of the people having such thoughts. For God all are the same. You can see your true image only in a glass covered on the rear with the mercury of love. Everyone says he has not experienced God, it is not God's fault. The feeling that God favours some and not others is born of jealousy.

I Would Relate An Episode From The Boyhood Years Of Shirdi Baba.
Shirdi Baba And Venkuusa

When Shirdi Baba was about ten years of age, Patel took him to Venkuusa. Patel had a dream in which he was told: "Patel! You are not likely to live long. The boy whom you have brought up so far cannot be looked after by anyone. There is a person called Venkuusa in a certain place. You take the boy to him and leave him in his care."

Venkuusa was giving spiritual lessons to a number of boys. When the young lad was being brought to him, Venkuusa had a premonition of his coming. He called the lad: "Aoji! Aoji (Come, Come). I have been waiting for you all these years." He spoke lovingly to the boy and asked him to go in and have his food.

From then onwards, Venkuusa developed great affection for the boy. Seeing this, the other students felt envious and started talking about him among

themselves. "How is it that the teacher is showing so much love for the new boy? We have been here for years. He has not shown us such Love." This was the way some of them spoke. Some others said: "He is lucky to have such love." Some others remarked, "perhaps our teacher expects some money from Patel, who is a wealthy man."

Plan to kill Baba

The attachment between Venkuusa and the young Baba grew steadily from day to day. One day both of them were going to a forest called Sikhara. After they had gone, the other boys drew up a plan to do away with the young Baba. "Then Venkuusa will have greater liking for us," they thought. They went to the forest and took rest behind a hut. One of the bigger boys, according to the plan they had already made, took a big brick and hurled it towards Baba. Venkuusa had great love for Baba. Immediately on noticing the brick, Venkuusa stood in front of Baba and let the brick hit him. What was aimed at Baba struck Venkuusa. Blood was streaming from Venkuusa's head.

Baba immediately tore a piece of cloth from his robe and bandaged Venkuusa's bleeding head. When Baba and Venkuusa were speaking about the wound caused to Venkuusa, some of the boys came rushing towards them bringing a dead body. That was the body of the boy who wanted to kill Baba. "Biter bit," says the proverb. (If you intend to harm others, you will be harming yourself).

The boys cried: "Guruji! Forgive us" and fell at his feet. Venkuusa told them: "Children! I have grown old. This young lad is carrying on all the work I was doing. Love alone can protect you. When there is no love no one can save you." On hearing these words, the boys. fell at the feet of Baba and placed the dead body before him. Baba burst into laughter. Why did he laugh? Not because he felt that the boy who intended to kill him was dead. He knew that death could come at any time, in any place and in any situation. Even at the young age Baba had realised this truth relating to the body. Baba transcended time. Age did not matter to him. He was the Cosmic Person.

He told the boys: "Today this boy has died. Your turn may come tomorrow. No one is immortal." The boys cried: "How can we explain this calamity to the parents?"
Baba told them: "Tell the parents what actually happened."

The boys realised that if they told the truth they would be put to shame. If they told what did not happen, they would be uttering falsehood. Recognising their dilemma, Baba asked them: "What is it you want now?

"Please restore the life of this boy." Immediately Baba placed the head of the dead boy on his lap and passed his hand over it. The boy revived. This was Shirdi Baba's first miracle.

Dust unto dust

Students should realise that the body is made up of materials coming from the earth and will go back to the earth when life is extinct. The body is like a mud pot which serves its purpose for a time and when it is broken,it becomes in the course of time one with the mud from which it was made. A seed sown in the ground grows into a tree with branches, flowers and fruits. All the things in the tree have come out of the earth. Likewise the body is made up of the five elements. It must be used properly.

The essence of Vedantha can be summed up in one sentence: "The Atma in you is the same as the Divine." Only those who have this feeling can experience God.

** Discourse delivered when Bhagawan narrated the circumstances in which Shirdi Baba, as a young lad of ten years, performed his first miracle by restoring to life a dead boy, who had intended to kill him.

One's duty is to act; act well, act in fear of God: act within the bounds of morality; act in love; continue acting; the consequences will naturally follow

as the fruit flows the flower. One need not worry or exult. Act enthusiastically, with faith, success is yours.

- Sathya Sai Baba

37. Jnaana and Bhakthi

Date: 21 August 1996

EVERYTHING in the cosmos is made up of the five basic elements, which are manifestations of the Divine. The Divine has no separate form. This truth is not realised by mankind. Avathars come to dispel the ignorance of humanity.

Avathars do not come in unique form. The reason is all the creatures in the world carry out their specific functions. Animals, birds, insects, ants and mosquitoes do not deviate from their respective roles in leading their lives. But, man alone has forgotten his duties. Birds obey "reason and season." Man alone behaves without regard to "reason and season." Hence the Avathar has to come in human form to reform man who has gone astray. Thus it is declared that "Dhaivam mannusharupena" (God comes in human form). If God comes in any other form, say, a bird, it will be driven away. Man will take no notice of it. If the Avathar comes in the form of a buffalo, it will be driven away with a stick.

There is nothing greater than devotion

In this context, two points have to be noted. There were two brothers, Jnanadheva and Bhakthidheva. Both were going on a journey. On the way, they felt thirsty. Bhakthidheva asked Jnanadheva, "I am thirsty but I cannot see water anywhere." Jnanadheva said: "Let us see whether there is any well nearby." After going some distance, they noticed an old well with water deep at the bottom.

Jnanadheva declared: "Jnanath-eva-thu-kaivalyam" (Through Wisdom anything can be accomplished).

He immediately assumed the form of a bird, flew down to the water in the well, quenched his thirst and came up. Jnanadheva had the ability to assume any form because of the supreme knowledge of the Self.

Bhakthidheva could not get down into the well. He sat near the well and prayed to God with intense love. After sometime, the water in the well rose to the level of his feet. Noting the wetness of his feet, he opened his eyes and saw that the water in the well had overflowed.

Jnana requires a change in one's form. Bhakthi needs no such change. Intense loving devotion will suffice. What the devotee needs will come running to him. There is nothing greater than devotion.

Bhakthidheva wrote a letter to Jnanadheva. It was a blank piece of paper which he sent in a cover. When Jnanadheva opened the letter, he found there was no writing on it. Jnanadheva then started writing his reply in page after page. He could not come to the end of his writing. His entire life was spent on enquiry and investigation. There was no time for doing anything practical. The life of most scientists is spent this way: continuous experimentation, with no experience. This sort of endless pre-occupation with enquiry is of no use. Devotion is easier than Jnana marga (the path of Knowledge). Through devotion, constant chanting of the name and loving remembrance of God, anything can be accomplished.

Never forget God

Students! See that the love that is inherent in you is not diverted in wrong directions, in anti social activities, or in ways opposed to the wishes of your parents. So far as love for God is concerned, you need not submit yourself to anyone.

When you love God with all your heart, the bliss you experience is unexcelled. This was the experience of the Gopikas. This has been described as the fifth Purushartha, the experience of union with God Paramab-hakthi - Supreme devotion.

Students! Whatever you may do in life, never forget God. Whatever positions one may achieve, whether President or Prime Minister, if he forgets God he is

nothing. Hero becomes zero if he forgets God. These officers come and go. You must never give up your faith in the supreme. That is the way to redeem human life.

37. Make Your Heart the Temple of God (Alternative Translation)

Date: 21 August 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This is the alternative translation of the discourse originally published in Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 29. A condensed version of this discourse appears in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. This more complete version was published in Sanathana Sarathi, November 2013.

In The Beginning, White Ants May Appear To Be Very Small In Number,
But In No Time They May Multiply And Eat Away The Entire Root Of The Tree.
Similarly, However Great One May Be, If Evil Thoughts Enter One's Mind
They Will Ruin Life Completely.
(Telugu Poem)
Where There Is Smoke There Must Be Fire. When There Is A Driver To Run The Train,
And A Person To Control The Traffic Signals, Should There Not Be A Creator Behind This
World?
(Telugu Poem)

This visible world consisting of sentient and insentient objects comprises five elements. The entire world is the reflection and manifesttation of these five elements. All forms, with their various limbs, are nothing but different forms of God. That is why Purusha Suktam declares, "the Cosmic Being has thousands of heads, eyes, and feet (Sahasra seersha Purusha sahasraksha sahasra pad)." It is God who pervades the entire universe with His thousands of heads, hands, feet, and eyes.

Make sacred use of the five elements

The universe is the effect, and God is the cause. The entire creation is the

manifestation of cause and effect. The cause is in micro form and the effect is in macro form. Both the microcosm and macrocosm are the very forms of God.

Brahman Is Subtler Than The Subtlest, Vaster Than The Vastest.
He Is The Eternal Witness And Pervades The Entire Universe In The Form Of Atma.
Atma Is Brahman And Brahman Is Atma. (Telugu Poem)

God is the smallest among the small and the biggest among the big. Small and big are only different in form, but they are one with respect to their innate infinite power. The microcosm and macrocosm are inseparable and are interdependent. Therefore, never consider nature different from God. Nature is God, God is nature.

The five elements present in nature are the forms of God. That is why our ancients worshipped earth, water, air, fire, and sky as Bhu Devi, Ganga Devi, Vayu Deva, Agni Deva, and Sabda Brahman.

But people today do not treat these five elements with reverence and instead make unsacred use of them. Showing disrespect to the five elements amounts to showing disrespect to God. Therefore, sanctify your life by making proper and sacred use of the five elements.

God is the creator, sustainer, and destroyer of everything that was in the past, that is in the present, and that will be in the future. He is the master of all three periods of time - past, present, and future.

According to the Telugu calendar, the name of the first year is Prabhava, because God is the Prabhu (Master) of time. Therefore, you should have faith in the Master. Only then can you experience peace and happiness in this world.

The same Atma is present in all.

Students!

This is not the first time I am telling this. I have told you on several occasions in the past also. In this world, there is a continuous conflict between good and bad, righteousness and unrighteousness. This is inescapable.

On the one hand, you have the Kauravas; on the other, the Pandavas; righteousness (dharma) on one side and unrighteousness (adharma) on the other. There is a constant conflict between the two.

The attitude and priorities of the Kauravas were just the opposite to those of the Pandavas. For the Kauravas, the priorities were first I (self), next the world, and last God. But the Pandavas gave first place to God, next to the world, and last to I.

Those who follow the path of dharma will always give first place to God. That is why, according to Indian culture, the first year of the Telugu calendar, Prabhava, connotes God. Not only that. All the years that follow are also named after God.

God is beyond any measure. That is why the sages extolled Him as Immeasurable (Aprameya). It means He cannot be comprehended by direct or indirect evidence or by any other inference.

None can describe God as this or that. He is a fool who says this is God and that is not God. Why? "I am present as the Atma in all beings (Mamatma sarva bhutantaratma)." The same Atma pervades all, just as the same current illumines all bulbs.

Jewels are many, gold is one. Cows are many, milk is one. Beings are many, breath is one. Flowers are many, worship is one.

Unable To Understand This Reality Out Of Ignorance,
People Have Become Victims Of Many Troubles.

For The Sake Of Their Mundane Existence, What Else Is To Be Conveyed
To This Assembly Of Noble Students?
(Telugu Poem)

Is there any difference between worship performed with different flowers such as jasmine, rose, and marigold? Flowers are many, but worship is one.

Humanity has developed all these differences to lead a mundane life. To observe differences is the attribute of the outward (pravritti). But the true, eternal, and immortal goal of life is only one, and that is the Atma. Divinity is uniformly present in all. But people perceive it in different ways depending on the capacity of their intellect.

Our intellect may be compared to a mirror. Holding a small mirror in your hand, you can capture the reflection of the sun and stars, which are millions of miles away. The circumference of the sun runs into crores and crores of miles. Such a gigantic sun is reflected in a small mirror. That is why it is said, "The entire world is like a city seen in a mirror (Viswam darpana drishyamana nagari tulyam)." The entire universe is reflected in the small mirror of our intellect. Therefore, this universe or world are not outside. They are within you. They are reflections of your inner being. What is present in you, you see the same thing outside.

In fact, there is nothing outside that is not present in you. Here, there, and everywhere, wherever you look, you find only one Atma. Why do you search here and there when the principle of Atma is everywhere? In fact, all five elements are one.

I explained to you the three principles of nondualism (advaita) the other day: padartha advaita, kriya advaita, and bhava advaita.

You may wonder, since the very meaning of non-duality is oneness, how there can be three forms associated with it. In fact, you experience these three types of non-duality in your daily life.

What is padartha advaita? Here is a cloth. It is not a cloth but a bundle of threads; not even a bundle of threads, it is cotton. Therefore, cotton, threads, and cloth are one and the same. Their usage and their names and forms may appear to be different, but there can be no thread without cotton and no cloth without threads. Cotton, threads and cloth are different only in name and form. But the underlying substance is the same. Therefore, you cannot say they are different from each other. This is padartha advaita.

What is kriya advaita? You perform many types of service activities and various actions, but if you do all of them to please God then all your actions become one. "Do all actions to please God (Sarva karma Bhagavad preetyartham)." You offer food and fruit to God. Before offering, they are merely food and fruit, but afterward, they become consecrated food (prasadam). You prepare sweet pudding, tamarind rice, curd rice, and various items. Before offering them to God, you may call them by their respective names. But after offering them to God, everything becomes prasadam. Therefore, all actions that are offered to God correspond to kriya advaita.

Here, there are no two entities. "Brahman is one without a second (Ekameva adviteeyam Brahma)." Not two, only one.

The third is bhava advaita. There are only five elements in this body, that body, and all other bodies. You may want a particular object from others if it is not already with you. When the desired object is with you, why do you want to acquire it from others? The five elements that are present in others are present in you also. Similarly, the Atma that is present in you is present in all. Therefore, all are one. "The One willed to become many (Ekoham bahusyam)." The same gold takes the form of various ornaments. Similarly, the five elements, which are manifestations of Divinity, are present in all. With regard to this, there is no difference whatsoever. This is bhava advaita.

One's life can become meaningful only when one tries to understand and experience these three types of non-dualism. When you keep the feeling of duality in your mind and try to exhibit non-duality outwardly, you get only restlessness. Here is a small example.

Develop love for God

Once, there was a very wealthy man who had nothing else to do other than 'loading and unloading'. Because of his excessive eating and lack of physical work, he suffered from indigestion. He went to a specialist and asked him the remedy for it.

The doctor was an expert. He said, "You don't need to spend even a naya paisa to cure indigestion. In fact, you yourself invited this trouble because of excessive eating. Don't you know how much your stomach can hold? On account of your greed you are overloading it. Hence, the indigestion. Your power of digestion is less, but the food you consume is more. That is the cause of your indigestion. Therefore, I prescribe a very good remedy for this. Try to listen. Keep a small piece of salt in your mouth and suck its juice." Today, salt is available in the form of powder, but earlier it was available only in rock form. The wealthy man did accordingly and got cured of indigestion. It was the time of his birthday. Since he was cured, he wanted to distribute sweets to all and celebrate the occasion.

He went to a sweetmeat shop and wanted to taste the sweet before buying it. When he put a small piece of the sweet in his mouth, it tasted salty. He told the owner of the shop that his sweet was not good and went to another shop. There, he had the similar experience. In this manner, he went to five sweetmeat shops. one after the other. but did not like the taste of the sweets in any of these.

The owner of the sixth shop understood his problem. Before the rich man could taste the sweet, the owner of the shop told him, "Look, there is a tap. Go there and rinse your mouth thoroughly and come back. Then only you should taste my laddu." The rich man accordingly rinsed his mouth thoroughly after throwing away the piece of salt that was in his mouth. Then the laddu tasted sweet. "Yes, this laddu is very tasty," he said.

The shopkeeper said, "Oh mad fellow, when you have a piece of salt in your mouth, how can you appreciate the sweetness of any laddu? Every laddu will taste salty." Likewise, a person suffering from the disease of atheism, and having bitter substances like bad thoughts and bad feelings in his mind, cannot enjoy the sweetness of the divine Name. When someone tells him the sacredness of service and such other spiritual practices, they appear tasteless to him. Does the defect lie in the divine Name or spiritual practices? No, no. It is the result of their own disease of atheism.

Once, some people went to attend a marriage. In the marriage, many types of food items were served. When sweets like laddu and jilebi were being served, five or six of them refused them, saying, "We don't want them." It is not because they did not like sweets. They did not want to take them because they were diabetic.

Likewise, there are theists, atheists, theisticatheists, and atheistic-theists in this world. All spiritual practices taste sweet to theists, but to those who have no love for God, the same spiritual practices appear tasteless.

Students, teachers, and all others fill their hearts with sacred feelings as long as they are here. Therefore, everything appears sweet and good to them.

But once they leave this place and enter the outside world, they become victims of worldly desires due to the influence of worldly surroundings. The moment the disease of worldly desires sets in, they become distant from spirituality. Not only that, they start developing doubts and misunderstandings regarding spirituality.

There may be a cure for cancer but not for the disease of hatred toward God and spirituality. Do they lack education? No. They lack sacred feelings.

Ravana was the master of 64 forms of knowledge. He was wealthy and powerful. He had everything at his disposal. But, since he became the slave of desire and anger (kama and krodha), all his knowledge, power, and wealth had no meaning.

God incarnates in human form to uplift humanity

A person who is a slave to desires becomes a slave of the entire world. But one who conquers desires conquers the whole world. The world becomes subservient to a person who becomes a servant of God. Therefore, never forget God.

Vedanta teaches three important truths. They are like priceless gems. These three truths are: do not believe the world, do not forget God, and never be afraid of death because death is inevitable. Carefully treasure these truths in your heart.

Do not believe the world, because the world is subject to change every moment. Do not be afraid of death - can you avoid death by fearing it? It does not spare anyone. Always keep in mind these three truths of Vedanta.

It is foolishness to confine God to a particular place and think that He is present only there. God is everywhere. There is no place where He is not present. There is no form that is not divine. He is present in both living and nonliving entities.

Scientists say that the world is made up of atoms. This piece of wood, this speaker are also made up of atoms. Scientists call it atom but spiritualists call it as energy. The difference lies only in names, but the object is the same. Just like atom is everywhere, divinity pervades everything. Every atom has a form. There can be no atom without form.

Have firm faith that God is the indweller of your heart. Just as our body has various limbs such as hands, legs, eyes, ears, nose, and mouth, all forms that you find in this world are different limbs of God.

There are rocks in the mountains, trees in the forest, water in the ocean, soil in the earth, and flesh in the body. But they are all made of five elements.

These five elements are the very forms of God.

God has no separate form. God incarnates to demonstrate this truth to those who suffer from the blindness of ignorance.

God comes down only in human form and not in any other form. What is the reason? All living beings like birds and animals are following their dharma and leading a natural life. Only humanity forgets its dharma. Birds and animals have a reason and a season, but for humanity there is no reason and no season. That is why God comes in human form, in order to reform humanity.

"God is in the form of a human being (Daivam manusha rupena)." If God came in the form of an eagle and tried to correct humanity, people would throw stones at it. Likewise, if God came in the form of a he-buffalo and tried to correct humanity, people would not care for it. Rather, they would beat it with a stick, saying, who are you to tell me anything. Therefore, God comes in human form and moves among human beings to uplift them.

Follow the easy path of devotion

Here, you have to understand two principles of devotion (bhakti) and knowledge (jnana).

Once, two brothers Jnanadeva and Bhaktideva were traveling together. They felt thirsty after walking for some time. Bhaktideva asked Jnanadeva, "Oh brother, I'm thirsty, but I can't find water anywhere in the vicinity." Jnanadeva said, "Let's see if there is a well nearby." After walking some distance, they found an old well, which had a little water at the bottom. Immediately, Jnanadeva assumed the form of a bird, went inside the well, drank water, and came out. Jnanadeva had the ability to assume any form.

"Experience of non-dualism is wisdom (Advaita darshanam jnanam)." Since Jnanadeva did not observe any difference between one form and another, he could assume any form.

But Bhaktideva didn't have the power to change his form. He couldn't go into the well to drink water. Therefore, he sat there and started contemplating on God with love.

As he was contemplating on God, water started overflowing the well. When he felt something cold touching his feet, he opened his eyes and found that water had come up to quench his thirst.

Jnanadeva had to change his form, but there was no need for Bhaktideva to do this. As he turned his love toward God, whatever he wanted came running to him. There is nothing superior to devotion.

Once Bhaktideva sent a letter to Jnanadeva. What was written in it? Nothing. He folded a piece of white paper, put it in an envelope, and sent it to Jnanadeva. When Jnanadeva opened the letter and looked, he didn't find anything in it. If it were a formal letter, one could read it from beginning to end, like "Dear Brother so and so... With salutations, your younger brother." But there was nothing written in the letter.

To give a reply to this letter, Jnanadeva kept on writing and writing. In spite of writing so much, there could be still some issues left in the letter to be answered. Therefore, he continues to write his reply even today. This signifies the principle of knowledge (jnana).

People who are endowed with knowledge are always engaged in research. They spend their entire life only in research. If you spend your whole life in research, when will you observe your inner reality? This is the fate of scientists today. They are always engaged in research and experiments, but they have no experience of reality.

What do you gain by experiments? What appears new today becomes old tomorrow. This process of new and old continues endlessly. This endless experimentation is meaningless.

The path of devotion is much easier than the path of knowledge. The path of

knowledge is difficult and not within the reach of all. One can achieve everything through devotion by chanting the Name of God and by the power of love.

God resides in the temple of your heart

Students!

Focus your love on a path that is acceptable to your parents and society. Do not take to a wrong path. Regarding matters of Divinity, don't go by the opinion of others.

Mira always sang the glory of Giridhara Gopala (Krishna). Maharana did not like this. In spite of this, Mira never stopped chanting the name of Krishna. She chanted it at all times, at all places, and under all circumstances.

Unable to control his anger, Maharana dragged Mira out of the temple and closed its door.

Mira was shocked. "Alas! Am I to leave You and go, oh Krishna! How is it possible? I can't live without You," she moaned. In this way, she underwent a lot of suffering.

Then she realised that God is all-pervasive and not confined to the temple. So, she said, "Oh Krishna! My heart is Your temple and this is the temple You Yourself have built. The temple built by Maharana is temporary, but the temple of my heart is permanent." She sang the song, "Oh mind! Go to the bank of Ganga and Yamuna (Chalore man Ganga Yamuna teer)".

There is no need to book a ticket or make advance reservations to go to Prayag, the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati rivers. The left nerve channel in the spine is ida, the right nerve channel is pingala, and the central nerve channel is sushumna. The centre of the eyebrows is the place where ida, pingala, and sushumna meet. That is the real Prayag, where

Krishna resides.

With His Peacock Crown, Yellow Robe, And Shining Earrings, Krishna Looks Resplendent.
Oh Mind! Go To The Banks Of The Ganga And Yamuna.
(Mira Bhajan)

Ganga symbolises devotion (bhakti); Y amuna, action (karma); and Saraswati, knowledge (jnana). How are the waters of the Ganga and Yamuna? They are pure and serene. They bring coolness to the body.

Mira said, "Oh mind! Go to Prayag. Don't go anywhere else." Where is Prayag? It is within you, not in the outside world. God resides in your heart. And, when you manifest your innate Divinity and experience it, you get bliss.

When you read the names of sweets like Mysore Pak, Jilebi, and Burfi in a book, can you enjoy their taste? No. Only when you eat them can you experience their sweetness. Similarly, merely knowing that God is within you will not give you the taste of Divinity. Only when you realise your oneness with God can you experience bliss. This is why God incarnates on earth. He comes to give us the bliss of union with God.

There is no bliss greater than associating yourself with God at the physical, mental, and intellectual levels, This is the type of bliss the cowherd maidens (gopikas) aspired to.

Were You A Tree Growing Upward,
I Would Cling To You Like A Creeper;
Were You A Blossoming Flower,
I Would Hover Over You Like A Bee;
Were You The Mountain Meru,
I Would Cascade Like A River;
Were You The Boundless Sky, I Would Be In
You Like A Star;

Were You The Bottomless Deep,
I Would Merge In You Like A River.
(Telugu Poem)

They said, "Oh Krishna, there should be absolutely no separation between us. There should be eternal union." Such inseparable union with God is the true principle of devotion.

There are four stages in the path of devotion: perception, proximity, identity, merger (salokya, sameepya, sarupya, and sayujya). Being in the contemplation of God is perception, being near God is proximity, identifying with God is identity, and merging with God is merger.

The four objectives of life are: righteousness, wealth, desire, liberation (dharma, artha, kama, and moksha). Supreme devotion (parama bhakti) is the fifth objective of life. There is nothing greater than this in the world.

Make your human birth meaningful

Students!

Study well, acquire jobs, get married, and beget children. There is nothing wrong in this. But never forget God. If you forget God, your life becomes meaningless. However great one may be, even a prime minister or president, one should not forget God. Hero becomes zero if the hero forgets God.

Everything in this world is subject to change. Come what may, never leave the Supreme Being. Try to go closer to God as much as possible. This is the real spiritual practice one should undertake. Only then can this human birth become meaningful.

Of all living beings, human birth is the rarest (Jantunam nara janma durlabham). Why is it considered to be the rarest?

Is human life limited to eating, drinking, roaming, and sleeping? Don't birds and animals do that? Then what is the difference between you and animals?

What is the special significance and sacredness of human life? What is its purpose? Is it eating, drinking, sleeping and dying (khana, peena, sona, marna)? Even ants and mosquitoes do that. If you also do the same, in what way are you superior to them? What is the value of human life?

Having attained human birth, you should reach the supreme state of blessedness. You should become recipients of God's love and grace and experience divine bliss. There is no bliss greater than that.

Oh Krishna, Play Your Sweet Flute And Sow The Seeds Of Love In The Desert Of Loveless Hearts.
Let The Rain Of Love Fall On Earth And Make The Rivers Of Love Flow.
(Telugu Song)

You should plant the sapling of love in your heart, - and not a thorny bush of hatred.

What does the flute symbolise? The flute is hollow. So, make your body hollow and pray to Krishna to breathe His divine music into it.

When the body is filled with desires, how can Krishna fill it with sweet melodies? First make your body hollow, giving up all desires and illusions. When the body becomes hollow, Krishna will call you near Him, saying hello. Then He will pick you up, place you on His lips, and fill you with divine music, which will immerse you and all others also in divine ecstasy.

One can aspire to become one of the two objects that are always with Krishna. One of these is a pair of sandals on His feet; the other is His flute. If you become His sandals, then you will have to bear all the pain due to stones, thorns, dust, scorpions, and snakes that you may find on the road. This is extremely difficult. It is much easier to become a flute in His hands.

If you continue to hold a handkerchief, your hand will feel pain after some time. It is easy to drop the handkerchief rather than to hold it. Likewise, it is easy to give up desires rather than cling to them and undergo suffering. This is called as detachment (vairagya). Develop this spirit of detachment to the extent possible.

However, it is not easy to do so when you lead a worldly life. You say, "my son, my daughter, my house". First of all, give up the feeling of mine and thine. Vedanta speaks about the principle of "Neti, neti, neti (not this, not this, not this)." Everything is God.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahi...".)

38. The Lord and the devotee

Date: 22 August 1996

Why Do You Search For God Hither And Thither? Is He Not Present In Your Heart?
Offer Service And Receive The Love Of God.
This Is The Way To Realise The Divine.

STUDENTS! Humility is the hall-mark of education. Humility calls for actions free from egoism and self-importance.

The inherent goodness in man is covered by the ashes of attachment and hatred. Remove the ashes and the goodness will manifest itself.

There are three ways of recognising the Self. One is to consider yourself as the Dhehatma. This is the dualism. The second is: "I am Jeevatma." This is Vishishta-Adhvaitha (Qualified non-dualism). Aham Paramatma (I am the Supreme Self). This is Adhvaitha (non-dualism). It will be seen that in all the three concepts, the common entity is Atma. The Deham (body), Jeeva (Individual) and Param (the Absolute) are separate. All the three are present in the same person as is clear from the Gayathri Manthra. Bhur-Bhuvas-Suvah represent Bhu (the body), Bhuvah (the Life-Force) and Suvah (the Atma). The body is inert matter. The Life-Force animates the body and is vibrant in every cell.

The power of the spirit is exemplified by the life of Kabeer. He was a poor weaver, who used to help the poor out of his earnings. While plying his loom, he constantly chanted the name of Rama. The clothes woven in such a devotional spirit were prized high. But he used to sell his cloth at fair prices and often gave it free to those who could not afford the cost.

Greek devotees: Bhakthi

In this context, I wish to refer to a current incident. Here are some 25 Greek devotees. They landed at Bangalore by plane. They strapped their baggage to their backs, carried water bottles in their hands and started walking all the way to Prashanthi Nilayam. Such is their devotion! At every step they recited the manthra: "Om Shri Sathya Sai Babaya Namah!" and reached Prashanthi Nilayam. I went towards them and received them on arrival at the Mandhir. I asked them: "Do you feel pain in the legs?" They said: "Oh Lord! Not at all. We are ready to walk another ten miles if necessary, chanting all the way. If we had come by car, we could not have remembered the Lord's name.

Kabeer was in the habit of uttering "Ram! Ram!" at each step as he walked. The greatness of his devotion spread to all parts of the country. A ruler of that time also came to know about it. Realising Kabeer's poverty and helplessness, the king sent various presents to Kabeer in a palanquin. Kabeer saw the palanquin nearing his house while returning from a bath in the river. Astonished at the sight, Kabeer asked the four bearers of the palanquin: "What is all this? In our house, there are only two of us. For whose sake did four of you bring the palanquin? Both of us are quite hale." Kabeer hinted that only a dead body is carried on the bier by four persons. "Please inform the king that we are quite well," said Kabeer.

The planquin-bearers said: "We have brought in the palanquin clothes, provisions and other gifts from the king who sympathizes with your plight. The king has ordered us to offer them to you because he considers you anatha (an orphan).

How Kabeer delved into the meaning of Anatha

Kabeer said: "Oh! Did the king say so? But, I am not anatha. Bhagawan is my overlord. I. am not without a protecting master. Rama is the only one who is an anatha - there is no Lord above Him. You better offer all these things to Rama."

See how Kabeer has delved into the meaning of the word anatha. No one in the world is an anatha (without a master). God alone is anatha, as there is no natha (master) above Him. Everyone has a master. God alone has no one above Him.

Some people come to Swami and say: "Swami! Don't make us anatha. I used to tell them: "It is not you who are anathas. I am the anatha(Master-less). Never consider yourself anatha (helpless).

Many people feel miserable and forlorn because they do not understand the ways of God. To those who firmly believe in God, there can be nothing lacking.

First Of All, You Have To Get Rid Of Attachment And Hatred. Develop Love. Bhagawan's Example For Egolessness

Get rid of ego and possessiveness Here is a small example. Bhagawan sets the best ideal for you. How? You are all seated where you are. I Myself walk towards you, bending my back, stretching my hand, to receive your letters. If I had chosen to sit and ask you to come and hand over the letters, what would be wrong? Still, with no sense of ego, I am going to each of you, to set an example. This is Sai's ideal.

So many who have come so far at such. expense, will they shrink from walking a few feet towards Swami? But to demonstrate that I am free from ego, I am acting in this manner to teach a lesson to you. I have no feeling of attachment to any one to treat some as mine and others as not mine. All are mine and I am yours. Every student and devotee should recognise this truth. This is what the Geetha declares: "I am the indwelling spirit in all beings."

You may ask: "Why, then, is God not visible? Why are some near to God and others remote?" God is not to blame. People are immersed in worldly concerns.

Modern youth are all crazy over their games and pastimes. With the result that they sing ridiculous songs, indulge in silly games and revel in meaningless talk. They are not eager to take part in bhajans or interest themselves in devotional activities. Some listen to discourses with one ear and expel them out of the other. Very few listen and take to heart what they have learnt. Some merely repeat parrot-like what they have heard.

Treat sensuous pleasures with contempt

Unfortunately today there are no good teachers and very few earnestly interested speakers. Students must develop real interest in the teachings. They must convert all work into worship. (Swami sang Thyagaraja's song to illustrate how the Lord should be worshipped as omnipresent). God does not judge anyone by his external appearance. This was the lesson which Ashtavakra taught to the pandits at the court of king Janaka when they laughed on seeing the crooked body of Ashtavakra. The latter laughed at them and told them: "I thought you were great scholars. I find you are only a set of cobblers. You judge a person by the skin on his body."

Students should have firm faith in God and minimise their desires. You must treat with contempt sensuous pleasures. Whenever any worldly desires arise in the mind, treat them as garbage that should be thrown only. By this means, students will enter on the path of purity. Then the Divine will welcome you and fill you with bliss. There is no greater goal, no higher destiny.

38. Work With Discrimination; Worship With Awareness (Alternative Translation)

Date: 22 August 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This is the alternative translation of the discourse originally published in Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 29. A condensed version of this discourse appears in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. This more complete version was published in Sanathana Sarathi, December 2013.

Why Do You Search For God Here And There When He Is Present In Your Heart?
Give Service And Receive Love.
This Is How You Can Know The Principle Of Divinity
(Telugu Poem)

Students!

Education bestows humility (vidya dadati vinayam). Humility is the hallmark of education and its very goal. Humility does not mean merely mean to bow your head and stand with folded arms. Humility means to perform actions without ego. A truly educated person performs all actions without ego and attachment in their daily life. Don't become egoistic just because you are educated. Don't be proud of your intelligence.

In Spite Of Education And Intelligence, A Foolish Person Will Not Know Their True Self
And A Mean-Minded Person Will Not Give Up Their Evil Qualities.
(Telugu Poem)
Modern Education Leads Only To Argumentation, Not To Total Wisdom.
What Is The Use Of Acquiring Education That Cannot Lead You To Immortality?
Acquire The Knowledge That Will Make You Immortal.
(Telugu Poem)

Desire and hatred cover up your innate Divinity

Lord Krishna declared in the Bhagavad Gita: spiritual education is true education (Adhyatma vidya vidyanam). "Out of all types of knowledge, I am spiritual knowledge," He said. No other knowledge is superior to this.

Modern education gives only worldly and bookish knowledge, but spiritual education gives practical knowledge. Modern education deals with only physical, worldly, ephemeral, and transient knowledge. It is not proper to even call this education. That which confers true knowledge is education. God is the embodiment of true knowledge.

You say that you need God. I ask you, "Why do you need yourself?" You yourself are God. God is not separate from you. He is in you, with you, around you, above you, and below you. Spiritual knowledge is that which gives you realisation of this truth.

Students!

How does spirituality grow? If you put a seed in a tin and pour water over it, the seed will decay and the plant will not come out of it. For the seed to germinate, it has to be sown in soil.

Similarly, if you sow the seed of spirituality in the soil of love, it will grow into a big tree and yield the fruit of bliss. The seed of spirituality will not grow in a heart bereft of love.

Any task can be accomplished by practice. Practice is necessary for everything in life, whether it is walking, talking, eating, reading, or writing. When you are a child, your mother teaches you words like mother, father (amma, appa). All these come only with practice.

You say that you want peace. For that also you need to put in some effort. All of you are squatting on the floor. Without practice, you cannot even sit in a cross-legged posture. If you want to perform a small drama, you start practising at least ten days in advance. The world is like a stage. All are actors. God is the director. You need practice for everything in this drama of life.

Divinity can be attained only by following the spiritual path. The fire of wisdom is in every human being. If you neglect this fire of wisdom, it gets covered by the ash of ego, attachment, and hatred.

Where does the ash come from? It comes only from the fire and ultimately covers the fire itself.

Similarly, Divinity is in every human being. Plato described the same in three words: truth, goodness, and beauty. The ancients in India called them sathyam, sivam, sundaram.

Everyone is endowed with goodness, which is the attribute of Divinity. No one in this world is devoid of goodness, but this goodness is covered by desire and hatred (raga and dwesha). If you want to visualise your innate Divinity, first of all, you have to remove the ash of ego, attachment, and hatred.

Students!

No path is easier than spirituality. Nothing is easier than this in this world. There may be some effort involved in crushing the petal of a rose, but spirituality is much easier than this. Why? The reason is that Divinity is within you. In fact, Divinity is not different from you, so there is no need to search for it.

Students!

Do you search for yourself anywhere outside? No one will search for themself. One who says, "I am searching for myself," will be considered a fool. You

yourself are God.

The Vice Chancellor quoted Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, explaining the principle of the individual soul and the universal Self (jivatma and Paramatma). I wish to elaborate on this in a different way.

There are three steps to Divinity: I am the body, I am the individual soul, and I am the universal Self (Aham dehatma, Aham jivatma and Aham Paramatma).

To say that I am the body is a sign of ignorance. This is dualism (dvaita). To say that I am the individual soul is qualified non-dualism (visishtadvaita). To say that I am the universal Self (Paramatma) is non-dualism (advaita).

You are not one but three: The one you think you are, the one others think you are, and the one you really are.

In the three terms dehatma, jivatma, and Paramatma, Atma is common. One should know the difference between these three terms to understand Divinity.

The terms bhur, bhuvah, and suvah in the Gayatri Mantra convey the same meaning.

Bhur refers to bhuloka. What is bhuloka? It consists of worldly matter. This can be described as materialization, which is represented by the human body.

Bhuvah represents the life principle, which makes the body move. Hence, it can be described as vibration. It is due to the presence of vibration within that the body is able to move.

Therefore, the body is materialisation, the life principle is vibration, and the Atma is radiation.

All these three are very much present in you. Then where do you search for Divinity? Why should you search for it? When you understand this truth, you will realise that you are everything.

Everyone has God as his master

Kabir was a poor weaver. He used the money that he earned by weaving cloth to feed the poor. He never worked to earn profit. He used to sell his cloth at a very cheap price, without any consideration for profit. If any poor person came to him to buy cloth, he would give it to him free and would starve that day. He constantly chanted the Name of Rama while weaving. That is why the cloth weaved by him acquired great value.

Some devotees arrived from Greece today. They came by plane from Greece to Bengaluru. From Bengaluru, they came to Puttaparthi on foot, carrying their luggage on their back, while chanting the mantra Om ya Namah at every step.

I received them in the temple (mandir). I asked if their feet were aching. They said, "No Swami, we are very happy, it is a great opportunity for us. We can walk even ten miles more. If we had traveled by car, we would not have had the good fortune of chanting Your Name all along." That is why our ancients said, Hard work yields rich rewards (Kashte phali). Only when you put in hard work can you enjoy the fruit.

Kabir also used to chant Rama's Name continuously while touring other places on foot. That is how the whole country came to know about Kabir's devotion to Lord Rama.

A king came to know about Kabir's devotion to Lord Rama. He heard that Kabir was very poor and had nothing to depend upon for his livelihood. Considering him to be forlorn (an anatha), the king sent him money, clothes, and food provisions in a palanquin.

When Kabir returned home after bathing in the river, he saw four people bringing the palanquin to his house. He was surprised to see this and asked the bearers, "Why did you bring this palanquin, which has to be carried by

four people? We are quite all right." What is being carried by four people? It is dead body.

Kabir meant to convey to the king that he did not need a palanquin to be carried by four people since he was quite all right.

The bearers replied, "Sir, the king has commanded us to give all these things to you because you are a poor anatha (meaning he is forlorn)." Kabir replied, "Oh, did the king say that! Did he say that these things are to be given to me because I am anatha? Well, I am not a-natha because I have Lord Rama as my natha (master). In fact, Rama is a-natha because He has no master above Him. Therefore, please offer these things to Lord Rama." See, what a profound meaning is in Kabir's statement! No one in this world is anatha (without master) because everybody has God as their master. If there is any Anatha, it is only God, because He has no master above Him.

In fact, God is neither a master nor a king; He is the king maker. Many devotees pray, "Swami, please don't make me forlorn (an anatha)." I tell them, "My dear, you are not A-natha (without master). In fact, I am Anatha." Unable to understand God's nature and His reality, devotees misunderstand Him and form wrong notions. One who has total faith in God will not lack anything.

Become egoless like Me

To light the lamp of Divinity in you, you have to get rid of ego, attachment, and hatred and develop love. I am the ideal example in this regard. How? During darshan, you remain seated where you are and I Myself come to you, bend My back, stretch My hand, and take your letters. Instead, out of ego, I could as well sit at one place and tell you to come to Me and give your letters. You would certainly do that. I don't do like that because I don't have even a trace of ego.

Just as I come to you and serve you, you also should go to others and serve

them without ego. This is the ideal I want to demonstrate.

All of you come to Prasanthi Nilayam from far off places. Would it be difficult for you to walk a small distance and give Me your letters if sat at one place? You could very well do that. But I act in such egoless manner to set an ideal before you.

I don't observe any difference like so and so is Mine and others are not. All of you are Mine. I am yours. Every devotee and every student should recognise this truth.

I am present as the Atma in all beings (Mamatma sarva bhutantaratma). The same Atmic principle is present in all. Then why is it not visible to everyone?

You think as though some are close to Me and others are not. God is not the cause of this. Since you are overpowered by worldly tendencies and attachments, you become distant from God.

Moreover, modern youth are always in a state of excitement. They have a craze for all sorts of vulgar words, songs, and dances. They are not interested in bhajans, discourses, or talks about God. Some of them who come here hear Swami's words in one ear and let them out from the other.

Assimilate what you hear and read

Once, a sculptor brought three dolls to the court of King Bhoja. All three looked alike and beautiful. The emperor summoned the prime minister and asked him to decide which of the three dolls was the best.

The prime minister brought an iron wire and put it in the ear of one of the dolls. The wire came out from the other ear. He remarked, "This is the worst doll." When he put the wire in the ear of the second doll, it came out of its mouth. He said, "This doll can be given second prize." When he put the wire in the ear of the third doll, it went inside and did not come out. The prime

minister declared, "This deserves the first prize.

What does this mean? It means that the person who assimilates what he hears is the best person.

In this modern age, some people hear sacred teachings in one ear but immediately let them out the other ear. Some others repeat like parrots what they read in scriptures and what they hear from Swami. Only a few assimilate what they hear and put them into practice.

Why? Where does the difference lie? The difference lies in the likes and dislikes of individuals. Where do these likes and dislikes come from? They come from the company you associate with.

You will be happy when all are happy

People want only their own well-being and the well-being of their family. How foolish it is to think like that! Oh simpleton! You aspire for the well-being of you and your family! But where do you live? On whom do you depend? You depend on your family, and your family depends on society.

Hence, when society is safe and secure, your family will be safe and secure. And when your family is safe and secure, you will be safe and secure. So, it is necessary that you strive first and foremost for the well-being of society. That is what the Vedic prayer, May all the beings of all the worlds be happy (Samasta lokah sukhino bhavantu)! teaches. When all are happy, you will also be happy.

In this way, Vedanta propounds sacred and fundamental truths. Unfortunately, today few teachers can impart such sacred teachings. As a result, people have lost interest in them. Where there is 'in trust' there is interest. What you need today is 'in trust', but only 'in-rest' prevails today. It means people have become lazy. It is not a good sign.

Consider every work as God's work

Always associate with good company. Tell me your company, I shall tell you what you are.

Good Company Leads To Detachment; Detachment Makes One Free From Delusion;
Freedom From Delusion Leads To Steadiness Of Mind;
Steadiness Of Mind Confers Liberation.
Satsangatwe Nissangatwam, Nissangatwe Nirmohatwam,
Nirmohatwe Nischalatattwam, Nischalatattwe Jivanmukti.
(Sanskrit Verse)

What is meant by good company? Good company is that which makes you think more of God than the world. What does the world signify? It signifies coming and going, coming and going.

Oh Lord! I Am Caught Up In This Cycle Of Birth And Death.
Time And Again, I Experience 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.
Punarapi Jananam Punarapi Maranam, Punarapi Janani Jathare Sayanam,
Iha Samsare Bahu Dustare, Kripayapare Pahi Murare.
(Sanskrit Verse)

The term jagat (world) has two syllables, ja and gat, that which comes and goes. There is nothing real in it. So, this is a big zero.

It is said that every good work is God's work. How does it become God's work? There are four letters in the word good. When you remove one zero from the word good, it becomes God.

If you give up your attachment to the world, you become divine. However, you don't need to renounce the world. You may look after your family, discharge your office duties, but do everything as an offering to God. Consider every work as God's work. Then your work will be transformed into worship.

You cannot perform even an ordinary task properly unless you do it with a sense of worship. You have your office work. If you do not perform it with a spirit of worship, you will neglect it. Worship is not only limited to God. Every task you perform, every subject you deal with, consider it as worship. When you do it with this spirit, you will get the desired results.

If you do not focus your mind on the work at hand, you will only spoil it. Every work you perform from morning to evening is, in fact, worship to God.

You eat to satiate your hunger. That is also an act of worship. Whatever you eat reaches God within. Otherwise, how would the food get digested? Before eating your food, you recite this prayer:

Brahman is the ladle as well as the oblation. He is the sacrificial fire as well as the sacrificer.

And finally, Brahman is the goal of one who is engaged in the act of sacrifice.

Brahmarpanam Brahma Havir Brahmagnou Brahmanahutam
Brahmaiva Thena Ganthavyam Brahma Karma Samadhina.

When you pray in this manner before you partake of your food, God immediately responds thus:

I Am Present In All Beings In The Form Of Digestive Fire.
United With The Exhalation (Prana) And Inhalation (Apana),
It Is I Who Consumes The Four Kinds Of Food.
Aham Vaishvanaro Bhutva Praninam Dehamasrita

Pranapana Samayukta Pachamyannam Chaturvidham.

God says, "My dear, I am present in your stomach in the form of Vaishvanara. I digest the food you eat and supply its essence to all the limbs of your body. That is how you can lead a happy and healthy life." Who grinds the food you eat and supplies its essence to all parts of the body? What effort do you make for this? None whatsoever. What effort do you make for your heart to beat? It is only the power of God that makes the heart beat.

Some people, out of ego, think they are the doers of everything. What effort do you make for the circulation of blood and beating of your pulse? It is all done by God. It is God that makes your heart and pulse beat, fills your lungs with oxygen, and supplies oxygen to all limbs of the body. The entire mechanism and functioning of the body is ordained by God. Without the presence of Divinity within, you cannot perform any task.

Therefore, first of all you know your innate Divinity. Whether you believe it or not, God is doing all the work.

However, you will experience bliss only when you develop faith in God. Work with discrimination, worship with awareness. Whatever you do, do it with total awareness and understanding.

When you know there is fire, you will not put your hand in it. On the other hand, if you put your hand in fire without knowledge, your hand will get burnt. That is why Thyagaraja sang, "Oh mind! Contemplate on the glory of Rama with full awareness. God pervades everything. Nothing happens without His Will:" Oh Rama! In Your pure and unsullied form of love, You indwell all beings from an ant to Brahma as also Siva and Kesava. Please be my protector too.

Sita Rama! This Thyagaraja, who praises You, has not indulged in evil deeds aspiring for acclaim, nor in his overweening pride forgot his origins.

Cheemalo Brahmalo Siva Kesavadulalo prema meera velasi unde birudhu

vahinchina Rama nannu brovara.

Meppulakai kannatavu nappu badaka Virraveegi tappu panulu leka yunde Thyagaraja vinuta Sita.

Develop inner vision

When you constantly think of God, anything you do will become perfect. Education is required to acquire this knowledge. I am telling you all this at great length only to impress upon you the true meaning of education.

Vid + Ya = Vidya. That which gives knowledge is education. What type of knowledge? Is it material knowledge? Material knowledge is associated with reaction, reflection, and resound.

Here is a table. This is a material object. When you hit it hard with your hand, your hand will also be hit hard. You say you have hit the table hard. This is not the full truth. The table has also hit you equally hard. Thus, there is reaction, reflection, and resound in this objective world.

So, whatever you think, say, and do will come back to you as reaction, reflection, and resound. That is why it is necessary for you to think good, speak good, see good, do good, and experience good.

The goal of human life is to do good. Having been born as a human being endowed with great intelligence and education and having attained high position, if you behave like birds and animals, then what is the use? Even an ant has hunger and fear like you. Even animals like dogs, monkeys, foxes and birds like crows and eagles have desires like you. If you conduct yourself as they do, then in what way are you superior to them?

Once, King Janaka called an assembly of great scholars and poets. Famous learned men came from all over the realm. The assembly was composed of such giants that there was no room at all for ordinary people to enter. The

daily meetings were presided over by King Janaka himself. Only the most outstanding and accomplished scholars were given an opportunity to speak and present their views.

A person with a deformed body came to this magnificent and august assembly of scholars. His name was Ashtavakra. On seeing the strange form of Ashtavakra, most of the great scholars who had gathered there began to laugh. Ashtavakra carefully looked around the hall, and then quite inexplicably started laughing even louder than the scholars who were seated there.

Ashtavakra's loud burst of laughter greatly surprised the scholars and also King Janaka. The king asked him, "The scholars gathered here laughed seeing your strange body. But what is the reason for your loud laughter?" Ashtavakra replied, "Well, sir, I entered this gathering thinking it to be a sacred assembly convened by you to discuss holy scriptures. If only I had known what kind of people were attending this assembly, I would not have bothered to come. I looked forward to being in the company of great scholars. But, alas, I find only cobblers (charmakaras) here, shoemakers, who stitch chappals and work with leather. That caused my laughter." Addressing the scholars, Ashtavakra said, "All of you are laughing at my skin and have obviously decided that it is not worth much, but not even one of you has made any effort to know about my scholarship. Pandits should develop the vision to look inward, but you seem to care only about the outer covering. If you have not developed inner vision but are only concerned with the superficial outer vision, then you cannot be considered scholars at all. You are only shoemakers, cobblers, specialists in hides." The scholars hung their heads in shame on hearing these words of profound wisdom. King Janaka, who understood very well what Ashtavakra was saying, invited him to take a high seat in the assembly and subsequently bestowed numerous honours upon him.

As was the case then, so is the case now throughout the world. However great you may be, you have developed only external vision. You do not bother to cultivate inner vision. When you look at someone, you pay attention only to their physical features, wealth, status, education, degrees, and so on.

On the other hand, when God sees a person, He looks at the purity of their heart; He pays attention to the peace that is within. It is such inner vision that you must develop.

Whatever be the circumstances with which you are confronted, do not get excited or agitated. Allow time for the nobler feelings to well up from inside you and manifest themselves. By practising patience and forbearance, you will be able to acquire all the other important spiritual qualities, such as mind control, faith, renunciation, endurance, and concentration. This will bring a state of inner purity and fill you with abiding peace.

Inner purity is much more important than outer purity. The Lord is ever present both inside and outside. Therefore, both the inner and the outer - the entire place where the Lord is to be found - must be purified and sanctified. Then the indwelling God will protect you wherever you go.

Attain divine proximity

Each has their own way of looking at things. Opinions vary from person to person (Munde munde mathir bhinnah). Today people have perverted thoughts. First of all, they should purify their hearts.

Some people consider themselves to be great scholars and poets, but God does not see your scholarship or poetic talent. God sees your inner feelings, not the outward show.

Some people feel proud that they offered food and clothes to thousands of people. Fie on them! Is it something to boast about? If you have offered food and clothes to thousands of people, you may give this statistical account to income tax authorities. God says that you don't need to tell Him all these details.

What I see is the purity of your heart. If your heart is pure, that is enough. This is what Ashtavakra taught to those scholars in the court. He told them,

"Don't see my physical frame, see the knowledge that I have." Who is a true scholar? A pandit is one who is equal-minded (Pandita samadarshina). A real scholar is one who is endowed with the quality of equal-mindedness.

But do you possess the quality of equal-mindedness? You may wear thick gold bracelets, adorn yourself with a costly shawl, and sit as though you are posing for a photograph, but that is not the sign of true knowledge. Open your heart, understand the nature of the world, and propagate the eternal teachings of Divinity. That is the sign of true knowledge. That is the type of knowledge you should acquire, develop, and propagate.

Students!

I am happy if you study well, get 'O' grades, and win a gold medal. Along with all this, you should develop faith in God. Without faith in God, you cannot achieve anything worthwhile in this world. What is the use of all your worldly possessions?

In addition to all this, try to attain divine grace. Only then will you find fulfillment in life. In the absence of divine grace, all your worldly achievements are meaningless.

When a person emerges from the womb of their mother, one does not find any garland around their neck.

There Are No Jewels Made Of Pearls, Nor Are There Glittering Gold Ornaments.
There Are No Necklaces Studded With Precious Stones Like Emeralds And Diamonds.
But There Is One Garland Around The Neck. Brahma Strings Together The Consequences
Of Their Past Deeds Into A Heavy Garland And Puts It Around Their Neck
At The Time Of Birth.
(Telugu Poem)

This invisible garland of karma is around everyone's neck at the time of birth. One should see to it that they wear a good and fragrant garland and not a garland that gives out foul smells. Therefore, keep your worldly desires under check as far as possible.

Develop the sense of detachment. How is it possible? Many of our boys say, "Swami, there is always a desire in our mind to possess this and that. How to control it?" For this, it is essential to develop the spirit of detachment. Only when you have real knowledge, humanness, and devotion to God can the spirit of detachment develop in you.

What is the true meaning of detachment? Do you feel like eating the food vomited by you? Just as you discard the food you vomited, you should give up worldly desires. If any worldly desire arises in you, at once discard it, telling yourself, this is the food you vomited. You don't even like to look at food you vomited, so how can you eat it again?

Thus, true detachment lies in giving up wicked thoughts and wicked feelings, just as you discard the vomited food. When a worldly desire enters your mind, be cautious. At this age, students have a tendency to look at bad things and entertain bad thoughts. When such a thought arises in your mind, remind yourself, "This is the food I vomited, I don't want this again. This is full of foul smell. It is very bad." What your stomach rejects, you vomit it out. How can you desire for it again?

To develop such firm resolve to discard worldly desires is the sign of true detachment.

Only then will you be able to take to the sacred path and become dear to God. God will be very pleased with you and make you sit close to Him.

There is no wealth greater than proximity to God. In fact, that is the purpose of human life. Having come to this world, you should attain divine proximity and earn a good name.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Govinda Krishna Jai Gopala Krishna Jai...")

39. Divinity Imparts Value To Everything (Alternative Translation)

Date: 27 August 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Onam

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Truth Is The Mother, Wisdom The Father, Righteousness, The Brother,
Compassion The Friend, Peace The Wife, Forbearance The Son.
These Six Qualities Are The True Relations Of Humanity.
(Sanskrit Verse)

Embodiments of Love!

It is natural for people to have parents, brothers, sisters, wife, and children. But what is important is to have relations that are spiritual, sacred, true, and eternal.

Who is your true mother? Is it the mother who gave you birth and brought you up? That mother may leave you at any point of time. Your real mother is truth. Truth remains unchanged in the three periods of time - past, present, and future (Trikalabadhyam sathyam).

Wisdom is your true father (Pita jnanam). What is meant by wisdom? Experience of non-dualism is wisdom (Advaita darshanam jnanam). That which is one without a second is true wisdom. That is your father.

Right conduct is your brother (dharmo Bhrata), compassion is your friend (daya sakha), peace is your wife (santham patni), and forbearance is your son (kshama putrah). These are the true relations of people.

To Make Divine Love Flow Toward Your Fellow Human Beings Is The Hallmark Of Supreme Devotion.
Life Will Be Sanctified When One Conducts Oneself With The Awareness That One Is Born To Serve Society And Not To Lead A Selfish Life.
One Will Attain Fulfillment When One Dedicates Life To The Service Of Humanity, Forgetting Oneself.
What Is The Use Of Being Born As A Human If One Doesn't Fill One's Heart With Unblemished Love And Serve Fellow Beings?
What Else Is To Be Conveyed To This Assembly Of Noble Souls?
(Telugu Poem)

Make yourself free from non-self

Embodiments of Love!

People undertake many spiritual practices to have the vision of the Atma, to be in communion with the Atma, and to experience Atmic bliss. They follow the nine paths of devotion and think they can have a vision of the Atma by following these nine paths. (The nine paths are listening, singing, contemplating on Vishnu, serving His Lotus Feet, salutation, worship, servitude, friendship, and self-surrender (sravanam, kirtanam, Vishnusmaranam, padasevanam, vandanam, srchanam, dasyam, sneham, Atmanivedanam).

But it is a great mistake. You cannot attain Divinity by merely undertaking spiritual practices. These are meant to help you get rid of all that is non-Self. Once you are free from non-Self, the Self will become manifest everywhere.

Fire becomes visible when you blow away the ash that covers it. You don't need to make any special effort to see the sun; you can see it when the clouds that cover it move away.

You are under the delusion that you perform spiritual practices to have a

vision of the Atma. In fact, they are not meant for the vision of the Atma. You perform these practices in order to separate yourself from the non-Self and unite with the Self.

You pray to God, saying:

Oh Lord! You Alone Are My Father And Mother, Friend
And Relation, Wisdom And Wealth. You Are My Everything.
Twameva Matacha Pita Twameva, Twameva Bandhuscha Sakha Twameva,
Twameva Vidya Dravinam Twameva, Twameva Sarvam Mama Devadeva.
(Sanskrit Verse)

What does this prayer do? What type of result do you get out of it? This prayer conveys that you are different from God and that you have a worldly relationship with Him. Such a worldly relationship is the cause of bondage.

Father cannot become son and son cannot become father. Father is father and son is son. Both cannot become one.

Therefore, to address God as your father and mother is a sign of ignorance. "You are I and I am you." This is the best prayer.

"That thou Art (Thathtwamasi)." One of the profound statements of the Vedas, this statement propounds your oneness with God. When you realise this, you will be free from all relationships that bind you.

Day in and day out, you experience worldly relationships that bind you. Then why should you establish such a relationship even with God?

Only God is present in all. "With hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth, and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe (Sarvatah panipadam tat sarvathokshi siromukham, sarvatah srutimalloke sarvamavruthya tishthati)." When God is present in all, how can you say that He is your father and mother?

You should develop the spirit of oneness (Ekatma bhava). "I am present as the Atma in all beings (Mamatma sarva bhutantaratma)", says the Lord. The same Atma is present in you, Me, and everyone. The Atma has no differences of caste and religion. It is not bound by time, space, and circumstances.

All names and forms belong to God

God is one and the same for all nations, for all people, for all religions, for all communities and for all time. It is with reference to this that the Vedas declare: "Truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names (Ekam sath viprah bahudha vadanti)." God is one, but you call Him by many names. Where did these differences arise? You develop these differences and get deluded because you see differences in form. Day by day, you are getting more and more deluded. As long as you have delusion (bhrama), you cannot attain God (Brahma). When you get rid of bhrama, you become Brahma yourself. "The One willed to become many (Ekoham bahusyam)." God is one and all are one. All are present in God and God is present in all. All names and forms are His.

You offer worship to God, chanting the mantras: Kesavaya Namaha, Narayanaya Namaha, Madhavaya Namaha, Govindaya Namaha, Madhusudanaya Namaha. You chant these various names of God, but you offer worship to the same idol.

"I am Brahman (Aham Brahmasmi)." Devotees should develop such firm faith. Today there are so many differences between people. There is so much difference between the thinking of one person and another. Then how can you experience oneness?

There may be differences in form, but there should be unity in the way people think. Brahman pervades the entire world. Scientists say the entire cosmos consists of atoms. Many of them also say it is foolish to attribute a form to God and worship Him.

You should enquire what is the reality. The entire world has a form, and every atom that constitutes it has also a form. "Brahman is subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the vastest (Anoraneeyan mahato maheeyan)." The atom itself is not without form. Hence, there is nothing in this world that has no form.

All names and forms are manifestations of the Supreme Being, who is the embodiment of peace and auspiciousness.

He Is Existence, Knowledge, Bliss Absolute, And Non-Dual.
He Is Truth, Goodness, Beauty (Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram).
(Sanskrit Verse)

It is God who has assumed all forms. The same truth is declared in the Purusha Sukta: "The Cosmic Being has thousands of heads, eyes, and feet (Sahasra seersha purusha sahasraksha sahasra pad)." All forms belong to God. One degenerates to the level of animal when one does not realise this truth.

There is no harmony between thoughts, words, and deeds. This is not humanness. The proper study of humanity is people. Have complete unity in your thoughts, words, and actions. Therein lies the true meaning of humanness.

God is present in everything

We say that all forms belong to God, but we also say that God is formless. He is attributeless, unsullied, final abode, eternal, pure, enlightened, free, and embodiment of sacredness (nirgunam, niranjanam, sanathana niketanam, nitya, suddha, buddha, mukta, mirmala swarupinam).

What is the inner meaning of this? Diversity has value only when it is associated with unity. When you add a zero after 1 it becomes 10. If you go

on adding more and more zeros, the value goes on increasing to 100, 1000, 10,000, 1,00,000, etc. How does zero assume value? It assumes value when it is associated with one. Therefore, one is hero, world is zero. The world has value only because of God, who is the hero.

Only divinity imparts value to everything. There can be no world without God. God is the cause, the world is the effect. This creation is nothing but the manifestation of cause and effect. Why are people unable to realise this divine principle, having attained human birth? There is Divinity in every atom of the universe. This is the truth you have to realise.

If you always identify yourself with your body, mind, and mind-stuff (chitta), how can you understand the truth that you are God? The body, mind, chitta, intellect, etc. are mere instruments. You are the master, the Atma.

The Atma is all-pervasive. Brahman and Atma are one and the same. Brahman signifies the all-pervasive and ever-expansive divine principle.

The child Prahlada declared this same truth long ago. Prahlada was Hiranyakasipu's son, Virochana was Prahlada's son, and emperor Bali, in whose name we are celebrating the Onam festival today, was Virochana's son.

Emperor Bali was the embodiment of righteousness and sacrifice. He considered the welfare of his subjects as his own welfare. The minister who spoke earlier mentioned in his speech that service to man is service to God. Emperor Bali followed this noble principle.

Once some people went to Buddha and asked, "You have been performing spiritual practices for a long time. Can you tell us something about God?" Buddha remained silent. His silence meant only that there is no scope for arguments and counter arguments in matters relating to God.

In fact, what do you know about God to involve yourself in argumentation? God is present in "yes" and also in "no". He is present in truth and

righteousness and also in untruth and unrighteousness. How can you argue about God, who is present in everything? Therefore, don't enter into any sort of discussion with regard to God. It is sheer waste of time and utter foolishness.

God is the embodiment of truth, righteousness and nonviolence. That is why the scriptures teach: Speak truth, practise righteousness (Sathyam vada, dharmam chara). Truth, righteousness, and nonviolence are the real forms of God.

Some people went to Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and asked, "Oh master, you are always in communion with God. Have you seen God?" Laughing heartily, he said, "Yes, I have seen God. In fact, I am seeing you as the very form of God. God is present right in front of my eyes in your form. All are embodiments of God. However, your outlook is different. You consider yourself as human beings. You consider what you see around you as the world. He is a fool who sees yet does not recognise the reality (Pashyannapicha na pashyati moodho).

"What you see around you is only God. How can you deny God when you see Him everywhere and all the time? Why can't people see God? People cry for their wife, husband, power, position, name, and fame. But do they really cry for God? No. If you cry for God just as you cry for other material things, He will immediately manifest before you." You have part-time devotion for God, whereas you have full-time devotion for the world. You are prepared to sacrifice anything for worldly things.

The Vedas declare, Immortality is attained not through action, progeny, or wealth but only through sacrifice (Na karmana na prajaya dhanena thyagenaike amrutatthwamanasu). What do you have to renounce? There is no need for you to renounce your home and hearth. What is required is to get rid of your delusion.

Renunciation does not lie merely in giving up one's wealth and family and going to the forest.

Real Renunciation Lies In Giving Up Evil Qualities.
This Is Real Renunciation (Thyaga) And Yoga. (Telugu Poem)

Drive away evil qualities from your mind. That is real sacrifice. But how many people practise this? You can experience reality only when you put this principle into practice. If someone comes in the way of your sacrifice, whoever they may be, disown them.

Emperor Bali noticed Vamana entering the platform for the performance of a sacrifice (yajnashala). He welcomed him, offered him a seat with respect, and said, "Swami, what is your desire that I can fulfil?" Vamana replied, "I don't want anything else, I just want three steps of land." Emperor Bali said, "What is this? Do you need to come all the way just for three steps of land, which anybody else would have given you?" Vamana said, "I want three steps of land from you only." Bali's preceptor Sukracharya, who was standing behind, cautioned him, "Oh king! He is not an ordinary man. Don't make the mistake of granting his request." Bali replied, "Is there a greater mistake than going back on one's promise? I already gave him my word. I can disobey even my guru, but I cannot go back on my promise." Accordingly, Emperor Bali fulfilled his promise to Vamana. He was the embodiment of truth. He was the one who would never go back on his word. That is why the people of Kerala enshrine his memory in their heart and celebrate the festival of Onam every year.

What do you have to worship? Truth. Nothing other than truth has any value.

Bereft Of Truth, Righteousness, Peace, And Love, The Value Of All Your Education Is Zero;
Bereft Of Truth, Righteousness, Peace, And Love, The Benefit Of All Your Acts Of Charity And Kindness Is Zero;
Bereft Of Truth, Righteousness, Peace, And Love, The Utility Of All Your Positions Of Power Is Zero;
Bereft Of Truth, Righteousness, Peace, And Love, The Result Of All Your Good Deeds Is Zero.
Truth, Righteousness, Peace, And Love Are The Very Foundation Of Human

Life.
What Else Is There To Be Conveyed To This Assembly Of Noble Souls!
(Telugu Poem)

You should recognise the importance of truth, righteousness, peace and love (sathya, dharma, santhi, and prema). These are the true human values. Truth is God. Righteousness is God. It is said, Rama is dharma personified (Ramo vigrahavan dharma). Dharma assumed the form of Rama.

Then where is peace? It is not outside. Outside in the world there are only pieces, but no peace. Peace is the precious pearl and ornament for humanity. You are the embodiment of peace.

Only God is your true friend

Love is God. Live in Love. There is no life without love. Love is the main life-force in people. But, unfortunately, people make improper use of love.

There is love between wife and husband, mother and children, friends and relatives. In this way, people fragment love. Join all these pieces together and direct your entire love toward God.

(Swami showing His handkerchief) You can see how strong this cloth is because all threads have come together. If the threads are separated, you can break them with your fingers. Therefore, focus all your love on God.

Revere your mother, father, preceptor, and guest as God (Matru Devo bhava, pitru Devo bhava, acharya Devo bhava, atithi Devo bhava).

Even friend is God. In fact, your only true friend is God. Among the nine paths of devotion, friendship comes before self-surrender. Once you develop friendship with God, you will have everything. If you want to completely surrender to God, you have to develop friendship with Him first. Developing

friendship with God signifies surrendering your three qualities of purity, passion, and sloth (sathwa, rajas, and thamas) to Him. That is friendship (maitree).

Worldly friends look at your pocket and the position of your father. When there is money in your pocket and your father has a high position, hundreds of friends will come to you, saying hello, hello. If your pocket is empty and your father is retired, everyone will desert you without even saying goodbye.

Can you call them your real friends? No, no. God is your real friend. He is always with you, in you, around you, below you. He will never forsake you.

All your friends and relatives will follow you only till the burial ground. Only the divine Name will never leave you. God is your only saviour in times of distress. He will follow you wherever you go. Therefore, develop friendship only with God.

Emperor Bali considered God as his friend and surrendered to Him. Many in this world give away land, gold, food, clothes, money, and other worldly possessions in charity. But Emperor Bali's was an act of supreme sacrifice. He offered himself to God. This is the highest form of devotion. He did not give merely three steps of land; he gave away himself.

I Offer My Family, Wealth - Everything To You.
I Surrender Before You And Offer Myself Also. Protect Me. (Sanskrit Verse)

I offer myself to You. Do whatever You like to do:

Oh Lord! I Offer My Heart To You, Which You Have Given Me.
What Else Is There For Me To Worship Your Feet With?
Please Accept This With My Humble Salutations.
(Telugu Poem)

Bali said, "What else can I offer? If I want to offer You the water from the river Ganga, I realise that Ganga is Your very form. If I want to worship You with flowers, I realise that You are the one who created them. If I want to buy fruits and offer them to You, are they not Your own creation?" Vedanta teaches the inner meaning of offering flowers and fruits to God. Once Rukmini prayed thus:

One May Offer You A Leaf Or A Flower Or A Fruit Or Even Water,
But, If It Is True That You Offer Yourself To One With Devotion,
Oh Krishna, May You Be Weighed By This Tulasi Leaf!
(Telugu Poem)

What does the leaf signify? Does it signify bilva leaf or tulasi leaf? No, your body is the leaf.

What flower you should offer God? Is it jasmine flower or marigold flower? No, no. Offer the flower of your heart. Then what fruit is pleasing to God? Is it banana, guava, or orange? No. These are not the fruits that you should offer. Offer the fruit of your mind. Similarly, God does not expect you to offer Him water from the Ganga or any other river or a well. Offer Him your tears of joy.

These flowers and fruits do not grow on a tree; they grow on the tree of your life. Your body is the leaf, heart is the flower, mind is the fruit, and tears of joy is water.

That is why Emperor Bali offered himself to the Lord. No other offering can match the offering made by Bali. If you offer a worldly object, it is transient. But what Bali offered to the Lord was something that would not fade away with time. That is why he attained great name and fame.

Bali was from the lineage of Jaya and Vijaya, who were the guards at the door of Lord Vishnu. Jaya and Vijaya took birth as Hiranyaksha and Hiranyakasipu. Prahlada was the son of Hiranyakasipu.

Character is your greatest wealth

Students must know the greatness and nobility of Prahlada. He was the personification of highest character. Once, Prahlada achieved victory over Indra and started ruling over his kingdom, heaven. Having lost his kingdom, Indra was very much distressed. He went to his preceptor and asked him, "Swami, how can I win back my kingdom? Kindly, show me the way." The preceptor replied, "Prahlada is performing a sacrifice called Viswajit. During this time, he will give away in charity whatever one asks from him. Therefore, go to him at an appropriate time and ask him for his character in charity." Accordingly, Indra assumed the form of a brahmin and went to Prahlada. Prahlada welcomed him and asked him what he wanted. As advised earlier by his preceptor, Indra asked Prahlada for his character. Prahlada asked the brahmin what use was his character to him.

The brahmin replied that there was no need to go into all that. He had expressed what he wanted in response to Prahlada's offer to give whatever anyone asked for in the Viswajit sacrifice. "Are you prepared to give or not?" He asked. Prahlada immediately gave what the brahmin asked with due ceremony.

Within a few minutes, an effulgent form emerged from Prahlada. Seeing the form, he asked, "Who are you?" The effulgent figure prostrated before Prahlada and said: "I am your character. Hitherto I was in you. I fostered your name and fame. You gave me away as a gift, so I am leaving you." Shortly thereafter, another beautiful effulgent form issued forth from Prahlada. Prahlada asked, "Who are you, oh king?" The radiant figure replied, "Prahlada! I am your reputation (kirti). When your character left you, I had no place within you. I am the servant of character. When character has left, I have to follow suit." Prahlada was puzzled. Then out came another beautiful radiant female form. Prahlada respectfully asked her, "Mother! Who are you?'' She said, "Prahlada! After character and reputation departed, I, namely, Rajya Lakshmi, (the goddess of royal prosperity) have no place within you." Then another effulgent form emerged from Prahlada and asked permission to leave

him. When Prahlada asked who he was, the form replied that he was Dharma. Prahlada then said no to him, because if Dharma left him nothing would remain with him. He held on to Dharma and prayed to him not leave. Dharma granted Prahlada's prayer and stayed.

When Dharma decided to stay with Prahlada, the goddess of royal wealth, his reputation, and his character also returned, saying that they would stay where there was Dharma. Thus, Prahlada proved that Dharma was most important for man.

From the story, you can see that where Dharma is, there lies all wealth, name, and fame.

Prahlada was endowed with six types of opulence: righteousness, wealth, fame, power, wisdom, and detachment (dharma, aiswarya. yashas, sakthi, jnana, vairagya). But when he lost character, he lost all six types of opulence.

What is your true wealth? It is the wealth of wisdom, love, and righteousness.

Prahlada was one of great character and righteousness.

You should understand the importance of character from the spiritual point of view also. You may give up any quality, but not character. Offer yourself only to God and to none else, because God is the embodiment of selflessness.

Never forsake God

God has no expectation from anybody. Everyone in this world loves you with some selfinterest, but only God's love is totally free of selfishness and self-interest. Even parents love you because of your physical relationship with them, but God has no such relationship. His relationship is heart to heart and love to love. He has no selfish motive in His love. Therefore, offer your life only to God.

This was the ideal demonstrated by Emperor Bali. Revere your mother, father, preceptor and guest as God as long as they don't come in the way of your relationship with God.

Kaikeyi was instrumental in stopping the coronation of Rama and sending Him to the forest. Because of Kaikeyi's evil deed Bharata disobeyed her. How can you revere your mother as God when she takes you away from God? Bharata demonstrated that if your mother comes in the way of your association with God, you should forsake her.

Hiranyakasipu tried to stop his son Prahlada from chanting the divine Name "Om Namo Narayana" in many ways. Prahlada was ready to forsake even his father but would not stop chanting the Name of the Lord. Similarly, Emperor Bali disobeyed his preceptor and offered himself to the Lord. One should make any sacrifice for the sake of God.

When Maharana commanded Mira to leave the Krishna temple and go away, she had a doubt as to what her dharma was - whether to stay with her husband or go away and offer herself to God. Expressing her doubt, she sent a letter to Tulsidas, who was her contemporary, through a messenger. Tulsidas was living on Chitrakuta mountain at that time.

She asked, "Swami, what am I supposed to do now? Should I give up my husband or God?" Tulsidas sent a reply, "Wives and husbands keep changing from birth to birth. Only God is with you in all your births. Therefore, you may give up your husband but not God." Then she decided to leave her house and sang, "Oh mind! Go to the bank of Ganga and Yamuna (Chalore mana ganga Yamuna teer)." Prayag is the confluence of Ganga and Yamuna rivers. There is no need to book a ticket to travel to Prayag. Ganga and Yamuna signify the subtle channels ida and pingala. The centre of the eyebrows (bhrumadhya) is the real Prayag where the three nerve channels ida, pingala, and sushumna meet.

"The waters of Ganga and Yamuna are very cool and pure, which will make one serene and peaceful. Therefore, oh mind! Go to the bank of Ganga and

Yamuna (Ganga, Yamuna nirmal pani, sheetal hota sareer. Chalore man Ganga Yamuna teer). There you find Lord Krishna donning a yellow silk robe, having a crown of peacock feathers and glittering earrings." In this way, Mira renounced her house, family, and husband for the sake of God.

Never heed anyone who advises you to go away from God. Even if a fierce calamity befalls you, never leave God. Even if you were to carry a ball of fire in your hand, never leave God. Even if earth becomes sky and sky becomes earth, never leave God. Under all circumstances, keep your faith in God firm. Such unwavering faith is your true protection.

Before going to the battlefield, Abhimanyu offered his salutations to his mother Subhadra and prayed for her blessings. But she tried to dissuade him from going to the battlefield, saying:

The Kaurava Army Was Arrayed In The Shape Of Padmavyuha By Dronacharya,
Who Has The Power To Subdue The Pride Of The Mightiest Of Enemies At Will.
It Is Not Easy To Withstand The Onslaught Of Bhishma.
Moreover, Your Wife Is In The Family Way.
We Do Not Know Whether The Time Is Favourable To Us Or Not.
Your Father And Uncle Krishna Are Not Here To Help You.
Hence, Give Up Your Resolve To Enter The Battlefield.
(Telugu Poem)

When his mother tried to stop him thus, Abhimanyu became furious and said,

At A Time When I Am About To Pounce Fearlessly On The Kaurava Army Like A Lion
And Annihilate Them With The Rain Of Powerful Arrows,
Is It Proper On Your Part To Dissuade Me From Going To The Battlefield
Instead Of Conferring Your Blessings On Me And Saying A Few Words Of Encouragement?
(Telugu Poem)

In this manner, the youth of those days upheld the honour of their family with courage and valour. They were prepared to make any sacrifice to protect the honour of the family.

Abhimanyu prostrated before his mother, seeking her blessings and pleading with her to permit him to go to the battlefield. Subhadra had no choice but to put her hand on his head and bless him thus:

May You Be The Recipient Of The Same Blessings That Mother Gauri Conferred On Her Son Kumara When He Went To Battle Tarakasura,
The Blessings Bhargavi Bestowed On Her Son At The Time Of Slaying Of Shambarasura,
The Blessings Vinata Showered On Her Son When He Set Out On The Sacred Mission Of Getting His Mother Freed From Servitude,
The Blessings Mother Kausalya Conferred On Her Son Rama When He Went To Forest To Safeguard Viswamitra's Sacrifice.
Above All, May The Most Powerful And Divine Blessings Of Rama Be With You And Protect You In The Battlefield.
(Telugu Poem)

Conferring her profuse blessings on her son for his protection, Subhadra permitted him to go to the battlefield.

One may have all types of blessings and protection, but if one lacks the protection of God, all other protections will be useless. You may have all types of power, but without the power of God, they will be of no use.

As described in the Ramayana, no one was more powerful than Hanuman. Similarly, in the Mahabharata, Bhima was considered the most powerful. If they were so powerful, you can well imagine the power of God. The power of God can shake the entire earth in a moment or cause deluge in a trice. The same power of God gives light to the entire world through the sun. There can

be no power greater than the power of God.

One May Have Physical Prowess And Power Of Intelligence,
But One Will Come To Grief If One Lacks Divine Grace,
Karna Was A Great Warrior, But What Was His Fate?
Never Forget This Truth.

Physical power, manpower, and the power of intellect, wealth, and position are not so important. What is most important is the power of righteousness and the power of God.

Whether you do any spiritual practice or not, do contemplate on the Vedic maxim "I am Brahman (Aham Brahmasmi)." Then you become Brahman. "The knower of Brahman becomes verily Brahman Himself (Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavathi)." Do not develop meaningless relationship with God. I and you are one. Strive to experience this oneness.

You may do meditation, repetition of His Name, bhajan, and rituals, but all these are meant only for your mental satisfaction. The mind is of fickle nature. Therefore, do not try to satisfy your mind; satisfy your conscience. Only then can you have the experience of Satchidananda.

Sat is being, chit is awareness. The unity of sat and chit is ananda (bliss). Always remember this divine principle and contemplate on it.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin...")

39. The greatness of Bali and Prahlaadha

Date: 27 August 1996 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Onam

EMBODIMENTS of Love! In this phenomenal world, physical relationships like parents, brothers, sisters, wife and children are natural. But in the spiritual context, man should develop relations which are permanent, sacred and transcendental.

One's true relations are Sathyam (Truth) as mother, Jnanam (Wisdom) as father, Dharmam (Righteousness) as brother, Dhaya (compassion) as friend, Shanthi (Peace) as wife and Kshama (forgiveness) as son. The physical relations are temporary and bound to pass away. But the six great virtues are the true imperishable relations.

The Foremost Duty Of Everyone Is To Make
Love Of God Flow Towards All In Creation.
Every Man Lives Not For His Own Sake But To Render Service To Society.
To Forget Concern For The Body
Is The Way To Realise Self-Realisation.
Of What Use Is Human Birth If You Do Not Manifest
Unsullied Love Towards All Beings? (Telugu Poem.)

Oneness with God

Man performs a variety of spiritual exercises to achieve self-realisation and the bliss of oneness with the Divine. These include the nine forms of devotion. In these forms of worship God is regarded as mother, father, friend or master. The highest form of worship is to regard God and the individual as one. "You are I and I am you." This attitude flees man from bondage.

Human beings are different in form and name. Oneness amongst them can be achieved only by a feeling of oneness in thought, by a recognition that the whole cosmos is permeated by the Divine.

God is the cause, the world is the effect. In this marvellous universe, why is man unable to recognise his true nature? Divinity is present in every atom of the cosmos. You have to realise that you are that Divinity.

This truth was declared by Prahladha long ago. Emperor Bali, whose return to the earth for one day in a year is celebrated today in the Onam festival, was the grandson of Prahladha. Bali belonged to a line of great renunciants. His father, Virochana was also known for his spirit of sacrifice. He regarded the welfare of his people as his own well-being.

Mr. Wellington (who had spoken earlier) said that service to humanity is service to God. This principle was observed by Virochana. Emperor Bali also followed the same rule.

Experiencing God by renouncing bad qualities

Once several persons gathered round Buddha and asked him to teach them something about God as he had been pursuing the spiritual path for a long time. The Buddha remained silent. No one is competent to engage in discussions about God. God is in "Yes" and in "No." He is in Dharma and Adharma, in Truth and untruth. How can you have an argument over one who is omnipresent? It is a waste of time. (God is the very embodiment of Dharma, of Sathya and of Ahimsa (non-violence). Hence, Vedantha exhorted mankind: "Speak the Truth, follow Righteousness.

Some persons gathered round Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and asked him: "Sir! Have you seen God?" Ramakrishna had a hearty laugh. He said: "Yes! I have seen God as I am seeing you. All are forms of God. However, your vision is different. You look at all persons as human beings. But all that you see is Divine. Why are you failing to see the Divine? You cry about your wife, your children, your wealth and your position. Have you ever cried for God in the same way? No. When you cry for God intensely, God will appear before you." Once you renounce you bad qualities you will experience God.

When the Lord as Vamana, was approaching Emperor Bali's yaga, the Emperor received him reverentially and asked him what he wanted. He said: "I want three feet of ground measured by my feet." Ball said: "Why come all the way to ask for just three feet of ground?" Vamana declared: "That is all I want." The Emperor's preceptor, Shukracharya warned the Emperor against making the gift, as the seeker was no ordinary person. But the Emperor firmly declared that there is no greater sin than going back on one's promise. He kept his word.

Emperor Ball stands forth as the great upholder of the plighted word. That is the reason why the people of Kerala worship him to this day and celebrate the festival of Onam in his memory.

Love is the supreme value

What is that is adored today? It is Truth. Without truth nothing has any value. Without the values of Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Love, all education and other attainments are useless.

Love is the supreme value. It is not mundane love, but Divine love that is precious. That Divine love encompasses every other form of attachment to friends and others. Cultivate the enduring friendship of God.

Emperor Ball was prepared to offer everything, including himself, to God. That is his greatness. It is not the gift of mere three feet of land. He offered himself to the Lord. "I am offering all that is mine, my family and wealth, and myself, keeping nothing for myself. Save me, Oh lord, who has sought refuge in you," says a Sanskrith shloka. "The heart which you gave to me, I am offering to you. What else can I offer at your Lotus Feet?" says a Telugu poem. This is the spirit in which Bali surrendered to the Lord.

Prahladha's gift of his character to Indhra

Many students do not know the full story of Prahladha (grandfather of Bali). If you have to name anyone for his highest character, it is Prahladha alone.

Once, Indhra conquered Prahladha and enjoyed Swarga (the realm of the gods). Later Prahladha overcame Indhra and deprived him of Swarga. Indhra was forlorn and sought the advice of his high-priest for winning back his kingdom. The priest told him that Prahladha was performing a great yaga called Vishvajith and Indhra should assume the form of a Brahmana and seek a gift from Prahladha. Prahladha will give whatever one seeks from him. Indhra went to Prahladha in the guise of a poor Brahmana. Prahladha welcomed him and asked him what he wanted.

As advised earlier by his high-priest, he asked Prahladha to offer him Prahladha's Sheelam (character). Prahladha enquired of the Brahmana of what use was his character to the seeker.

The Brahmana replied that there was no need to go into all that. He had expressed what he wanted in response to Prahladha's offer to give whatever anyone asked at the Vishvajith sacrifice. "Are you prepared to give or not?" Prahladha immediately gave what the Brahmana asked with due ceremony.

Within a few minutes, an effulgent flame emerged from Prahladha. Seeing the effulgent form, he asked: "Who are you?" The effulgent figure prostrated before Prahladha and said: "I am your character. Hitherto I was in you. I fostered your name and fame. Now you have given me away as a gift. Hence I am leaving you."

When character is lost everything is lost

When character left Prahladha, shortly thereafter another beautiful effulgent form issued forth from Prahladha. Prahladha asked him: "Who are you, oh King?" The radiant figure replied "Prahladha! I am your Keerthi (Reputation). When character has left you, I have no place within you. Hitherto I was the servant of Character. When Character has left you, I have to follow suit."

Prahladha was puzzled. Then came another beautiful radiant female form from Prahladha. Prahladha respectfully asked her: "Mother! Who are you?" "Prahladha! After the departure of Character and Reputation, I, namely Rajyalakshmi, (the goddess of royal prosperity) have no place within you." Indhra, who had come in the form of a Brahmana, took all the three with him.

That very moment, Prahladha lost his kingdom. You can see from this how one's fame and prosperity are dependent on one's character. Character is a supremely Divine quality. Hence God is described as having six great attributes including Righteousness, infinite wealth, boundless prosperity, indescribable fame and unfathomable wisdom.

Prahladha was the embodiment of character. After Indhra had taken away his character from Prahladha, the latter got married and had a son by name Virochana.

You may realise from this episode what importance is attached to character in the spiritual process. This character should be offered only to God and none else. God is utterly selfless and therefore offering your character to God will mean no loss to you.

In the relationship between the devotee and God, no other relationship should be allowed to prevail. Ball ignored the warning of his preceptor in carrying out his promise to Vamana. Bharatha condemned his mother's action which resulted in his separation from Rama. Prahladha did not submit to his father when it was a question of his devotion to Narayana. Meera did not allow her husband's conduct to come in the way of her devotion to Krishna.

Do not give up God

Whatever may happen you should not give up God. God is the only unfailing protector. Abhimanyu obtained his mother's blessings before going into battle at a time when Arjuna was away and Krishna was not available for advice. But her blessings were of no avail when God's strength was not available.

Abhimanyu died in the battle valiantly like a hero.

All forms of strength, physical, material, manpower, etc., are of no use without Divine strength on your side.

Divine support and Dharma (Righteousness) are the two things essential for success. Whatever spiritual exercise one may practise, one should concentrate on achieving union with the Divine as the primary aim.

40. Krishna's life and message

Date: 04 September 1996 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Krishna Jayanthi

Sweeter Than Sugar, Tastier Than Curds,
Extremely Sweeter Than Honey,
Is The Chanting Of The Divine Name.
Recite, Oh Mind, The Nectarine Name Of Shri Krishna For Ever.

EMBODIMENTS of love! It is easy to criticize or belittle the leelas or infinite potencies of God. But it is very difficult to comprehend the truth about the Divine. The omnipresent Divine is present both in Truth and untruth. He is present both in Dharma (righteousness) and Adharma (unrighteousness). He is present in good and evil. With regard to such an all-pervading Divine, how can anyone determine what is good and what is bad?

From the earliest times men have been proclaiming what is Divine. That the Divine has a form and possesses innumerable auspicious qualities was declared from their experiences.

The cosmos functions on the basis of three types of actions. Creation, sustenance and dissolution are the three processes. The truth of this phenomenon cannot be denied by anyone at any time or place, whether he is a Vedanthin or a scientist, an engineer or a man of the world. While this has enabled people to describe the Divine, it has not served to demonstrate God. But they were able to indicate the means by which one can experience God.

Experiencing the power of the Divine

A distant star like the Dhruva nakshathra (Pole Star) can be pointed to some one by reference to some nearby physical object like a tree. Likewise the Vedas and Scriptures, while not demonstrating the Divine, have helped to indicate the path leading to the realisation of the Divine.

The spectacle of a dense forest confers delight. The sight of all tall mountain excites wonder. Seeing the torrent in a river one rejoices. All these are evidences of the power of the Divine.

The stars shine. The planets revolve. The sun blazes forth. The wind blows. All these are signs of the Divine at work. When you see the spark of a fire, you can infer the nature of fire. If you know the nature of a drop of water, you can understand the nature of Ganga. Likewise, if you understand the nature of the atom, you can understand the nature of the entire cosmos. Recognising this truth, the Upanishaths declared: "The Divine is subtler than the atom and vaster than the vastest."

The human is indeed a manifestation of the Divine with numerous potencies. It is the Divine that shines effulgently in every human being. But, because of his attachment to the body, he is unable to develop attachment to the Atma (Spirit).

Recognising the omnipresence of the Divine in all things, the quest for Truth should be undertaken. What is the Truth? Where is it? How to search for that which is everywhere? A distinction must be made between an apparent fact and the unchanging Reality. In daily life the sun appears to "rise" and "set" everyday, but in reality these apparent phenomena are due to the movement of the earth round itself and round the sun. Likewise what is apparently true about you, as is inferred from external observation, is not the real you. It is the effulgent Divine within you.

The spiritual quest involves the churning of the heart by meditation. The qualities like compassion emerge from the heart. The human heart, which should be an ocean of milk, has been turned into an ocean of brine now infested with creatures like hatred, lust and greed.

Krishna's leelas

The childhood episodes relating to Krishna have an esoteric meaning. For

instance, when his mother, Yashodha, chided Krishna for eating mud (as alleged by Balarama), Krishna replied: "Mother am I a child, or a silly brat or a crazy fool to eat mud?" In this way Krishna, even though he was a child, was affirming His divinity indirectly. The Divine teaches profound lessons to mankind in this indirect manner. God's actions should be understood not by the external events but by their inner meaning. Moreover, many changes in the ordinary ways of living are necessary to understand the ways of God. Adhi Shankara indicated in the Bhaja Govindam song how even a brief experience of the Divine by a devotee fills him with ecstasy. This bliss can be got only through the Atma. The experiences of the gopikas and gopalas of Brindhavan during Krishna's early years at Gokulam have been misunderstood and misinterpreted. Krishna was in the village for five years only. It is absurd to suggest that a five year child behaved in an objectionable manner. After going to Mathura Krishna did not return to Repalle.

Awareness of the Divine will confer bliss

To ascribe anything improper to the pure and Divine life of Krishna is sheer blasphemy. The true nature of the Divine has to be fully understood. Divinity is the all-pervading Cosmic Consciousness present in all. The nature of this consciousness should be understood. It is chith, which illumines every object in creation. Chith illumines what exists and thereby makes it cognisable. Existence is sath. Cognisability is chith. The combination of sath and chith confers thrupthi (satisfaction derived from enjoying the object). This Anandha is thus the very nature of every being. The Divine pervades everything inside and outside. Awareness of the Divine will confer bliss. But few are able to realise this.

Once, an individual, unable to bear the difficulties in his family, left hearth and home. Later, after earning some money he set out to return to his house. A young son, who was in the house when the father left, was so grief-stricken over the father's absence that he died after sometime. Before reaching his village, he took shelter in a choultry during a storm. There he had a dream in which he saw himself as a king in a palace living with six princely sons. He

was enjoying the dream. A peal of thunder woke him up. He wondered what had happened to all the beautiful things he had been enjoying so far. He realised that it was all a dream. There was no trace of the six sons.

The reality in both dream and waking states

He reached his home in the morning. On seeing the husband, the wife broke into tears. On the one hand she was happy over the husband's return. On the other, she was filled with sorrow over the passing of her son. The father asked her: "Where is our son?" She replied that he passed away, unable to bear the separation from the father. The man was stupefied. He did not feel sad or happy. He stood transfixed like a statue. The wife asked: "How is it you are not moved by the loss of the son whom you loved so much? What is the reason?"

He then related to his wife the remarkable dream he had experienced the previous night. In that dream his six sons had died. "Am I to grieve over the loss of those six sons or over the loss of this one son?. For whose sake should I weep? They were my children in the dream state. This son was my child in the waking state. What was present in both the state is the reality. All other things are transient." This realisation came to him.

If people today wish to achieve spiritual bliss, they have to follow three principles: First, they must know what has to be known. Second, they must give up what has to be renounced. Third, they must reach the goal that has to be attained. By observing these three, bliss can be realised. What is it that has to be known? What is this world? How long will I live? We see many passing away. Coming and going are continually happening. When the transient nature of the physical world is understood, bliss will be realised.

Next, what is it that you have to give up? The delusion under which what is unreal is considered real and what is real is treated as unreal. People consider that they are in the grip of Maya and that they are caught up in misery. Misery has no limbs to hold you. It is you who are hugging misery. This is due

to your ignorance. When you get rid of this ignorance you will experience bliss.

We have to go back to our source

What is the goal you have to reach? You have to go back to the source from which you came. You have come from the Atma and you have to return to the Atma. This is what the Upanishaths sought to convey when they declared: "Asatho ma sadhgarnaya" (Lead me from the unreal to the Real). Where there is truth, untruth exists as its shadow.

"Thamaso ma jyothirgamaya" (Lead me from darkness to light). What is darkness and what is light? Light alone exists. Darkness is only the absence of light. Discovering the light leads to the elimination of darkness.

"Mrithyor-ma Amritham gamaya" (Lead me from death to Immortality). Birth and death are incidental to the body alone. Your Self has neither birth nor death. What is born (the body) dies. Death relates to the body and not to the Atma. The Atma is eternal. It is the truth. You have to acquire this awareness to experience lasting bliss. To experience permanent bliss one has to develop firm faith in God.

The distinction between Krishna and Rama

Today we celebrate the birthday of Krishna. Where was he born? In a prison. What were his possessions? Nothing. Born in a prison, he was taken to the house of Nandha and then he went to Mathura. He owned nothing. But he became the greatest figure in the world. What does this show? Worldly possessions are not the secret of greatness. Krishna's greatness consisted in his permanent state of Anandha (bliss).

If you recognise the distinction, between Krishna and Rama, you will appreciate better the nature of Krishna. Krishna always smiled at the outset

and carried out his task later. For Rama, the deed came first and then the smile. Krishna made women cry. Rama wept for the sake of women. Rama went into the battle only after-having a strong cause for it. Krishna first provoked the conflict and then determined its outcome.

The Krishna principle revels in delight. The Rama principle is based on the concept of badhyatha (obligation).

The Ramayana is intended to promote the reign of Truth and Righteousness on earth. The Krishna Avathar was intended to give a perennial message to the world. He sought nothing for himself. He kept nothing for himself. He gave away everything to the people. He slayed his maternal uncle, Kamsa. He installed on the throne Kamsa's: father Ugrasena. He did not covet the Kingdom. He befriended the Pandavas, defeated the Kauravas and crowned Dharmaja as the emperor. He did not make himself king. He was a king without a crown. He was the king of kings. He had no kingdom of his own. But he ruled over the hearts of the millions. It is this profound truth that is proclaimed by the Krishna-thathva (Krishna principle).

If you enquire deeply, you will find that every Avathar has incarnated to convey a special message and carry out a particular mission.

Krishna's divine power

The gopikas used to complain to Yashodha about Krishna's pranks. But whatever Krishna said in fun or did as a prank was based on truth. Krishna never indulged in untruth even by way of a joke. But those who could not understand the inner meaning of His statements used to accuse him of lying. This kind of misunderstanding has been a disease in all yugas (ages).

When a gopika complained to Yashodha that Krishna had entered the house of a cowherd at night and played some mischief, Krishna pleaded before his mother how he could have gone out anywhere when he was sleeping beside her. The truth was that Krishna was in both places because of His Divine

power. Krishna displayed any number of such baffling miracles. (Bhagawan sang a series of songs about the complaints of the gopikas to Yashodha against Krishna). Against each complaint Krishna had a convincing alibi. Indirectly Krishna was revealing His divinity. Krishna explained to His mother the ways of the Divine in a way she could understand.

Krishna used to visit the houses of the cowherds and drink curds and milk. The symbolic meaning of this action is Krishna's preference for sathva, represented by the pure white curds and milk.

Krishna explained to Yashodha the reason why he preferred the butter in their homes to the butter offered by Yashodha. The hearts of the gopikas were pure and filled with selfless devotion to Krishna. Their devotion was superior to the maternal affection of Yashodha, which bore a taint of selfishness. Krishna told Yashodha: "I am attracted to the hearts of those who are pure and selfless."

Follow the footsteps of the Lord

Krishna had always eluded the gopikas after playing his mischief. But once, out of compassion for them, he wanted to provide a clue by which they could trace him. One day they all lay in wait round their houses to catch Krishna. Krishna went into a house stealthily, broke a pot of milk and quietly hid himself. The gopikas found that he had broken the pot and tried to trace him. The milk white steps which he had left revealed to them his hide-out. Then, Krishna revealed to them the spiritual truth that if they cling to the feet of the Lord they realise Him. "Follow my footsteps and you shall find me," Krishna told the gopikas.

In the Bhagavatham, the lessons you learn are according to the state of your mind. To understand the glories of the Lord as related in the Bhagavatham, you have to enjoy the leelas (frolics) of Krishna and realise their inner meaning. For instance, the real meaning of the story about Krishna taking away the clothes of the gopikas while they were bathing is that to realise the

Lord they have to abandon the attachment to the body, which is the vesture of the Spirit. These stories should not be treated in a spirit of levity or profanity.

Krishna dedicated the flute to delight Radha

In the case of Radha, Krishna churned her heart and gave here the nectar of Divine bliss. Radha had no attachment to any of her kith and kin. (Swami sang sweetly a song of Radha expressing her grief over separation from Him). Krishna appeared before Radha before she gave up her life and blessed her. God will give anything for the devotee including Himself. No one can equal Him in the sacrifice He will make for the sake of the devotees. Krishna asked Radha what she wanted at the last moment of her life. Radha said: "I don't want anything except to listen to the music of your flute once before I pass on." "Sing, Oh Krishna, speak to me to fill my heart with bliss," sang Radha. "Distill the essence of the Vedas and make it flow into the eternal music of your flute, Oh Krishna." Krishna took out His flute and played on it and when Radha closed her eyes, He threw it away. He never touched it again. He dedicated the flute to give delight to Radha.

Thus, all the mysteries of Krishna served to relieve the distress of the devotees. Krishna used all His powers to serve the devotees. When the purport of the Bhagavatha stories is properly understood, one can realise the pussiance of the Lord.

In the life of Meerabai, for instance, when the Rana's sister gave to Meera a cup of milk containing poison, Meera drank it as an offering to Krishna. The result was Krishna absorbed the poison and left the sweet milk alone for Meera.

By making an offering of all that you eat to God before taking it, the food gets purified and sanctified.

The gopikas were illiterate and totally innocent. But their love for Krishna was

unalloyed and exclusive. Even while engaged in their daily activities, their thoughts were centred on Krishna. Hence they experienced indescribable joy.

Proclaim the message of unity

Devotees should cultivate unity, transcending all barriers of caste, creed and nationality. (Swami then related the story of Suguna who was oblivious to her hand getting burnt because she saw the figure of Krishna in the flame of a lamp. Swami sang a song expressing the delight of the gopikas on seeing Suguna in the state of Divine forgetfulness).

Krishna's mystery and miracles are beyond words. He was all things to all people. He is the indweller in the heart of everyone. There is no room for religious differences. Students should resolve themselves to restore the pristine glory of Bharath by leading ideal lives. Proclaim the message of unity to the whole world.

Before concluding My discourse, I would make an announcement to the students. In view of the ever-growing number of devotees coming to Prashanthi Nilayam Swami is not in a position to devote individual attention to students. Those who wish to get married and settle down in life, might happily do so and come to Bhagawan for His blessings. Swami will not perform any marriages in the Nilayam. But the Kalyana Mandapam can be used for marriages if they desired. Swami will perform, however, mass marriages and mass Upanayanams. Swami's grace and love will be available to you wherever you may be. You may get married, lead a worldly life as householders and serve the nation.

Today is Gokulashtami, the day celebrated as Krishna's birthday. But it is not this celebration that is important. What is important is the adherence to Krishna's teachings. Krishna is not different from His teachings. The Geetha is Krishna and Krishna is Geetha.

Develop Prema (Love) towards the Lord, the Parama-Prema (Highest Love) of

which He is the embodiment. Never give room for doubts and hesitations, for questions, to test the Lord's Prema.

- Sathya Sai Baba

40. Love For God Is The Only Real Wealth (Alternative Translation)

Date: 04 September 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Krishna Jayanthi

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Sweeter Than Sugar, Tastier Than Curd,
Sweeter Indeed Than Honey Are The Names Of Rama And Krishna.
Constant Repetition Of These Sweet Names Gives One The Taste Of Divine Nectar Itself.
Therefore, Contemplate On The Names Of Rama And Krishna Incessantly.
(Telugu Poem)

Verily all this is Brahman (Sarvam khalvidam Brahma). Everything is the manifestation of Divinity. It is easy to criticise the divine play (leelas) and the supreme powers of Avatars, but it is difficult to understand the principle of their Divinity.

God, who is all-pervasive, is present both in truth and untruth, righteousness and unrighteousness, and good and bad. Such being the case, how can you call something good and some other thing bad, something divine and something not? Since ancient times, people have been investigating the principle of Divinity and propagating it to the entire world. Based on their own experiences, people have been demonstrating that the Divine has a particular form with some attributes Divinity shines in everyone The entire world is governed by the three principles of creation, sustenance, and dissolution. One may belong to any country or faith, one cannot deny this truth, be one a scientist or a philosopher. However, these three principles can only teach you the principle of Divinity; they cannot grant you the vision of Divinity. They are only pointers to the existence of Divinity. When you look from a distance, you

say that the pole star is on top of a particular tree, but in reality, the pole star is not located there. The tree is just an indicator of the position of the pole star, which is millions of miles away. Likewise, the scriptures, epics, and mythological texts (Vedas, Sastras, Itihasas, and Puranas) are only pointers to the existence of Divinity but they cannot give direct experience of divine principle.

When you see a dense forest, a mighty mountain, a flowing river your heart is filled with bliss. All these demonstrate the mighty power of God. The stars shine in the sky, the planets revolve in their respective orbits, the sun gives light, and the wind blows - all these are indicators of Divinity.

When you recognise the nature of the spark of fire, you will know the nature of fire. When you know the nature of a drop of water, you will know the nature of the entire Ganga. Likewise, when you understand even a fraction of the principle of Nature, you will understand the infinite Divinity. That is why the Upanishads have declared in this context that "Brahman is subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the vastest (Anoraneeyan mahato maheeyan)." Humanity is essentially the embodiment of allpowerful Divinity. It is Divinity that shines brilliantly in everyone. But people are not able to understand their innate Divinity because of their body attachment. You should consider everything as divine in this world and conduct a search for truth (sathyanveshana). What is meant by the search for truth? Where does truth exist? Where is the need to search for truth, which is everywhere? However, there is something called fact (nijamu), which is different from truth. For example, we say that the sun rises in the east and sets in the west every day. Here you have to conduct a search for truth (sathyanveshana), whether it is a fact or the truth.

When you go by your daily experience, it is a fact the sun rises in the east and sets in the west everyday. But when you investigate deeply, you will know that it is not the truth. The sun is stationary and does not move. It is because the earth rotates on its axis that you see the sunrise and sunset everyday. This investigation is called sathyanveshana.

The sun does not move; it is we on earth who move, and as a result we experience the phenomenon of sunrise and sunset. In the same manner, you should make efforts to search for Divinity in humanity. In what way can we know the Divinity innate in a person? It is in this context that the Upanishads exhort, "Know thyself." A pure human heart is the abode of God When someone asks you who you are, what answer can you give? If you say that you belong to such and such country, such and such community, and that you are the son of so and so, does it amount to knowing yourself? This is not the correct answer. Knowing yourself amounts to realising your true Self, which is beyond the body, the mind, the intellect, the mind-stuff (chitta), and the ego (ahamkara).

It is in this reference that the Vedanta teaches the principle of "not this, not this (neti, neti)". The body, the mind, the intellect, the mind-stuff, and the senses - all these are mere instruments. You are the Divinity, which is beyond all these. It is Divinity that is responsible for their functioning.

However, when you start conducting such enquiry into truth, you may have to face many difficulties, troubles and ordeals.

When the demons and gods churned the ocean of milk, the first thing to emerge from the process of churning was deadly poison. It was only after this that the precious treasures like the wish-fulfilling cow (kamadhenu), celestial elephant (airavat), and the goddess of wealth, Lakshmi, manifested one after the other. The divine ambrosia also emerged only after the emergence of poison.

Likewise, when you churn your heart, which is like the ocean of milk (ksheer sagar), using wisdom (jnana) as the churning rod, initially you may have to face difficulties, but when you continue the process with determination, precious qualities like compassion, forbearance, empathy, and love will manifest from it.

The human heart is pure, like the ocean of milk. But today it has become impure because of the presence of sea monsters like desire, anger, delusion,

greed, pride and jealousy (kama, krodha, moha, lobha, mada, and matsarya) in it. The human heart is the repository of sacred qualities and hence is compared to the ocean of milk. That is why Saint Thyagaraja sang, "Oh the One reclining on the ocean of milk, please look after me Ksheera sagara sayana nannelu)." God is described as the one reclining on the ocean of milk. It means that He dwells in the pure heart of a person. That is His true abode.

Atma is the source of bliss

On receiving complaints from the cowherd maidens (gopikas) that Krishna was stealing butter from their houses, mother Yashoda chided Him, saying, "Don't we have food at home? Don't we have butter and milk at home? Why do You steal butter from gopikas houses"?

On another day, a gopika came and complained to her that Krishna was eating mud. Mother Yashoda caught little Krishna by His ear and said, "Does the butter made by me not taste good to You? Why do You eat mud outside"?

Krishna smilingly replied, "Mother, am I a child, amIhungryoramImad?WhywouldIeat mud"? The words of God are full of mystery and have deep inner meaning. By His reply, child Krishna conveyed to His mother in an indirect manner that He was not a child but God Himself. God always teaches in an indirect manner.

Since people are always immersed in worldly life, worldly tendencies (vasanas) and worries, it is not possible for them to understand teachings relating to the transcendental principle when they are conveyed directly. A person's life is centred around worldliness (pravritti) whereas God's acts are related to spirituality (nivritti). To understand the principle of spirituality, one should transform oneself and take to the path that leads to spirituality. One should know how to conduct oneself in accordance with the time, place and circumstances. Adi Sankara said:

One Whose Mind Is Fixed In Brahman Is Always In Bliss,

Whether Engaged In Yoga (Spirituality) Or Bhoga (Worldly Pleasures), In Solitude Or Company.
Yoga Ratova, Bhoga Ratova, Sanga Ratova, Sanga Viheena. Yasya Brahmani Ramate Chittam, Nandati, Nandati, Nanditi Yeva.
(Sanskrit Verse)

Can the yogis attain Divinity just because they lead a very simple and austere life? Can the bhogis (those who seek worldly pleasures) attain Divinity just because they enjoy all pleasures and comforts? One can attain divine bliss only by offering everything to God and developing firm faith that God dwells in one's heart. One cannot derive bliss from people or material possessions or worldly endeavours. Atma is the only source of bliss. A person by very nature is a seeker of bliss, a repository of bliss, and the very embodiment of bliss. Then what is the reason for one's misery? Body attachment is the main cause for this.

You cannot leave your body and go somewhere else. You need not give up your worldly duties and responsibilities. You may continue to perform all your duties living in society - but never leave God.

There is no point in having any amount of wealth if you lack love for God in your heart. Your true wealth and property is God's love and God's love alone. What is the use of a person's existence in this world if they do not become the recipient of God's love? Worldly love is temporary like passing clouds. It comes in a moment and goes in the next moment. God's love alone is permanent, and it confers permanent bliss. Make yourself deserving of such divine love.

The Gopikas, the cowherd maidens and all the people of Repalle became recipients of such divine love. But many people criticised the divine plays (leelas) of Krishna due to their perverted thinking.

Krishna lived in Repalle only up to the age of seven years. It is meaningless to say that such a small child of seven years indulged in acts that were against

the norms of society. After going to Mathura at the age of seven, He never returned to Repalle.

Unable to understand the sacredness of divine acts, people attribute their own feelings to God and become distant from Him due to their misunderstanding. As the feelings, so is the result (Yad bhavam tad bhavati).

First of all, recognise what is true Divinity. The Consciousness (chaitanya) present in everyone is true Divinity. You should understand the nature of this consciousness.

There are so many people sitting in this hall. There are people here, this denotes 'being'. It is the light that makes us aware of their presence. Existence is denoted by sat, awareness is denoted by chit. When sat and chit come together, bliss (ananda) results. Therefore, sat, chit, ananda denote our true nature. They are all within us.

That all-pervasive God is present within and without (Antarbahischa tatsarvam vyapya Narayana sthita). The same Divinity is present inside and outside. When you understand this truth, you will experience bliss. People think they know the nature of Divinity, but actually they do not know anything. What is the reason? The reason is that they have no experience of Divinity.

The world is an illusion

Once upon a time, a man not able to support his family left his house without informing anybody. After earning money by doing some odd jobs for some time, he decided to return home. When he left his house, he had a son who was very much attached to him. After his father left the house, the child died as he was unable to bear the pangs of separation from his father. As the father was returning home, all of a sudden, there was a heavy downpour with lightning and thunder and it also became dark. He thought it was not safe to travel in such a situation. He took shelter in a inn in a nearby village for the

night.

As soon as he fell asleep, he had a dream. He saw that he had become a king served by many servants, and he was seated on a golden throne. He also dreamt that he had six sons dressed in princely costumes. He saw that he had a royal bed on which he could recline without any worries whatsoever.

Meanwhile, his dream was broken by a loud thunder. He at once got up and looked around. He thought, alas, what happened to the royal bed? Till now I was a king; where has my throne gone now? What happened to all my servants who were attending on me? And where have my six children gone? Now he was in a state of despair, as he realised that it was all a mere dream.

Next morning, he got up and returned home. Seeing her husband, his wife started crying bitterly. On the one hand, she was happy to see her husband return home, but on the other hand, she was grief-stricken at the loss of their only son. When he asked his wife where their son was, she told him that he had died. On hearing this, he was shocked and stood there like a rock, without showing any emotion. His wife asked him why he was not showing any signs of sorrow on the death of their son, to whom he was so much attached.

He replied, "Oh foolish woman! Last night while sleeping in the inn, I had a dream in which I was a king served by a number of servants, and I was reclining on a royal bed. I had six sons dressed as princes. But now I have lost those six sons. Whom should I cry for now? Should I cry at the loss of those six sons or should I cry at the loss of our one son? They were my sons in the dream and he was my son in the waking state. There is no dream in the waking state and there is no waking state in the dream, but I am present in both. Therefore, I am the only reality, and everything else is mere illusion. I am omnipresent, all other things are passing clouds".

He realised that this world was just an illusion.

How to experience true happiness

In order to experience true happiness, three things are necessary. First and foremost, one should know what one is supposed to know. Secondly, one should give up what one is supposed to give up. Finally, one should reach where one has to reach. Only then can one experience true happiness.

Develop firm faith in God

What is a person supposed to know? One should enquire: What is the nature of this world? How long is my stay here? What am I experiencing here?

You see many people taking birth and many others leaving this world in front of your eyes. As the name ja-gat (to come and go) indicates, everything comes and goes in this jagat (world). Once you recognise the transient nature of this world, you will experience happiness. This is what you are supposed to know. This is the way of the world.

Then what are you supposed to give up? illusion (bhranti). In your illusion, you consider unreal things to be real and experience sorrow in trying to cling to them. On top of that, you think that illusion (maya) and sorrow have taken you in their grip and are not going to leave.

Does sorrow have hands, feet, eyes, nose, etc? Only you have these limbs. Therefore, it is you who have caught hold of sorrow and not the other way round. Sorrow has no hands to catch you. But you imagine that you are in the grip of sorrow, which is the cause of your suffering. This is ignorance, and this is what you are supposed to give up. Only then can you experience true happiness.

Lastly, where are you supposed to reach? You should reach where you have come from. It is but natural for all living beings to go back to their source of origin. You have come from the Atma; you have to go back to the Atma. There lies the real happiness.

The same is stated in the vedic prayer: Lead me from unreality to reality, from darkness to light, from death to immortality (Asatoma sadgamaya, tamasoma jyotirgamaya, mrityorma amritamgamaya). It is a prayer to God to lead the seeker from untruth to truth. Untruth follows truth like its shadow. Tamasoma jyotirgamaya.

What is light and what is darkness? There is only one thing: light. When you don't see light, you experience darkness. Light and darkness do not exist separately. The absence of light is darkness. You can attain happiness when you realise this.

From death to immortality (mrityorma amritamgamaya. What is it that has birth and death? It is only the body, not you. You have no birth and no death. That which is born is bound to die. Therefore, birth and death are related to the body and not to the Atma. The Atma alone is true, eternal, and immortal. When you realise this truth, you can experience real happiness.

Every day you recite this vedic prayer, but you do not try to know what you are supposed to know. Hence, you should know what you are supposed to know, give up what you are supposed to give up, and reach where you have to reach. Only then can you experience real happiness. Until then, the happiness that you experience is only temporary and not permanent.

The state of permanent happiness is termed as immortality. This state of happiness is described by the Vedas as attributeless, unsullied, final abode, eternal, pure, enlightened, free, and embodiment of sacredness (nirgunam, niranjanam, sanathana niketanam, nitya, suddha, buddha, mukta, nirmala swarupinam). Develop firm faith in God to experience true and eternal happiness.

Avatars come to demonstrate great ideals

Where was Krishna born, and what was His property? He was born in a prison, brought up in the house of Nanda, and lived in Mathura. But He attained great

name and fame in the world, because He never considered worldly wealth as real. Worldly wealth is temporary and, in fact, it is no wealth at all. Bliss was Krishna's real wealth, and He was always blissful.

Here, you should understand the difference between the two Avatars, Rama and Krishna. Krishna performed everything always in a state of happiness, whereas Rama derived happiness from the work He performed. Rama battled with the enemy after being provoked, whereas Krishna Himself would provoke the enemy and fight with him. Both Avatars acted according to the need of the times. Krishna signified bliss, whereas Rama symbolised responsibility.

Rama incarnated to demonstrate the matchless power of truth and righteousness to the entire world. Rama + ayana is Ramayana, meaning Ramayana is the story of Rama's earthly sojourn.

The principle of Krishna was different from this in the sense that He was a world teacher. He never desired anything for Himself, nor was He attached to anything. He offered all that He had to His people. He killed His maternal uncle Kamsa, but did not take his kingdom. He gave it to Kamsa's father, Ugrasena. Likewise, He took the side of the Pandavas, defeated the Kauravas, and anointed Dharmaraja as the king.

Krishna never aspired to become king. He was the king without a crown. He was the king of kings and lord of lords without any kingdom. In fact, He was the emperor of the hearts of everyone. This is the truth demonstrated by the Krishna principle. When you enquire deeply, you will understand that every Avatar comes to demonstrate an ideal.

Krishna stole the pure hearts of the cowherd maidens

Krishna always uttered truth, even when He spoke something in fun. He never uttered a lie even in a lighter vein. But those who do not understand the import of Krishna's words think that He indulged in untruth. In every age (yuga) and during the time of every Avatar, some people are afflicted with

this type of malady.

Once, the cowherd maids (gopikas) came to Mother Yashoda and complained:

Mother, Your Krishna Came To The Top Of Our Terrace In The Middle Of The Night And
Tied The Plaits Of Our Hair When We Were Fast Asleep.
Ask Him, Oh Mother, Ask Him.
Then Yashoda Asked Krishna:
(Telugu Song)
What Work Do You Have In Others' Houses At Midnight?
It Seems You Tied The Plaits Of Their Hair And Came Back Running.
I Am Not Going To Leave You Now.
(Telugu Song)
Krishna Replied With A Smile:
Mother, Was I Not Lying By Your Side Without Moving Anywhere At Night?
When Did I Go And When Did I Come Back? You Yourself Tell Me.
(Telugu Song)

What Krishna meant to convey was. "I am here, there, and everywhere, wherever you look." He demonstrated such supreme truths by His divine sports.

Another group of gopikas once came and complained to Mother Yashoda:

Oh Mother, When We Were Carrying Pots Of Buttermilk For Sale,
Krishna Accosted Us And Asked Us To Pay Tax.
Then He Hit The Pots Making Holes In Them. Oh Mother, Ask Him!
(Telugu Song)
Krishna Said To Mother Yashoda:
They Wanted To Offer Those Pots Of Buttermilk To God,
And God Himself Came And Made Holes In Them
But Unknowingly, They Are Pushing The Blame On Me.
I Don't Know Anything About It; I Am Innocent.

(Telugu Song)

Here, Krishna conveyed to Yashoda indirectly that He is God Himself. He was trying to explain to His mother in a way she could understand His Divine nature.

Many a time, Krishna would steal milk and butter from the houses of cowhered maidens (gopikas) and would run away when they tried to catch Him. What do the milk and butter symbolise? Butter and milk are white in colour, which symbolises purity. Therefore, Krishna accepted the pure and sublime (sathwic) feelings of the gopikas.

Once Mother Yashoda chided little Krishna:

Oh Krishna! You Do Not Eat What I Serve You At Home.
But You Go To The Houses Of The Gopikas And Steal Their Butter.
Oh Dear Krishna! It Spoils Our Good Name.
(Telugu Poem)

She complained, "Oh Krishna! You are such a small child, but You are creating such a great commotion in the entire village by Your mischievous acts. Doesn't the butter prepared at home taste good to You? Is the butter in the houses of the gopikas so tasty to You?" When Yashoda chided Him in this manner, Krishna said to her, "The hearts of the gopikas are pure,

sacred, and without any trace of selfishness. But there is an element of selfishness in your motherly love toward Me. Therefore, I am not interested in the butter you prepare at home. I am stealing from the houses of the gopikas not butter but their pure and selfless hearts. I steal the hearts of those who are pure and totally devoid of selfishness".

That is why devotees praise Krishna singing the song, Chitta chora Yashoda ke bal navaneeta Chora Gopal (Oh Krishna, the son of mother Yashoda, You

are the stealer of butter and the hearts of devotees). People think Krishna stole butter but, in fact, He stole the pure hearts of the gopikas.

What Is The Point In Offering Worship To The Lord If The Heart Is Not Pure?
Without Inner Purity, What Is The Point In Following Ritualistic Practices?
What Is The Point In Cooking Delicious Items In A Vessel That Is Not Clean?
The Word Of Sai Is Verily The Truth.
(Telugu Poem)

Krishna's leelas reveal His Divinity

If you chant the Name of Rama even once with purity of heart, He will at once respond. He alone can bestow on you real happiness.

Purandaradasa said, "Rama and Yama (god of death) are not different from each other. Both are one and the same." The same Rama appeared as Yama to the wicked Ravana and as God to the pious Vibhishana, who totally surrendered to Him. He appeared as Rama or Yama based on the feelings of the respective individuals.

The same Krishna appeared as God to Ugrasena, who had faith in Him, and as Yama to wicked Kamsa, who considered Him to be his enemy. Similarly, He became Yama to Hiranyakasipu, who hated God, and appeared as Narayana to Prahlada, who contemplated on Him all the time.

Once, the cowherd maidens (gopikas) became tired of Krishna's mischievous pranks. In spite of their best efforts, they could not catch Him. Therefore, one day Krishna thought: "The poor gopikas are pure-hearted; they are innocent and totally devoid of selfishness. It is not proper on My part to escape from them whenever they try to catch Me. I am the servant of devotees (bhakta paradhina), and I should not put My devotees to hardship. This time, I will let them catch Me." He devised a plan by which gopikas could know His whereabouts and catch Him. Sensing that Krishna was in the house of a

particular gopika, all others stood like soldiers around the compound wall so that He could not escape from them. What did Krishna do? He poured down all the milk from a pot hung to the ceiling, dipped His tiny feet in it, and ran away when the gopikas came to catch Him. The gopikas followed His footprints and caught Him.

There was a message for the gopikas in this episode. Krishna conveyed, "Follow in My footsteps, and you will be able to attain Me." Many such incidents in the Bhagavatha convey a profound message to devotees, but they appear to be mere pranks to those who consider them so. Opinions vary from person to person (Munde munde mathir bhinnah). When heads are different, thoughts also vary.

The Bhagavatha is nothing but the story of the Lord. The divine pranks of Krishna are the basis of understanding His Divinity. All these stories of Lord Krishna demonstrate great ideals. They cannot be made a subject of ridicule, as some people have a tendency to do.

Radha pined for Krishna endlessly. Krishna churned her heart with the churning rod of spiritual wisdom (jnana) and granted her the precious jewel of devotion. She considered Krishna as her only refuge and never relied on her kith and kin.

I Have No Refuge Other Than You.
Oh Krishna, I Am Carrying On This Burden Of Life Only For Your Sake.
My Mind Becomes Restless If I Don't See Your Smiling Face.
At Least Appear To Me In My Dreams. I Cannot Live Without You Even For A Moment.
(Telugu Song)

God is ready to grant anything the devotee asks for. In fact, He is ready to give Himself. You cannot find such supreme spirit of sacrifice in your friends, relatives, or anyone for that matter in this world.

Radha had become completely weak and was about to breathe her last. At that moment, Krishna appeared before her and asked, "What is your last wish?" Radha replied, "Krishna, I don't want anything. My only wish is to listen to the melody of Your flute for one last time".

Oh Krishna!
Sing A Sweet Song And Fill My Heart With Nectarine Words And Bliss.
Distil The Essence Of The Vedas, Transform It Into Divine Music,
Play It On Your Enchanting Flute, And Captivate Me With Your Melody.
Sing, Oh Krishna! Sing For Me!
(Telugu Song)

The human body is a flute with nine holes. Radha prayed to Krishna to make the essence of the Vedas flow through this 'flute'. Accordingly, Krishna played a sweet song on His flute, listening to which Radha gave up her mortal coil. Then and there, Krishna left His flute for good. From that day, He never touched it again as a gesture of Radha's great devotion toward Him.

The devotion of gopikas is worth emulating

Once, Rukmini invited Radha to her house. On receiving the invitation, Radha at once came to her house. Those days idli, dosa, cakes, etc., were not known as they are today. People would offer milk or curd to guests. In her exuberance of happiness, Rukmini offered her hot boiling milk in a glass. Radha used to offer everything to Krishna before partaking of it. She said, "I offer it to Krishna (Krishnarpanam) and gulped the boiling hot milk.

In the evening, when Krishna came to Rukmini, she performed His Padaseva (pressing His feet), and she was shocked to notice blisters on His feet. She asked, "Oh Lord! What has happened? Who caused blisters on Your feet"?

Krishna replied, "It is your own doing. When Radha came to you in the morning, you offered her hot boiling milk without bothering to check whether

it was fit for drinking. She offered that milk to Me before drinking. Therefore, these blisters have come on My feet".

Some people think that these are mere stories (kathas). They are not mere stories but divine sports, which are meant to remove the sufferings (vyathas) of people.

All the divine sports (leelas) of Krishna are meant to remove the sufferings of people. He utilised all His divine powers only for the sake of devotees. When you try to understand the significance of the sacred Bhagavatha, you will realise the supreme power of Divinity.

The cowherd maidens (gopikas) led their lives in constant contemplation of Krishna while discharging their worldly duties. They had no formal education and no degrees. They neither went to a university nor studied any Upanishads. The Name of Krishna was the only Upanishad and scripture (sastra) they knew. The Name Gopala (a name for Krishna) was the only Veda they studied. In this manner, they sanctified their lives in the constant contemplation of Krishna. They also enjoyed all types of worldly happiness.

The gopikas were united in their love for and devotion to Krishna. All devotees should emulate them in this regard and give up all differences based on caste, race, and religion. What is the caste of the five elements, which are present in us? What is the caste of fire, wind, ether, water and earth? There was a great spirit of unity among the gopikas. Where there is unity, there is purity. When unity and purity come together, divinity manifests.

Suguna had the vision of Krishna

People in the village Gokul lighted their oil lamps from the lamp in Nanda's house. They believed that they would attain plenty and prosperity if they lighted their lamps from the lamps lit in the houses of prosperous people. One day, a newlymarried cowherd maiden (gopika) by name Suguna arrived in that village. She desperately wanted to see Krishna, having heard so much

about His divine plays (leelas). But she could not express her feelings to either her husband or her in-laws.

Her mother-in-law commanded her not to go to the house of Yashoda lest she should see Krishna and become His devotee. But, in fact, no one has the right to prevent anyone from having the vision of God. Every day, the mother-in-law herself would go to the house of Yashoda to light the lamp.

One day, as she had developed high fever, she was left with no choice but to send Suguna to Yashoda's house to light the lamp. Suguna was overjoyed, thinking that she had a chance to see Krishna at last. In that feeling of extreme happiness, she forgot herself as she entered Yashoda's house. As she lighted her lamp from the lamp kept in Yashoda's house, she could see Krishna in the flame. She was so much lost in the vision of Krishna that she did not realise that her hand was getting burnt.

In the meantime, other women from the neighbouring houses also came there to light their lamps. They were wonderstruck on witnessing this scene. They noticed that Suguna was not moving away from the flame even though her fingers were in contact with the flame.

Mother Yashoda also came running and asked her, "What is this? Don't you realise that your hand is getting burnt"?

But Suguna was not able to hear the words of Yashoda because her mind was totally focused on Krishna. Krishna was smiling at her, and she too was smiling at Him. Therefore, she did not feel any pain.

Later on, when the gopikas asked her about this incident, she told them, "I had the vision of Krishna in the flame. He smiled and made me also smile".

When they know something like this, will the women keep quiet? In a moment, this news spread in the entire village. Then gopikas joined together and sang a song describing the incident.

It Seems Suguna Had A Vision
Of Gopala In The House Of Nanda. She Saw Krishna In The Flame!
(Telugu Song)

The mother-in-law of Suguna also came to know about this incident. But Suguna was not worried. She was happy that she could have the vision of Krishna. It is not possible to describe the glory and grandeur of the divine sports (leelas) of Krishna. He was a woman among women, a man among men, a child among children, and an elder among elderly persons. That is why the Bhagavad Gita says, "With hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth, and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe (Sarvatah panipadam tat sarvathokshi siromukham, sarvatah srutimalloke sarvamavruthya tishthati)." He resides in the hearts of everyone.

Therefore, never observe differences with regard to Divinity based on name and form. God is one without a second (Ekameva adviteeyam Brahma). You may call Him by any name, Allah, Jesus, Zoroastra, Buddha, Rama, or Krishna, etc. Don't observe any differences whatsoever. There is only one religion, the religion of humanness. There may be something wrong with mathi (mind) but not with matham (religion). Therefore, set right your minds. Do not give scope to conflicts and hatred based on religious differences.

Students!

You should propagate the principle of oneness to the entire world. Never give scope to differences. This is the real education you have to acquire. Only students have the capacity to revive the ancient culture of Bharat by adhering to the path of devotion and surrender.

Swami's word is Swami

There is another important subject I want to tell you. Devotees coming to Prasanthi Nilayam are increasing in number day by day. Since they are happy

having My darshan, I am also very happy spending My time with them. Since I am busy with My devotees, I have no free time. Therefore, it will not be possible for Me to perform marriages in Prasanthi Nilayam. Those who want to get married can happily do so wherever it is convenient for them and come here. I will happily bless them.

However, I will continue to perform mass marriages and mass Upanayanams (thread ceremonies). Swami's love is always with you wherever you are. But from now onward, I will not perform marriages either in the interview room or anywhere else. If anyone wants to get married, he can do so in the Kalyana Mandapam. I have no objection to that. Get married and come to Me; I will bless you with all love. Lead an ideal married life by serving the country and propagating the principle of oneness. Today is Krishna's Birthday (Gokulashtami). But what is birthday for God? This is only the birthday of the physical form. Do not give importance to birthdays; instead give importance to the teachings and ideals of Krishna. Krishna is not different from His teachings.

Krishna is Gita, Gita is Krishna. Likewise, Swami is not different from His teachings. Swami's word is Swami.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Govinda Krishna Jai ....")

41. The power that draws devotees

Date: 05 September 1996

The Unwise Man Thinks About The External World;
The Man Of Wisdom Contemplates On Vishnu;
The Former Becomes A Worldy Man;
The Other Realises The Divine,
Hearken! Oh Valiant Sons Of Bharath.

EMBODIMENTS of Love! Man, although he is inherently the embodiment of Sath-Chith Anandha (Being-Awareness and Bliss), unaware of this truth, seeks this bliss in the phenomenal world. This is because he considers the physical world as the ultimate reality and forgets his own true Divine nature. This is a mark of his Ajnana (ignorance). When one's vision is turned Godward, this ignorance disappears.

Many persons yearn for God, worship God or contemplate on God. God cannot be realised by any of these means. All these activities are based on separating themselves from God. What is needed is a sense of oneness. How is this to be obtained? When you cultivate the feeling: "I and you are one." This oneness is beyond the grasp of the mind and the senses. It is only the Buddhi (Intellect) that can experience what is beyond the senses.

The message of Vedantha

There is no need for penance or japa or other austerities to realise oneness with the Divine. Love alone is enough. This is the message of Vedantha.

When Adhi Shankara set out on a tour of the country to propagate Adhvaitha, he met Mandana Mishra, a great Vedhik scholar. They wanted to have a philosophical debate. They had to choose a judge to declare who had won in the debate. Adhi Shankara, who was a thrikalajnani (one who knew the past,

present and the future), chose Mandana Mishra's wife, Ubhaya-bharathi, as the judge. She was a lady who could rise above personal attachments. The debate was held and Ubhaya-bharathi adjudged in favour of Shankara. She declared in unqualified terms that Mandana Mishra had lost in the debate. Immediately the verdict was declared, Mandana Mishra took to sanyasa. Thereafter, Ubhaya-bharathi also, as Mandana Mishra's better half, followed suit and became a renunciant.

Ubhaya-bharathi established an ashram of her own to which only women were admitted as disciples. One day she was going with some of her disciples to the river Ganga for a bath. On the way she saw an ochre-robed sadhu resting under a tree with his head on a Kamandalam (a vessel used for keeping water). He was a renunciant only in external vesture but not a whole hearted renunciant. He kept the gourd water container under his head lest some one should take it away when he fell asleep.

A lesson for the sadhu

To teach the sadhu a lesson in genuine renunciation, Ubhaya-bharathi spoke loudly to her disciples: "Ladies! Look at the man's renunciation! He has not given up his attachment to his worthless Kamandalam and is concerned about its safety." On hearing her words, the byragi (renunciant) got angry. When Ubhaya-bharathi was returning from the river, he ostentatiously cast off the gourd-bottle. Ubhayabharathi then exclaimed: "What a pity? I thought the sadhu was only a victim of Abhimana (attachment). I find that he is also filled with Ahamkara (egoism). If he was not so egoistic would he have thrown his Kamandalam at me?" She stood before the sadhu, and told him: "Your egoism is growing along with your attachment. This does not befit the robe you are wearing. You cannot be a real renunciant as long as you are filled with attachment and egoism. Give up attachment to the body and develop attachment to the Atma" She taught this lesson in a quiet and convincing manner.

In the sphere of wisdom, there are no distinctions of sex, or creed. Hearing

Ubhaya-bharathi's words, the sadhu came running, fell at her feet and sought her forgiveness. He said: "Oh Mother! Because I had no one to teach me the truth in this manner, I was leading this double life. From now on, you are my guru.

The Lord's grace

In human life, many pursue different forms of spiritual exercises.

Whatever Ochre Robe They May Don,
Whatever Sacred Garland They May Wear,
However Fast They May Roll The Beads,
Finally They Have To Come To Baba.
His Grace Is Essential
For Anyone Of Any Eminence.
Only His Grace Can Redeem You. (Telugu Poem)

So many are engaged in formal spiritual practices of various kinds. But of what use are they to win the grace of the Divine? Are you searching for the path that will help you to earn God's love? When you earnestly search within, you will get the answer.

Among the nine forms of devotion, the foremost is the cultivation of the sakhya (friendship) of God. Friendship is followed by total surrender to the Divine.

A great devotee once lamented that all his limbs and organs were utterly useless unless each of them was used to serve the Divine, to see the Divine or to listen to the glories of the Divine. The same feeling was expressed by saint Suurdhas when he said that the gift of eyesight was of no value if the eye did not see the beauteous form of the Dime. Those with ears who would not listen to the songs in praise of the lord might as well be as deaf. (Swami sang a number of songs which deplored the pitiable plight of those who did not use their God-given organs for experiencing the Divine). True humanness

consists in using all one's senses and limbs for sacred purposes and not misusing them in various ways.

The man of faith need not worry about who will take care of him if he devotes all his time to thoughts of the Divine. The Lord who is the universal provider will take care of his devotees. This faith in the Lord was emphatically proclaimed by Purandharadhasa in his songs.

Recognise the miraculous powers of the Divine

How many realise the wonders in God's creation? There is a chick inside the egg. A huge tree comes out of a small seed. A human being is born from a human being. Who is responsible for all this? Only the Divine will. Without recognising these miraculous powers of the Divine, people make much of human achievements.

Look at what is happening here. What is it that makes people from Australia, Argentina and other countries come here? What is the power that draws them here? Without the power of the Divine, will they come here? Thyagaraja glorified the power of Rama in a song in which he extolled how Rama's Divine power enables Hanuman to leap over the ocean and how it induced Lakshmana and Bharatha to worship Him.

It is the same Divine magnetic power which is attracting people from all over the world to come to Bhagawan.

Once Rama desired to install a linga of Shiva while He was going to the south for the recovery of Seetha. He had asked Hanuman to bring a linga from the Himalayas within a stipulated time for performing the installation. As Hanuman did not come in time, Rama created a linga and performed the prathishta ceremony. Hanuman, who adored Rama more than any other deity, threw away the linga nonchalantly.

Later, while walking, Rama's foot hit against a stone in the ground. Rama

appeared as if he had lost his balance. Lakshmana asked Rama what had happened. Rama said that it was a small stone. Hanuman came forth and said that he would pull out the stone lest some one else should stumble on it. Rama was inwardly seeking to test Hanuman and teach him a lesson.

He remarked: "Hanuman! You are capable of carrying mountains. Why do you bother about this small pebble? I shall walk more carefully. It is no fault of the pebble." Hanuman, however, was determined to remove the pebble. It was a mark of his simian nature. He tried to remove the pebble with his left hand. He could not remove it. Later he used all his strength, but the pebble could not be removed. He was surprised and asked Rama: "Lord! What is this mystery?" Rama remarked: "Oh! It's nothing." He steeped forth and lifted the pebble with a toe and flung it afar. That pebble was in fact the linga which Hanuman had cast away.

An effulgence emerged from the linga and merged in Rama. And an effulgence from Rama entered the linga. Rama thereby wanted to demonstrate to Hanuman that there was no difference between Him and Shiva. He taught that both Vishnu and Shiva should be adored alike.

Today people have their own preferences regarding the deities they adore:Rama, Krishna, Shiva, Sai and so on. Why cherish such differences? God is one. Names and forms differ according to differences in taste. But the Divine is one alone. When you develop the feeling of spiritual oneness of all beings, you become one with the Divine.

Students! Do not consider God as distant from you. Do not also entertain the crazy notion that if you worship Him, He will appear before you. Offer yourself to Him and in a moment you will experience Him within you. There is no need for any other severe penance.

The Jnani says, "Sarvam Brahma mayam" (God is All); another, a Yogi, says all is Energy; a third, who is a Bhaktha says all is the play of Bhagawan. Each according to his taste and according to his progress in spiritual sadhana. Do not blame or ridicule them, for they are all pilgrims trudging along the same

road.

- Sathya Sai Baba

41. Turn Your Vision Toward God (Alternative Translation)

Date: 05 September 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This is the alternative translation of the discourse originally published in Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 29. This discourse appears in the Sathya Sai Speaks series but was retranslated and appeared in Sanathana Sarathi in two parts in February and March 2015.

One Devoid Of Wisdom Always Thinks Of The World, Whereas A Wise Man Always Thinks Of The Lord.
The Wise Man Attains The Lord, Whereas The Worldly Man Gets Mired In Worldliness.
Listen, Oh Valiant Sons Of Bharat!
(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Even though people are the embodiment of existence-knowledge-bliss (satchidananda), he is unable to realise this truth and searches for satchidananda in the external and physical world. What is the reason? The reason is that they all the time think of the world, run after worldly pleasures, and thereby forget their own true Self. They believe this world to be the reality and forget the Lord. This ignorance is the root cause of all their misery.

Realise your true nature

Even though people are verily the embodiment of the Divine, they identifiy with the world out of their foolishness. Due to this ignorance and lack of discrimination, people are forgetting their very humanness. In fact, existence-knowledge-bliss (satchidananda) is one's very nature and very form. Just as rice grain is covered by husk, water is covered by moss, and the sun is

covered by clouds, people's true nature of satchidananda is covered by the veil of ignorance.

Wherefrom has this ignorance originated? The moss that covers the water is born out of water, the clouds that cover the sun are born out of the sun. You see the rice grain when you remove the husk; you can see water when you brush aside the moss; when the clouds move away, you see the sun in the sky. Similarly, when the veil of ignorance is removed, one can realise one's true nature, that is, existence-knowledge-bliss.

What is this ignorance? The absence of spiritual knowledge (jnana) is ignorance (ajnana). In fact, knowledge and ignorance are not separate from each other. Without knowledge, there can be no ignorance. Ignorance always follows knowledge like a shadow. People today follow only the shadow but not the reality.

Here is an example that students can easily understand. When you face the sun as it rises in the east, your shadow will fall behind you. On the other hand, if you turn away from the sun and start walking toward the west, you will follow your shadow. No matter how much you try to overtake your shadow, your shadow will continue to move ahead of you.

Similarly, when you turn your vision toward God, who is the very embodiment of existence-knowledge-bliss, the shadow of ignorance will fall behind you and will not be visible to you. But you forget God and turn your vision toward the world. You follow the shadow of ignorance, which moves ahead of you.

That is why the Upanishads exhort people: Oh man! Get up! Be aware and awake! Go to noble men and learn from them the secret of attaining Divinity (Uthishta jagrata prapya varannibodhat). Oh people, you are in the deep slumber of ignorance. You don't know in which direction you are traveling. You don't understand on which you are reposing your faith. In fact, you forget the truth and believe the untruth.

Experience oneness with God

In the dream state, people believe all that they see in the dream and consider it to be true. A president or a prime minister may have a dream in which they see certain things that he do not understand. While in the dream state, they have no awareness that they are the president or prime minister and that they resides in a big bungalow. They may dream that they are moving in a forest or doing shopping in the bazar. As long as they are in the dream state, they consider all that to be true. Once awakened from the dream, they will remember that they are the president or prime minister.

Likewise, you are the embodiment of existenceknowledge-bliss. You are the president, you are the prime minister, you are the master of everything. Because you are overpowered by the sleep of ignorance, you see this world and consider yourself to be a member of society in this world.

But all this is a mere dream, which is born out of ignorance. In order to get rid of this ignorance, make efforts to attain wisdom (jnana). What is spiritual wisdom? Experience of non-dualism is wisdom (Advaita darshanam jnanam).

People want to attain God, contemplate on Him, and worship Him. But they do not realise that they cannot attain God by merely adopting these practices. As long as you contemplate on Him and desire for Him, it means God is different, you are different. You have to experience oneness with God to attain Him.

When is that possible? When you offer yourself to God completely, you become He and He becomes you. Then you realise "You and I are one." The same is stated by the profound aphorisms: That Thou Art (Thattwamasi) and I am Brahman (Aham Brahmasmi).

Only the one who offers himself to God completely can experience oneness with Him. Till such time, God is God and devotee remains a devotee. When you mix sugar in water, sugar dissolves in it and becomes one with it. Similarly, if you want to become God, offer yourself to God.

It is not possible to understand the principle of oneness so far as you have body consciousness.

The Atma is beyond the mind and the senses. The Atma is beyond the ken of senses and can be understood only by the intellect (Buddhigrahyamatheendriyam). Only when you transcend the mind and senses can you understand the principle of oneness.

This is a tumbler. Consider that there is fruit juice in this tumbler. In fact, there is only water in it. I don't have the habit of drinking fruit juice. I am saying this only to give you an example. Though the fruit juice is present in the tumbler, the tumbler does not know its taste. You put a straw in this and suck the juice into your mouth. Though the juice passes through the straw, the straw also does not enjoy its taste. Only when the juice reaches the tongue can you know its taste, whether it is sweet or sour.

Similarly, our body is a tumbler in which the sweet juice of Divinity is present, but the body is not aware of it. Senses are the straw through which we experience Divinity. But the senses also do not know the taste of Divinity.

Intellect is like the tongue, which experiences its taste. That is why Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, a great devotee of the Lord, extolled tongue in many ways.

Oh Tongue, The Knower Of Taste! You Are Very Sacred.
Speak The Truth In The Most Pleasing Manner.
Chant The Divine Names Of Govinda, Madhava And Damodara Incessantly.
This Is Your Foremost Duty.
(Sanskrit Verse)

Oh tongue, you are very sacred because you can experience the taste of divinity. You are not satisfied by tasting ordinary sweet juice. But there is one juice that is most sublime and sweet. That is the Name of the Lord. Therefore, chant Govinda, Damodara, Madhava. Its sweetness never changes or diminishes. It enters your heart and saturates your entire life with sweetness.

People today consider God to be different from themselves and worship Him. It is impossible to become one with God in this way even after many births and aeons (yugas). Just as water becomes one with milk, the devotee should become one with God.

There is no need to perform any spiritual practice like chanting and meditation (japa and dhyana), nor is there a need to read spiritual texts or go to a guru. It is possible to become one with God only through love. That which preaches this principle of love is Vedanta.

You may sing devotional songs (bhajans) for any number of years, but you cannot become one with God as long as you have the feeling that you are different from Him. You can only derive temporary satisfaction while doing bhajans. That's all.

God is the embodiment of divine essence (rasa). The human heart is always filled with that divine essence. This is the teaching of the Upanishads.

If you forget God, you become devoid of essence (neerasa). In order to get rid of your neerasa state, you have to take refuge in the embodiment of divine essence (rasa).

Wherefrom does neerasa originate? It originates from the feeling that you are different from God. The Divinity present in you is called conscience, which is nothing but the principle of Atma. You have to make efforts to understand this principle. Ego (ahamkara) and attachment (abhimana) are the two hurdles that prevent you from experiencing the divine essence present in you.

When Adi Sankara was on his victory march, he had a debate with Mandana Misra on the principles of Vedanta. Before the commencement of the debate, they had to appoint a judge to decide the winner. Sankara, being one who knows the past, present, (being trikala jnani), knew the right person to perform the duty of a judge. He said, "Mandana Misra, your wife, Ubhaya Bharati, is the right person to perform the role of a judge." See what great faith Sankara had in the nobility and ability of Ubhaya Bharati! Normally a

wife always takes the side of her husband. But Ubhaya Bharati was not such a person. She was totally impartial. She did not observe any differences like mine and thine. That is why Sankara chose her as the judge.

The debate went on for a long time and ultimately Mandana Misra was defeated. Ubhaya Bharati gave the judgment without any doubt or hesitation.

The moment Mandana Misra heard the judgement, he took to renunciation (sannyasa) without any delay in fulfilment of the condition of the debate. Ubhaya Bharati also followed suit, since she was the better half (ardhangini) of Mandana Misra.

As you can see here, the worldly path is different from the spiritual path. One is outward (pravritti) and the other is inward (nivritti). Ubhaya Bharati proved that outward and inward are inseparable and interdependent.

Once they took to renunciation (sannyasa), they started living separately. One day, Ubhaya Bharati was going along with her disciples to the river Ganga to take bath in the river. On the way, she observed a renunciant relaxing, keeping a dried bottle gourd under his head. He was using this for storing drinking water, so he was preserving it carefully.

Ubhaya Bharati saw this renunciant's attachment to the bottle gourd and said to her disciples, "Look! This man calls himself a renunciant, but he is attached to a bottle gourd, which he keeps under his head as a pillow." The renunciant heard this comment but did not say anything then.

While Ubhaya Bharati and her disciples were returning from the river, he threw away the bottle gourd in front of them in order to demonstrate that he was not attached to it. Observing his action, Ubhaya Bharati aptly remarked, "I thought there was only one defect in him: attachment (abhimana). Now I realise that he has another defect also: ego (ahamkara).

How can one with attachment and ego become one with spiritual wisdom (jnani) and a renunciant (sanyasi)?" Her comment was an eye-opener for the

renunciant. He expressed gratitude to Ubhaya Bharati for imparting true knowledge of renunciation to him.

There is no difference between man and woman with respect to the attainment of wisdom (jnana). Man and woman are different only in physical form, but there is no difference between them in the realm of knowledge. Similarly, there is no difference on the basis of caste, colour, and race.

That renunciant at once fell at the feet of Ubhaya Bharati and said, "Mother, since there is none to teach such profound truths, today renunciants do not understand what true spirituality is. Hence, from today onward, you are my guru." Today we find renunciants performing various types of spiritual practices. What is the use of performing such external practices without deserving divine grace and compassion? Can you attain divine grace by merely performing spiritual practices like repetition of chanting and meditation (japa and dhyana)? Are you in search of a path following which you become deserving of God's love? When you enquire on these lines, you will realise the truth at once.

One May Don Ochre Robes, Wear Garlands, And Chant With One's Beads, But Ultimately One Has To Seek Refuge In You, Become A Recipient Of Your Grace To Redeem One's Life.
One Cannot Move Your Heart And Win Your Love And Grace Merely By Chanting, Holdingone's Breath, Offering Salutations To You Repeatedly, Or Pleading With Shedding Tears.
(Telugu Poem)

People today perform various types of spiritual practices. However, in order to attain Divinity, first of all you have to develop friendship with God, who is changeless and immortal. I have told you many times about the nine forms of devotion: listening (sravanam), singing (kirtanam), contemplating on Vishnu (Vishnusmaranam), serving His Lotus Feet (Padasevanam), salutation (vandanam), worship (archanam), servitude (dasyam), friendship (sneham), and self-surrender (atmanivedanam). Friendship comes before total

surrender. Therefore, first of all, develop friendship with God.

Worldly friendship is temporary

Worldly friendship is no friendship at all. It is limited to hello, hello, how are you, and goodbye. As long as there is water in the tank, you find many frogs in it. When the water dries up, you don't find even a single frog there. When you have money in your pocket and your father has a high position as an M.L.A., M.P. or a minister, everyone will act like your friend. When there is no money in your pocket and your father is not in a high position any more, everyone will desert you without even saying goodbye.

Oliver Cromwell was a military commander in England. He was also an astute politician. He spent thousands of pounds on his friends. He also spent a lot of money to get the votes of people. But, ultimately, when his end came near, he started repenting, "Fie on me, I have misused my body, time, money, and energy. If only I had offered all these to God, how happy I would have been and what an exalted position I would have attained! This is my fate, after having spent so much money and effort." He took a vow if there was another life for him, he would never enter politics.

Sanctify your body by undertaking sacred activities

Once a devotee prayed, "Oh Lord! What for are these hands, which do not serve You?" He declared, "Oh Lord! I am without limbs (angaheena)." His disciples who were by his side wondered, "What is this? Is he out of his mind that he calls himself an angaheena when all his limbs are intact"?

The devotee explained, "Yes, I have hands, but I am unable to serve Him. I have eyes, but I am unable to see His beautiful form. I have ears, but I am unable to listen to the divine music of His flute and sweet words. I have legs, but I am unable to do circumambulation (pradakshina) and offer my salutations to Him. Instead I am roaming in the streets. Therefore, what is the

use of all my limbs? It is as good as I don't have them." Oh ears, you are interested in listening to vain gossip and tales about others, but you pay least attention when the wonderful stories of the Lord are narrated.

Oh Feet, You Keep Roaming Here And There Like Dogs Who Have No Work.
Is It That Difficult To Stand Before The Lord Even For A Minute?
(Telugu Song)

What is the use of all the limbs if they are not utilised to serve the Lord? The same truth was stated by Surdas when he said, "Though people have eyes, they have become blind since they are unable to visualise the most auspicious form of God." When Lord Krishna offered to restore his vision, he said, "Oh Lord! I don't want my eyesight back. Many have eyes, but are they able to see You?

People have ears, but they have become deaf since they are unable to listen to the sweet music of Your flute. Though they have the Lord right in front of their eyes, they crave for mundane pleasures." God is present in your heart, but you forget Him and run after worldly pleasures. For what are the eyes given to you? Are they meant to see anything and everything in this world? Saint Purandaradasa echoed the same feelings when he said, "Oh Rama! What for are the eyes that do not see You?" It is God who sustains all God has given you the physical body with various limbs not to misuse them or take to wrong path but to sanctify them by undertaking sacred activities. True humanness lies in understanding this truth and acting accordingly. When you offer your everything to God, He will take care of you in all respects.

Some people question, "Who will give me food if I spend all my time chanting Ram, Ram, Ram?" One who has planted the sapling, does He not water it too? If you sincerely and wholeheartedly think of Him, will He not look after you? Will one person become a burden to the One who provides sustenance to the entire creation? He will look after everything.

You find big trees growing on the top of hillocks. Who puts manure and water

for their growth? Who provides food to a frog that lives inside a boulder? It is God who does all these.

Samartha Ramdas was a great devotee of Lord Rama. Once, when Shivaji visited him, Ramdas broke a rock into two pieces, from which a frog came out right in front of Shivaji's eyes. Then he told Shivaji, "Oh Shivaji, don't pride yourself that you are the ruler of the kingdom and you are looking after everyone. Are you the one who provided food to this frog all along? It is God who does everything and looks after everyone in His creation." This incident was an eye-opener to Shivaji.

How wonderful are the colours of a peacock! Who painted it so beautifully? One may be a great painter, but no mortal can reproduce the original colours of a peacock on a canvas. Howsoever beautiful a painting you may do, the colours will look only artificial but not 'heartificial'. Who is the one who provided red beak to green parrot? What a perfect matching of colours is this! There is a bird in the egg, a giant tree is hidden in a tiny seed, human is born out of human. How great are the mysteries of God's creation! Which engineer designed the entire Nature? This is all the Will of God.

Saint Purandaradasa expressed the same truth in his song:

Who Gave The Wonderful Colours To The Feathers Of The Peacock?
Who Gave The Red Beak To The Green Parrot? Who Planted The Tree On The Mountaintop And Watered It?
Who Provides Food To Sustain The Tadpole In The Crevices Of A Rock?
God Is The Fundamental Basis Of All Creation.
(Kannada Song)

People don't understand such sacred divine power. On the other hand, they go on extolling the achievements of humanity, which are trivial when compared to the mighty power of God. Humanity's power is like a small pebble compared to the power of God, which is like a mountain.

One God is called by many names

When Rama and Lakshmana came to Rameswaram, Rama wanted to install a Siva Linga there so that when people came to Rameswaram, they would remember the Lord and chant His Name. He wanted to demonstrate that Siva and Vishnu are one and the same.

Rama taught this truth to Hanuman in a very subtle way. Hanuman had great love only for Rama Nama (repeating the name Rama) and nothing else. Rama asked Hanuman to go to the Himalayas and bring a Linga for installation at Rameswaram. God derives pleasure in making people do things that they don't like. Though Hanuman did not show any interest or enthusiasm to perform the task assigned to him, Rama commanded him, "Go at once and bring the Linga, since we have to perform the installation at a particular auspicious time for which not much time is left." Since he had no other choice, Hanuman went and brought the Linga.

One with steadfast faith attains wisdom (Sraddhavan labhate jnanam). When one has no faith, his wisdom will also desert him. Since Hanuman lacked faith in performing this task, he came ten minutes after the stipulated time of installation. Meanwhile, Rama made a Linga out of sand on the seashore and performed the installation at the auspicious time.

Hanuman was sorry that he could not bring the Linga on the auspicious time. He was quite upset and even questioned Rama's divine power. He thought, "Do I lack devotion, or is there no power in Rama?" He pulled out a strand of hair from his body and put it near his ear. He could hear the Name of Rama. Then he gave a certificate to himself, saying, "I have devotion, but there is no power in Rama".

You can see, sometimes even great devotees are carried away by the sense of ego.

Then Hanuman thought for a while and realised his folly. "How mistaken I am!

If really there is no divine power in Rama, would it be possible for me to cross the ocean? Could I have achieved such a stupendous task?" Once Thyagaraja also had a doubt about the power of Rama. Then he sang the song:

But For The Power Of Rama, Could A Mere Monkey Cross The Mighty Ocean?
Would Lakshmi Devi, The Goddess Of Wealth, Become His Consort?
Would Lakshmana Worship Him?
Would The Intelligent Bharata Offer His Salutations To Him?
But For The Mighty Power Of Rama, Would All This Happen?
Indeed, Rama's Power Is Beyond All Description.
(Telugu Poem)

"The entire world worships Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. Everyone prays for the grace of Lakshmi. If such most worshipped goddess of wealth in turn worships You, how great must be Your power! What an intelligent person Bharata is! Would he worship You for nothing? Therefore, oh Rama, Your power is unparalleled," said Thyagaraja.

Similarly, if there were no power in Sai, would people from various countries like Argentina, Australia, Germany, China, and Japan come to Him? We are not sending any invitation to anyone. This sacred Divinity attracts everyone.

Test is the taste of God

After the installation of the Linga at Rameswaram, one day Rama decided to test Hanuman. God always likes to test His devotees. Test is the taste of God.

As He was walking one day, Rama pretended to have tripped over a small stone. Lakshmana, who was walking behind, asked, "Brother, what happened?" Rama said, "Nothing, it is a small stone." Hanuman said, "I will uproot this stone and throw it away, lest someone should trip over it." Rama said, "Hanuman, you have carried huge mountains. This small stone is nothing before you. Therefore, leave it. It was My mistake. Next time, I will be

more careful while walking." But Hanuman was adamant to remove the stone. Monkey is known for its fickleness. That is its natural quality. Therefore, without paying heed to Rama, Hanuman tried to remove the stone with his left hand. But he was not able to move it. Then he tried with both hands, using all his power, but all in vain. Hanuman was extremely surprised. He said, "Rama, this must be Your divine play (leela)." Rama said, "Hanuman, you don't need to take that much trouble." Saying so, Rama pushed the stone with the little toe of His foot. The stone at once flew away to a great distance.

What was that stone? It was the Linga Hanuman had brought for installation. Instantly, a light emerged from the Linga and merged in Rama. Likewise, another light emerged from Rama and merged in the Linga, symbolising the oneness of Siva and Vishnu.

Siva rides on the bull, whereas Vishnu rides on the eagle. But both are one and the same. Rama exhorted Hanuman to realise the oneness and equality of both. Likewise, in the world today, some people have their chosen deity as Rama, Krishna, Easwara, and Sai Baba. But why observe such differences when God is one?

God is one (Ekam sath), the One willed to become many (Ekoham bahusyam). You may like any sweet like mysore pak, gulab jamoon, etc., but the sugar is same in all of them. Similarly, you attrib ute various names and forms to God to suit your taste.

But God is one. When you develop this principle of oneness, you become one with God.

Students!

Embodiments of divine Atma!

Never consider God as someone separate from you. Give up the idea that you can visualise Him merely by worshipping Him. Understand that you are He and He is you. Offer yourself to God completely. That is the easiest way to

attain Him. You don't need to make any special effort for this. Offer yourself to God. Then you will realise your true Self.

God is the only Master. There is no other master in the world. There are some who are called headmaster, stationmaster, postmaster, etc., but they are not real masters. There is only one Master, and He is God.

Therefore, contemplate on Him incessantly and attain Him. That is the truth. Truth is God. That is the real knowledge. Knowledge is infinite and God is infinite.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Sathyam Jnanam Anantam Brahma...".)

42. Hold on to the Fundamental Principle of Oneness (Alternative Translation)

Date: 06 September 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

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Pots Are Many, Clay Is One,
Jewels Are Many, Gold Is One,
Cows Are Many, Milk Is One,
Likewise, The Same Divinity Dwells In All Forms.
(Sanskrit Verse)

If you enquire deeply, you will find in this world that the same thing assumes different names and forms and is put to use in myriad ways. Seed is one, from which emerge the trunk, branches, subbranches, leaves, flowers, and fruits of the tree. All these have different names and forms and are put to use in different ways. The One willed to become many (Ekoham bahusyam). Though God is one, He assumes many names and forms.

God is the cause of the universe

Here you have to enquire into the two types of causes: one is the instrumental cause (nimitta karana) and the other is primary cause (upadana karana). For a pot, the potter is the instrumental cause and clay is the primary cause. Pots may break and lose their form, but the clay remains changeless. The potter makes different types of pots from the same clay. Even though the pots may be broken, the clay does not undergo any change.

Similarly, there are many types of ornaments, for which gold is the primary

cause and the goldsmith is the instrumental cause. You may change the ornaments into different names and forms, but gold remains the same.

But God, who is the primary cause of the universe, also assumes the role of the instrumental cause, the Creator, and creates objects and beings with different names and forms. Here, you have to understand the oneness of the instrumental cause and the primary cause.

If there is no potter, clay cannot be converted into pots. And the potter cannot make pots without clay. Therefore, both - potter and clay - are necessary for pots to be made.

For the entire universe, God is the primary cause, and He is also the creative force of the universe.

Your bodies are like different pots. You put your body to different uses and experience pleasure and pain. Just as the pot breaks when it falls down, the body also perishes when the time comes.

But God, who is both the instrumental cause and the primary cause, is permanent. The same pot, which is useful, becomes useless when it breaks. The same can be said about the human body.

Five names of God

Five names are attributed to God:

1. Para Nama (para means higher, beyond supreme; nama means name),
2. Vyuha Nama (vyuha: to arrange, dispose, separate, divide, resolve. Also refers to emanation and manifest power of Vishnu),
3. Vibhava Nama (vibhava: friend),
4. Antaratma Nama (antaratma: inner self),

5. Archana Nama (archana: worship).

With these five names, God performs various tasks in this world.

God dwells in Vaikuntha (heaven, the abode of Brahman). Therefore, the dweller of Vaikuntha is Para Nama. Vaikuntha is that which does not become deformed (kunthita). There, God dwells with Para Nama. Nobody has access to that place. None can enter Vaikuntha, where Divinity shines resplendently. From there, God sees and hears everything and creates everything, but He is neither seen nor heard by anyone. Nobody can see His form. This is the principle of Para Nama.

The second name of God is Vyuha Nama. It refers to the One who reclines on the serpent Adisesha in the ocean of milk. There, gods and goddesses can see Him, but ordinary mortals cannot. Here, God, with the attribute Vyuha Nama, fulfils the wishes of gods and goddesses.

You have seen this in dramas and movies. When the demon king Hiranyakasipu was causing untold suffering to people of all worlds, gods and goddesses went and prayed to Lord Narayana, who was reclining on Adisesha. He accepted their prayers and incarnated on earth to kill Hiranyakasipu. Therefore, you can understand that God with the attribute of Vyuha Nama is visible only to gods and goddesses.

The third type of name is Vibhava (friend) Nama. This is the name attributed to God when He incarnates in human form like Rama and Krishna for the protection of the world. When God comes down as an Avatar, He establishes an intimate relationship with the people of the world, destroys their wicked qualities and wicked thoughts, and puts them on the right path by developing devotion, noble thoughts, and good qualities in them. When God comes as an Avatar, He demonstrates the intimate relationship that exists between God and His devotees.

The fourth name is Antaratma (inner self) Nama. It refers to the consciousness, which pervades a person from top to toe and protects them.

The indwelling divinity (Antaratma) is in everyone.

The fifth type is Archana (Worship) Nama. Man worships God in this form to earn His grace through prayer, devotional singing (bhajan) with devotion and surrender.

Decline of dharma in the Kali Yuga

Since time immemorial, God has been incarnating on earth from age to age for the establishment of dharma. Students today may be surprised to know this. In fact, anyone will be struck with awe and wonder when they hear about the mighty power of the people of the Kritha Yuga (the first age of humanity). It really sounds incredible. In the Krihta Yuga, people used to live for hundreds of years. People used to be very tall and well built, not short statured, like people of today. Their hand itself was six feet long.

What was the life sustaining force of people of those days? The life principle was present in their bones. Therefore, people could remain alive even when they were reduced to a skeleton in the absence of food and water. Even if there was no flesh and no blood in the body, the life principle could remain in the bones.

In the Thretha Yuga (the second age of humanity), the height of people became comparatively less. Not only the height, even the longevity was reduced. People could be alive as long as there was flesh and blood in the body.

Then, in Dwapara Yuga (the third age of humanity), the life principle was present in the blood and people could remain alive as long as there was blood in the body. This can very well be understood by the example of Bhishma in the Mahabharata war. He was lying on the bed of arrows for 56 days till his entire blood got drained out from the body. There were no life support systems like oxygen cylinders those days. The life principle was in his blood, which slowly got drained out over a period of 56 days.

In this age of Kali (this, the fourth age of humanity), the life principle is present in food. People remain alive as long as they take food. Without food, the body becomes lifeless. Therefore, in this age of Kali, a person is called "one who is sustained by food "annagata prani)".

But in earlier ages, food was not important, connection with God was more important. In the Kritha and Thretha Yugas, people gave top priority to their relationship with God. But after the Dwapara Yuga started, people relied more on their head than on God. Try to understand this clearly.

In the Kritha and Thretha Yugas, people believed that righteousness is the basis of the entire world (Dharma moolam idam jagat). But in the Dwapara Yuga, people considered that wealth or money is the basis of the entire world (Dhana moolam idam jagat).

What was the cause of the war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas? The greed for wealth was so much that the Kauravas refused to give even five villages to the Pandavas as their share of the kingdom. Therefore, wealth was the cause of the Mahabharata war.

In this age of Kali (the age we are now in), you should realise that it is not money (dhana) that sustains the world but compassion (daya). Compassion is the basis of the entire world (Daya moolam idam jagat). But there is no trace of compassion in the heart today. Hri + Daya = Hridaya. That which is filled with compassion is the human heart. But due to the absence of compassion in the heart of people, they are facing many ordeals.

Avatars come to establish dharma

During the time when the teachings of Buddhism and Jainism were widely followed in India, Sankara was born in a small village named Kaladi in Kerala to a noble couple Aryamba and Sivaguru. What was the state of affairs at that time? Many small kingdoms were fighting with each other for worldly gains. As a result of these wars, people's minds were filled with hatred. Hatred led to

disunity, which in turn gave rise to improper conduct, falsehood, injustice, and wickedness. Not only that, Vedic scholars, intellectuals, and educated people started misinterpreting the teachings of the Vedas and scriptures (sastras). Therefore, people lost faith in the teachings of the Vedas and scriptures. Consequently, a need arose for a divine power to incarnate to set things right.

Lord Krishna declares in the Bhagavad Gita:

> Whenever Righteousness Is On The Decline And Unrighteousness Is On The Ascendance, I Incarnate On Earth.
> Yada Yada Hi Dharmasya Glanir Bhavati Bharata,
> Abhyutthanamadharmasya Tadatmanam Srujamyaham.
> (Sanskrit Verse)

When the practice of dharma (right conduct) declines, when injustice is on the rise, when people start acting contrary to the teachings of the Vedas and scriptures, either God Himself incarnates or He sends Amsavathars (partial manifestations of God), prophets, and noble souls to correct the situation.

When God incarnates with all His divine attributes, He is called Purnavathar (Full Avathar) or Vibhavavatar. The Archana (Worship) Nama refers to the names of partial manifestations (Amsavatars). Not only in India, but in all countries, such partial manifestations incarnate from time to time.

In the beginning, Jesus said, "I am the messenger of God." Gradually, he understood the principle of indweller. Then he declared, "I am the son of God." Being the son of God, he acquired all the attributes of God. Just as the son has complete right over his father's property, Jesus, being the son of God, acquired all the divine attributes. When he realised that the same Atmic principle is present in everyone, he declared, "I and my Father are one." The same was stated by Zoroaster. First he said, "I am in the light." He declared, God is in heaven and he is living in His light. Gradually, he understood that Divinity is present within him. Then he declared, "The light is in me." In the

beginning, he thought he was in the light. Then he realised the same light was within and the light outside was nothing but the reflection of the inner being. He believed that he was being guided by the light within. When he realised the oneness of the inner light and the outer light, he declared, "I am the light." As per Indian philosophy, these three stages are represented by dualism (dwaitha), qualified nondualism (visishtadwaitha), and non-dualism (adwaitha).

Sankara taught the principle of nondualism to the world

Sankara, who came to demonstrate the principle of non-dualism to the entire world, considered himself a servant of God. Unfortunately, his father Sivaguru passed away when Sankara was three years old. Ten days prior to his demise, Sivaguru had a vision of divine effulgence, which conveyed to him that he should perform the sacred thread investiture ceremony (upanayanam) of Sankara. Obeying the directions of the divine light, Sivaguru performed the upanayanam of Sankara at the age of three. After the upanayanam, Sankara started reciting the Gayatri Mantra.

After the death of his father, Sankara's mother, Aryamba, took up the complete responsibility for his upbringing and admitted him to a gurukul under the tutelage of a guru (preceptor).

Sankara was endowed with such a sharp intellect that before he attained his sixteenth year, he had mastered the four Vedas and six Sastras (six systems of philosophy). For ordinary mortals, it is not possible to study the four Vedas and six Sastras even in fifty years. But Sankara was a special boy; in fact, he was super special. He could understand and assimilate the teachings of all four Vedas and six Sastras. The Guru was wonderstruck at the intellectual acumen of his disciple.

One day, his mother approached the Guru and expressed her intention to perform the marriage of her son. But Sankara said he was not interested in marriage and that he wanted to take renunciation (sannyasa). He said, "I wish

to offer my body, mind and everything to God. In fact, nothing is mine, everything is given by God. Therefore, I want to offer myself to God". He was determined to become a renunciant (sannyasin).

Aryamba pleaded with him, shedding tears, that he should marry. It is but natural for a mother to wish her son to marry.

One day when his mother went to the river to fetch water, Sankara followed her, pleading, "Mother, give me permission to take renunciation". But she did not budge.

As she was filling her pot in the river, Sankara jumped into the river, and after some time, he raised his hand and yelled, "Mother, I am being swallowed by a crocodile. At least now, permit me to embrace renunciation." The mother at once said, "My dear, if taking to renunciation saves your life, so it be! It is enough for me, if you are alive". At once, the crocodile released its grip on Sankara and he came out of water. He told his mother, "I was being swallowed by the crocodile of worldliness. Once you permitted me to become a renunciant, giving up all worldly attachments, the crocodile of worldliness left me." Taking to renunciation does not mean merely putting on ochre robes; it means changing one's outlook toward life.

Sankara offered his salutations to his mother and left home at the age of sixteen. At that time, his mother extracted a promise from him that he would come to her at the time of her death and perform her last rites.

There were no buses, cars or planes to travel from one place to another in those days. Sankara traveled on foot and visited all the pilgrimage centres in the country. During his travels, he met many Vedic scholars and defeated them in debates and taught them the principle of nondualism (adwaitha). He told them, "You see diversity on the basis of external names and forms. Though forms are different and heads are different, heart is one and the same. That is Divinity." There may be many varieties of sugarcane, but the juice is the same in all of them. Similarly, Divinity is present in everyone in the form of divine essence. At that time, Mandana Misra was considered a

great scholar. He also became a disciple of Sankara when he was defeated in the debate with him. Sankara traveled widely and convinced all great scholars about the principle of oneness.

All religions teach the principle of unity

There is only one entity, not two. God is one without a second (Ekameva adviteeyam Brahma).

People are deluded by diversity of names and forms. They should hold on to the underlying principle of oneness. Nothing exists without this fundamental principle. It is not possible to make ornaments without gold, nor is it possible to make pots without clay. Likewise, there is only one fundamental principle for the entire creation. It is the same for people of all religions: Hindus, Christians, Mohammedans, or Sikhs.

Though the divine principle is one, people of different faiths call it by different names. God is one, goal is one. This principle of oneness needs to be taught to students. It is not so easy to understand the principle of nondualism (adwaitha). That is why today I have told in a nutshell what it means.

What is religion? Religion is that which removes all differences. In fact, it demonstrates unity in diversity.

Having established the principle of nondualism firmly in the hearts of people, Sankara left his body at a very early age of 32. What was the reason? The task for which he had come had been accomplished. He told his disciples to preserve this principle in their hearts and propagate the same. He established four centres of nondualism - Jagannath Mutt, Sringeri Mutt, Dwaraka Mutt, and Joshi Mutt - and put his four eminent disciples in charge of these monastic establishments (Mutts).

By establishing these Mutts and promoting the sense of spiritual oneness among the people, Adi Sankara promoted harmony in the country. He strived

to spread happiness everywhere by propagating the principle of nondualism and removing differences and unrest. None can dispute the principle of nondualism that Sankara propagated.

Later on, Ramanujacharya modified nondualism (adwaitha) and called it qualified nondualism (visishtadwaitha). Just as juice is the same in all types of sugarcane, the divine essence is the same in all beings. This was the principle of nondualism taught by Sankara.

But how long can one keep sugarcane juice? Sugarcane juice cannot remain as it is with the passage of time. But if the same sugarcane juice is converted into sugar, it becomes long lasting and can be added in any preparation. You may add it to wheat flour or rice flour or any flour for that matter; it gives sweetness. Anything that comes in contact with a sweet substance like sugar will acquire the property of sweetness.

Sugar is permanent and can be used in anything. Therefore, instead of preserving sugarcane juice as it is, it is better to convert it into sugar. This is the principle of qualified nondualism (visishtadwaitha) advocated by Ramanujacharya.

The third principle was dualism (dwaitha). This was advocated by Madhwacharya.

Sankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, and Madhwacharya are the exponents of three types of philosophy: nondualism, qualified nondualism, and dualism, respectively. But all three agreed on the fundamental principle of oneness.

Sankaracharya called it sugarcane juice. Ramanujacharya called it sugar.

Madhwacharya said, "If Divinity is like sugar, I don't want to become sugar; I want to be one who enjoys the sweetness of sugar. If I become sugar, how can I enjoy its taste?" Therefore, he prayed, "Oh Lord! You remain sugar always, but make me the one who enjoys Your sweetness." When can you become the one who enjoys the sweetness of Divinity? It is possible only

when you offer yourself to God completely. Till such time, you may perform any type of spiritual discipline like chanting (japa), penance (tapas), meditation (dhyana) and yoga, and you may study any number of sacred texts, but you will not attain the deservedness to enjoy the sweetness of divinity. All these spiritual practices give only temporary mental satisfaction. Since all these practices are performed with the help of the heart, offer your heart to God. This is what Madhwacharya taught:

Oh God, I Offer My Heart, Which You Have Given Me.
What Else Can I Offer At Your Lotus Feet? I Pray To You To Accept It.
(Telugu Poem)

One should know one's humanness to realise one's Divinity

When you say, "Oh God, I offer my heart to You," God says, "Here I give you the experience of the sweetness of Divinity." As are the feelings, so is the result (Yad bhavam tad bhavati). God is changeless. He will respond to you in accordance with your feelings.

What is the form of water? What is the form of air? They have no form of their own. God is also like that. Out of His immense love for His devotee, God assumes the form of His devotee's choice. Air assumes the form of a football when it is filled in a football and takes the form of a balloon when it is filled in a balloon. Similarly, water assumes the form of the container or the tank in which it is put. Likewise, God assumes the form upon which you contemplate. God has no preference for this form or that form.

All names and forms are but manifestations of the Supreme Being, who is ExistenceKnowledge-Bliss Absolute and nondual.

He Is The Embodiment Of Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram (Truth, Goodness, Beauty).
Sarva Rupa Dharam Santham, Sarva Nama Dharam Sivam,

Satchidananda Rupam Adwaitam, Sathyam, Sivam, Sundaram.
(Sanskrit Verse)

Though God has no form, He assumes all forms and considers all names as His.

Though truth, goodness, beauty (sathyam, sivam, sundaram) appear to be different, they are in fact one and the same. Truth is beauty. Where there is no truth, how can there be beauty? There can be no beauty in untruth; there may be attraction but no beauty. Therefore, that which is true is beautiful. When truth and beauty come together, goodness manifests. Truth, beauty, and goodness are one and the same.

The same truth was taught by Plato to his disciple Aristotle. He said, "My dear, I have studied all the scriptures and have realised that God is the embodiment of truth, goodness, and beauty." When a person has these three attributes, they also become divine.

People today do not understand what humanness is. They are unable to recognise the human values present within. Then how can they recognise their innate Divinity?

Lakhs of years have passed since the birth of human beings. But, so far, humanness has not taken birth in him. The day one realises one's true human nature, that person will visualise their own innate divinity. Unless one knows one's humanness, how can one realise one's divinity? How can one who cannot touch the roof reach the sky?

Therefore, first of all, try to acquire human qualities. Then it will be easy for you to develop divine qualities.

Students should understand how noble souls in those days realised divinity. When they follow the path shown by those noble souls, they will be able to develop noble feelings and selfless love and lead a peaceful life.

(Bhagavan concluded His siscourse with the bhajan, "Bhaja Govindam Bhaja Govindam...")

42. Ways of the Divine : Advent of Shankara

Date: 07 September 1996

LAY is one substance. But out of it a variety of products with different names and shapes can be made. Likewise, out of gold, a variety of ornaments can be made. The same white milk is got out of cows of different colours. The Supreme Self is one, but dwells in innumerable bodies, with different names and forms.

If you examine the cosmic scene, you will find that out of the same basic substance a variety of objects with different forms are produced. For instance, out of a single seed, comes a tree with various branches, leaves, flowers, and fruits. These different things vary in form, name and use. But they have all come from one seed.

"Ekoham bahusyam" (The One chose to become the many).. There are three factors involved in this. For making a pot, a potter is the cause and the pot is the effect. The base for the production of the pot is clay. The pot may break but the clay remains as such. Out of the permanent substance, clay, the potter makes a pot. The fate of the pot does not affect the potter. The clay in the pot also remains as such. The analogy applies equally to gold, the goldsmith, and the jewels made from gold.

On the same analogy, God is the changeless creator who creates the innumerable objects in creation which are subject to changes in names and forms. The relations between the three entities involved should be properly understood. The potter cannot make a pot without clay. No pot can be made if there is clay alone but no potter. Both potter and clay are necessary for making a pot.

Five forms of the Lord

The Creator is the nimitha-karana (instrumental cause of creation). The

bodies are like the pots. They are used for various purposes and are a source of enjoyment. But, like the pots, the bodies are perishable. When their time is up, they fall away. But the Creator is permanent. The elements out of which the bodies were made remain. Only the bodies have gone. The bodies are capable of being put to good or bad uses.

Divinity has five names. The first is Para-namam. Second, Vyuha-namam. Third, Vibhava namam. Fourth, Antharatma-namam and fifth, Archana-namam The Divine functions in the cosmos in these five names.

Para-namam refers to the abode of the Supreme, Vaikunttha. Vaikunttha means that which is unchanging. There the Supreme Lord dwells under the name Para-namam.

No one can enter that abode of the Lord. The Lord dwells there as an effulgence. He oversees everything. But He is not visible to anyone and no one can see His form.

The second is: Vyuha-namam. This name refers to the Lord who reclines on a serpent on the ocean of milk. The Lord in this form can be seen only by Dhevas (the various deities).

Only those with special powers can see the Lord here. Ordinary beings cannot do so. But the Lord in His Vyuha form fulfils the desires of the: Dhevas. You are aware of the story of Hiranyakashipu. He was harassing the Dhevas in various ways. So, they went to the Lord's couch on the ocean of milk and prayed to Him. In answer to their prayers the Lord agreed to incarnate on earth.

Various human forms in which Lord incarnates

Third is: Vibhava-namam. This refers to the various human forms in which the Lord incarnates on earth as Avathars of Rama and Krishna to protect the good and punish the wicked and turn them to the righteous path. The incarnations

that are adored as the ten Avathars belong to this category of Vibhava-namam. In this form, the Lord manifests the relationship between God and the devotees.

The fourth is: Antharatma-namam. In this form, the Lord pervades every part of a human being as an indwelling spirit. This indwelling spirit is Divine.

The fifth is: Archana-namam. This refers to the form in which the Divine can be worshipped, praised and adored for securing His grace.

Man through the aeons

Avathars of the Lord in these different forms have been manifesting themselves for aeons and aeons. This may be quite astonishing to children of today. For instance, when they hear about the state of things in the Kritha Yuga they will feel that they are amazing and incredible. Human beings in that age used to live for hundreds of years. Moreover, their bodies were not as small as in this age. They were gigantic figures, with arms as long as six feet. What kind of life did they lead? In the Kritha Yuga, life remained in the body as long as the bones were intact. All other parts of the body may disintegrate, but life remained in the skeleton.

In Thretha Yuga, the height of human beings was less. The longevity was also less. Life remained as long as muscles and flesh remained in the body.

In Dhvapara Yuga, life remained as long as blood circulated in the body. As you may know, Bheeshma lay on a bed of arrows after he had been wounded in the Kurukshethra war. As long as blood remained in his body, he lived. His life lasted for 56 days.

In the present Kali Yuga life lasts as long as there is food in the body. Without food man cannot survive.

In Kritha and Thretha Yugas, men had intimate relationship with God. Food

was not so important. In Dhvapara Yuga, the head became important.

In the Kritha and Thretha yugas, Dharma was all-important. Dharma muulam idham jagath (The cosmos is based on Dharma). In Dhvapara Yuga, the decline started and wealth became all important. Dhana muulam idham jagath (The world is founded on wealth). The war between the Kauravas and the Pandavas was over property rights.

In the Kali Yuga, neither Dharma nor Dhana (wealth) is as important as Dhaya (compassion). It is because of the absence of compassion that the world today is afflicted with so many troubles.

The advent of Shankara

In the early centuries of this Kali Age, Buddhism and Jainism mere predominant religions. At that time, a young child was born in a village called Kaladi in Kerala to a couple, Shivaguru and Aryamba. In those days, there used to be frequent wars between Kings of different territories. These wars generated hatred between peoples of different regions. The feeling of national unity was lost. With the loss of unity, all kinds of bad practices developed. Untruth, injustice, dishonesty and disreputable conduct became the order of the day. Nor was that all. Even the learned pandithhs, scholars and intellectuals of the time started interpreting the Vedas in perverse ways. The very face of the scriptures was blackened. With the result that the people's faith in the Vedas and scriptures was undermined.

At such times, God or a divinely inspired saint or messiah makes His advent on earth to reform the wicked and restore the reign of Dharma. Such incarnations are known as Archana-nama forms of the Divine. In this Archana-nama form, the manifestations are regarded as Amsa avthars - manifestations of aspects of the Divine.

The Vibhava avathars (like Rama and Krishna) are Puurna-avathars (total manifestations of the Divine). The Archana-avathars are Amsa-avathars

(partial manifestations). Such avathars incarnate from time to time, not only in India but in all countries.

Jesus declared at first that He was "a messenger of God." Who are these messengers? They are of two kinds: Yamadhuutha and Avadhuutha. Yamadhuuthas are messengers who inflict harm on people. Avadhuuthas are messengers who protect. Jesus belonged to the second category. In due course, he recognised his own inner divinity. Then he declared: "I am the Son of God." Thereby he proclaimed his right to a share in all the qualities of God. When he acquired all the qualities of the Divine, he announced: "I and my Father are one."

The same threefold progress can be seen in the pronouncements of Zoroaster. First, he declared: "I am in the light." Then he said: "The light is in me." Finally he declared: "I am the light." These declarations can be compared to the three systems of Indian philosophy Dualism, Qualified Non dualism and Nondualism. In propagating the doctrine of Non-dualism, Shankara considered himself a servant of God.

Shankara and his guru

Shankara's father, Shivaguru, passed away when Shankara was barely three years old. In this context, it is interesting to note how the Divine operates. Ten days before his passing, Shivaguru had a vision of an effulgence. The effulgence conveyed a message to Shivaguru. "Perform the upanayanam of your son," was the message. Shivaguru hurriedly arranged to have the upanayanam performed for the three-year old child. The little boy started reciting the Gayathri Manthra.

After the passing of Shivaguru, the grief-stricken mother devoted herself to bringing up the little boy. She took him to a guru, who taught the boy all kinds of scriptural knowledge. By the time he was 16, Shankara had completed study of the four Vedas and the six systems of philosophy. Normally even 50 years would not have sufficed for such study. Shankara was a prodigy. He

could grasp anything at the first mention of the subject. Even the guru was astonished at the boy's genius.

Meanwhile, the mother, was anxious to get the boy married and broached the subject with the guru. The boy was totally opposed to marriage. "I want to be a sanyasi (renunciant)," he said. "I want to dedicate my body, mind and all else to God. They are all gifts of God. I have surrendered myself to God."

How Shankara obtained sanyasa

The mother was in deep distress over the son's resolve. One day she was going to the river to fetch water. The young Shankara followed her earnestly pleading: "Mother! Permit me to take to sanyasa." She did not agree. When she got into the river for her bath, Shankara jumped into the river and going down the river for a while, he raised one hand and shouted: "Mother, a crocodile has caught hold of me. At least now permit me to become a sanyasi." The mother said: "If you can be saved from the crocodile by taking to sanyasa, you better do so, so that you may live." Shankara then came out of the river and told his mother: "In the ocean of samsara I was about to be drowned by a crocodile in the form of a wife. When you let me become a sanyasi I was free from the hold of the crocodile. No one could marry a sanyasi."

Sanyasa does not mean a mere change-in the colour of the robe. It is really a change in one's qualities.

Shankara prostrated before his mother and took her leave to embark on his career as ascetic. At that time, the mother made Shankara take a pledge that he should come and see her at her last moments.

Triumphal tour to all sacred shrines in the land

Shankara set out on his wanderings, visiting all the sacred shrines in the land.

All travel had to be done by foot. He went to every assemblage of scholars and vanquished them in debates. He propagated the Adhvaithik doctrine. He declared: "The bodies are different, the forms are different, but the inner Self is one alone. The Divine is present in all like sugarcane juice which is the same, regardless of the cane from which it is got."

He had an encounter with Mandana Mishra, who was an upholder of the Karma siddhantha (the doctrine of action). He defeated Mandana Mishra in the debate.

In this manner, Shankara went all over the country, from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, several times. He convinced the scholars of the truth of Nondualism. "Ekam eva Adhvitheeyam" (The Self is one only; there is no second).

Adhi Shankara was able to convince all the scholars about the truth of Adhvaitha. People are deluded by the multiplicity of names and forms. But the basis for all this diversity is the one Divine. Without the basis nothing can exist. This fact is recognised by all faiths. God is one and the goal is one. The doctrine of Adhvaitha is not easily understood. It has to be explained to the students in simple and intelligible terms.

Shankara passed away at the early age of 32. But he completed the mission for which he had come. Before his passing, he collected five lingas and installed them in five different centres: Puuri, Dhvaraka, Shringeri, Benares and Kanchi. At Kanchi he installed the Yoga Linga. One of the pontiffs was Suresha, who was none other than Mandana Mishra before he took to sanyasa.

By establishing these mutts and promoting the sense of spiritual oneness among the people, Adhi Shankara promoted harmony in the country. Unfortunately some of his disciples started distorting Shankara's doctrines and attributing their own views to Shankara. Ultimately the disciples fell out and opposed each other's views.

Similarly, among Christ's eleven disciples differences developed and they fell apart. Only Mathew remained true to Jesus. He propagated the gospel. Peter was the first among Jesus's disciples. But he denied Christ when the authorities questioned him.

Ramanuja who came after Shankara enunciated a modified version of Shankara's Non-dualism. Then came Madhvacharya, who propounded dualism. I would explain their doctrines in subsequent discourses.

43. Knowledge of the Self is Real Knowledge (Alternative Translation)

Date: 07 September 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This is the alternative translation of the discourse originally published in Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 29. This discourse appears in the Sathya Sai Speaks series but was retranslated and appeared in Sanathana Sarathi in June 2015.

When The Branches Of A Tree Rub Against Each Other Incessantly, Fire Is Produced.
When You Churn Curd Continuously, Butter Comes Out Of It.
Similarly, Continuous Enquiry Will Lead To The Realisation Of Reality.
Listen To This, Oh Valiant Sons Of Bharat.
(Telugu Poem)

Practice is necessary to perform any task in this world. Human effort is required for anything. Practice is required even for walking, talking, eating, writing, and reading. Likewise, proper effort is required if you want to attain Divinity.

Fundamental principle of Divinity is one

If the food served in the plate has to reach your stomach, don't you have to put your hand and mouth to work? On the other hand, if you go on repeating the names of the food items served in the plate even for a hundred times, your hunger will not be satiated.

Similarly, mere mechanical repetition of the divine names Rama, Krishna, Govinda is not enough unless you express your devotion to the Lord in the form of service. Any work that you do with the intention of serving others becomes God's work.

But people today want to have everything easily without putting any effort.

Divinity is immanent in every being just as is oil is in sesame seeds, fragrance in flowers, juice in fruits, and fire in wood. Only with proper effort can you get butter out of milk, oil out of seeds, juice out of fruits, and fire out of wood. Similarly, due effort is required to experience Divinity, which is immanent in every person.

But in the present circumstances, students and youth have forgotten Divinity, which is true and eternal. Due to their misunderstanding, they consider truth as untruth and untruth as truth and waste their time, effort, and energy.

Forms may appear to be different, and you may give different names to these forms. The experiences arising out of the diversity of names and forms may also vary, buy the fundamental principle of Divinity, which is the basis of all names and forms, is one and the same. This is the principle of nonduality (adwaitha) propounded by Adi Sankara.

You sow a mango seed, and after some time it grows into a tree with branches and sub-branches. The tree may have thousands of leaves and flowers and hundreds of fruits. The fruits and flowers appear to be totally different from each other. Similarly, nothing appears to be common between branches and leaves.

Not only that, the leaves, flowers, and fruits may be put to many different uses. You may prepare pickles out of unripe fruits. Leaves may be used to make festoons to decorate houses. The dried branches can be used as firewood, and the ripe fruits may be eaten.

But the same seed is the basis for all the branches, sub-branches, leaves, unripe fruits, and ripe fruits. Without the seed, there can be no tree; without the tree, there can be no branches; and without branches, there can be no fruits.

Lord Krishna declared this truth in the Bhagavad Gita when He said, "I am the

seed that is the origin of all living beings (Beejam mam sarva bhutanam). The principle of nonduality (adwaitha) demonstrates the underlying oneness of everything.

This visible world appears with varied names and forms, but when you enquire deeply, you will realise that the underlying principle of Divinity is the same for all diverse forms.

Knowledge is meant to attain wisdom

Yesterday, I told you the story of Adi Sankara, who took to renunciation (sannyasa) with the permission of his mother after the death of his father. After acquiring the knowledge of the Vedas, scriptures (sastras), epics (itihasas), and mythological texts (puranas), he approached Govindapada, who was a disciple of Gaudapada, for initiation into the order of Renunciation (Sannyasa).

One with steadfast faith attains wisdom (Sraddhavan labhate jnanam). Since Sankara was endowed with great faith (sraddha), he could master the four Vedas and six scriptures at the young age of sixteen years. Age is not the criterion to learn something if one has the required faith.

For everything, time is important. It is with the passage of time that a child grows into an old person. A male child becomes a boy at the age of ten, a man at the age of thirty, and a grandfather at the age of seventy-five. But the child, boy, man, and grandfather are one and the same. These changes in names and forms occur as a result of change of time.

In order to test the skill and knowledge of Sankara, one day, Acharya Govindapada decided to engage him in a debate. Sankara, being one of humility and obedience, offered his salutations to his guru and sought his permission before entering into debate with him. This debate was a wonderful demonstration of Sankara's knowledge wherein he gave befitting replies to the questions raised by his Guru in consonance with the teachings of the

Vedas and scriptures. He explained how one could follow the path of spirituality (nivritti) while leading a worldly life.

In those days, there were many eminent scholars, but they were using their knowledge to acquire wealth. They ignored the truth that knowledge was meant to acquire wisdom and not wealth. Even today, students think that all their education is meant to earn money. It is a misconception. Agriculture is for food, and education is for knowledge. Therefore, Sankara strived to show the right path to scholars so that they would make proper use of their knowledge and not waste it in mundane pursuits. What is the use of worldly education?

Oh Man! You Struggle Hard In Life Merely For The Sake Of Filling Your Belly.
You Acquire Myriad Types Of Knowledge From Various Fields.
Examine And Enquire For Yourself What Great Happiness Have You Achieved By Spending All The Time From Dawn To Dusk In Acquiring Worldly Knowledge And Earning Wealth While Forgetting God.
(Telugu Poem)
Oh Man! Do Not Feel Proud Of Your Education.
If You Do Not Offer Your Salutations To God And Do Not Think Of Him With Devotion, All Your Education Will Become Useless.
(Telugu Poem)

Sankara felt deeply distressed to see such a scenario. His preceptor, Govindapada, saw how sad Sankara was. Gaudapada also understood his feelings and observed that Sankara, being endowed with all knowledge and noble feelings at such a young age, was capable of driving away all the injustice, untruth, and impropriety prevailing in the world and firmly imprint the teachings of Vedas and scriptures in the hearts of people.

Both of them called Sankara and told him, "Dear one! You don't need to be here any longer. Tomorrow itself, embark on your journey to Kasi (Varanasi). Teach all those eminent scholars in Kasi the great truth of nondualism (adwaitha) and propagate it to the entire world. No one is more capable than

you to achieve this task." Likewise, students today should realise this truth that they are most capable of driving away injustice, impropriety, and other evils from society.

Sankara propounded the principle of nondualism

As per the command of his guru, Sankara set out on his journey to Kasi. In those days, there were no such modes of transport as planes, trains, and buses, and he traveled on foot along with his disciples. When he came near Kasi, he saw a person sitting under a tree, repeating the rules of Panini grammar, "Dukrun karane, dukrun karane ...". In order to put this person on the right path, it was here that Sankara recited the first verse of his famous composition, Bhaja Govindam:

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

Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam, Govindam Bhaja Moodha Mathe,
Samprapthe Sannihithe Kale,
Nahi Nahi Rakshati Dukrun Karane.

What do you achieve by learning the rules of grammar? Will this grammar come to your rescue when you are to depart from this world? Instead, sing the glory of God and contemplate on Him. When you leave this world, none of your friends, relatives, or wealth will come with you. Only the Name of God will be with you and will protect you always. Thus, Sankara taught the importance of reciting God's Name.

Just as the light of moon goes on increasing day by day in the bright fortnight, the teachings of Sankara started spreading far and wide day by day, radiating light of knowledge.

Once there was a conference of scholars in Kasi. Many scholars came,

donning thick gold bracelets, gorgeous shawls, and garlands of beads showing their high status. There was no dearth of pomp and show in the conference. Only Sankara came to attend the conference in all simplicity wearing only an ordinary dhoti and a small towel covering his shoulders.

Many scholars looked down upon him thinking, "What sort of a scholar is he? He doesn't have even a single garland of beads. What can we expect from him"? However, some scholars knew the level of Sankara's scholarship and started extolling him, "Sankara, we have heard so much about you. You have mastered the Vedas, Sastras, Itihasas, Puranas, Brahma Sutras, grammar, and logic. You are the one who propounded the principle of nondualism." When his turn came, Sankara smilingly ascended the stage and offered his salutations to the assembly of scholars and began his speech. Sankara said that knowledge of scriptures should not be used to earn money. He said to the scholars, "Why do you crave money? A pandit is one who is equalminded (Pandita samadarshina)." Though he was young in age, he declared this truth emphatically in the presence of scholars that they should yearn for God and not crave for money.

Oh People, Give Up Your Thirst For Money.
Give Up All Your Desires By Proper Discrimination.
The Wealth You Have Is Nothing But The Result Of Your Past Actions.
Therefore, Be Contented With Whatever You Have.
(Telugu Song)

What you earn with hard labour is true wealth. When you work with both hands, you will certainly get food to sustain yourself. How compassionate God is! He has given you two hands and one stomach. Are two hands not enough to fill one belly? But today, you don't work with both hands. That is why you are not able to fulfill all your needs. Do not give room to laziness. Give up thirst for money and develop thirst for God and righteousness.

Sankara gave a wonderful exposition of the doctrine of nondualism (adwaitha) and exhorted the august gathering of scholars to realise the divine principle

of oneness of all creation. The scholars and their disciples were wonderstruck listening to Sankara's profound words. Just as the saying goes, a small sparrow chirps loudly, the young Sankara started imparting great moral teachings to one and all.

Not only his teachings, his behaviour was also exemplary. This is the hallmark of noble souls. Those whose thoughts, words and deeds are in perfect harmony are noble ones (Manasyekam vachasyekam, karmanyekam mahatmanam).

People should develop purity of thought, word, and deed. First and foremost, purity of mind is essential. When the mind is pure, the speech will be pure. Pure thoughts and pure words will lead to sacred actions. This is described as the three instruments of purity (thrikarana suddhi), which were very much evident in Sankara. Many scholars started asking him questions, "What is the principle of nonduality"?

"It is nothing but the vision of oneness. The experience of nondualism is wisdom (Advaita darshanam jnanam)." What is this knowledge? Is it physical knowledge, worldly knowledge, or secular knowledge? None of these. It is the knowledge of the Self. That is the fundamental knowledge. But no scholar is making efforts today to recognise this fundamental principle. Understand this truth clearly.

Jewels are many, but gold is one. Likewise, the fundamental principle of the entire creation is only one, although it manifests in various names and forms. A gold ornament worn on the wrist is called a bracelet. When it adorns the ear, it is called an earring. When you wear it on your finger, it is called a ring. When it is worn around the neck, it is called a necklace. Though the names and forms of these ornaments are different, isn't the gold the same in all of them?

Sankara spoke about this principle of oneness in the assembly of scholars. Why do you observe differences based on name, form and use? Heart is the basis for everything. Therefore, follow the dictates of your heart. This is called

conscience. In this manner, Sankara propounded great truths in simple words.

Jewels Are Many But Gold Is One.
Cows Are Many But Milk Is One.
Beings Are Many But Breath Is One.
Castes Are Many But Humanity Is One.
Flowers Are Many But Worship Is One.
(Telugu Poem)

When you enquire deeply in this manner, you will visualise the underlying unity in everything. Yesterday, also I spoke about the fundamental principle of oneness. Pots are many, but clay is one (Mritpindamekam bahubhandarupam). The Vice Chancellor also mentioned this in his speech.

Pots have emerged from clay. There is clay in the pot but not pot in the clay. Many people are gathered here. Their names, forms and fee,lings may be different but the same five elements are present in all of them. This principle of five elements is the principle of Divinity. It is present in all. You, he, and I are all embodiments of Atma. You are all the embodiments of Brahman. That is why the Upanishads have declared: That thou Art (Thatthwamasi), and I am Brahman (Aham Brahmasmi). Who can deny this?

What does Brahman signify? It signifies expansiveness. That is why there is the quality of expansiveness in humanity. Though you are here, your mind travels to Chennai, Mumba,i or Delhi in an instant. This power of expansiveness is termed Brahman. This power is latent in every person, but they are unable to develop it because of their desires and greed for wealth and power.

Greed ruins people

A farmer had a small piece of land. He wanted to acquire more land so that he could be called a landlord. His friends told him, "You want to acquire vast

land, but you don't have sufficient money for that. Therefore, we will give you an idea following which you can have as much land as you want." A greedy person listens to evil talk not with two ears, but with twenty ears. People do not give ear to good talk but are all ears for evil talk.

Oh Ears, You Are Interested In Listening To Vain Gossip And Tales About Others,
But You Pay Least Attention When The Wonderful Stories Of The Lord Are Narrated.
(Telugu Song)

The farmer listened to the advice of his friends with great interest. They told him that in this region of Andhra Pradesh, one could not get a big piece of land with a small amount. They asked him to go to the Himalayan region where he could get as much land as he desired.

As per the advice of his friends, he went to meet the king of a Himalayan region and asked for a huge piece of land. The king told him, "My dear, since you have come from such a far off place like Andhra Pradesh, I will certainly fulfill your wish." The king promised to give him all the land that he could walk around from sunrise to sunset on a single day.

So, in his uncontrollable greed, he rose with the rise of the sun and, without wasting a minute for breakfast, he walked fast. Indeed, he ran very fast in order to cover as much land as he could. He never took a second's rest; he was happy that he could get a pretty vast area free when the sun was about to set. He was within a few paces of the point from where he had started. He was too exhausted to take even the few steps he needed; he fell down on the ground he coveted so much and breathed his last. His heart could not stand the strain of walking so fast, so long, with such hurry and tension.

The people gathered there told the king, "Alas, he breathed his last in his greed to acquire hundreds of acres of land. Now what he requires is only six feet of land."

Acquire education to serve society

What a great misfortune the farmer met with because of his greed! The lesson is that there should be a limit to your desires. Limitless desires will lead to danger. That is why Sankara taught mankind, "Give up your thirst for money." But students today make preparations to go to foreign lands to earn more money as soon as they get their degree.

Students!

Understand this clearly. What is not here in Bharat (India) cannot be found anywhere else (Yanna Bharate, thanna Bharata). Bharat is the master of all nations. That is why people from many foreign countries come to Bharat. Bharat is the land of righteous action, merit, spirituality, and sacrifice (karma bhumi, punya bhumi, yoga bhumi, and thyaga bhumi). Even with a small income, you can lead a peaceful life here.

What Is The Use Of Acquiring High Education If One Is Found Wanting In Virtues?
What Is The Value Of Such Education? What Is The Use Of Ten Acres Of Barren Land?
Instead, A Small Piece Of Fertile Land Is Good Enough.
(Telugu Poem)

Students are wasting their time, energy, and money in their craze to go to foreign lands. You are born and brought up in Bharat. You eat and drink the food and water of Bharat and call yourself a Bharatiya (Indian). What will you achieve by giving up this sacred land and going to foreign countries?

Give up this greed for money. Serve your motherland. Serve the poor and destitute in this land. Not only for your self-interest, work for the interest of others, too. Acquire your education with a view to serve and strengthen

society. There is no point in acquiring merely high degrees.

Many educated people go abroad, and when they don't find proper employment, they do even menial jobs like cleaning of cups and plates in hotels. They think, nobody from here would know even if they sweep the roads or clean plates in a hotel. But the same people don't want to wash their own tiffin plates in their house. Why should one be ashamed of doing work in one's own house?

The sacredness and glory of Bharat is diminishing because of such false sense of prestige of students.

Love is a divine quality

Develop love for the motherland, not attachment to the body. However, do not belittle or criticise other nations. May all the beings of all the worlds be happy (Samasta lokah sukhino bhavantu)! This is what the culture of Bharat teaches.

After slaying Ravana, Rama wanted to crown Vibhishana as king of Lanka. At that time, Sugriva, Jambavan, Angada, and other prominent warriors approached Rama and asked Him, "Swami, now that Ravana is killed, it would be better if You take over the reins of Lanka, which is full of affluence and riches".

Lakshmana also said, "Brother, anyway, Bharata is ruling over Ayodhya. Therefore, it would only be proper if You became king of Lanka and sanctify this place." Rama erplied, "The mother and the motherland are greater than heaven even (Janani janma bhumishcha swargadapi gareeyasi). Can we call some other beautiful woman our mother just because our own mother is not so beautiful? Even if she is not so beautiful, our mother is our mother." Students should develop such exalted feelings of love for motherland. They should work for the honour of their country.

Students!

One Is Verily A Living Corpse Who Does Not Declare With Pride
That This Is My Motherland, This Is My Mother Tongue, And This Is My Religion.
(Telugu Poem)

Sankara, who was born in Kerala, brought great name and fame not only to Kerala but to the entire country with his profound teachings of nonduality. It is goodness that brings good name. Goodness is godliness. Without goodness, one becomes godless.

First of all, understand that you yourselves are divine. There is nothing greater than divinity.

Your innate quality of love is a divine quality. That is the true human quality. Develop this human quality of love. You will be called a human being in the true sense of the term only when you have the qualities of compassion, love, tolerance, empathy, and forbearance.

People today are human in form only but not in practice. One appears as human but lacks human qualities. One can clearly say, that one is human only in form but not in practice.

Students!

Sankara was also a student like you, but, even at the young age of sixteen years, he earned such a great name and fame that it will continue to shine age after age like a precious jewel, whose splendour never diminishes. Every student should emulate his ideal and lead an exemplary life. Give happiness to your parents. Earn a good name in society, uphold the great name of motherland and thus sanctify your human birth. Do not think it otherwise.

Sankara tried to develop a sense of renunciation in everyone through his

composition "Bhaja Govindam".

Some people may say, "Sai Baba is teaching renunciation to students." Let people say what they want. I am not afraid. Why should one be afraid to speak the truth? Is it so easy to attain renunciation? It is not possible for everyone. There has been no transformation even in those who have been listening to My discourses for a number of years. Such being the case, can we expect a sudden change in you by merely listening to this discourse? Only the most fortunate few can develop the sense of renunciation.

What great good fortune can there be other than developing the spirit of renunciation naturally? That is why I repeatedly tell you, "Immortality is not attained through action, progeny, or wealth but only by sacrifice (Na karmana na prajaya dhanena thyagenaike amrutatthwamanasu)." Only the spirit of sacrifice ensures your well-being.

What is meant by sacrifice?

If you don't exhale the air that you inhale, your lungs will get spoiled. Your stomach will be upset unless the food you eat is digested and excreted. Similarly, blood has to continuously flow in all parts of the body. If it remains in one place, it develops into a boil.

The same can also be said of money. The money that you earn should be spent for righteous purposes. Only those who have such a spirit of sacrifice can really be called truly fortunate.

As long as you remain distant from God, you will not be able to understand the principle of Divinity. As you go closer to God, all the mysteries of life will be revealed to you. Not only that, you will develop a sense of detachment without any effort. Your heart will be filled with divine feelings and your life will be sanctified.

As the saying goes, The knower of Brahman becomes verily Brahman

(Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati). You become one with God. Therefore, develop good qualities and the spirit of sacrifice.

Sage Vyasa has given the essence of eighteen Puranas in two sentences: One attains merit by serving others and commits sin by hurting them (Paropakara punyaya, papaya parapeedanam). Help Ever, Hurt Never. If you put this dictum into practice, you will have followed the teachings of Vedanta in the real sense.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin...")

43. The glorious saga of Shankara

Date: 07 September 1996 / Location: Brindavan

When The Branch Of A Tree Robs
Against Another Branch Incessantly,
Fire Emerges From The Branches. When You Repeatedly Chum Buttermilk
You Get Butter From Which Ghee Is Got. By Engaging One's Self In A
Continuous Process Of Enquiry
One Realises The Divinity Within. (Telugu Poem).

BY perseverance anything can be accomplished, says a Telugu proverb. The Geetha declares that by repeated practice one acquires the wisdom that ultimately leads to Thyaga (renunciation). Every activity in life is based on practice. Likewise, to realise the Divine, constant practice is necessary. Mere repetition of the lord's name is not enough. Devotion should express itself in social service. Any service done with social well-being in mind will become service to God.

"The one Self dwells in a myriad bodies like butter in milk, oil in thil seeds, fragrance in a flower, sweet juice in a fruit and fire in a faggot," says a Sanskrith sloka. This is the truth proclaimed by Vedantha. Today, modern youth, not realising this truth, are wasting their lives in every way.

The doctrine of Adhvaitha

Adhi Shankara demonstrated that underlying all forms, names and qualities, there is one basic reality which alone is real and changeless. This is the doctrine of Adhvaitha (Non-dualism). Out of a mango seed comes a tree with branches, leaves, flowers and fruit each with distinct forms and uses. But all the myriad things that have come from the seed owe their existence to the seed from which the tree arose. This truth was declared by Krishna in the Geetha when He said: "Beejam mam sarvabhoothanam" (I am the seed that is

the origin of all beings). All things in the universe are manifestations of the One Divine.

Yesterday I related the story of how Adhi Shankara took to sanyasa at an early age and came to his guru, Govindha. The preceptor for Govindha was Gaudapadha. Gaudapadha distinguished the Riks in Rig-Veda which proclaimed the oneness of the Divine. Shankara received this teaching from Govindha and mastered all the Vedas and Shasthras by his fourteenth year. Earnest pursuit of knowledge leads to total understanding (Jnana).

Shankara's debate with preceptor

One day, to test Shankara's mastery of the scriptures Govindha engaged Shankara in a philosophical debate. It was a debate between the preceptor and the disciple. Shankara was full of humility and reverence for the guru Hence, before entering on the debate he prostrated before the preceptor and prayed to him for permission to argue with him. With the guru's sanction he began his argument with amazing skill and demolished, with due scriptural authority, the propositions of the preceptor and presented his views in accordance with Vedhik authorities with due regard to worldly understanding and showed how the Nivritthi (inward) path could be harmonized with the Pravritthi (external) path.

Shankara was deeply perturbed over the conduct of great Vedhik scholars of those times who were concerned about making a money out of their scriptural scholarship than to gain spiritual wisdom from it. They forgot that knowledge should not be used for commercial purposes. Even today many students consider education as a means for earning a living. This is utterly wrong. One should work for a living. But knowledge should be sought for acquiring wisdom. Shankara sought to bring about a change in the use of scriptural knowledge.

Of What Use Is The Acquisition
Of All Kinds Of Knowledge If

One Does Not Think Of God And Use His Hands For The Adoration Of The Divine?
All Such Knowledge Is A Sheer Waste,
Says A Telugu Poem.

Shankara was deeply distressed over the conduct of the scholars. His preceptor Govindha observed Shankara's sadness. Govindha's guru, Gaudapadha, also felt unhappy over this state of things. Both of them were elated at the sublime feelings of the young Shankara. They both realised that Shankara was best qualified to use the sacred teachings of the Vedas to combat the prevailing unrighteous and immoral tendencies in the society. They summoned Shankara-and told him "Child! There is no need for you to stay here any longer. Leave for Kasi tomorrow. You must meet the great pandiths in Kasi and propagate the doctrine to the whole world. Nobody else can carry out this mission."

Students today should realise that they are the most powerful instruments for rectifying all the evils rampant in our society today.

Shankara's journey to Kasi

With the permission of the two preceptors, Shankara set out for Kasi. No modern means of transport were available in those days. Shankara had to walk all the way to Benares. The sixteen year-old lad gathered his disciples and left for Kasi. On the way he saw a pandith sitting under a tree and cramming the rules of grammar. At that moment, he began composing the famous hymn. "Bhaja Govindham." (Swami recited the opening stanza from Bhaja Govindham). "You dull-witted fellow! Why do you immerse yourself in the rules of grammar? They will not save you when death knocks at the door. Instead, worship Govindha!" At the time of death nothing and nobody will follow the departing soul when it leaves the body. Only the remembrance of the name of the Lord will keep you company at all times. Shankara advised the pandith to chant the name of the Lord instead of conning the rules of

grammar.

After teaching him this lesson, Shankara proceeded to Kasi with his disciples. Shankara's teachings were spreading far and wide. The of Benares arranged for a grand assembly of scholars in the holy city.

Shankara and the scholars

Many scholars had gathered there in all their regalia. Nothing was lacking in terms of ostentation at that assembly. Shankara entered in a simple way, wearing a dhothi covering upto his knees and a towel over his shoulder. On seeing him, the pandiths seemed to feel that it was all a joke. Some pandiths remarked: "He does not even wear a rudhraksha mala (a garland of beads). Apandith should have an imposing figure. What is it that this stripling can tell us?" They addressed him thus: "We have come to know that you are proficient in all the Vedas and Shasthras, an authority on grammar and logic and a great exponent of the Adhvaitha doctrine."

Shankara then sang the Bhaja Govindham songs, pointing out the transitory nature of material wealth and exhorting all to give up worldly desires. He declared that pandiths should be equal minded and should give up the desire for wealth, which is the result of one's actions. "Give up this thirst for money. Develop the thirst for God," declared Shankara in strident terms. Then he gave a superb exposition of the metaphysics of Adhvaitha.

All the pandiths and their disciples were astonished at the performance of the young Shankara. They realised that here was one who was not only a great teacher but one who practised what he taught. This unity in thought, word and deed is the mark of greatness. Shankara was the very embodiment of unity and purity in thought, speech and action.

Many pandiths got up and plied Shankara with questions. He answered them all with perfect ease. He declared that Adhvaitha means oneness of the spirit and awareness of this oneness is true Jnana (wisdom). Spiritual wisdom alone

is true wisdom. Pandiths today, he declared, are not having this realisation.

Exposition of Adhvaitha

Shankara pointed out that though names and forms may be many, the Self is one only. That Self resides in everyone's heart. He exhorted the pandiths to purify their hearts and follow the dictates of the conscience. Shankara made it clear that creeds may vary but God is one.

Shankara called upon the pandiths to be content with moderate incomes and not hanker after riches. Vast knowledge and petty desires go ill together.

Students should realise how a young lad born in Kaladi brought greatness to Kerala and Bharath.

Students should cultivates human values like love, compassion, righteousness and truth and become truly human. Every student should strive to lead an ideal life like Shankara.

In this context, I should like to mention that in Bhaja Govindham Shankara commends renunciation of all worldly attachments. People may feel that Swami is telling the students these unworldly teachings. This does not worry me, because what I am saying is the Truth. Is renunciation acquired so easily?. No. People who have been listening for years have not changed to the slightest extent. To imagine that a single discourse is going to make a big change is fanciful. Only a fortunate few experience such transformation. If real renunciation is promoted in anyone, there can be no greater blessing than that.

Nearness to God will inspire the spirit of renunciation even without one being conscious of it. In that renunciation lies fulfillment. And one's life is redeemed.

Steady adherence to Truth, Renunciation, Genuine Prema (Love), Self-less service these are the essential components of character. Follow the dictates

of your conscience. You can never be wrong.

- Sathya Sai Baba

44. Vedha and Vedhaantha

Date: 08 September 1996 / Location: Brindavan

One May Have Mastered The Vedas Or Be A Versatile Writer;
But, Without Purity Of Mind,
He Will Take To Bad Ways.
Hearken, Oh Son Of Bharath! To This Good Counsel.

EMBODIMENTS of Love! Shankara propagated the view that the Vedas uphold Dhvaitha (dualism) and Vedantha teaches Adhvaitha (non-dualism) on the basis of citations from the scriptural texts. The difference between the Vedas and Vedantha is like the differences between various organs in the same body. The eyes, the ears, the nose, the arms and the feet are different parts of the body. The individual is a limb of society. Society is a limb of humanity. Humanity is a part of Nature or the phenomenal world. Nature is a limb of the Paramatma (Supreme Self). In Kasi (Varanasi), at the assembly of scholars, debates raged over many philosophical issues. Amused at this spectacle, Shankara remarked: "Vadhe Vadhe Vardhathe Vairam" (Enmity grows with controversy). Continuous disputation only results in increasing bitterness among the disputants. Argumentation is not the proper method for setting spiritual issues.

Dualism of the Vedas

Man is obliged to resolve problems in life. In daily existence man will never be free from worry. From birth to death man is confronted continuously with worries. The only way out of them is for people to develop love for God. Love is the sovereign remedy for all ills.

The Vedas, however, have not given sufficient importance to this love. Their emphasis is more on asayam (aspiration) than on anubhavam (experience). There are innumerable Vedhik scholars who ceaselessly chant the Vedas. All

this is verbal and not concerned with active practice. This attitude was described by Shankara as Dhvaitha (dualism). All the Vedhik manthras were in the form of prayers for favours. (I want this, I want that). Desire is at the root of dualism. Desire arises because of the feeling that there is the "other." The one who desires and the object that is desired are two things apart from each other. True non-dualism is the extinction of this separation by the unifaction of the subject and the object. Dualism exists when the object that is desired, for instance, a kerchief, is distinct from the person who desires it.

Non-dualism can only be experienced

Non-dualism is a state of consciousness which can only be experienced and not described in words. In this regard, the Adhvaithin is like a dumb man who has enjoyed a delightful dinner but cannot describe the taste of the dishes he has consumed. There are two kinds of proof for the existence of anything. Prath yaksham (direct perception) and Paroksham (indirect proof). The bliss derived from the Adhvaithik consciousness is beyond words. It can only be experienced, but cannot be described or explained. In this matter, if indirect proof did not exist, direct perception would be out of the question. Unfortunately, today people attach value to direct perception alone and have scant regard for indirect evidence. This is not the right attitude. For instance, one sees a block of ice. It appears solid, but it is entirely made up of water, which is a liquid. Thus water, whose presence is inferred indirectly, is the basis for the solid block of ice that is seen by direct perception. Thus it can be realised that what is indirect is the basis for what is perceived directly.

Likewise, for this visible phenomenal universe, the invisible is the Divine. Not recognising this truth, men go by the Vedhik conception of dualism instead of recognising the truth of the Vedanthik doctrine of non-dualism.

Man spends his life immersed in worldly affairs. To point out to mankind the more vital inward path, Shankara dedicated his life. His preceptor, Gaudapadha, gave Shankara all help and encouragement. Despite being young in years, Shankara showed great determination and strength of

conviction. At the age of 16 he could convince the venerable pandiths of Kasi about the validity of the Adhvaithik doctrine.

What is Adhvaitha? The oneness of everything is Adhvaitha. The scriptures have declared that the cosmos is permeated by the Divine. It is the desire of devotees to worship the Divine under different forms and names that is the reason for the various creeds and sects.

The form and the substance

An affluent devotee, filled with dualistic feelings, adored the form of Krishna. He wished to offer worship regularly to an idol of Krishna. He got a gold idol of Krishna made by a goldsmith out of 20 coins. He got a golden cow made to match the idol. He got made a peacock and a golden cup to perform the abhishekam for the idol, both of the same weight as the idol.

Everyday he used to perform the abhishekam and enjoy the worship of Krishna. But the tide of time brought in its wake a decline in his fortunes and he found himself nearly destitute. He collected all his golden articles of worship and took them to another rich man to sell them. Each of the four items was weighed and valued at Rs. 60,000 each. The old devotee could not bear to learn that his revered Krishna idol was valued at the same price as the cow, the peacock and the cup. He said that more should be paid for the Krishna idol. The intending purchaser said: "Sir, for you the Krishna form is more precious than the other. But for me only the weight matters, not the form."

What is happening in the world today is that men are attaching value to the external forms and not to the Divine substance which is common to all of them. The five elements constituting every being are Divine. Apart from the five elements there is no sixth element. People imagine that. there is a sixth element and go after it.

This crazy desire is the cause of much of man's misery. Desires are

inescapable. But there should be a limit for them. In the story of Midas, he prayed and got a boon that whatever he touched should turn into gold. He soon found that he could not even eat his food as it turned into gold at his touch. He prayed again to the good fairy to take back the boon she had given to him.

It is evident from this story what will be the grave consequences of insatiable desires. Those who act upto Divine injunctions will be happy and prosperous.

Shankara, therefore, warned mankind against the mad pursuit of wealth and exhorted everyone to reduce one's desires. (Swami sang a Telugu song. "One gets wealth according to his Kanna. Therefore be content what you get.").

Control your desires

Control your desires. Cultivate love of God. That love will confer on you everything according to your needs. There is no need for you to ask for anything from God. "Did He not give to Shabari what she needed without her asking? Did He not bless Jatayu with His grace?" Dhasharatha had prayed for so long that his son should perform the last rites for him. But he did not get it, while the bird Jatayu had the privilege of getting his last rites done at Rama's hands. Jatayu got liberation after receiving the saving drops of water form Rama. Shabari was eagerly waiting for the arrival of Rama and made all the arrangements to welcome him and offer him the sweetest fruit. Shabari's intense devotion to Rama got its reward.

God confers His grace according to each one's deserts. The Divine is marked by Anugraha (Grace) and not Agraha (anger). But devotees tend to judge the ways of God according to their own predilections. A man standing before a mirror will see his moods reflected in the mirror.

It is impossible to escape from karma

No one can escape from the consequences of his actions whatever efforts he may make to run away from them. (Swami sang a song with the refrain, "Karma-dhatha vasama, nana" - Is it possible to escape from Karma, oh man?) As are your actions, so are the reactions.

In the cosmic context, nature is the mirror. God is the viewer. All that is reflected in nature is Divine. The One alone exists. The object and the image appear because of the presence of the mirror. When there is no mirror there is no image. This is the mystery relating to nature and the wonders of the Lord. The glories of the Lord are multifarious and marvellous beyond words.

God's arithmetic is different from man's. For instance, when a mirror is placed before you, you have three entities. Yourself, the mirror and your image. When you take away the mirror, according to ordinary arithmetic, three minus one should be two. But when the mirror is removed only you remain. Three minus one becomes one!

Many people think and many people say: "Money makes many many things." But I say: "Money makes many wrongs."

Only when the distinction between the worldly point of view and the Divine point of view is understood that people will learn to make proper use of money.

"You and I are one"

This is the distinctive significance of Shankara's non-dualism. Shankara related the experiences of daily life to the doctrine of Ekathvam (spiritual oneness). The Divine is one, but is adored under different names and forms: Allah, Jesus, Buddha, Zoroaster, Rama, Hari or Hara. All are the same. Shankara did not approve of God being described as mother, father, etc. The relationship between God and man is oneness. "You and I are one." This is the essence of the Adhvaithik doctrine. This awareness of oneness can give infinite joy, according to Shankara.

This experience does not come easily. One has to undertake intensive enquiry and also practise samskaras (spiritual discipline). When the samskaras lead to the refinement of the spirit, the experience of oneness with the Divine comes. How fortunate is the one who gets that experience! None can be more fortunate.

The one who gets this experience is the Lord of the universe. As the Master of the Self he is the Lord of the Cosmos. This Atma is present in every cell of the human body. When this nectarine truth is realised, man will not seek the ephemeral. Everyone should therefore seek the nectar, of enduring Athmik bliss.

Shankara made all endeavours to propagate the Adhvaithik message to the entire country and to every person whether he was a king or a commoner, scholar or ignoramus.

Pledge to the mother

Shankara had given a pledge to his mother that he would, reach her in the last moments and perform the last rites for her. Being a pure and high-souled being, he was determined to keep his word. For the pure-hearted the plighted word is bound to be kept. Moreover, whatever they say will happen.

The Divine chooses the time and the situation for showering H.is grace and conveying His message. In the ease of Arjuna, the Kurukshethra war was the right moment for Krishna to test Arjuna's total faith in Krishna and his deservedness for receiving the message of the Geetha.

The true strength can be acquired only through Love. All other efforts are of no avail. Thus we should seek from God only the strength of LOVE.

- Sathya Sai Baba

45. Attachment to the Self is True Love (Alternative Translation)

Date: 09 September 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This is the alternative translation of the discourse originally published in Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 29. This discourse appears in the Sathya Sai Speaks series but was retranslated and appeared in Sanathana Sarathi in August 2015.

Noble Souls Are Least Affected When Wicked People Criticise And Ridicule Them.
Does The Elephant Lose Its Might And Majesty Just Because Dogs Bark At It?
(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of divine Atma!

Every object in this creation appears to have a colour. You think that these colours are natural to these objects, but this is not so. They only appear to have a particular colour. For example, sky appears to be blue in colour and so is the ocean, and you say that the sky is blue, the ocean is blue. But that is not correct. Neither the sky nor the ocean is blue in colour. Since the sky is far away, it appears to be blue to our eyes. Similarly, the ocean appears to be blue because of its infinite depth. When you go near the ocean and take its water in your hand, you will see it has no colour.

The good and bad that you experience in this world depend on your feelings, thoughts, and beliefs. You cannot see the true form and colour. Electricity is produced from water and is put to many uses, but it cannot be seen with the naked eye. Likewise, all living beings originate from the divine principle of Atma. But the principle of Atma cannot be seen. You can only visualise the behaviour, good or bad, of the living beings that originates from it.

Sankara fulfilled his promise to his mother

Sankara's philosophy of nondualism (adwaitha) became popular among the scholars. Once, he was presiding over a large congregation of scholars. As he closed his eyes, he saw his mother in distress. The heart of a noble soul is like a mirror. He at once stopped the proceedings of the assembly and went to Kalady. He came to his mother and poured sanctified tulsi (a medicinal plant) water in her mouth before she breathed her last. In this way, he kept up the promise he gave to his mother.

In the prevailing circumstances those days, people of Kalady were opposed to any renunciant (sannyasi) performing the funeral rites of his near and dear ones, since they believed it was against the tradition. One who takes to renunciation is supposed to have given up all worldly relationships. But Sankara, in spite of being a renunciant, came to perform his mother's final rites to fulfill his promise.

No one in the village came forward to help him performance his mother's funeral rites. Nambudiri Brahmins (Hindu Brahmins from the state of Kerala) strongly objected to this. According to them, Sankara was acting contrary to Dharma. Since he had no other option, Sankara carried the body of his mother on his shoulder and cremated it in the backyard of his house.

The same practice is followed even to this day in Kerala. If some person in the family dies, they cremate the body in the backyard of their house. If you go to Kerala, you will find houses having spacious back yards.

I am explaining this in a little more detail in order to make the students understand this. Before taking up renunciations (sannyasa), one is supposed to perform viraja homa (a fire-sacrifice). What is Viraja homa? In viraja homa, one performs one's own final rites, giving up all worldly relationships and one's name. From that moment onward, one takes a new name and dons ochre robes.

All those who take to the path of renunciation assume names such as Satchidananda, Nityananda, etc. However, we don't see even a trace of bliss (ananda) in many of them.

When one performs one's own final rites in viraja homa, one starts a new life. Then where is the question of having worldly relations? Therefore, it is prescribed that a renunciant should not take part in ceremonial acts and sacrificial rites (karma kanda).

Here, I would like to give you a small example. When we went to Rishikesh, Burgula Ramakrishna Rao made arrangements for the accommodation of devotees in guest houses and in the houses of a few individuals. That day, Swami Sivananda and his disciples came and asked Me to preside over the 75th Birthday celebrations of Swami Sivananda. I told them it was the 75th Birthday of Kuppuswami and not Sivananda. Kuppuswami was his name prior to taking to renunciation. After taking to renunciation, Kuppuswami ceased to exist. His name and status changed. Sivananda was the name given to him at the time of taking to renunciation. By then, thirty-seven years had passed. Therefore, I told them it was the 37th birthday of Sivananda and not 75th.

Sivananda said that he had not met anyone in his life who imparted a spiritual lesson in such a forceful manner.

People today rely only on physical name and status, but they don't recognise the fundamental basis. It is possible only for the divine incarnations to have the same name and stage in life right from birth till the end. Many make the mistake of associating and identifying themselves with their earlier name and status even after taking to renunciation.

Devotion of Burgula Ramakrishna Rao

Burgula Ramakrishna Rao was a great devotee. He was also a great linguist, knowing twelve languages. He was highly intelligent. He had the desire to perform a pilgrimage to Badrinath, Kedarnath with the Avatar Himself. When

he was the Governor of Uttar Pradesh, he wanted to undertake this sacred pilgrimage with Swami. Having come to know about this trip, nearly 200 devotees from all parts of India joined us and became part of our entourage.

Burgula Ramakrishna Rao and his wife had a sacred heart. They used to partake of food only after feeding those devotees. Such was their spirit of sacrifice. They used to personally serve water to all the devotees. When his ADCs requested him, "Sir, you also have your food, and we will serve water to devotees", he told them, "I am not the Governor now, I am the servant of Swami." On another occasion, when Burgula Ramakrishna Rao was the Chief Minister of erstwhile Hyderabad State, Swami went to Malakpet in Hyderabad. Thousands of devotees were standing in the queue to have Swami's darshan. The devotees were supposed to have Swami's darshan one after the other without wasting a moment. The volunteers were nudging the devotees, as is the practice in the sanctum sanctorum of Tirupati. Here students should understand how pure-hearted Ramakrishna Rao was. He also stood in the queue to have Swami's darshan.

The Inspector General of Police came and asked him, "Sir, you are the Chief Minister; therefore, you should not stand in the queue. Please come in the front." Ramakrishna Rao replied, "I may be the Chief Minister from a political point of view, but I am an ordinary devotee from the spiritual point of view. I am not such a great devotee to have darshan of the Lord straightaway". Such was his nobility.

Physical beauty is perishable

After fulfilling the promise given to his mother, Sankara went to Kasi, accompanied by his disciples. On the way, he saw some young men and women moving together. He cautioned his disciples to beware of physical attractions. He told them, "These days, young men and women are attracted by the physical body, which is filled with all sorts of filth and gives out a foul smell. They are carried away by the physical beauty, but they don't see the beauty of the indwelling Atma. This does not behoove a human being. Why so

much infatuation for the body, which changes from moment to moment?" The physical body is bound to disintegrate and get reduced to ashes. In this human birth, youth is like passing clouds that come and go.

Describing the ephemeral nature of the body, Sankara tried to develop a sense of detachment in the hearts of people. In this regard, young men and women should behave with great caution. They should not have attraction for the physical body, which is made up of flesh, blood, and bones and emits foul smell. Where is the question of beauty in such a body? It is only an illusion and not the reality.

(In this context, Swami related the story of a prince who wanted to marry a merchant's daughter for her beauty. The girl, who was devoted to God and wished to remain single, devised a plan to rid the prince of his infatuation. She sent word that she would agree to marry the prince if he approved of her after a week. Meanwhile, she took a series of purgatives, collected all the purgings in vessels and went to meet the prince. By that time, she was so emaciated that all her youthful charm had gone. She told the prince that the beauty he saw in her was all contained in the vessels. The prince learnt the lesson and decided also to remain single and devote himself to serve God.) The body is like a water bubble, the mind is like a mad monkey. The body follows the mind. Adi Sankara taught young people not to have attraction for sensual pleasures.

The Body, Which Is Made Up Of Five Elements, Is Weak And Is Bound To Disintegrate.
Though Hundred Years Of Life-Span Is Prescribed, One Cannot Take It For Granted.
One May Leave One's Mortal Coil At Any Time, Be It In Childhood, Youth, Or Old Age.
Death Is Certain.
Hence, Before The Body Perishes, Make Efforts To Know Your True Nature.
(Telugu Poem)

At the same time, Sankara never advocated that all young people should become renunciants (sannyasis). He advised them to discharge their duties earnestly and spend their time in contemplation of God. He taught what he himself practised. Young men and women today have become slaves to their senses and are leading their lives like animals. That is why Adi Sankara taught youth the philosophy of nondualism (adwaitha) in a way they could understand.

Brahman is the fundamental principle of creation

Children - boys and girls! You would have watched movies in a cinema hall. You can learn nondualism even from cinema. When you enter the cinema hall, initially you find only the white screen. You will not be satisfied just by watching the white screen all the time. You eagerly wait for the pictures to be projected on the screen. When the pictures appear on the screen, you are happy to watch. Does the same picture permanently appear on the screen? No. It comes and goes. But the screen neither comes nor goes. It is always there. The screen is permanent, but the picture is temporary.

Similarly, the world (jagath), which comes and goes, is temporary. Brahman, who neither comes nor goes, is eternal. That is why Adi Sankara declared, "Brahman alone is real; the world is unreal (Brahma sathyam jagan-mithya)." In the word jagath, 'ja' means 'to come' and 'gat' means 'to go'. Just as pictures appear and disappear on the screen, likewise the world comes and goes on the screen of Brahman. Brahman is the truth; it is like the white screen. But nobody likes to see only the screen all the time. People will look the screen only when pictures appear on it.

Sankara also declared, "Vishnu pervades the entire universe (Sarvam Vishnumayam jagat)." Hearing this, the scholars were confused because earlier Sankara had declared that the world is unreal. Later he said, the entire world is permeated by Vishnu. The scholars wondered which of these statements was true. But Sankara said, both are true. Pictures come and go.

Oh Lord! I Am Caught Up In This Cycle Of Birth And Death; Time And Again, I Experience 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.
Punarapi Jananam Punarapi Maranam, Punarapi Janani Jathare Sayanam,
Iha Samsare Bahu Dustare, Kripayapare Pahi Murare.

Everything is unreal except Brahman. Here is an example. On the cinema screen, you see the pictures. You see only the pictures but not the screen. But where is the screen when pictures are projected on it? It becomes a part of the pictures. Without the screen, you cannot see the pictures. Therefore, the screen is in the background. Similarly, the eternal principle of Divinity permeates the entire universe.

It is on this basis that it is said, "Vishnu pervades the entire universe (Sarvam Vishnumayam jagat)." The same truth is declared by the Vedic statement, "the entire world is permeated by God (Isavasyam idam jagat)." The same Atma is present in all names and forms. Without the screen of Atma, you cannot see the picture of the world. This is how Sankara propagated the principle of nondualism (adwaitha) to the world.

What is the essential teaching of nondualism? One should take the fundamental principle as the basis while carrying on life in this physical and ephemeral world. This fundamental principle is the screen of Brahman. This unreal world is projected on the screen of Brahman.

The entire creation is based on this fundamental principle. You can experience the principle of oneness only when you realise the fundamental basis of the creation. This oneness is denoted by the Atma, which is present in everyone in the form of consciousness.

This Atmic principle is given various names such as Rama, Krishna, Buddha Jesus, Nanak, etc. All these names and forms are attributed by people to Divinity. They have birth and death but not Divinity. Divinity is all-pervasive.

Sankara taught this principle of nondualism to all the scholars in an elaborate way. However, it is not easy for all to understand this nondualistic philosophy because every individual appears to be different from the other. But the fundamental power is the same in all. That is the life force, which is also called I (Aham).

What is this life force? The process of our inhalation and exhalation is denoted by the soham principle. This is our life force. It is due to the presence of the soham principle that the body exists. 'So' means 'That', 'ham' means 'I'. That Thou Art is the teaching of the soham principle, which is also called the Hamsa Gayatri.

There are three subtle channels in the human body - ida, pingala, and sushumna (the nerve currents to the left, right and middle of the spinal column) - which are associated with the life force. Inhalation is denoted by puraka, exhalation by rechaka, and retention by kumbhaka. These three form the essential aspects of breath control (pranayama). Breath control is one of the steps of yoga propounded by Sage Patanjali, which consists of eight steps, namely,

control of the inner senses (yama), control of the outer senses (niyama), sitting postures (asana), breath control (pranayama), control of the mind (pratyahara), concentration (dharana), meditation (dhyana), superconscious state (samadhi).

The process of inhalation is denoted by 'so' and exhalation by 'ham'. Between inhalation and exhalation, there is retention of breath at the centre of eyebrows. This is the place where yogis focus while performing meditation. This is the source of Atmic knowledge. Ancient yogis have exhorted man to focus on the fundamental basis of everything, i.e. Atma.

The confluence of Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati rivers is called Prayag in the worldly sense. But the real meeting place (prayag) is where the nerve channels ida, pingala, and sushumna meet. That is the place of the centre of the eyebrows (bhrumadhya).

Adi Sankara compared the path of sacred and selfless work to the Ganga, the path of worship to the Yamuna. and the path of wisdom to the Saraswati. Saraswati is unseen (antar vahini). Similarly, wisdom is the unseen (antar vahini) of work and worship.

We travel either by train or car to reach Prayag. But the real confluence (prayag) cannot be reached by these modes of transport.

The same truth was declared by Mira when she was forced to leave her house. Then she sang,

Oh mind! Go to the banks of the Ganga and Yamuna; the water of Ganga and Yamuna is pure; it will make the body cool and serene Chalo re mana Ganga Yamuna teer, Ganga Yamuna nirmal pani sheetal hota sarir Lord Krishna resides at the confluence of sacred Ganga and Yamuna in the form of Atma. How does Krishna appear to be?

He Is Wearing Yellow Silk Robe And Is Adorned With A Crown Of Peacock Feathers And Glittering Ear Rings.
Mora Mukata Pitambara Shobhe Kundala Rajata Sarir

Such are the sacred feelings of pure-hearted devotees. Mira experienced oneness with Krishna by her deep devotion.

Such a principle of oneness was taught by Sankara to young and old alike. In this manner, gradually, the philosophy of nondualism (adwaitha) was accepted by everyone.

Sankara's atonement

When Mandana Misra was defeated in the debate, Sankara insisted that he should take to renunciation (sannyasa) as per the condition of the debate. Ubhayabharati, the wife of Mandana Misra, was a great scholar. She told

Sankara, "You have full knowledge of all scriptures. I am the better half (ardhangini) of my husband, which means I am half of his body. Therefore, only when you defeat me also in the debate can you ask him to take to renunciation." Sankara agreed to her proposal and entered into a debate with her. During the course of the debate, she asked him a question relating to the dharma of a householder as stated in the Kama Sastra (a treatise on marital love). Sankara had no knowledge of this. Therefore, he asked her for one month's time to find out an answer to this.

At that time, a king named Amaruka died, and his dead body was lying in the palace. Seizing the opportunity, Sankara entered his body through the power of yoga. Seeing their king coming back to life, the people of the kingdom were overjoyed and took him to the palace. But it was not the king but Sankara, who had entered the king's body.

He started leading the life of a householder just like the king. But very soon he realised that he had done an unsacred act, and his conscience did not accept this. At once he left the king's body, went to Ubhayabharati, and answered her question.

Afterward, Sankara set out on his journey to Kashmir. In those days, Srinagar in Kashmir was also a place of great scholars and intellectuals. The king of Kashmir patronised them.

The moment Sankara entered Srinagar, the doors of the temple of the divine mother got closed at once. People tried in vain to open the doors. Many Vedic scholars went to the temple and started singing hymns in praise of the deity and praying to her to open the doors.

The goddess was moved by their devotion. An ethereal voice was heard, saying, "Sankara is a great scholar and one who practises what he preaches (an acharya). However, he has acquired a blemish. Only when he atones for the mistake he committed that caused this blemish will the temple doors be opened." Sankara started praying to the divine mother intensely. He admitted that it was his mistake to have entered the body of the king and led the life of

a householder in the royal palace. In order to atone for the sin he committed, he undertook deep penance for eleven days, foregoing food and sleep. On the twelfth day, the temple doors opened on their own. Such was the determination of Sankara.

The earlier speaker said, "Everyone should love Swami, and only through love will life be sanctified". But what type of love you should have? It is not worldly love. Sankara acquired a blemish because of such worldly love. But even that he did not do with any bad intention. His intention was only to give an answer to Ubhayabharati.

If your love is associated with Atmic feeling, you will not acquire any blemish. True love is related to the Atma and not to the body. Attachment to the Self is true love. Love is God. Live in Love. Such love will confer purity of heart. I said yesterday,

One may have mastered the Vedas and Vedangas, One may have the expertise to compose prose and poetry,

> But If One Lacks Purity Of Heart, One Will Ruin Oneself.
> Never Forget These Words Of Wisdom.
> (Telugu Poem)

It is not the knowledge of the Vedas, the scriptures, and the Puranas that is important. Whatever you do with purity of heart is good, pure, sacred, and divine. Do not perform any action with the desire for fruits. Love everyone with the feeling that the same Atma is present in you and them. That is the principle of true love.

Taking such love as the basis of his teachings, Sankara propagated the philosophy of nondualism to the entire world. He paid special attention to youth and children while imparting his teachings.

However, you should be aware that one cannot develop the spirit of

detachment by merely listening to spiritual discourses.

A big businessman used to go every day to listen to lectures on mythological texts delivered by a learned holy man. The holy man once announced publicly, "All of you must listen to these talks on all seven days of the week. This will bestow full merit on you." The businessman attended the talks regularly on five days. On the 6th day, he had to go out for urgent work, so he called his son and said to him, "The holy man told me that I would earn great merit if I attend his talk sessions on all seven days. But it is urgent for me to go out tomorrow. Therefore, you go and listen to the talk of the holy man in my place because I don't want to lose the merit by my absence." Soon after, the businessman went to his room and started thinking, "The holy man is imparting Vedic teachings that one should renounce the world and focus only on God. He is exhorting everyone not to develop body attachment and get trapped in this objective world (samsara). What will happen if my son becomes a renunciant after listening to the teachings of the holy man"?

Immediately, he went to the holy man and said to him respectfully, "Tomorrow I am sending my son to listen to your talk. Kindly do not emphasise the value of renunciation in your talk. Rather, speak about the significance of love for the world." The holy man remarked, "You have attended my talks for five days. Tell me how much detachment and renunciation have you developed? Then, how is it possible for your son to develop the spirit of renunciation by listening to my talk for only one day? That is out of question." True meaning of renunciation It is not easy to get rid of mountainous sins that one has acquired over a number of births. Therefore, Sankara was determined to develop a sense of detachment in children, thereby cleaning their hearts by exposing them to his teachings repeatedly.

The vessels that are used for marriages may be cleaned once in a while. But the tumbler that is used everyday has to be cleaned daily. Likewise, youth should undergo this cleaning process repeatedly to develop detachment.

In this way, Sankara developed the spirit of detachment (vairagya) in the youth. What is meant by vairagya? I have told you earlier. Will anyone want

to eat the food they have vomited? You should develop as much aversion to worldly pleasures as you have to the vomited food.

Don't say, "I shall try." "Try is dry." You must do, you must do. It is only for your good.

There is no happiness in worldly things and relations. Whatever may be your earnings, whatever may be the happiness you experience in this world, you have to leave all that and go from this world. Therefore, hold on to God firmly. He is your true and eternal saviour. Develop strong determination to hold on to Him. Only then will your life be redeemed.

There is no point in developing detachment for some time and getting attached to worldly things again. Having given up worldly desires once, give them up forever. Divinity will manifest in you when you have such a supreme sense of detachment. This is the truth, and nothing but the truth.

The teachings of Sankara on detachment have done great good to humanity. Today many scholars propagate the principle of nondualism, but they themselves do not practise it. It is not enough to merely teach, you should practise.

Your mind should be immerse in the feelings of nondualism and your body should translate it into action. That is the true sense of detachment. Then only can you attain Brahman, who is truth, wisdom, and infinity (sathyam, jnanam, and anantam). Only God is real, all else is unreal.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan "Sathyam Jnanam Anantam Brahma...")

45. Shankara’s call to youth

Date: 09 September 1996 / Location: Brindavan

What Does It Matter
If The Petty-Minded
Slight Noble Souls?
Does Mighty Elephant Lose
Its Grandeur When Dogs Bark?

EMBODIMENTS of the Divine Atma! All objects in the world which you see display some kind of colour. We think that these colours are natural to those objects. It is not so. The colours are really a reflection of our own vision. The sky appears blue when we look at it. The ocean appears dark blue in colour. We say that the sky is blue, the ocean is blue. This is incorrect. Neither the sky nor the ocean is blue in colour. It is the vastness of space and the depths of the ocean which produce this impression of bluishness. When you take a handful of seawater and look at it you will find that it is colourless. It will not show the colour that you fancy.

Likewise, good and evil depend on one's thoughts and feelings. The true colour of any object is not perceivable. Equally, the true form is not apparent.

Electrical energy is generated from a hydroelectric power station. The electric current is not visible to us, though the different uses to which the energy is put are obvious. Likewise, all beings, all living creatures, emerge from the Athmik Principle. But this Principle is not apparent. We can see the beings arising from this Principle and their behaviour, good and bad.

A promise fulfilled

After Shankara propagated his Adhvaithik doctrine from Kasi, there was an assembly of great scholars in the holy city. Shankara, who was in that

assembly, closed his eyes for a moment and experienced the vision of his mother in great distress. Immediately he dispersed the assembly and left for Kaladi. He reached his mother in her last moments, as promised, administered thulasi water to her lips and discharged his duties to the mother.

At that time, the people of Kaladi did not view with approval the actions of Shankara, because in their view, one who had taken to sanyasa, should not revert to the activities of a householder and perform rituals. Sanyasa means giving up all desires. The view of the orthodox.pandiths was that once a person had taken to sanyasa he should not perform the last rites for a mother or a father which are the obligations of a householder.

To enable the students to understand the implications of this incident, I shall explain what sanyasa means. Before one takes to sanyasa, the Viraja Homa is performed which signifies that the person dies as it were and gives up all his previous worldly commitments and enters on a new life, assuming a new form and wearing a new robe. The old form is cast away and the former name is also given up. He gets a new name related to the ascetic order. The suffix Anandha is tacked on the name, though few of them, experience Anandha! After going through this ceremony, where is the place for mother or father?

Swami's visit to Hrishikesh

In this context, I should like to recall an incident which happened when I was travelling with Burugula Ramakrishna Rao, the then Governor of Utthar Pradhesh. He was a good devotee and was proficient in a number of languages. He was a very intelligent person. He resolved to make the trip to Badhrinath and Kedharnath "in the company of the Lord Himself (Bhagawan Baba)." On learning that Swami was going to Badhrinath, nearly 200 devotes joined Bhagawan's group. The Ramakrishna Rao couple were very pure and pious people and every day they would take their food only after the 200 devotees with Swami had taken their food. Such was their devotion! When the devotees sat for the meals, Ramakrishna Rao himself would serve water

for all of them. He would not allow his A.D.C. or others to do this service. He used to declare-"I am a servant of Swami, not a Governor."

Ramakrishna Rao was previously Chief Minister of Andhra Pradhesh at Hyderabad. When Swami went there during that period, thousands of persons were lined up in a queue for dharshan of Swami at Malakpet. The volunteers were hustling the devotees in the queue to save time.

I should like the students to realise what a tender heart Ramakrishna Rao had. He joined the queue. The Inspector General of Police approached Ramakrishna Rao and appealed to him to come separately and not join in the queue. Ramakrishna Rao told him: "Politically I may be Chief Minister. Spiritually I am a cheap devotee! I am not such a great devotee." Such was the devotional spirit of Ramakrishna Rao!

Swami and Shivanandha

All of us reached Hrishikesh. Ramakrishna Rao had arranged for the stay of the entire party in a big guest house and nearby cottages. At that time, Shivanandha and a group of his devotees came to the guest house and requested Swami to visit Swami Shivanandha's ashram the next day, which happened to be Shivanandha's seventieth birthday. Swami remarked: "It is not Shivanandha's birthday but KuppuSwami's birthday. Before he assumed the name. Shivanandha, as a renunciant, his name was KuppuSwami. He was a doctor. That KuppuSwami ceased to exist with the taking of Sanyasa. He then adopted the name Shivanandha. That was 26 years ago. Hence the Swami is only 26 years old as Shivanandha. It is the 70th Birthday for KuppuSwami and only the 26th Birthday for Shivanandha!" Shivanandha said: "Swami! No one has told me this truth so far in this forceful manner."

This body is 70 years old. People recognise the physical, but do not recognise the basis that sustains it. This truth can be understood only by Divine personalities like avathars and not by others. From the moment of birth till the end of this body it will bear one form and one name.

People who profess Adhvaitha, often remember their pre-sanyasa life and continue to think of it while carrying on their life as renunciants.

Practice of cremation in the backyard in Kerala

Shankara was confronted with a difficult situation. No one in his village was willing to help him. He had to perform the obsequies for his mother. The local Nambuudhiri Brahmins declared that they could not touch the body. They felt that Shankara was going against scriptural injunctions.

Utterly helpless, Shankara carried the body himself to the backyard of the house and cremated it. What Shankara did then is practised even today in Kaladi. When any elders pass away, their bodies are cremated in the backyard of their houses. There is no separate cremation ground for them.

When you go to Kerala you will find houses facing the street but the backyard will be open space. Anyone who goes there will have to take a purifactory bath. In this manner Shankara fulfilled the promise he gave to his mother.

Shankara then left for Kasi. He was deeply pained at the attitude displayed towards him by the people of Kaladi. Shankara was walking all the way to Kasi, with just a stick in his hand and an oil torch to light his way at night.

Advice to the young

Looking at young men and women going about on his way, Shankara remarked to his disciples that young people were more keen about sensuous pleasures than to enquire about the Atma. It is a pity that people are attached to the body which is a container of many filthy objects. They are carried away by the external physical attractions of the body. It is a crying shame! What a pity that people should be so attached to this impermanent body! How long can youthhood last? Shankara then and there taught the people about the transitoriness of carnal pleasures.

His message was a warning to youth to be very careful in the life they led. They should give up attachment to the body. In this context I would relate the story of a prince who wanted to marry a merchant's daughter for her beauty. The girl who was devoted to God and wished to remain single, devised a plan to rid the prince of his infatuations. She sent word that she would agree to marry the prince if he approved of her after a week. Meanwhile she took a series of purgatives, collected all the purgings in vessels and went to meet the prince. By that time she was so emaciated that all her youthful charm had gone. She told the prince that the beauty he saw in her was all contained in the vessels. The prince learnt the lesson and decided also to remain single and devote himself to serve God.

Shankara sought in this manner to turn the minds of the people away from sensual pleasures to thoughts of God. Shankara did not call upon all young men to take to sanyasa. He exhorted them to do their duty and dedicate the body to the service of the Divine. He preached the truth, practised it and broadcast it to the world.

Young people today have become slaves of the senses and are behaving like the lower animals.

Shankara pointed out how worldly life is like the scenes on a screen. They come and go, but the screen remains. He declared: "Brahma Sathyam. Jagath mithya" (The Self is real. The world is illusory). Shankara also declared: "Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagath" (The Universe is permeated by God). When scholars pointed out the contradiction between the two statements, Shankara said: "Worldly life is illusory because it is continually coming and going." At the same time, this worldly life is lived like the moving scenes on a permanent screen. In this process the world and the Divine become one as it were like the oneness of the screen and the pictures on it. This is the basis for the statement: "Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagath." Hence, the Upanishathik declaration that the whole cosmos is dwelt in by God.

Adhvaitha and worldly duties

This was the non-dualism preached by Shankara. Consider the Divine as the fundamental basis and lead your worldly life recognising its impermanence. Without the Divine the cosmos has no existence. Hence man must recognise the one Divine Athmik Principle that is present in all beings. It may be called by different names. The Eternal Divine is birthless and nameless.

(Swami described Shankara's successful debates with Mandana Mishra and his wife, Ubhaya bharathi, both of whom took to sanyasa thereafter. Shankara then went to Kashmir.) Shankara's atonement in Kashmir The ruler of Kashmir was a great patron of scholars. Shankara wanted to defeat them in debates. The moment Shankara entered Kashmir, the gates of the temple of Kanaka-dhurga closed. All the efforts to open them proved fruitless. All the pandiths went to the temple and prayed to the goddess. In answer to their prayers the Goddess spoke in an ethereal voice: "Shankara is a great Acharya (preceptor). But he suffers from one taint. Only when the taint is removed will these doors open." Shankara then sang hymns in praise of Shiva. Shankara realised that he had committed a mistake in entering the dead body of the king of Kasi to acquire the experience-of a householder for carrying on the debate with Ubhayabharathi, the wife of Mandana Mishra. To atone for this lapse he decided on a eleven days fast, without food or water, to perform a thapas. On the twelfth day, the doors of the temple opened of their own accord. This showed the power of Shankara's determination and penance.

Krishnamurthy and Sandipan Chatterjee (who had spoken earlier) referred to Prema and called upon the students to cultivate love. What is the kind of love they should develop? Shankara has given the answer. The love should arise from the Atma. True prayer should stem from the soul and not the body. That love is God. Live in love.

Develop detachment

Shankara continuously preached the doctrine of detachment to young people because he realised that attachments developed over many lives cannot be

shed by listening to one or two speeches. There was a businessman who feared that his son might develop aversion to the world if he listened to the discourse of a pandith who was expounding the greatness of renunciation. The pandith assured the merchant that one day's talk was not going to reform his son, when a series of talks had no effect on the father. When there was need for constant purity in daily life, the efforts at spiritual cleansing should be continuous. This was the way Shankara was preaching to the young the philosophy of renunciation and detachment. Students should hold fast to God as the only true friend and supporter. When you have firm faith, the Divine will manifest Himself to you. This is the truth, the truth and nothing but the Truth.

Today several pandiths expounded Adhvaitha, but few practise it. Adhvaitha should be lived, not merely repeated in words! Realise the truth: "Sathyam, Jnanam, Anantham Brahma!"

46. Atma is the Fundamental Basis of Everything (Alternative Translation)

Date: 10 September 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It is taken from the following website and edited slightly: http://sssbpt.org/Pages/Archivals/Divine_Discourses.htm.

The Tongue Moves In Between The Teeth Without Getting Harmed.
Likewise, It Is Good For People To Conduct Themselves With Care And Caution While Leading A Life In Society. Never Forget These Words Of Wisdom.
(Telugu Poem)

Adi Sankara taught that world is like a drama stage on which man plays his role, experiences pleasure and pain, and ultimately gives up his life.

Human Life Is As Unstable As A Drop Of Water On A Lotus Leaf.
This Body Is A Den Of Diseases And Attachment.
The Entire World Is Riddled With Sorrow And Misery.
Therefore, Oh Foolish People, Chant The Name Of Govinda.
(Telugu Poem)

Human life is filled with sorrow, disappointment and dejection. Every moment is filled with fear, uncertainty and doubts. There is nothing certain in life, and there is fear everywhere. How can one be free from fear?

This Life Is Full Of Fear.
The World Is Like A Padmavyuha (Lotus-Shaped Military Formation)
From Which One Is Unable To Find A Way Out.
Are Trials And Tribulations The Only Companions Of People Who Have No Refuge?

Are Tears Of Sorrow The Only Reward For Families That Are Already Ruined?
Take Refuge In The Atmic Principle
(Telugu Song)

How can one get happiness in this human life, which is filled with fear, doubt, agitation, and ego? Even the happiness you get is associated with fear. Fearlessness is nowhere to be seen in life.

Then how can one be free from fear? Fearlessness is where detachment is. How can one develop detachment? It is possible only in the proximity of God. That is why Sankara taught "Oh man, in order to be free from fear and attain a state of fearlessness, take refuge in the principle of the Atma. It is only then can you understand the reality." Happiness, merit, profit, and light are nothing but the absence of sorrow, sin, loss, and darkness, respectively. In fact, they are not separate from each other. The Atma is the fundamental basis and source of all these.

Here is a flower with a number of petals. These petals appear to be different from each other, but all of them originate from the same source. Flower is one but petals are many. Similarly, innumerable waves originate from the infinite ocean. No wave appears to be identical with the other. Waves are many but their source of origin, that is the ocean, is one. You find in the waves the same wetness, coolness, and salinity as you find in the ocean.

Out of the waves emerges froth. Waves are the basis of froth, and ocean is the basis of waves. The water in the ocean assumes the form of waves and the water in the waves manifests as froth. But, in fact, all the three are one. That is nondualism (adwaitha).

Similarly, a person is the combination of body, mind, and Atma. Mind is the basis of body, and the Atma is the basis of mind. In fact, the Atma is the fundamental basis of everything. That is the principle of nondualism taught by Sankara. People who do not realise this truth take to the physical, ephemeral, and worldly path and undergo many difficulties and hardships

before they are able to realise the Atmic principle.

Siddhartha's detachment

King Suddhodana was blessed with a son after a long wait. He named him Siddhartha. One day a noble sage came to the palace of King Suddhodana. On seeing child Siddhartha, he made a prophetic statement, "Oh king! Your son will become a renunciant." On hearing his words, the king was gripped with fear. From that day onward, he took care that Siddhartha would not go out of the palace so that he would not see the suffering, sickness, and misery that are present in the world. He got him married at the age of 16 and provided all comforts and conveniences to him in the palace.

However, one day, Siddhartha went out of the palace to see the outside world. As he was going in the chariot, he saw a decrepit old man walking with difficulty with the help of a stick. Siddhartha asked his charioteer, "What type of animal is this? It appears to be a rather strange animal." The charioteer replied, "Oh prince, he is also a human being like us. As the age advances, the body becomes weak and misshaped." Siddhartha was surprised, "He asked, will everyone come to this stage as the age advances?" "No one is an exception to this. It is the law of nature," replied the charioteer.

After going some distance, Siddhartha came across a sick person coughing, gasping for breath, and undergoing a lot of suffering. Siddhartha asked, "What is this? Why is he suffering so much?" The charioteer replied, "Oh prince, this man is sick. This body is a den of diseases. Nobody can say when and how a person will be afflicted with a disease." This caused disturbance in the mind of Siddhartha. After going further, he found a dead body being carried by four people. He asked the charioteer, "What is this? What are they carrying?" "They are carrying a dead body," replied the charioteer.

"What do you mean by dead body?" asked Siddhartha.

The charioteer said, "It is a body without life. When there is life principle in

the body, it is sivam (auspicious) and when the life principle leaves the body, it becomes savam (corpse)".

Siddhartha asked him, "Does everyone die one day?" "No one can escape death," said the charioteer.

After hearing all this, Siddhartha returned to the palace. All that he saw deeply affected his mind. After returning home, he could neither eat nor sleep. He cast a look of detachment at his wife Yashodhara and son Rahula, who were in deep sleep. He concluded that the world is full of sorrow and fear. Realising that everything was ephemeral and unreal, he developed intense feeling of renunciation.

All of you come across many sick persons, old people, and dead bodies, but you do not develop the sense of detachment like Siddhartha. It is only by the grace of God that one develops such an intense feeling of detachment.

Qualities of a true renunciant

Here is a small story. Once, a prince went to a forest for hunting. After roaming in the forest for a long time, he felt very tired and thirsty. He came across an Ashram and went inside in search of water. The sage residing in the ashram asked him, "Who are you? Where have you come from?" The prince replied, "My name is Jitendriya, and I have come from the Jitendriya kingdom. Please give me some water to quench my thirst." The sage offered him a seat and gave him water to drink. The sage thought, "There are people in this world whose name is Dharmaraja, but they conduct themselves in a most unrighteous way. He comes from Jitendriya kingdom and his name is also Jitendriya (one who has conquered his senses). Does he conduct himself in accordance with his name? Let me find out." The sage asked the prince to hand over his royal clothes to him and wear an ascetic's dress himself. He took the prince's clothes, sprinkled some red liquid on them, and set out for the kingdom of Jitendriya. At the palace gate, the sentry greeted the sage with reverence and asked him the object of his visit. The sage told him that

the prince had been killed by a wild animal in the forest and that he had brought the prince's clothes. He asked him to convey this message to the king.

The gatekeeper smiled and asked, "Who is free from death? Everyone who is born is bound to die. Birth and death go together." There is a practice in the railways to stamp on every railway wagon the date on which it has to be returned to the workshop for repair and repainting. Likewise, everybody has a return date, though it is not visible.

After hearing the sentry's words, the sage went to meet the king himself. He told the king that his son had died and pretended like crying. While the renunciant was wailing, the king was having a laugh. The king said to him, "You are wearing an ochre robe, but your words are unbecoming of a renunciant. Why do you cry? This is no matter for grief or worry. At dusk, hundreds of birds return to a tree for rest. The next morning they fly away. What is the relationship between the different birds? Likewise, on the tree of my family, birds like wife and children rest for a while and depart. No one can tell when and where any of them will leave. There is no cause for grief over their departure. It is a law of nature." The sage then went to the queen, thinking that as a mother she would grieve over the death of her son. He told her, "Mother! Your son is dead. Here are his clothes." She too laughed. "Oh Sadhu! You are one who has renounced everything in the world. How can you entertain any concern for the ephemeral? Life is like an inn where wayfarers stay for a while and then pass on. Each has their own time of departure. There is no need to grieve when anyone leaves the world." The sage went to the prince's wife to find out whether she at least reacted differently. He broke the news about the death of her husband. She remarked, "When it rains, leaves and branches fall away from a tree. When there is a flood, two pieces of wood come together for a while and separate again. In this ocean of life, I am one such piece; the prince was another. We came together and we have gone apart. Why be surprised or lament over this? For all these, the cause is either attachment or possessiveness. The events themselves are not to be blamed. They are bound to happen. Why worry about them?" The sage realised that what the prince had said about the kingdom was all true. Yet, he

wanted to test the prince himself. He returned to the hermitage and exclaimed before the prince, "Oh prince! Your kingdom has been over run by invaders, and your father and mother have been made prisoners. You must leave immediately to recover the kingdom and release your parents. Get ready for war." The prince replied, "All that has happened is according to the Will of God. I did not bring that kingdom with me when I was born. Can I take it with me when I die? Why should I wage war to recover it? It is not my kingdom. My kingdom is the kingdom of the Atma. I am striving to realise it. That is the kingdom of heaven. That is what I seek to secure. It cannot be got by waging war. It has to be won through love alone. I have no interest in other kingdoms." Then, the renunciant prostrated before the prince and confessed, "We don ochre robes, but we have none of the qualities of true renunciants. How many householders are leading lives free from worldly attachments!" A human should manifest human qualities I would relate another story to show that whatever role one has to play in life, one should be true to it. Once, an actor came to the court of a king in the costume of Sankara, declaring forcefully the unreality of all human relationships and the impermanence of worldly possessions. He quoted the verses of Sankara:

Relationships Like Mother, Father, Brothers, Sisters And Friends Are Not Real.
House And Wealth Are Also Illusory. Hence, Beware! Beware!
Mata Nasti, Pita Nasti, Nasti Bandhu Sahodara, Artham Nasti,
Griham Nasti, Thasmath Jagrata Jagrata.
(Sanskrit Verse)

Birth is a misery, old age is a misery, family is a misery, and death is a terrible misery It is said: The proper study of mankind is man. What is mankind? What does it signify? It signifies the unity of thoughts, words, and deeds. This is called trikarana suddhi in Vedantic parlance. Where there is unity, there is love. When love manifests in you, the lotus of your heart blooms. You develop the spirit of detachment when your heart blooms with love. If a person has not developed detachment, it only means that their heart has not bloomed with love. Devoid of love, one leads the life of an animal.

The same was taught by child Prahlada to his father Hiranyakasipu when he said, "Oh father! You have acquired all types of knowledge, and you have studied the scriptures and Vedanta. But you have not understood the essence of all this." Even wild beasts have some kindness and compassion, but Hiranyakasipu subjected his son to all types of ordeals without a trace of compassion. In fact, he was worse than an animal. One who derives pleasure in torturing others is verily an animal. Therefore, be good and do good. Then you will have everything good in your life. If you want your life to be good, develop good qualities.

Sankara toured the length and breadth of the country, taught the principle of nondualism (adwaitha), instilled courage in people to relieve them of their sufferings, and inculcated human values in them.

Sankara's immortal verse "Bhaja Govindam" gives the essence of his teachings. When Sankara recited the first 12 verses of this poem, each of his disciples contributed a stanza of his own to impart the knowledge of nondualism to people. In those days, the principle of nondualism was firmly established in Bharat (India). But, due to the influence of modern age, people are not putting it into practice in their daily life today.

Reduce the luggage of your desires

Embodiments of Love!

I am not asking all of you to become renunciants. Do your duty and keep your focus on God. Realise that there is one fundamental basis for everything. Once you recognise this truth, you will develop detachment automatically. It is not possible to develop a sense of detachment by force. As you develop love for God more and more, detachment will go on increasing in you.

So, Beware! Beware!
Janma Dukham Jara Dukham, Jaya Dukham Punah Punah,
Antya Kale Maha Dukham, Thasmat Jagratha Jagratha.

(Sanskrit Verse)

The actor gave a powerful exposition of nondualism (adwaitha), Atmic principle, and unity of mankind for one hour.

Pleased with his performance, the king directed his minister to present the actor with a plate of gold coins. But the actor firmly refused to accept the present, saying that it would be unworthy of him to receive it in his role as Sankara. He said, "I have adopted the form of a renunciant (sannyasi) and am donning ochre robes. It is not the quality of a renunciant to receive gold coins as present. I have not come here to receive any reward. In fact, you are dishonouring me by offering reward." Saying this, the actor left the palace.

The next day, the same actor appeared in the role of a beautiful dancer and performed an excellent dance before the king. The king was so much impressed with the dance that he directed the minister to present a plate of gold coins to the dancer. This time, the dancer declined to accept what was offered because he considered it too small a reward for his performance.

The minister, who realised that the dancer was the same person who had come as Sankara the previous day, asked the actor the reason for his refusal to accept the plate of gold coins the previous day and to ask for more this day. The actor explained that he declined the previous offer in keeping with his role as a renunciant. But, in the role of a dancer, he was free to ask for more because it was natural for dancers to make as much money as they could.

You are born as a human being. Therefore, conduct yourself befitting your stature as a human being. This is the teaching of Sankara. Your conduct should be in accordance with the role you are playing. Oh people! You are human in form. Therefore, your conduct and behaviour should manifest human qualities. Otherwise, you are a disgrace to humanness itself.

The secret lies in turning your mind toward God. Here is a lock, and here is

the key. Turn the key to the right, and the lock opens. Turn it to the left, and it closes. Your heart is the lock and mind is the key. Turn the mind toward God, and you get liberation. Turn it toward the world, and you get bondage.

That is why it is said, "Mind is the cause of bondage and liberation (Manah eva manushyanam karanam bandhamokshayo)." You may doubt how you would develop attachment when you turn your mind toward the world. Here is an example. Now you have two legs. But after you finish your education and get a job, your parents will get you married to a girl. Your parents may arrange your marriage or you yourself may marry a girl. Whatever may be the case, after marriage, you will have four legs. As you beget children, you will go on adding to the number of legs. As the number of legs increases, your movement will be hampered. That is bondage. This bondage does not come from anywhere else; it comes from your own desires.

Less luggage more comfort makes travel a pleasure. Life is a long journey. Reduce the luggage of your desires to experience happiness and comfort in this journey of life. As much as you reduce your worldly desires, so much happiness will you experience. Discharge your duties earnestly, focusing your mind on the goal of life.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam...")

46. The conquest of attachment

Date: 10 September 1996 / Location: Brindavan

With What Ingenuity Does The Tongue
Manage To Move About In The Mouth
Without Getting Caught Between The Teeth!
Man Also Should Behave Likewise
To Avoid The Perils Of Life.
Forget Not These Good Words, Oh Man!

SHANKARA looked upon man's existence in the world as that of an actor on the stage, who plays his part, by being born, growing and dying.

Man's Life Is Like A Drop Of Water
Shimmering Without Rest On A Lotus Leaf.
It Is Filled With Grief And Sorrow.
Give Up Attachment To This Life
And Start Worshipping Govindha,
Oh Man! Lacking In Wisdom. (Telugu Poem).

Human life is like a house filled with many rooms in the form of desires. Desires and disappointments are the order of the day. Doubts are rampant. Man is racked by fears. Fear haunts him wherever he goes or remains. He is caught up in a maze of troubles. How is he to escape from it? Even the happiness which he seems to derive from life is coupled with fear. There is no freedom from fear. How is it to be got? Where there is no attachment, there is no fear. How is this state to be got? By proximity to the Divine.

Shankara exhorted mankind to banish fear by cultivating vairagya (detachment) and journeying towards the Atma (Self). It is through Self-Realisation that the true nature of fear is understood. Joy and sorrow, profit and loss, light an darkness are pairs of opposites in which the absence of one

is the sign of its opposite. For both, the root cause is the Atma. All things originate from the Atma. Here is a flower. It has many petals. These petals appear distinct from each other. But all petals have emerged from the same single stem. The stem is the seat of the Atma, from which the petals have emanated. But we view the flower as a single object. The flower is one, but the petals are many. The petals have come out of the one stem.

The ocean, waves and foam

The analogy is applicable to the endless number of waves arising on the ocean. The waves are many and distinct. But they are of the same stuff as the ocean. From the waves arises the foam, which has the same properties as the waves and the ocean though different in form and name. These three are based on the ocean. The three represent the three kinds of proofs in logic Prathyaksha (direct perception), Paroksha (indirect evidence) and Anumana (inference). This is the logical basis for Adhvaitha. It is termed Thriputhi - the three-in-one - the Athmik principle. In the human, this three-in-one is found in the unity of the body, mind and Atma. The body functions on the basis of the mind. The mind is based on the Atma. The Atma is the basis for everything. For humanness, the Atma is the basis. This is the doctrine of Non-Dualism.

Ignoring this truth and pursuing the myriad ephemeral objects of the phenomenal world, people ultimately come to a realisation of the Athmik Principle.

Siddhartha's discovery

After a long period Shuddhodhana had a son, named Siddhartha. The King kept Siddhartha entirely within the palace so that the boy should have no knowledge of the sufferings in the world outside. Once Shuddhodhana introduced his son to a high-souled pandith who had come to the palace. The pandith was an oracle. He told the king: "Shuddhodhana! This lad will become a renunciant. Moreover he will become a great teacher of wisdom to the

people." Shuddhodhana was alarmed on hearing this.

Apprehending that the prince might develop Vairagya (total detachment) if he went out, he kept the prince from going out. The king got him married when he reached his eighteenth year and crowned him Heir-Apparent. After his coronation as Yuvaraja, Siddhartha desired to go round the kingdom. There was no meaning in a ruler confining himself to his palace. He should know how the people lived. Hence he wanted to go round the country. Despite his apprehensions, the king agreed to the prince's request because he was now married and was unlikely to break away.

Old age, disease and death

Siddhartha got into his chariot and set out on a tour of the capital. He saw an old woman, bent with age, trudging, on the road with a stick. He asked the charioteer: "Who is this strange creature moving on the road?" "Lord! When one grows old, the back is bent and one becomes infirm. This is an old woman." The prince asked: "Does this happen to everyone as a result of old age?" He replied: "It is inescapable. It is a law of Nature."

The chariot went further. A sick man was sitting under a tree, coughing and wailing. The prince asked what the matter was with the man under the tree. The charioteer replied: "The human body is subject to a variety of ailments. That man is suffering from a severe ailment. No one can tell when anyone may be afflicted with disease." The prince took note of this.

The chariot proceeded further. A dead body was being carried by four persons on a bier. The prince asked what it was that the four men were carrying. He replied: "It is a dead body." "What is a dead body?" asked the prince. The charioteer replied: "A dead body is without life." "What about us?" asked the prince. "We are Shivam (alive)." The prince asked: "Does everyone lose his life?" "Yes. Death is unavoidable, sometime or other." The prince heard this. He dropped the sword in his hand and returned to the palace.

He did not eat that night. He went to bed, but could not sleep. By his side, his wife Yashodhara and his young son were sleeping. He looked at them intensely. The thought flashed in his mind: Sarvam duhkham (All is sorrow). Then he declared: "Sarvam Bhayam, Bhayam, Bhayam" (All is filled with fear). Next, he declared: "Sarvam anithyam, anithyam, anithyam" (Everything is transient, transient, transient). Then, he declared: "Sarvam shuunyam, shuunyam, shuunyam" (All is emptiness). Making these declarations, he left the palace.

What great renunciation is this! We see any number of ailing persons, old people and dead bodies. How many get the feeling of renunciation after seeing these scenes? Only Siddhartha got this feeling. To acquire such a control over the senses (as to give up all attachments) God's grace is necessary.

The Jithendhriya kingdom

Likewise, a prince went to a forest for hunting. Feeling tired and thirsty, he went to an ashram for rest and water to drink. The sage of the heritage asked the prince who he was and what brought him to the ashram. He said: "My name is Jithendhriya. I have come from the kingdom of Jithendhriya. I need some water." The sage offered water and asked him to sit. The sage wanted to find out whether the stranger was one who lived upto his name. (Jithendhriya means one who has conquered his senses). There are many persons who have names like Dharmaraju, but who belie their names.

The sage asked the prince to hand over his royal clothes to him and wear an ascetic's robes himself. He took the prince's clothes, sprinkled some red powder on them and set out for the kingdom of Jithendhriya. At the palace gate, the sentry greeted the sage with reverence and asked him the object of his visit. The sage told them that the prince had been killed by a wild animal in the forest and that he had brought the prince's clothes. He asked them to convey this message to the king. The gatekeeper smiled and asked: "Who is free from death? Everyone that is born is bound to die. Birth and death go

together." There is a practice in the railways to stamp on every railway wagon the date on which it has to be returned to the workshop for repair and repainting. Likewise everybody has a return date, though it is not visible.

Indifference to death

After hearing the sentry's words, the sage went in to meet the king himself. He told the king that his son had died and started crying. While the Sanyasi was wailing, the king was having a laugh. The king said to him: "You are wearing the ochre robe. But your words are unbecoming of a renunciant. Why do you cry? This is no matter for grief or worry. At dusk hundreds of birds return to a tree for rest. The next morning they fly away. What is the relationship between the different birds? Likewise on the tree of my family, birds like wife and children rest for a while and depart. No .one can tell when and where any of them will leave. There is no cause for grief over their departure. It is a law of nature." The sage felt that the king was a heartless man. He then went to the queen, thinking that as a mother she would grieve over the death of her son. He told her: "Mother! Your son is dead. Here are his clothes." She too laughed. "Oh Sadhu! You are one who has renounced everything in the world. How can you entertain any concern for the ephemeral? Life is like a choultry where wayfarers stay for a while and then pass on. Each has his own time of departure. There is no need to grieve when any one leaves the world."

Then the sage went to the prince's wife to find out whether she at least reacted differently. He broke the news about the death of her husband. She remarked: "When it rains, leaves fall away from a tree. When there is a flood, two pieces of wood come together for a while and separate again. In this ocean of life I am one such piece. The prince was another. We came together and we have gone apart. Why be surprised or lament over this? For all these, the cause is either attachment or possessiveness. The events themselves are not to be blamed. They are bound to happen. Why worry about them?"

True detachment

The sage realised that what the prince had said about the kingdom was all true. Yet, he wanted to test the prince himself. He returned to the hermitage and exclaimed before the prince: "Oh prince! Your kingdom has been overrun by invaders and your father and mother are kept as prisoners. You must leave immediately to recover the kingdom and release your parents. Get ready for war."

The prince replied: "All that has happened is according to the Will of God. I did not bring that kingdom with me when I was born. Can I take it with me when I die? Why should I wage war to recover it?

It is not my kingdom. My kingdom is the kingdom of the Atma (Spirit). I am striving to realise it. That is the Kingdom of Heaven: That is what I seek to secure. It cannot be got by waging by war. It has to be won through love alone. I have no interest in other kingdoms."

Be true to your role

Then, the sanyasi prostrated before the prince and confessed: "We don the robes of renunciants, but we have none of the qualities of true renunciants. How many householders are leading lives free from worldly attachments."

I would relate another story, to show that whatever role one has to play in life, he should, be true to it. Once an actor appeared before the court of a king in the guise of Shankaracharya, declaring in strident terms the unreality of all human relationships and the impermanence of worldly possessions. The actor gave such a powerful exposition of Adhvaitha that the king directed his minister to present the actor with a plate of gold cons. But the Shankaracharya firmly refused to accept the present, saying that it would be unworthy of him to receive it in his role as Shankaracharya. The next day the same actor appeared in the role of a beautiful dancer: and performed an excellent dance before the king. The king was so much impressed with the

dance that he directed the minister to present a plate of gold coins to the dancer. This time, the dancer declined to accept what was offered as too small a reward for his performance. The minister who realised that the dancer was the same person who had come as Shankara the previous day, then asked the actor what was the reason for his refusal to accept the plate of gold coins the previous day and to ask for more that day. The actor explained that he declined the previous offer in keeping with his role as renunciant. But, in the role of a dancer he was free to ask for more as it was natural for dancers to make as much money as they could.

Shankara's call to humanity

Shankaracharya called upon mankind to realise that as human beings they should cherish human values and practise them. Otherwise they would be betraying their true role in life. Shankara went round the country exhorting people to lead spiritual lives, shedding their animal qualities. His disciples imbibed the essence of Shankara's doctrines and became proficient in expounding Adhvaitha. For a time the Adhvaithic doctrine held sway all over Bharath. In course of time, however, the doctrine lost its hold.

Students! I do not want you all to become sanyasins and to give up everything. All that I want you to do is to carry on your duties, place your faith in God and realise that there is one fundamental Reality underlying all things. When you get this realisation, detachment will develop in you of its own accord. Detachment is not acquired by compulsion. As love of God grows, indifference to worldly things develops naturally.

47. The Vinaayaka Principle

Date: 16 September 1996 / Location: Brindavan

EMBODIMENTS of Love! When you rub piece of sandalwood on the grindstone, the more you rub it, the greater the fragrance it emits. As you chew a piece of sugarcane, the more you chew the greater the sweet juice you get from it. As gold is heated more and more in the crucible, it acquires greater brilliance, getting rid of all impurities. A noble being displays his good qualities, however much he might be subjected to trials and tribulations. Thereby he stands out as an example to the world. (Swami explained the purport of the opening Sanskrith stanza thus).

God is the embodiment of bliss. He is eternal. Every living being originates from bliss, grows on bliss and merges in bliss.

Among the myriad names of God, the foremost is Sath-Chith-Anandha. Sath is that sacred thing which has no change in the three worlds and in the three categories of time (past, present and future). It is permanent. Chith means total awareness. When Sath and Chith become one, Anandha (bliss) is realised. Hence, the Divine is described as Sath-Chit-Anandha (Being Awareness-Bliss). This principle is all-pervasive. It is present in all. The scriptures declare: "Sarvam-Vishnumayam Jagath" (The cosmos is permeated by the Divine).

Failing to recognise this truth and treating the body as the only reality, man distances himself from bliss. Men identify themselves in terms of their professions or nationality. But all these are acquired characteristics and not innate to the persons. concerned. Essentially everyone is an embodiment of the Atma (the Self). All the other aspects are transient. To identify yourself with the body is to mistake the dwelling for the indweller. When the truth is investigated in this manner, spirituality will become apparent.

Athmik principle resides in everyone

The basis of the Adhvaithik doctrine is the spiritual oneness of the entire cosmos. It is the Spirit that is common to all beings. The Spirit is the source of all beings and their ultimate destination.

The Athmik principle resides in the heart of every being. Hence there is no need to go in search of God. You are the Divine.

Today the nation is racked by divisions of all kinds based on religion, language and region. People should strive to realise the underlying unity of all religions, languages and regions. God is called by different names by people of different faiths. But all names signify the same God. All of them stress the unity that underlies the apparent diversity.

Vedantha indicates the four stages in realisation of the Divine. Salokya (perception of the Divine), Sameepya (proximity to the Divine), Saroopya (experiencing the vision of the Divine) and Sayujya (merger in the Divine). The Divine as such has no form. Whatever the form in which the devotee worships the Divine, the Divine assumes that form for the devotee. However, all forms are His. "Sathyam, Shivam, Sundharam." Truth is God. Beauty is God. The unity of Truth, Goodness and Beauty is Sath-Chith-Anandha.

Emperor Janaka's transformation as a Raja-Yogi took place after he learnt from Yajnavalkya that his present queen was in his previous birth his mother. This knowledge immediately made Janaka renounce everything and become a seeker of the Divine. While Yajnavalkya hesitated to reply to the King's persistent query about his previous birth, once he revealed the truth, the king considered it a blessing and became a yogi.

Worship of Vinayaka

Today we celebrate the birthday of Ganapathi. What is the significance of this term? Ga means Buddhi (the intellect). Na means Vijnana (wisdom). Pathi means Master. Hence, Ganapathi is the master of the intellect and wisdom.

Another meaning of the term is Master of the Ganas (the hosts of spirits). The name Vinayaka means one who has no leader above him.

Before we commence any activity we offer prayers to Vinayaka so that the action may be successful without any impediments. Vinayaka is worshipped not only in Bharath but in many other countries. The worship of Vinayaka has been prevailing from the times of the Rig-Veda.

The Vinayaka principle protects man from the various hurdles in life and ensures peace and security. Hence on every auspicious occasion Vinayaka is worshipped.

The devout offer worship to Vinayaka with the well-known prayer beginning with the words, Shuklambara-dharam (The one who wears a white garment). Vighneshvara is described as one who is white like the moon, who has four arms (two for giving worldly protection and two for spiritual benediction), who has an ever-pleasing countenance and to whom obeisance is offered for removing all obstacles. While the pious used this prayer in a devout spirit, the impious misused the words to distort the meaning and make it a prayer to a quadruped which is employed for carrying washed clothes. It is by such misinterpretation that some people have sullied the great culture of Bharath and undermined faith in God.

Fill your hearts with love

Students! Instead of filling your minds with scriptural knowledge it is enough if you fill your hearts with love. One ounce of practice is worth tons of spiritual knowledge. Today men should show their humanness in action and not their physical features. Students should be filled with idealism and serve the Motherland in a sacred spirit, with firm faith in God.

The preciousness of human birth is indicated by the declaration in the Geetha that every human being is a spark of the Divine. Everyone should look Godward while attending to worldly duties. If you dedicate all actions to God

there will be no obstacles. Good thoughts will lead to good actions which produce good results.

Students! You should seek to earn the love of God and His grace. All other acquisitions are worthless and impermanent.

Bharath has been blessed with many saints and sages and with many manifestations of Divinity in Human Form. A doubt may arise why such appearances take place in Bharath, more than in any other place, when the world is so big and we have humanity everywhere to be saved and guided. There is a reason for this, believe Me! Well, why should, in all India, Kolar alone have gold? Where there is a gold mine, there is the need for mining engineers and chemists who will extract it, separate it, purify it and distribute it to the various places where gold is in demand, is it not?

- Sathya Sai Baba

48. Attain the Sovereignty of Atmic Kingdom (Alternative Translation)

Date: 08 September 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

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One May Have Mastered The Vedas And Vedangas,
One May Have The Expertise To Compose Prose And Poetry,
But If One Lacks Purity Of Heart, One Will Ruin Oneself.
Never Forget These Words Of Wisdom.
(Telugu Poem)

The teachings of the Vedas are based on the principle of dualism (dwaitha) and that of Vedanta (which is based on the latter part of the Vedas) on the principle of nondualism (adwaitha). This is what Adi Sankara preached and propagated through various examples.

The relationship that exists between Vedanta and the Vedas is the same as that exists between the body and its various limbs such as eyes, ears, nose, mouth, hands, and feet. As are the limbs to the body, so are the human beings to society. Society is a limb of mankind, mankind is a limb of nature and nature is a limb of God. When you enquire deeply into these relationships, you will find the underlying principle of nondualism in the creation.

Desire is the root cause of dualism

In the assembly of scholars at Kasi (Varanasi), scholars started indulging in argumentation due to differences of opinion on philosophical subjects.

Amused at this spectacle, Sankara said, "Argumentation will lead to conflicts (Vade vade vajrate vairam)." Such vain argumentation will lead only to enmity; it will not bring peace. No problem can be solved by indulging in futile argumentation.

To overcome worries in life is the main problem of people. In fact, the entire life of a person is full of worries. There is not a single moment in life when a person is free from worries.

To Be Born Is A Worry, To Be On The Earth Is A Worry;
World Is A Cause Of Worry And Death Too;
Entire Childhood Is A Worry And So Is The Old Age; Life Is A Worry, Failure Is A Worry;
All Actions And Difficulties Cause Worry;
Even Happiness Too Is A Mysterious Worry. Devotion To Swami Alone Will Put An End To All
Your Worries.
Oh People! Develop Such Devotion And Love.
(Telugu Poem)

It is only through love for God that you can get rid of worries in life. Love is the remedy for all problems of man. Where there is love, there can be no hatred, no jealousy, and no differences. Love has all the power to develop equality and harmony. But the Vedas speak of this principle of love only to a small extent.

Many Vedic scholars use the knowledge of the Vedas to fulfill their desires and not to gain the experience of Divinity. They chant the Vedas from dawn to dusk and propagate the teachings of the Vedas but do not practise them themselves.

The Chamakam part of "Rudra Prasna" deals with the fulfillment of desires. In these mantras, cha mey is repeated again and again, which means 'I want this, I want that.' Desire is the root cause of dualism. The desire for a

particular thing arises because you think it is separate from you. Here there are two entities, one, the person who desires and two, the object desired.

The principle of nondualism (adwaitha) emphasises the unity of the person who desires and the object of desire. A person observes the principle of dualism (dwaitha) when they consider themself different from the object of desire. Here is a handkerchief. You say, I want the handkerchief because handkerchief is different from you. This is dualism.

But there is also an underlying principle of nondualism in the handkerchief, which can be easily demonstrated. This is a cloth, but when you analyse deeply, you will realise that it is not a cloth but a bundle of threads. On further enquiry, you will say that these are not threads but cotton. In fact, cotton, threads, and cloth are one and the same.

Here you have to enquire into two aspects: direct experience (pratyaksha) and indirect experience (paroksha).

Even after having the direct experience of something, sometimes it is not possible to describe it in words. For example, a dumb person cannot describe the taste of the food items that they consume. Similarly, the bliss of nondualism cannot be described in words. It can only be experienced but cannot be explained to people. Here direct experience is of little consequence when it comes to explaining it to others. But, unfortunately, people give importance to only direct experience; they attach no significance to indirect evidence.

Divinity is present in all

Here is a small example. There is an ice cube. What is the basis of the ice cube? It is water. Ice cube is the direct evidence (pratyaksha pramana) while water is the indirect evidence (paroksha pramana). Without water, there can be no ice cube.

What is of primary importance - the ice cube or water? It is water, the direct (paroksha), which is the basis of the ice cube. In the same way, the unseen Divinity is the basis of this visible world.

But people are not able to realise this truth because they are merely chanting the Vedic mantras and trying to experience the teachings of the Vedas without actually putting them into practice. They are leading a worldly life, following the path of worldliness (pravritti) in this transient nature prakriti).

The path of spirituality (nivritti) is totally opposite to worldliness (pravritti). Pravritti leads to worldliness while nivritti leads to Divinity.

In the face of all challenges, Sankara strived hard to propagate the principle of Divinity, which is the fundamental basis of this creation. His guru, Gaudapada, provided him all support and encouragement. Though Sankara was young in age, he was steadfast in his resolve to propagate nondualism (adwaitha).

If Sankara at the young age of sixteen could conduct debates with great scholars and convince them of the validity of the principle of nondualism, it was only the power of Divinity that was his driving force. Nondualism is the basis for everything.

What is meant by nondualism (adwaitha)? It is the oneness of everything.

Some vendors in the market sell sugar candy in the forms of various animals like cat, elephant, dog, etc., to attract children. Innocent children see only the form and demand, I want cat, I want elephant.... Names and forms like cat and elephant are different, but the basis of all of them is sugar. When you eat any part of these animals like ears, tail, they all taste sweet. In fact, their entire form is full of sweetness.

In The Same Manner, Divinity Pervades The Entire World:

Verily All This Is Brahman: (Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma),
The Entire Universe Is Permeated By God (Isavasyam Idam Sarvam).
God Is The Indweller Of All Beings (Iswara Sarva Bhutanam).

Sankara realised this truth and propagated to the entire world. But some devotees attribute a particular name and form to God and consider their form of worship superior to other forms of God, which is the cause of all differences.

A rich man had great love and devotion for Lord Krishna. He wanted to get an idol of Krishna made of gold, perform worship and the ceremonial bath (abhishekam) every day, and partake of the sanctified water. He went to a goldsmith, gave him twenty gold coins, and asked him to make an idol of Krishna. He gave another twenty coins and asked him to prepare the idol of a cow to be placed behind Krishna, and a similar amount for an idol of a peacock to be placed near the idol of Krishna. He also got a cup made of twenty gold coins for performing ceremonial bath. Every day he used to perform ceremonial bath to the Krishna idol and drink the sanctified water.

But the flow of time will not always be the same. Nobody can say when one has to undergo difficulties in one's life. Happiness and sorrow are like two pots hung on each side of a kavadi (a pole with a sling attached to both sides to hang pots on each side). How can anyone know what will happen in the next moment? Once the accrued merit is exhausted, one has to come to the mortal world (Ksheene punye martyalokam vishanti).

The financial position of the rich man became worse day by day. Since he was finding it difficult to make both ends meet, he decided to sell the gold idols to another rich man. The other rich man first weighed the cup used for the ceremonial bath and fixed its price as sixty thousand rupees, since it was made of twenty gold coins. Then he weighed the peacock, the cow, and Krishna's idol one after the other and fixed the price of each of them as sixty thousand rupees. However, the seller was not satisfied. He said, "What is this! You are putting the same price for Krishna as well as the cow, peacock, and

cup. I cannot bear this. You should give more price for Krishna." The buyer replied, "You give more value for the idol of Krishna than other objects because Krishna's form is more important for you. But what is important for me is the gold contained in each of them." He gave importance to the weight of gold and not to the form.

Likewise, we give importance to humans based on name and form without realising that the same Divinity is present in everyone in the form of five elements. The realisation of this oneness is the principle of nondualism (adwaitha). The five elements are the same in everyone; there is no sixth element in anyone. But we are deluded because we go by the form.

Excessive desires cause disaster

Excessive desires are the cause of misery. Desires are necessary, but they should be under some limit. Most of you might have read the story of King Midas. Though he was very rich, he was obsessed with greed. Therefore, he started praying to God from dawn to dusk with intense devotion. A devotee prays, and God grants their prayer. God appeared before him and offered to grant him any boon.

Midas said, "Oh Lord, whatever I touch should turn into gold. Please grant me this boon." God cautioned him, "Don't ask for this boon. You won't derive any happiness from it; rather you will become the victim of so many problems and worries. Ultimately, you will ruin your life. Therefore, don't ask for this boon".

But Midas Insisted, "leave Me To My Fate. I Want Only This Boon".
What Can Anyone Do If One Does Not Listen To Sound Advice?
Can Anybody Change What Is Written In The Destiny Of Anyone?
There Is No Point In Feeling Sorry About It Even For Hundred Years.
(Telugu Poem)

God replied, "Okay, if you want to suffer your fate, you may suffer." He

granted his prayer and disappeared.

Overjoyed at the boon received from God, Midas returned home. He came and sat on the mattress and kept the pillow aside. Immediately, both the mattress and the pillow turned into gold. He was happy that both the mattress and the pillow turned into gold with his touch, but he wanted to further test the efficacy of the boon he received. Therefore, he entered his garden. All the trees, flowers and the saplings turned into gold when he touched them. After some time, he felt tired and hungry. He asked a servant to bring food. When he tried to eat it, it turned into gold as he took it in his hands. He was feeling hungry but was unable to eat anything. He cried, "Alas! What will be my fate now?" Out of desperation, he hugged his daughter who also turned into a statue of gold.

Then Midas came to his senses. He repented, "Fie on me, I am so foolish that I did not pay heed to the advice of God." Again he prayed to God wholeheartedly, with intense feelings. God manifested before him and said, "My dear! You have fallen to this state because you did not listen to Me. What do you want now?" Midas prayed to Him to take back the boon given to him. From that moment onward, he developed a sense of contentment with whatever he had.

Excessive desires lead to such disastrous consequences. One who follows the divine command implicitly will be blessed with all comforts and auspiciousness. That is why Sankara said:

Oh People, Give Up Your Thirst For Money.
Give Up All Your Desires By Proper Discrimination.
The Wealth You Have Is Nothing But The Result Of Your Past Actions.
Therefore, Be Contented With Whatever You Have.
(Telugu Song)

She plucked some fruits, tasted each of them, and kept aside the sweetest of them for offering to Lord Rama. Lord Rama also reciprocated her feelings by

showering His grace on her.

God is the embodiment of grace (anugraha); there is no trace of anger (agraha) in Him. But as the saying goes, "As are the feelings, so is the result (Yad bhavam tad bhavati)." He will respond as per the feelings of the spiritual aspirant.

When you stand in front of a mirror in a posture of salutation, you will see your reflection also doing the same. If you point a finger at your reflection showing anger, your reflection will also do the same at you. Similarly, Nature is like a mirror. As is your action, so is the reaction.

Oh People, Is It Possible To Escape The Consequences Of Actions?
You May Study The Scriptures And Worship Your Family Deities,
You May Go To A Forest And Perform Intense Penance,
But It Is Impossible To Escape The Consequences Of Your Actions.
(Telugu Poem)

Money makes many wrongs

God is the cause, nature is the effect. This world is nothing but the manifestation of cause and effect. Whatever you do in front of the mirror of nature will come back to you in the form of reaction, reflection, and resound.

In fact, there is only one entity. You see the object and its reflection only when there is a mirror. Without the mirror, there can be no reflection. This is the mystery of nature.

From the worldly point of view, there are three entities: yourself, your reflection, and the mirror. If you ask what is 3-1, even a first standard student will say 2. The student knows worldly mathematics well. But God does not agree to this. He says 3-1 = 1.

You may make fun of God, "What is this? God might not have attended any school. He does not know the basic principles of mathematics." Then God says, "Oh madcap, there are three entities here: yourself, your reflection, and the mirror. Take away the mirror. What remains is only yourself, the reality." As are your feelings, so is the result Oh people! You may have some desires. But do not give room to greed. You must develop love to attain God. That love alone will give you everything you need. It will give you all that you require at the appropriate time and place.

Do Not Ask, Oh Mind, Do Not Ask.
The More You Ask, The More You Will Be Neglected.
God Will Certainly Grant You What You Deserve Without Your Asking.
Did He Not Grant The Wish Of Sabari, Who Never Asked?
Did He Not Redeem Jatayu, Who Never Asked But Sacrificed His Life For His Cause?
(Telugu Poem)

King Dasaratha asked Rama to pour water in his mouth in his last moments, but he was not fortunate to have Rama by his side when the end came. However, Rama poured water in the mouth of Jatayu, though Jatayu did not ask for this boon. He sanctified the life of Jatayu and granted him liberation.

Sabari chanted the Name of Rama day and night. But did she ask for anything? No. On coming to know that Rama had entered the forest, she waited for Him everyday. since she did not know by which path Rama would come, she cleaned all the paths leading to her hermitage. Sitting under a berry tree, she thought: It seems Lord Rama has come to the forest along with Mother Sita. He may come this way and ask me, "Mother, give me some fruits to eat". She started imagining in this manner due to her intense love for Lord Rama.

What appears from the worldly point of view is different from the spiritual point of view. Many people say, money makes many things. But I say, money makes many wrongs. Only when you realise this truth will you be able to put

money to proper use.

Realise the principle of oneness

Sankara was able to explain the principle of oneness even in day-to-day matters. This is the uniqueness of his philosophy of nondualism (adwaitha). As I told you yesterday, pots are many, but clay is one; jewels are many, but gold is one. Similarly, God is one, but He manifests in various forms. Truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names (Ekam sath viprah bahudha vadanti).

People call God by many names like Allah, Jesus, Buddha, Zoroastra, Rama, Hari, and Hara, but God is one. This can be illustrated by an example in day-to-day life.

The owner of a house is addressed by his wife as 'my dear husband,' his grandson says, 'my dear grandfather,' his brother says, 'my dear brother,' his son addresses him as 'my dear father,' and his daughter-in-law says, 'my dear father-in-law.' Though the person is one, he is addressed by different people differently based on their relationship with him. This is worldly relationship.

People pray to God:

Oh Lord! You Alone Are My Father And Mother, Friend And Relation, Wisdom And Wealth. You Are My Everything.
Twameva Matacha Pita Twameva, Twameva Bandhuscha Sakha Twameva, Twameva Vidya Dravinam Twameva, Twameva Sarvam Mama Devadeva.
(Sanskrit Verse)

But Sankara did not approve of this type of prayer. When you say, "You are my father," you are different from father.

Sankara said, "It is not correct to say, 'You are my father, You are my mother,'

which connotes the principle of duality. Instead, you should say, 'You are I, I am You; You and I are one.' " This shows the doctrine of nondualism.

The Vedas Propound The Same Truth Through The Great Aphorisms,
I Am Brahman (Aham Brahmasmi), That Thou Art (Tattwamasi).

Experience of oneness gives bliss. That is why Sankara propagated the principle of nondualism. However, it is not that easy to experience this principle. You have to conduct proper enquiry and undergo the process of refinement (samskara). When you reach the ripe stage of refinement, you can easily realise the principle of oneness.

How fortunate is a person who realises the principle of oneness! In fact, there is none more fortunate in this world. That person is the king of kings and the emperor of emperors. That person is the king of the Atmic kingdom.

The Atma pervades everyone from top to toe. Only those who do not realise the presence of the immortal Self in the body aspire for the poison of worldliness. Once you taste this divine ambrosia, you will not have a taste for worldly matters. Therefore, make efforts to have the experience of the Atma.

That is why Sankara strived hard to propagate this principle of nondualism (adwaitha) in villages as well as in cities, from a simpleton to a scholar.

Sankara demonstrated ideals in every aspect of his life. Before he left his house, he gave a promise to his mother. She said, "My dear, you have become a renunciant and are leaving the house. But it is my wish that you should be by my side when I leave this body." Sankara was pure-hearted and kept his promise to his mother. In fact, whatever one says with purity of heart will become true. If one points toward a flower and says, this is not a flower, it will cease to be a flower. You should understand this truth.

Faith confers deservedness

An incident from the Mahabharata illustrates this truth. A day prior to the commencement of the Mahabharata war, Krishna took Arjuna with Him for a walk in a forest. They were discussing who would fight with whom and other such war related matters. At this time Krishna, wanted to subject Arjuna to a test. God always tests the deservedness of a person before showering His grace on them. The reason is: Only a person of deservedness will be able to make the best use of grace conferred on them.

Since it was getting dark, Krishna said to Arjuna "Let us go back home." Then He started His test.

Krishna pointed toward a bird perched on a tree and said, "Arjuna, see how beautiful this peacockis!" He started this conversation to see the state of Arjuna's mind.

Arjuna replied, "Yes, Swami, the peacock is really beautiful".

Krishna said, "Oh madcap, that is not a peacock. Don't you see it is an eagle?" Arjuna replied, "Yes, Swami, it is an eagle." Then Krishna slapped him on his back and said, "What a fool you are, Arjuna, that you are unable to make out whether it is a peacock, an eagle, or some other bird. Look carefully. It is neither a peacock nor an eagle. It is a pigeon." Arjuna replied, "Yes, Swami, it is a pigeon." Pretending to be a little angry, Krishna said, "Don't you have any common sense? Don't you have discrimination power? What are you thinking? You don't seem to enquire whether it is a peacock or an eagle or a pigeon. You are blindly saying yes to whatever I say." Arjuna replied, "Oh Krishna, if I say it is not a peacock, You may change it into a peacock. Similarly, if I say it is not an eagle or a pigeon, You may turn it into any of them. You can do anything. Therefore, Your word is important for me. What does it matter to me whether it is a pigeon or a peacock or an eagle?" Krishna was very happy that Arjuna had so much faith in His words. He placed His hand on Arjuna's head and blessed him.

Fix Your Mind On Me, Be Devoted To Me, Offer Obeisance To Me And Worship

Me.
Truly, Do I Promise That You Will Come To Me For You Are Dear To Me.
Manmana Bhava Madbhakto
Madyajimam Namaskuru Mam Evaishyasi Satyam Te Pratijane Priyo Asi Mey.

Krishna said to Arjuna, "Now you have become My true devotee. You have total faith in My words and, therefore, you will emerge victorious in whatever you do." It was only after this incident that Krishna gave the knowledge of the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna.

What is the use of imparting knowledge of scriptures to a person who does not have faith? At the time of Mahabharata war, Krishna was 86 years old and Arjuna was 84 years old. All those years prior to the war, Krishna never tried to impart the knowledge of Vedanta to Arjuna. All of a sudden, He started teaching him Vedanta. God showers His grace on an individual at the appropriate time, place and circumstance.

He said, "Arjuna, who are these people? You think that they are your relations. But, in fact, they are not so. You, I and they are all one and the same." Arjuna was utterly confused listening to this. He thought, "How can we say that all are one? In that case, where is the necessity for a war?" Then Krishna said, "Oh madcap, there is a reason for this, which I am aware of and you are not. I am the embodiment of awareness, whereas you are in a state of ignorance."

Without Coming Under The Veil Of Forgetfulness, Always In The Waking, Dream, And Deep Sleep States,
One Should Constantly Be Aware Of The Soham Mantra, Which Enables One To Realise The Atma Tattwa.
By The Grace Of Sadguru, Oh People! Cultivate The Sense Of Discrimination.
(Telugu Poem)

God knows the past, present, and future

Krishna added, "I know the past, present, and future, whereas you do not. That is why you are carried away by the physical relationship you have with them in the present. You do not know the past. You knew it once, but now you have forgotten." Arjuna asked, "Swami, You say, You, I, and they are all one. Why is it that only You are aware of this truth while I am not aware of"?

Krishna replied, "You look from a worldly point of view; I look from the point of view of spirituality (nivritti) or Atma. I transcend the three periods of time. That is why I am omniscient while you are not." To illustrate this point, Krishna gave a beautiful analogy. In narrating this to you, I am changing the names so that you will understand easily. Once a man went to Kashmir. There he bought a piece of cloth, since it was available at a cheaper price. On his return from Kashmir, he gave that piece of cloth to his mother, who put it in a clothes cabinet and forgot all about it. Ten years passed. One day, the mother found this piece of cloth in the clothes cabinet while she was looking for something. She called her son and said, "Here is a piece of cloth. Get it stitched." Accordingly, the son got a shirt stitched from that piece of cloth and wore it on his birthday. When he bent down to pick up a sweet dish prepared by his mother, the shirt at once got torn. His mother was surprised. She said, "This is a new shirt, how come it got torn so quickly?" The son explained, "Mother, the shirt is new, no doubt, but the cloth is of old stock, isn't it?" In the same manner, Krishna told Arjuna, "You have forgotten your reality, but I am always aware of it. This is the difference between you and Me." In the Mahabharata war, Arjuna was dejected and depressed at the death of so many young warriors, including his son Abhimanyu. He asked Krishna, "Swami, why did Abhimanyu die so young? Being his father and much older than him, I should have gone first." Krishna replied, "Nobody can say who will go when. None can escape death when the appointed time comes."

The Body Is Bound To Perish, How Much Ever You Protect And Nourish It.
In The Same Manner, Whatever Is Written In Your Destiny, Good Or Bad, Will Happen Even If You Hide Yourself In A Thick Forest.
(Telugu Poem)

Whatever you face in this life is the result of your many past lives. For

example, a young man of 25 years hits a boulder with a hammer twenty times, but the boulder does not break. Afterwards, the boulder breaks when an old man hits it only twice. The old man boasts, "This young man hit the boulder twenty times, but it did not break, but I broke it with only two strike." The young man said, "Oh grandfather, don't be proud of your achievement. The boulder broke at the 22nd stroke since I had hit it earlier 20 times. Understand this." In the same manner, you see only the present, whereas God takes into consideration the past and the future also. This is the difference between God and man. The seed of present has come from the tree of past and is the basis for the tree of future. You see only the seed of present; you are unable to see the past and future, which are contained in the seed.

Lord Krishna said, "I am the seed of all living beings (Beejam mam sarva bhutanam)." In this manner, Sankara propagated the principle of nondualism (adwaitha)to the entire world. This nondualism has a fundamental principle as its basis. It is the unity of all creation. Many examples have been compiled in scriptures to help people understand this fundamental principle. You should also make efforts to understand it.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "Hey Siva Sankara Namami Sankara...")

48. Who is dear to the Lord?

Date: 03 October 1996 / Location: Brindavan

EMBODIMENTS of Love! Human life is precious, noble and virtuous. It is a pity human beings do not realise this. The whole purpose and goal of human life is to know one's true nature. Forgetting one's true nature, man is caught up in worldly concerns and plunged in misery. The ancient sages indicated the. path to be pursued for the redemption of mankind.

They commended nine forms of worship any one of which could confer bliss and redeem a man's life.

To experience the proximity of the Divine the easiest path is Nama-smarana, remembering constantly the name of the Lord. Sage Veda Vyasa declared that in this Kali Yuga there is nothing greater than chanting the name of Hari for realising God. It is the easiest path for one and all, the scholar and illiterate, the rich and the poor.

In the Geetha, the Lord has indicated the qualities which a devotee should possess to enable him to earn the love of the Lord. Among these qualities, Krishna declared Anapeksha (desirelessness) as important. Today there are few without desires of one kind or other. All sensual pleasures are ephemeral. But most people are content with them. Greater than the sensual is the transcendental path, Shreyo marga, which confers lasting bliss.

When one does any action as an offering to God, it gets sanctified. Such an act becomes anapeksha (desireless act). Every selfless act of devotion becomes an action free from the taint of desire.

The second quality is Suchi (purity). What is required is both internal and external purity. God cares only for Chittha-shuddhi (internal purity of the mind).

Faith and service

The third quality is dhaksha. This means that the devotee should be steadfast and unwavering in any situation. With his mind firmly rooted in God, he should engage himself in service to others and perform actions in a spirit of detachment. Only such a devotee is eligible for God's love. He is unaffected by pleasure or pain, gain or loss or what happens in the mundane world. The fourth quality is Udhaseenah indifference to external happenings. The fifth quality is freedom from egoism and possessiveness. One should get rid of the idea of doership and ownership and surrender everything to God.

Today all spiritual exercises are ostensibly undertaken for realising God. But there is no need for undertaking them. Human birth itself is a mark of Divinity. What is essential is to recognise the indwelling Divinity and live on that basis.

Where is God? Not in temples or pilgrim centres or other places. He dwells in the heart of everyone. To experience the Divinity within, one has to see the Divine in all others and render them service in that spirit.

Worship of padhukas

Today we are celebrating the worship of padhukas (sandals sanctified by the touch of the Lord's feet). Worship of padhukas is not of recent origin.

Even during the Kritha Yuga, the sages used to worship padhukas, experience divine bliss and share it with others. By worshipping the Feet of the Lord, they achieved the goal of their penance.

In the worship of Dakshinamurthy, adoration of the sandals of the Lord as guru (preceptor) is considered important. Even Shankaracharya resorted to the worship of the Lord's Feet as essential. In a famous hymn, he extolled the Lord in many ways and declared that he was taking refuge in the Lord's feet (Shambhu). He declared that Shiva's feet were enshrined in his heart and not

elsewhere.

The glory of the Lord's feet is demonstrated by a significant episode in the Ramayana. After Rama left for the forest, Bharatha came to him and pleaded earnestly with him to return to Ayodhya. Rama was equally determined not to return. Vasishta noticed the equal determination of the two brothers. The sage told Bharatha: "Rama has come to the forest to carry out the command of his father. It is not right on your part to ask him to change his mind. Let us take his padhukas to Ayodhya. Those padhukas will reign over the kingdom." Vasishta gave this timely advice and persuaded Bharatha to take Rama's sandals and install them on the throne in Ayodhya.

These incidents show that the worship of the Lord's feet and of the Lord's sandals has a long antiquity. The sacredness of this worship was propagated to the world by Bharath from ancient times as part of its spiritual message to mankind. Indians today have largely forgotten this ancient practice. In those days it was the practice of the disciples, after the completion of their education at the guru's ashram, to take with them padhukas of the guru to worship them on their return to their homes. But even the worship of padhukas is an external activity. True devotion calls for the installation of the padhukas in the heart.

This means that starting with the external form of worship, we should in due course make it an internal exercise.

Karma, Bhakthi and Jnana

All these are related to the Karma Marga (path of Action). Beginning with the path of action, progressing towards the Bhakthi Marga (path of devotion), one should ultimately achieve Kaivalya (Self-realisation) by the Jnana Marga (the Path of Wisdom). "Jnanath eva thu Kaivalyam" (Realisation is only through Wisdom), declares the scripture.

The entire life should not be spent on only worldly duties. One must progress

spiritually from stage to stage. Karma-Upasana-Jnanam (Action-Devotion-Wisdom) - these are the three steps in Self-Realisation.

Subramania Chettiar has been engaged in these devotional activities for a long time. Looking at his age, you can realise that physically he is not fit to undertake long journeys. But because of his intense devotion and strong faith in Bhagawan he has been able to carry on this work. The Divine grace has been giving him all this abundant energy.

So far as the worship of the padhukas is concerned you need not bother about what others think. Every man should take up such sacred activity to get nearer to God.

To get close to the Divine, you have to engage yourselves in activities which please the Divine. The supreme maxims of the Bharatheeya culture are: "Speak the Truth. Follow Righteousness." When you adhere to these two maxims, all your actions will be sacred.

The Purusharthas

Of the four goals of human life prescribed by the scriptures, the first is Dharma (Righteousness). It is the feet in the human body. The entire body rests on the feet. Artha, the second goal, rests on the feet. Hence, the acquisition of wealth should be based on righteous means. The third goal is Kama (desires). For the fulfillment of desires you need the Bhujabalam (strength of the arms). Both Kama and Artha are based on Dharma. Moksha is the culmination of a life based on Dharma.

Today people have forgotten Dharma and Moksha and are immersed only in Artha (acquisition of wealth) and Kama (the pursuit of sensual desires). For the realisation of the goal of human existence, you have to rely on the feet, namely, Dharma, and the head, namely Moksha (Liberation). This is the meaning of the symbolic description of the Cosmic Person in the Vedas. The face of the Cosmic Person symbolises the Brahmik Principle. The feet

symbolise Dharma. Thus basing oneself on Dharma, one should pursue Artha and Kama to attain Moksha.

People should seek the Divine in all possible ways. In the worship of the pahukas, devotees should offer worship with all their heart and not as a mechanical ritual.

How to recite manthras

For instance, when the chief priest was reciting the manthras, anyone would have been deeply moved by listening to them. Our pandith pronounced the words with extreme clarity. Let me not be misunderstood when I say that, whether in Thamil Nadu, Kerala or even in Northern India, Sanskrith words are not pronounced correctly. But the pandith pronounced all the words very clearly this morning. Every syllable was pronounced in such a way that it appealed to the heart. His assistants were also closely following him.

Governor Burugula Ramakrishna Rao took one group to Badhrinath. The priest in the temple there was a Nambuudhiri and a Sanskrith pandith. Yet, when the pandith was reciting the manthras, Ramakrishna Rao closed his ears. Ramakrishna Rao exclaimed: "Oh pandith! Do not massacre our Sanskrith!" The pandith was saying: "Janthagaram Bhujaga Jayanam Badmanabham - (laughter) instead of saying "Shanthakaram bhujagashayanam Padmanabham .... " What humiliation is inflicted on the Sanskrith language! It is praiseworthy that a pandith living in Tamil Nadu should pronounce Sanskrith manthras more clearly and correctly than even Andhras.

It is because of the help of such pandiths that Subrahmanya Chetty's burdens are lightened.

A blissful experience

The spectacle you witnessed this morning was indeed a blissful experience for

one and all. It looked as if all were in Vaikunttha (the Abode of the Supreme Lord) or Svarga (the abode of Indhra). It was not at all a command performance. Everyone silently performed the puuja (worship of the padhukas) with his/her full heart in it. The pandith explained the meaning of every word in the manthra. It is rare to find pandiths who recite the manthras so clearly and explain their meaning intelligently. This has been the problem in Bharath for quite a long time. Very few are concerned about the well-being of society. People carry on their work, professing that duty is God. That was not the case with the pandith who officiated at the function today. It is thanks to such pandiths that we have devotees who practise the rituals sincerely.

Now, let me say a word about Dr. Gadhia (who has addressed the meeting earlier).. You know about him. His grandfather, Kaka Dheexith, was in Shirdi. He has not seen the old man. But I have seen him. Kaka Dheexith's son came to Bhagawan and stayed with Swami for 30 years in Brindhavan. He showed to Swami the diary written by Kaka Dheexith. The Dheexith family had relations with Swami which have continued to this day. Dheexith stayed with his wife in Swami's ashram. He showed to Swami Kaka Dheexith's diary. In it he had written what Shirdi Baba told him: "Child! you will again be close to Baba. Whatever troubles may come, do not give up your faith." Then Gadhia came to Baba. I sent him to Manipal to study a course in Medicine. After completing his medical studies in Manipal he came to Bangalore. I told him that there was no point in his remaining in Bangalore and directed him to go to London.

In this manner, Gadhia and his ancestors have been associated with Sai! Like this, many devotees have been associated with Swami over many lives. Without such association in the past it would not be possible for all of you to come here. You are not aware of this but I know it all. These sacred associations have been maintained over many life-times.

Association with Sai

Thus, many of you have from immemorial times had links with the Athmik

Self. This link is unbroken. It is eternal, infinite. Such sacred relationships should never be given up. All should return to the place wherefrom they came. That is the strident declaration in the Bhagavatham: "It is natural for every living creature to go back to the source from which it came." You have come from the Atma and you must merge in the Atma. Till the goal is reached you must not treat lightly the sacred journey of life.

People forget the route by which they came and are searching for new paths. Many approach me anti ask: "Swami! show a way." I tell them: "There is need for me to show you a path. You go back by the route you came.

Wherefrom did you come? Not from your mother. Nor from any particular place. The body came from the mother, but the Atma came from the Atma. You are not the body or the senses or the mind. You are the Atma alone. You are the son of immortality. Being an Amritha-puthra (son of immortality), why are you seeking this anrutha (untruth). What is the way to immortality? Removal of immorality is the only way to immortality. If you get rid of evil qualities like attachment, hatred and envy, you will realise immortality. These bad traits make you remote from God. When you get rid of them, God becomes close to you.

The Lord is with you

Hence, gradually: you have to give up the animal qualities and develop godly qualities such as truth, righteousness, justice and morality. By a process of self-enquiry you can get rid of your animal qualities like anger. How long are you going to remain in the same round of birth and death without realising the goal of human existence? All puujas, rituals and penances are performed for this realisation. You have secured an extremely precious gift by your present birth. Do not waste it. Utilize every available moment for a worthwhile purpose. Devotees are yearning to realise the Divine by worshipping the Lotus feet and offering their worship to the padhukas. Have the conviction that when you have the sanctified padhukas with you, the Lord is also with you When you enter the Mandhir you leave your shoes out side. But the

Lord's feet are present wherever His sandals are kept. Bear in mind this sacred idea. Live upto the conviction that the eternal Divine is omnipresent. Maintain purity and harmony in thought, word and deed. That is the way to secure Jnana-shuddhi (Divine Wisdom).

Thanks to many meritorious lives in the past, you have got this sacred opportunity. Of the hundreds of millions in Bharath, how many have got this opportunity? Many who wished to come here have been unable to do so for one reason or another. Make the best use of the rare and sacred opportunity that has come your way.

Spread the message of worship of Padhukas

Dr. Gadhia observed that many significant events are likely to take place before 1998. Dr. Gadhia invited Swami for a big padhuka celebration to be held in Birmingham in 1998. In accordance with this desire, Subramania Chettiar should be blessed with the necessary health and strength. He is willing to take on any burden, but is physically weak. But his faith and determination will give him the strength he needs. Our Shasthri (who officiated at the function in the Nilayam) should also take a resolve.

He should spread the message of the worship of the padhukas among wider sections of the people and dispel the darkness of ignorance. Whoever carries on the divine mission, unaffected by success or failure, joy or sorrow, will be the recipient of God's grace. Krishna has declared that such a devotee is dear to Him. Such a devotee develops detachment towards all worldly concerns and is indifferent to the happenings in the phenomenal world. He is indifferent to praise or censure, pleasure or pain.

The next quality a devotee should have is giving up attachment to the fruits of one's actions. Even the egoistic sense of doership should be given up. Everything belongs to the Divine. Engage yourself in good acts and experience the Divine. (Bhagawan then honoured the Pandith with a gold kankanam and fastened a gold wristlet on Subrahmanya Chettiar. The entire

gathering broke into applause. Bhagawan also presented shawls to the other pandithhs who had participated in the function).

It is here in India that there is a mine of spiritual wisdom and spiritual treasure: the Dharshanas, Upanishaths and the Geetha and the Vedas. This has to be distributed, pure and unsullied, guaranteed in value and quality, to eager aspirants everywhere and so, we have here a succession of sages and saints. On account of the teachings and the lives of these people, there is a vast field of spiritual virtue in this land, which needs only a little care to yield a rich harvest.

- Sathya Sai Baba

49. The devotee’s ordeals and God’s grace

Date: 22 October 1996

YOU must acquire the friendship of God. Once you acquire that friendship you can achieve anything. All happiness can be derived therefrom.

You know how Kuchela was a friend of Krishna in their boyhood. Because of his prolific progeny. Kuchela was immersed in a sea of troubles. His wife reminded him that if he went to Krishna, who was his boyhood friend at the guru's ashram and who was now a ruler at Dhvaraka, Krishna would relieve him of his poverty. While he had some apprehensions whether Krishna would remember him and receive him, he got over them and set out for Dhvaraka. Though Kuchela was in tattered clothes, the moment Krishna learnt that his old friend had come, he rushed towards him and embraced him. He exclaimed: "How long ago is it since we last met? Where have you been all these years? How have you been faring?" Kuchela remembered the Lord only because of his troubles.

Another example may be found in the Mahabharatha. After completing their years of exile, the Pandavas returned to their capital. Happy over the safe return of her sons, Kunthi went to Krishna to offer her salutations. Krishna said: "Dear aunt! Are you happy? Is there anything more you want? I shall fulfill your wishes." Kunthi said: "Krishna! I don't need anything. I have to enjoy your support, your guidance and your nearness at all times. I must be blessed with troubles always. It is because my children experienced innumerable troubles during our exile in the forest, living on roots and fruits, that we found you were always with us, beside us and behind us and you saved us so many times. If we are to enjoy your proximity we have to face troubles."

Experience of two students

In this context, let me reveal a significant episode in Sathya Sai's career

which is not known to anyone. Every year summer courses used to be conducted in Brindhavan. In view of the growth in number of students at Brindhavan, we undertook to build a new hostel for them. That year I took all the students to Ooty during the summer. All the arrangements for the summer course were completed successfully. Swami told the students a day before they were to leave Ooty: "Boys! You have had the chance to come to Ooty. You had better go on a sight-seeing trip and enjoy the grandeur and beauties of the Lord's creation." Swami asked them to go out sight seeing, but they insisted on Swami also coming with them. The boys are a stubborn breed. Swami told them that if He came with them, large crowds would gather wherever He went and they would not be able to see anything.

Modern boys have a stubbornness of their own. They said they would not leave unless Swami also came with them. Swami relented and made arrangements for all the students to leave by buses for Doddabetta, the highest point in the Neelgiris range (above 8000 feet altitude). They wanted to take photographs with Swami on the top of the hill and Swami agreed to follow them to take photographs with them. Swami left half an hour later from Nandhavanam to Doddabetta. Two young men went to Nandhanayanam to see Bhagawan. They were told that Swami had left for Doddabetta. Immediately the two young men got up on their motorcycle and started driving at high speed to catch up with Bhagawan's car on the road to Doddabetta. Their only anxiety was somehow to get a glimpse of Swami.

Swami noticed the boys and wanted to know who they were. Someone in the car remarked: "They might be some rowdies." Swami remarked: "No, no. Without knowing the truth you should not make such remarks. They might be boys eager for Swami's dharshan." When Swami's car was taking a turning, the boys came at high speed near Swami's car. At the turning the motorcycle fell on a side. Both the boys fell down from the vehicle. Immediately, I stopped my car, went near them, wiped the mud from their bodies and enquired of them: "Boys! Have you suffered any injuries! Why did you drive at such a high speed? You should not have done so. If you wanted to see me, you could have come to Nandhavanam." I sought to comfort them and gave them two Kamala oranges to eat.

The two boys, who were local college students, said: "Swami! We came to have your dharshan. Because of this mishap, we not only got Swami's dharshan, but also sparshan, sambhashan and prasadham If this accident had not happened, would Swami have come near us, wiped our backs and spoken so endearing to us? Swami! We yearned for your dharshan. We earnestly sought you. We got all three dharshan, sparshan, sambhashan (see you touch you and speak with you). Any trouble is worth while if these three can be got. Please give us always such troubles."

There is no pleasure and pain for the Lord

Kunthi prayed likewise to Krishna. The benignity with which the Lord considers a devotee in the moment of his troubles, He is not likely to show .at other items. Of course, the Lord thinks of the devotee even at happy occasions. For the Lord there is nothing like pleasure and pain.

When Kuchela was in Krishna's palace he forgot to ask Krishna what he had come to ask. But there is no need to ask the all-knowing Lord. After lavishing all the hospitality on him, Krishna sent Kuchela back in a palanquin. After going some distance Kuchela reflected on his folly. "I enjoyed all the sumptuous feast Krishna gave me, but I forgot all about the plight of my children. I forgot to ask Krishna what I had gone to ask him. What a fool I am!" But when he neared his old home, what he saw was a magnificent mansion. His wife was dressed in fine clothes and was shining with all ornaments. She came out to welcome Kuchela like a queen. Kuchela wondered whether she was some princess or his wife.

She approached Kuchela and asked him: "Lord! What did Krishna tell you?" Kuchela described how lovingly Krishna rushed to meet him and embraced him endearingly. "How can I describe his all-encompassing love? He is love itself. Is there anyone who could confer countless blessings in return for a handful of Kuchela's parched rice!" (Swami sang a Telugu song). "What a fool I was not to realise the boundless grace of such a Lord!" Reflecting like this Kuchela went round the mansion, deeply moved by Krishna's love for him.

Believers will never suffer

Nothing will be lacking for those who believe in God. Many non-believers have suffered in life in various ways, but no one who had full faith in God has ever suffered. There are none such sufferers, none at all. Unfortunately many suffer because of lack of faith. Very often they suffer disastrous losses. On the other hand, the real believers are often carried from the depths of life to the Abode of the Lord! Hence, faith is supremely important. Faith is everything. This faith can be acquired and strengthened only through love.

During the past four days, innumerable devotees from all parts of Andhra Pradesh have come here and experienced the bliss of heaven on earth. All of them are utterly innocent people. Their hearts are pure and unsullied. They have firm faith in God. Bharatheeya culture today survives to some extent only in the villages.

No one can adequately describe the joy experienced by these innocent villagers. That is true devotion. All other devotees present in Prashanthi Nilayam were deeply moved by the devotion of these Andhra village folk. I bless all of them to be happy, to be ever blissful and lead sacred lives.

Love for the Lord should not degenerate into fanaticism and hatred of other names and forms. This type of cancer is affecting even eminent men nowadays. But you must avoid-it. Believe that all who revere the Lord and walk in fear of sin are your brothers, your nearest kith and kin. Their outer dress or language or skin-colour, or even the methods they adopt to express their reverence and ear are not important at all.

- Sathya Sai Baba

50. The glory of Bhaarath's women

Date: 19 November 1996 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Ladies Day

Fear Of Sin Has Gone,
Evil Deeds Are Rampant,
Devotion To God Is Wavering.
To Fight These Tendencies
Chanting The Name Of The Lord
Is The Only Remedy, Oh Man!
If Women Go Out For Jobs
Who Will Take Care Of The Homes?
If Husband And Wife Go To Offices Â· Who Will Look After The Children?

Earning money may solve some problems But how will it resolve domestic problems? Truly speaking, working women Do not enjoy much happiness.

LOVING Embodiments of the Divine Self!. It is not my view that women should not get educated. They should have education. You may also take up jobs. But you should live up to the obligations and glory of womanhood. The first title given to a woman is GrihaLakshmi (the goddess of Home). A woman is expected to confer all prosperity, honour and good name on the home and the family. She is characterized as Grihalakshmi and not Office-Lakshmi.

Another title for a woman is Ardhangi (The better half. This means she is the better half of the husband and not a partner in his job.

The third title is Illalu (the Mistress of the Home). She is the mistress in the house and not in the office.

Dharmapathni is the fourth title conferred on a married woman. This implies that the home is the dwelling for all righteousness. The home is the birth place of all the Dharmas (rules of right conduct) hallowed by usage from ancient times.

What we have to safeguard and protect today are Truth and Righteousness and not the nation. When Truth and Righteousness are protected, they will protect the nation. Hence righteousness should be fostered in the home. A home is no trivial place.

The Home Is A Veritable University Teaching Many Subjects,
The Home Is Centre Of Comfort And Pleasure Conferring Joy;
The Home Is A Stone That Can Make Even The Creator, Brahma, Sing And Others Dance.
The Home With The Husband
Is A School For The Wife. (Telugu Poem)

The home is the abode of Dharma, which protects and safeguards the country. The home is beacon which illumines the world and sustains it. Women should realise that, irrespective of their education or position, their foremost obligation is to protect the home. For lakhs of students and children who go to school, the mother is the first teacher. From the moment of birth, for every one the mother is the preceptor. If such a teacher leaves her home to teach other children, who will teach her children?

For Bharatheeya women, the first duty is to reform the home and run it along ideal lines.

The home and the family is the basic social institution everywhere in the world. When the home improved, the whole world will be better.

The home is a heaven itself

In this phenomenal world, whatever pleasures and satisfactions one may derive elsewhere, if there is no joy at home, it becomes a veritable hell. The home is heaven itself. It is the duty of women to maintain it as such.

There is a proverb in the Andhra Country: "First care for the home and then

think of other things." Since ancient times, Bharath's name and fame have rested on the greatness of women (Bhagawan sang a song in Telugu, praising the greatness of Savithri, who made the Lord of Death restore the life of her husband, the power of Chandhramathi, who stood by her husband's determination to sacrifice everything for Truth, the chastity of Seetha who went through an ordeal by fire, and Damayanthi, who shared all her husband's troubles with fortitude. Bharath was noted for such heroic women whose chastity and courage are an example for all humanity). To be born as women in such a country where there were such heroic women, is indeed a privilege.

Should not the sacred river Ganga be worshipped as a mother? Is not Bharath the home of Gomatha, Bhuumatha and Vedamatha - the land in which the cow, the earth and the Vedas are worshipped as a mother? It must be realised that it is not proper for Bharatheeya women to forget their sacred vocation and engage themselves in outside activities contrary to their great heritage.

(Bhagawan sang a song glorifying the quality of forbearance, which was the hall-mark of people in this sacred land, the love for mother and the Motherland, and the readiness even to sacrifice one's life to uphold one's honour). Unfortunately these values have been lost today. Bharath was the leader for the entire world in the realm of spirituality. Hindu tradition stood for the welfare of all mankind all through the ages. To uphold these ideals the kings and women in ancient Bharath made great sacrifices. Everyone must take a pledge to revive and uphold these great ideals.

Consequences of uncontrolled immoral desires

The great epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharatha, and the supreme Purana, the Bhagavatha, have taught the great lesson for all mankind regarding the disastrous consequences of uncontrolled immoral desires. Ravana, who Was a great scholar and warrior, became victim of an evil passion. Hiranyakashipu met with his end because of his intense hatred for

God, despite the fact that he was a master of all sciences and had acquired many powers by his penance. Dhuryodhana was the victim of incurable jealousy and insatiable desire for power and property.

Many women have played a great role in the past in trying to restrain husbands from indulging in evil deeds. Mandodhari was a notable example of such a woman who tried to impress on Ravana the error of his ways. But Ravana paid no heed to her.

Women who are the embodiments of the Divine spirit! At least from now on you must strive to sanctify the home and turn the family towards the Divine path.

Mind can make one a demon or Divine

Women must realise the enormous power of the mind for good or evil and see that its power is used only for doing good. The mind can make a person a demon or Divine. The mind is under the control of the intellect. The intellect is governed by the Atma. Self-realisation will bring about control over everything.

The dire conditions prevailing in the world are known to everyone. The root cause of all this is the failure of people to realise their inherent divinity. Excessive desires, fuelled by selfishness, are the cause of all troubles. The primary requisite is confidence in one's self. Without that confidence, nothing can be accomplished.

Men are in quest of peace. But how is it to be secured? Faith in God is essential. That faith has to be generated in the family. Then alone the children will develop sublime thoughts. They are the future citizens of the nation. Hence they have to be brought up well. Unfortunately today mothers in affluent families neglect their children. They leave the children in the care of nannies and the children have more love for the nannies than for their mothers.

In ancient times, children who were fed on their mothers milk developed into good persons. Today the children are fed not on mother's milk but on tin milk. With the result the children develop a "tin" mentality.

Only women can restore the glory of the land

If the mothers take care of the homes on right lines, they will be protecting the nation. Mothers should foster in the children love for truth and righteousness and tell them stories about the lives of great men and women. In olden times, the elders used to tell the young children all about the nation's great heroes and saints. Where are such elders today?

Modern youth even mock at such old people. It is the seed sown by those elders which has kept our ancient culture alive to this day. Only the women of the nation can revive and restore to its glory the ancient culture of our land.

The culture of Bharath is a hallowed one. Everyone got up from bed with the name of God on his lips. You are all aware that in Kashi (Varanasi) there is the practice of reciting the name of Rama in the ears of dying persons. The idea is to remember the name of the Lord at the time of death because of the belief that one's rebirth is related to one's thoughts before death.

Teach the children sacred things and not nonsense verses. In the old day, the first words a child was taught at school were "Om Namasshivaya" (the five-letter Divine manthra) or "Om Namo Narayanaya." Today, as the sacred ritual of initiating, a child is taught a nursery rhyme like "Ba ba black sheep," or "Ding dong Bell, Pussy is in the well." Is this the kind of stuff that should be taught to our children? What should be implanted in the hearts of our children are sacred names like Rama and Krishna.

How should devotees conduct themselves?

Chaithanya used to exhort his tongue to glory in chanting sweet names of the

Lord, "Govindha, Dhamodhara and Madhava." (Bhagawan sang sweetly the song of Chaithanya). How should devotees conduct themselves today? Their looks should be cool and soothing like the moon. Their speech should be soft like butter. Their hearts should be sweet like honey.

Seethalakshmi (who had spoken earlier) had quoted part of a poem of Swami. (Swami recited some other passages from the poem). "Oh brother, open your eyes and see the Lord Sai, who is in your hearts and not in Shirdi or Parthi." Fill your hearts with divine thoughts and feelings.

How do devotees behave today? Thinking that God is in Badhrachala, Thirupathi, Badhrinath or Kedharnath, they prepare themselves for long pilgrimages. But they will not appreciate the statements that God is in one's own heart and there is no need to go out in search of him. They have no faith in the God who is so close to them. They are prepared to incur any expense to go in search of God who is declared to be in some distant place. The statement that God is somewhere else is bhrama (delusion). The truth is God is within you. People forget that the divinity within you is there to guide you. Everyone should be good, think good and do good and enjoy good results. This is true Vedantha.

Have full faith in God as your Indweller. Develop pure sublime love. That alone will be lasting. All other qualities come and go. Learn to live in love. Women are the fountain-source of love. Bhakthi is considered a feminine quality wile Jnana (wisdom) is considered masculine. Let me not be misunderstood if I say that for the presence of all the male devotees present here, women alone are responsible. It is they who by their sacred feelings brought their menfolk here. Their work is sacred in every respect. They seek not only to sanctify their lives but the lives of all others in the family.

It is sinful to look down upon women

Women are not to be treated lightly. The Geetha says that women are endowed with seven kinds of powers while men have only three. It is sinful to

look down upon women.

Consider, for instance, this fact. There are any number of women who have tried to bring back their dead husbands or to venerate their memory. How many men have done likewise for their wives? Many hasten to acquire a second wife. In this respect, Bharath has been an example to the world.

Wherever women are honoured, there is prosperity and happiness. Women should never be slighted or treated with disrespect. A home in which the housewife sheds tears will be bereft of all prosperity. This is the ancient conception of the role of women in the home.

You might say that the karma of the previous birth has to be consumed in this birth and that no amount of grace can save man from that. Evidently, some one has taught you to believe so. But I assure you, you need not suffer from karma like that. When a
severe pain torments you, the doctor gives you a morphine injection and you do not feel the pain, though it is there in the body. Grace is like the morphine, the pain is not felt though you go through it.

- Sathya Sai Baba

51. Adhere to Sathya and Dharma

Date: 22 November 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Convocation - 15

This Motherland Of Ours Gave To The World Noble Souls Renowned In All The Continents; It Is The Land Which Freed The Nation From Western Rulers. This Bharath Is Reputed For Its Scholarship. It Is The Sacred Land Which Stood Forth As The Master In The Realms Or Music, Literature And Sacred Lore; Born In The Land Of Bharath, Noted For Its Fine Arts And Natural Beauty, It Is Your Bounden Duty To Foster The Glory And Prosperity Of The Motherland.

BHAARATH, which in the past was noted for its educational achievements in various spheres, is today confronted with a crisis in its educational system. The system attaches value only to the acquisition of degrees. Is it for earning a mess of potage that these degrees should be got? Or should they be acquired for rendering service to society? Or are they to be acquired for getting Vijnana (wisdom)? Neither students, nor the authorities, nor the parents appear to be bothered about these questions.

The educational system of today

Can an education which is not of use to society or the nation be called education at all? Every year the colleges are letting lose upon the world lakhs of degree-holders. What is their future? What is the goal of the educational system? When you pose these questions, the answer you get is that the educational system has become mechanic. In today's education you find no trace of character-building, respect for values and regard for tradition. Education is pursued for selfish purposes and not for serving society.

There are in Bharath today 200 universities, 90,000 colleges and nearly a crore undergraduate students. What is the outcome of all this prodigious educational effort? What is happening to these millions of students and how is the outside world affected by them? The educational institutions appear to be mainly factories turning out graduates. Even the educational authorities seem

to be content with statistical progress rather than the real achievements of the educational system. Schools and colleges are mushrooming everywhere, with or without official sanction. There is a pretence of acquiring education, without anyone being aware of what it really means.

Knowledge against Character

"Of what use is the acquisition of all kinds of knowledge if one has not good qualities and has no moral values?" says a Telugu Poem. What for is academic knowledge acquired? Is it for deceiving others? Or is it for promoting one's selfish interests? Or for the selfish enjoyment of pleasures? Education today is being, used largely for these purposes than to promote the well- being of society or the nation. An education that serves no useful purpose in daily life in utterly worthless.

Education today promotes largely intellectual cleverness.

What is the use if the head is filled with bad thoughts, If the ears listen only to scandals,

If The Eyes Look Enviously
And The Mind Is Plotting Misdeeds? (Telugu Poem).

All that is noble in human life is being destroyed. The students of today are divorced from all that is ennobling.

Educated youth, instead of going to the relief of the suffering and the needy, are raising problems for society. But they are not to blame. The fault lies with the educational system. Governments in India set up many committees to report on the reform of the system. From the time of Morarji Dhesai till today these committees have been set up. No one knows what happened to the reports of these committees. There is no evidence that anyone in authority is

concerned about training our young people to be useful and ideal citizens of the nation. In the place of high ideals, students today are cultivating high ambitions. What is required is not Asa (desire) but the Asana (ideal).

Students have no awareness of the greatness of humanness. They do not understand the significance of unity in thought, word and deed. Instead of unity and harmony, you have only discord and division. All problems arise out of this discord.

Respect for culture undermined

What is important is samskara (culture) much more than mere knowledge. Occidental education has undermined Respect for Indian culture,

Eclipsed Truth And Righteousness In Daily Life,
Encouraged Fascination For Foreign Languages
And Eroded The Love Or Native Languages,
Broken The Norms Of Social Behaviour,
And Destroyed The Respect For Teachers. (Telugu Poem)

The higher values of education are being eroded continuously. Education is getting increasingly commercialized, especially in professional courses like engineering and medicine. I am unable to understand what joy the students derive from going through these excessively expensive courses.

Students should first of all know how to deal with the problems of daily life. They have to acquire general knowledge and common sense. Practical knowledge is more important than familiarity with books. It is this kind of bookish education that has led young people astray and made them lead worthless lives.

Serve the Motherland

Students! You are the children of Mother Bharath. You must cherish and foster the great culture of Bharath. Born in this motherland, you breathe her sacred air, drink her holy water and are sustained by her produce. Follow her sacred footsteps, engage yourselves in service to society in a spirit of dedication. You have to transform yourselves in accordance with our ancient culture. Only then will your humanness be vindicated. Otherwise all your education will be like cultivating a barren land.

Your own conduct accounts for how you live. There is no need to blame anyone else. Begin with the purification of your minds. Then your thoughts, your looks and your behaviour will become pure.

Today men's actions are governed by selfishness and self-interest. Even when one appears to love another, it is only out of self-interest. Self-interest is bound to exist. But there should be a limit to it. As long as they remain as students, the young people appear well-behaved. But the moment they get out of colleges and enter the outside world, they get polluted.

Students! Wherever you may be, remain in good company. Entertain and do good deeds. Adhere to good conduct.

Inherently all students are good. But the social environment pollutes their minds. They are spoiled by bad associations. Hence they should take good care about the company they keep. They must bear in mind three vital maxims: One, "Sarvabhuutha hithe rathah" (Rejoice in the well-being of all living creatures). Two: "Sarvajnana samayukthah" (Have comprehensive knowledge of all things). Three: "Sarvaguna Samayukthah" (Develop all qualities equally). When you develop these qualities, your life becomes exemplary.

Today the world is filled with violence and fear. The root cause of all this is selfishness. Adhere to truth. Truth is your life breath. Truth transcends the categories of time. It is changeless. It is invincible. "Sathyameva Jayathe" is our national motto. The Chinese, though different in culture from us, also

adore Truth. Truth is the basis of genuine prosperity.

The importance of Truth

There is a story relating to Prahladha. Once Indra secured from Prahladha the gift of his Sheelam (character). When character left Prahladha, the goddesses of Fame, Royal Prosperity and Prowess left him one after the other. Prahladha allowed them to go. But when Sathya (Truth) started to leave, Prahladha prayed to the goddess not to leave him. The moment Truth stayed with Prahladha, the other deities representing Fame, Prosperity etc. also returned.

Students! In whatever situation you may be placed in your official careers, never give way to untruth. You must uphold Dharma, which means acting according to your conscience. Always follow the dictates of your conscience. This is the meaning of the Upanishathik dictum: "Sathyam Vadha, Dharmam Chara" (Speak the truth, follow righteousness). This was the advice given by the Rishis to their disciples when they completed their studies.

Students! This is a great opportunity in your lives. Esteem this day of the Convocation as a sacred day. Take to your hearts the good counsel given to you. Dedicate your lives to righteous ways. Earn a good name for yourselves. That is all that I desire. Bring a good name for your parents and for the Institute where you have studied.

Shed all fear except the fear of swerving from Truth. You should not be afraid because you are not an animal. You should not cause fear in others because you are not a wild beast. You are human beings. When you act upto this truth, you will benefit society.

I bless you all with the hope that you will not onlylead good lives but make your friends and all others with whom you are associated lead worthy lives.

Values for Education; Education Jar Life; Life for Love;; Love for Man; Man for Service; Service for Spirituality; Spirituality for Society; Society for Nation;

Nation for World; World for Peace.

- Sathya Sai Baba

52. Fill your hearts with love

Date: 23 November 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Birthday - 71

Whether One Is A Great Scholar
Or A Ruler Living In A Mansion,
Or A Hero Who Has Won Great Victories,
Or A Destitute Grovelling In Poverty,
Without Love In His Heart, He Is Nothing.
A Devotee With Love Is More Worthy Of Veneration.
Of What Use Are Men In Bharath
Who Can Make The Stones Sing In Joy,
Men Who Can Play With The Heads Of The Enemy, Men Who Can Wield Power Over The Land,
If They Have No Awareness
Of The Wail Of The Oppressed,
When Will They Respond
To The Cries Of The Poor?

EMBODIMENTS of Love! The cosmos is filled with love. Love is Righteousness. Love is Truth. The universe is based on love. Lost in the transient pleasures of worldly life, man is forgetting this supreme Love Principle.

What is the reason? Selfishness has grown and selflessness-has declined. Narrow-mindedness is widespread. Broadness of heart is on the wane. Desires have increased. Ideals are vanishing. Human life is dominated by selfishness and self-interest.

The ancient sages enthroned thyaga (sacrifice) on the highest pedestal. They adored Righteousness. Today these sublime ideals are forgotten in Bharath. As a consequence the country is racked by every kind of trouble.

A heart without love is a cemetery. Love demonstrates the existence of the Divine. It is all pervasive. It is the basis for human unity. Only when

selfishness goes and faith in the Divine grows will human unity be achieved.

Hence, Every Human Being Should Fill His Heart With Love.
God Is Love; Love Is God. Love Is Linked To Love.
When One Is Full Of Love
He Is Fit For Oneness With God.

It is most vital for everyone to recognise and practice this Love Principle. At all times love has existed among the good and the bad, in the forest or in a palace, in attachment or in separation, in one's conduct as well as in one's speech, in the mind as well as in action. It is all-pervasive.

The power of love

The most powerful weapon to destroy the forces of evil rampant in the world today is love. Unfortunately men are not pursuing the right path to acquire this sacred love.

Love is the seed of love. It is also the branches, the flowers and the fruit. To enjoy the fruit of love, one has to practise Love.

Instead of seeking to know the true nature of love, man is engaged in the pursuit of wealth and power. No doubt wealth and power are necessary, but only within limits. The vast ocean, when it swells beyond its bounds, is censured for its misbehaviour. The human body and mind will be healthy only when food is consumed within limits. Excessive eating causes various disorders.

Everything in the world is governed by the bounds set for it. However, love has no limits. "Anirvachaneeyam Prema" (Love is beyond the power of words), declares the sage Naradha.

The flow of love is the life-giving water for everyone. How is this love to be

secured by one? Not by Japa (chanting the Lord's name) or meditation or by studying the scriptures. God does not dwell in the Vedas or the Puranas. God dwells in the heart and should be sought there. People should close their mouths and open their hearts. Then they will experience the divine bliss.

Today love has been almost totally banished. Where love should prevail hatred has taken its place. Petty jealousy has usurped the place of compassion. Man can experience true happiness only when the appropriate qualities reside in their allotted places.

Transform your entire life into a saga of love. You will then lack nothing to make you happy. All wealth and position will be added unto you. Love conquers all.

Have a feeling of total surrender

What is the nature of this love? When praying to God, you should have a feeling of total surrender. If you are really keen about realising God, if you are hungering and thirsting for God, then you should cultivate this all-absorbing love. Mere expression of desire is not enough. You should endeavour to experience union with the Divine. If your heart is full of selfishness, how can you experience the Divine merely by a wish?

There is love of sorts today. It is related to the body consciousness and not to the Self which is the basis. Spiritual love begins with the concept of Dhasoham (I am your servant) and culminates in the concept of Soham (He and I are one). Without the feeling of Dhasoham, you cannot experience the feeling of Soham. ;Soham is the expression of divine oneness. "The Atma and I are one."

That Atma is Brahma. That is love. That is Truth. That is Righteousness.

Men have been concerned with the four goals of human life - the Purusharthas - -Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha (Righteousness, wealth, sensuous desires and Liberation). But there is a fifth goal: Love. Only when love is achieved will the world become an earthly paradise.

Where love prevails, there will be no room for hatred or envy. Love can have no truck with evil thoughts and actions. Love should be steadfast and unwavering. If one goes on hopping from one Swami to another, from one form of worship to another, he will never experience love of the Divine. "One word, one path" - -that should be the aim.

Today thousands of people have gathered here. What has brought them together here? Love is the main cause. Without love few of you would have come from such distant places. How does this love express itself? It is a process of give and take. You have. to receive God's love. And you have to offer your love. But both are one and the same love. God's love is reflected in your bodies. That is the meaning of the Geetha declaration: "A fragment of mine is present in everyone in the cosmos."

Use the Divine element for the benefit of others

That Divine element in you should not be misused. It should be used for the benefit of others. The Divine principle of love is being treated with narrow ideas. From ancient times the sages welcomed this Principle with open arms. Naradha declared: "Ya-labhdhva puman siddho bhavathi, amrutho bhavathi, thriptho bhavathi" (Having gained Divine love, Parama Prema, a person becomes perfect, immortal and contented).

He considered Divine love as supreme over all things. Just as without sugar, no sweet will have sweetness, without love nothing in life can have any value. Your heart is inherently filled with love. But you are ignoring this plenitude and going after the trivial. Your real sustenance will come from this Divine love and not from other petty pleasures.

Every cell in the human body is filled with love. It is this microcosmic love that fills the entire cosmos.

Investment in devotion

You have no need to go in search of love elsewhere. It is all within you. A man makes every effort to accumulate wealth. An equal effort is needed to acquire the wealth of love. Men today invest their assets of love in pitiful ventures. Instead they should invest all their love in the Divine bank of devotion. This deposit is not only safe but will yield you increasing returns in terms of bliss. Your heart is the bank where your love for God should be deposited. Deposits elsewhere are insecure. Deposits of money may be in danger of being lost. But the deposit in your heart is immune from any kind of theft or loss. Make your deposit safe by "insuring" it within your heart. It is totally safe, though it has no bolts, doors or locks. This love has been characterized as Amritha-svaruupa (the form of eternal nectar). Nectar pleases only the palate. But Divine love confers eternal bliss which is sweeter than nectar. Everyone should resolve to acquire this nectarine Love.

Today your foremost duty is to enthrone thyaga (sacrifice). Only when sacrifice reigns, love will come into its own. All your latent potentialities will then manifest themselves. You will succeed in all your legitimate undertakings. When love becomes the ruling principle, sorrow and disappointment will disappear. That was why the Vedas declared that sacrifice alone is the key to immortal bliss. "God is love. How can you hope to realise God without love?" (Telugu poem).

How to manifest that love that is within you? You have to engage your hands in clapping as you chant the names of Rama, Krishna and others. Recite the names of the lord with your mouth. If you really desire to experience God-, you must remember the name of the Lord always like Prahladha: "Om namo Narayanaya." Sing the praises of the Lord like Radha and Meera. Worship the Lord like Jayadheva, Gauranga and Thukaram. Shed tears in devotion before the figure of the lord like Ramakrishna Paramhamsa. Then you will experience

the Lord. People shed tears over petty things, but do not shed a single tear for the Lord. There are two kinds of tears: tears of joy and tears of sorrow. What you have to shed for God are tears of joy.

Power of the Lord's name

When Krishna was being weighed in a balance, all the jewels of Sathyabhama could not balance His weight. Rukmini then came and declared that the mere chanting of the name of Krishna would be equal to His weight. By the additional offer of a leaf, a flower or a little water, the scales will be tilted against Krishna. So saying she placed a thulasi leaf on the scale. And lo! it went down. The tulasi leaf carried the full weight of Rukmini's boundless love for Krishna. All the jewels of Sathyabhama were of no avail. But Rukmini's invoking the name of Krishna and offering a thulasi leaf with a love-filled heart titled the scales against Krishna. Such is the power of the Lord's name and a love-filled offering to the Lord. The Lord is not swayed by wealth or scholarship, power or position. Love alone can move Him.

If you wish to sway the lord, you must offer love and love alone. Today unfortunately love has become scarce. Even material love is disappearing. But God's love is boundless. In whatever manner you may love Him, He responds in equal measure. But without love, you have no right to seek His love. Filled with bad feelings and thoughts, if you pray to the pure and unsullied Lord, how do you expect to win His grace? If you remain pure at least in your shrine, you may acquire some fragment of divine love.

There are any number of able exponents of spirituality. But of what use are their discourses if they do not practise what they preach?

Manifest your love

Embodiments of the Divine! If you are really filled with devotion, manifest your love for God who is the very embodiment of love. If you are genuinely

hungering and thirsting for God, partake of Divine love to appease your hunger and quench your thirst.

Divine love is the only panacea for all your troubles and miseries arising from insatiable desires and frustrated ambitions. God's love is like a lighthouse beacon. It shows you the right path. Divert the boat of your life towards the lighthouse of Divine love. You are then bound to gain the shore of bliss.

You do not need any special type of penance or meditation. Meditate on love. Fill your mind with love. Even while attending to your daily chores, regard all of them as offerings to the Divine. God is omnipresent. See God in everything and every being. Let love grow in your hearts like the waxing moon. Divine love will not wane like the moon. Let such steadfast love be enshrined in your heart. As Thukaram said: Dhil me Ram, hath me kam (Ram in the heart and work in the hand).

The duty of everyone from today onwards is to cultivate true, unsullied love. With love of God you can secure anything. Without that love, you will only be steeped in misery.

Do not divorce yourself from Nature

Let the Buddhist prayer be your guide. First, take refuge in your intellect - Buddham Sharanam Gachchami. Divert that intellect to the service of society - Sangham Sharanam Gachchami. Then you will find refuge in Bliss - Anandham Sharanam Gachchami.

Do not divorce yourself from Nature. "Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagath" (The cosmos is permeated by the Divine). Hence recognise the Divine even in your enemy. His heart is bound to change. When you love even the one who has harmed you, he is also bound to change. Do not allow your love to be affected in any way.

When people pray to God, sometimes doubts may arise as to whether and

how the Lord will respond. Such doubts arose even in the mind of Radha..But all doubts disappeared when she realised that the whole universe was the mansion of God and there was no need to keep any door open or closed. All that was needed was complete surrender to God. The mystic significance of the songs of the saints and devotees like Radha and Meera should be rightly understood. (Bhagawan sang a Meera Bhajan, "Chalo re man" to explain the esoteric meaning of the song).

Sing the glories of God

God is moved by the devotee's heart-felt song. He becomes one with the devotee. No other form of worship has the same effect of God. It is enough if you do the singing within yourself. (Bhagawan demonstrated by singing the opening lines of a song, "Rama nannu kapadu", how a melodious prayer can move the heart of anyone). Make music the passport to merger with the Divine. Music is the gift of God. Only the gifted ones can sing sweetly, appealingly and delightfully. We-.have here M.S. Subbalakshmi. From her early years, she dedicated herself to music, which filled her heart. This kind of soulful music cannot be acquired by anybody. It can come only through God's grace.

When you sing in public you can give delight to many. But if you cannot do so, you can sing to yourself. It will delight your heart and sweeten it. Immerse yourself in all work with love. Whatever you do, consider it as gifts from God. When you have malaria, you have to take the bitter quinine mixture. But that is the medicine for your ailment. Likewise, when adversity confronts you, treat it as a kind of medicine for your good. God has to be melted and beaten to make a jewel. A diamond is cut to make it more brilliant. Likewise troubles in life serve to refine a person. Love should enable you to welcome even hardships as meant for your own good.

Today this body enters on its seventy first year. This body is made up of the five elements and is essentially impermanent. Do not attach much importance to the body. Take to heart the Love Principle that is being

conveyed to you. My entire life is filled with love. I have never put anyone at any time to any kind of suffering. I have never done any harm to anyone. I have hated no one. I have no aversion to anybody. What is the reason? It is my love that is transforming others. I am now 71. But no one can know what accounts for my condition. I may act as if I am angry on some occasions, but the anger does not stem from the heart but is confined to the tongue. From head to foot I am filled only with love. It is this love which has attracted the whole world.

I do not desire anything. I have three P's. One is Purity. Second is Patience. Third is Perseverance. It is these three which have secured the world's regard. No invitations were issued to those who have gathered here. Swami's love alone attracted them all like a magnet. Some may ask why they are not attracted to Swami if that magnet is so powerful. The reason is that these persons are like rusted iron which no magnet can attract. Let them remove the rust and dust and they will be drawn to the magnet. Their hatred and desires, their envy and greed are the rust and dust covering them. If you cleanse yourselves of these, wherever you are, you will be mine and I will be yours. The hapless and the forlorn, wherever they may be, are the concern of Sai. Promote sacred love in your hearts. That love will not only redeem your lives but will promote the well-being of all around you.

You need not offer anything except love. In Prashanthi Nilayam no offerings are permitted. Only love is allowed entry.

53. Realise God through love

Date: 25 December 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Christmas

Asthiram Jeevitham Loke (Life In The Mundane World Is Impermanent). Life In This Phenomenal World Is Not Permanent.
"asthiram Yauvvanam Dhanam" (Youth And Wealth Are Not Lasting). They Are Like Passing Clouds.
"asthiram Dhara-Puthradhi" (Wife And Children And Other Relatives Are Liable To Vanish Like White Mist In A Moment).
"dharmam Keerthi Dhvayam Sthiram" (Righteousness And Fame Endure Forever). In Human Life, Righteous Living And A Good Reputation Are The Two That Are Everlasting.

In the history of mankind several religions arose to promote the moral advancement, the prosperity and the welfare of humanity.

Vaishnavites have esteemed Vishnu as the Supreme Shaivites have given the highest place to Shambhu The worshippers of Ganapathi accord the highest place for Ganesha; Saraswathi is adored as the Supreme by the seekers of knowledge; Muslims regard Allah as the Supreme Lord While Christians hail Jesus as the Saviour; Buddhists worship Buddha as the Supreme Enlightened One; Jains accord the highest place to Mahaveera; Parsis adore Zoroaster Sikhs deem Nanak as the Supreme teacher Baba devotees adore Sai as the Supreme The wise regard all of them as equal.

All Religions Should Be Revered Equally
Because God Is One And The Same God For All Of Them. God Is Truth. He Is Righteousness.
He Is Peace. He Is The Embodiment Of Love.
(Telugu Poem).

Embodiments of Love!

It is essential to realise and act on the basis that the purpose of religion is to promote unity in diversity, banish divisive tendencies and make human beings lead ideal lives.

The common essence of all religions

The essence of all religions, the message of all scriptures and the destination for all mankind is the same. But because of selfishness, narrow-mindedness and concern for self-interest, religion is used as a pretext for promoting differences and conflicts. "All religions teach only what is good if they are studied intelligently. If your mind is good, what religion can be bad?" says a Telugu poem. Morality and integrity, righteousness and charity, truth and tradition, forbearance and non violence are basic tenets of all religions. These basic truths are common to all religions. But over the years men have forgotten these truths and have fostered divisive tendencies in the place of unity. As a result, respect for human values has gone. It is essential to recognise the Divine unity that suffuses all the diversity in human existence.

The life of Jesus

(Bhagawan gave a brief account of the Jewish concept of the creation, of the cosmos and referred to the birth of Jesus as the son of Mary and Joseph). As the name and fame of Jesus spread, opposition to him developed among a section of Jews. After his father's death, young Jesus considered it his duty to help his mother and revere her as divine. Jesus preached the primary obligation of everyone to show one's gratitude to the parents. Jesus came with his mother to Jerusalem when he was eleven years old. His mother was worried about the activities of Jesus. Jesus was critical of the ways of the Jews in the temple in Jerusalem.

He came out against the harmful practices in the temple and preached the omnipresence of God in all living beings. He exhorted the people not to cause harm to anyone.

What he preached was in accord with the basic teachings of all religions. He engaged himself in a mission of mercy to the sick and the poor. He offered food to the hungry. Seeing his acts of love and kindness, people declared that he was a "Messenger of God." Jesus constantly referred to God as the father. Later he declared: "I and my father are one." Jesus dedicated his life to the propagation of faith in one God who is common to all mankind.

Men today celebrate the birthdays of great holy men but they do not follow the teachings of the masters. There is nothing great about the celebration of birthdays. People must resolve to uphold their ideals and act up to their teachings.

A unique book

There is a book compiled in Britain around 1530 A.D, containing all the information about Jesus gathered during the preceding centuries. The Russians condensed all this material in a small book which they preserved in a place on the Black Sea coast. (Swami produced the little book by a circular wave of His band and held it before the audience). This is the book. You can see the cross on the cover page. The book was designed to demonstrate the common features of all religions. What is contained in this book is not to be found even in the Bible. It contains an entirely new account of the life of Jesus.

It is not open to all to understand the ways of the Lord. To know about God one has to develop godly feelings. In this book, there are bookmark threads which distinguish every faith by a shloka relating to it. There is one page which contains the shloka from the Bhagavath Geetha in which Krishna exhorts Arjuna to give up all beliefs and take sole refuge in Him and assured Arjuna that thereafter he will absolve Arjuna of all the sins (Cheers).

The essence of all creeds is one and the same thing. Man's primary duty is to surrender to God. "Surrender" means attaining the state in which the devotee feels he is one with God. This feeling arises out of the conviction that the

same divinity is present in all. Bodies of human beings are varied like bulbs, but the current passing through them is the same. The colour of the bulbs or their wattage may vary. But the current activating them is the same. This book contains the Vedhic saying: "Ekoham bahushyam."

Follow the conscience

The same God dwells in all beings. There is no justification for differences on the basis of religion. It is attachment to the body which accounts for religious differences. Do not regard the body as permanent. It is a water bubble. The mind is a mad monkey. Don't follow either of them. Follow the conscience. That is the main message contained in this little book. The culture of Bharath has experienced this truth in the concept of Sath-Chith-Anandha (Being-Awareness Bliss).

Today people read all kinds of books and go after all sorts of "great persons." They do not enquire about what constitutes greatness. Realise that there is no one greater than each of you. But you have not discovered the real truth about yourself, like an elephant that does not know its own strength. A mahout with a goad is able to control it.

Recognise the fact that the whole universe is within you. You have all the powers in you. They are derived from the Divine Spirit within you. It is the Divinity which endows you with a Free Will. Forgetting the supreme power of the Spirit, people place their reliance on the powers of the body, the mind and the intellect.

Love binds all people

Embodiments of Love!

If you want to realise God, if you wish to experience the Divinity within you, if you want to know your true self, you have to develop pure, unsullied love. It is

this that binds all people. It is described as the Prema-pasham (tether of love).

Today there are numerous sects within Christianity all of which are engaged in propagating their respective doctrines. While this preaching goes on, there is very little of practice in daily life. Practice is most important. People may be entitled to propagate their creed. But that does not achieve anything lasting. Only practical example matters. When you practise what you preach, others will be inspired by your example. No one will care for the teaching of a person who does not practise what he preaches.

I have often told the students that of all forms of knowledge, the one that is most beneficial is practical knowledge which is relevant to everyone. You have to act on the conviction that the same Divine Spirit dwells in one and all.

Oblivious to this truth, man is immersed today in selfish pursuits. This selfishness is degrading man to the lowest levels. To develop true humanness, everyone has to foster the feeling of spiritual oneness. This sense of oneness constitutes true religion. Religion means "realisation" of your true self.

Develop the love of God. All other forms of love are not love at all, but only fleeting and impermanent attachments. Man's biggest folly is forgetting his divinity. All should realise that they come "from God." All are children of God. Everyone should seek to get nearer and nearer to God. That is sadhana. You must feel that God is Hridhayavasi (dwells in the heart). You must develop compassion in the heart, because without it the heart is only a stone.

That is the message of Jesus - the message of love. Love is God. Live in love. Start the day with love. Spend the day with love. End the day with love. This is the way to God. Only the person who is filled with love will be dear to the Lord.

God is your unfailing friend

This book contains the declaration: "*Yo madhbhakthah*." "The devotee who is filled with love of God is dear to me," says the Lord in the Geetha. God is your unfailing friend in weal and woe. You must acquire His friendship.

There are many devotees from overseas here today. They should be firm in their devotion whatever changes in the situation they may face.

You may begin worshipping God with specific form and name (sakara). But when you are faced with difficulties you experience God as a helper. When you have some desires, you pray to God for fulfilling them. You are then an artharthi (seeker of favours). In these different ways the devotee has to develop his relationship to God.

To illustrate how God responds to the prayers of devotees, I would relate the story of a rich man with four wives, who expressed what they wanted him to get for them during a trip abroad. The first wife, who was spiritually enlightened, prayed for his safe return. The second wife wanted him to bring some sacred books. The third wife, who was ailing wanted him to get some medicines. The fourth wife, who was a "modern", asked him to get her sarees and jewellery. The merchant on his return gave the three wives what they wanted and stayed with the first wife because she had no other desire except to have him back.

How God responds to devotees

God responds to devotees in the same manner. To those who aspire for wealth, he gives wealth. Those who seek knowledge, He will help them to acquire it. Those who are ailing and who pray to God will get the relief they pray for. God builds hospitals for their treatment. Those who pray to God for oneness with Him, will realise Him. This is the way God responds to the four kinds of devotees.

The devotees should consider God alone as important and not other mundane desires. If you have God with you, all other things are got easily. So, God is your real wealth. Real health is God.

Men should strive for God-Realisation because they came from God and should go back to Him.

Today there are devotees here from many countries - Germany, Japan and others. Whatever happiness you may have experienced here, you will have to go back to your countries when your money is exhausted or your visa expires. Your aim must be to acquire a permanent visa to stay here permanently. That is got by God's grace. You can get it through love and love alone. When you have that love, your proximity to God is ensured for ever.

Embodiments of love! There is love in everyone of you. Develop that love. Share it with others. When you have this love there is no need for you to go in search of ashrams. There are some foolish, persons who go on hopping from one ashram to another. This is sheer folly. There is no need to go anywhere. The Divine is in your heart. Adhere to one belief firmly. Do not change your faith from day to day. Follow one path with firm faith. That is the Love principle.

Grace takes away the malignity of the karma which you have to undergo; you know there are dated drugs, which are declared ineffective after a certain date; well, the effect of karma is rendered null, though the account of karma is there and has to be rendered or, the Lord can save a man completely from the consequences, as was done by Me to the bhaktha whose paralytic stroke and heart attacks I took over, some months ago, in the Guru purnima week!

- Sathya Sai Baba

54. Divine Ideals of Indian Culture

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Iron Gets Rusted When It Keeps Lying In Dust, But Its Rust Is Removed When It Comes In Contact With Fire.
In The Same Way, Humans Are Affected By The Company With Which They Associate.
(Telugu Poem)
Rain Water Gets Absorbed When It Falls On Sand.
When The Same Rain Water Falls On Fine Clay, It Becomes Sweet.
In The Same Way, The Devotion Of A Person Shines According To His Deservedness.
(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love, Students!

One may possess beauty, nobility, goodness and brotherliness, but all these are useless without culture. A life without culture is like a temple without deity, a field without water and current (electricity). How can this type of life attain peace and happiness in this vast world?

Scientific advancements in ancient India

Today, countries like America and Russia may feel proud of their position in the polity of nations due to their power and position, advancement in research in various fields, and great scientific progress. Both of them can boast that their advancements in the fields of science and technology are unequalled by any other country of the world.

But Bharat (India) not only achieved great advancements in science since the time of the Vedas, it also put them into practical use and set great ideals. So, Bharat of today has its roots in the Vedic period of the distant past. The sacred Vedic mantras (incantations), powerful yantras (mystic diagrams), and potent tantras (esoteric doctrines) had their origin in Vedic times.

The Vedas have been the very life-principle of the spiritual life of the Bharatiyas (Indians). Nobody can say that Bharat had an ordinary historical past. The sacred Vedas had their origin in Bharat. And it is the people of Bharat who have kept the Vedas alive by chanting their Mantras and studying them in depth.

Sage Viswamitra was a great Vedic scientist, who discovered the Gayatri Mantra. Not only that, he invented many potent weapons like fire missiles, light missiles, also by making use of the energy of the sun. He gave many such weapons to Lord Rama.

This happened thousands of years ago. It shows that the Bharatiyas were not backward in the field of science. In fact, modern scientific advancements achieved by many countries today are based on the inventions made by the Bharatiyas after due research and experimentation in the past, but later on they discarded them. In modern times, some overseas countries also conducted experiments on Vedic mantras.

Bharat was the leader of the world not only in science but arithmetic also. In ancient times, many principles of Indian arithmetic were adopted by the Romans. In this way, if we carefully examine we will see that Bharat was advanced in many fields.

But, unfortunately, the Bharatiyas could not properly disseminate their knowledge to others due to mutual jealousy and lack of unity among the Bharatiyas. In the field of medical science,

Sage Bharadwaja of Bharat made many inventions. In fact, his inventions in the field of surgery were the basis of many modern inventions in surgery.

Vastness and universality of Indian culture

Besides the scientific knowledge, the world needs to know about dharma (principles of righteousness), because, as it is said, "If you protect dharma, dharma will protect you (Dharmo rakshati rakshitah)." It is dharma that protects the world. The principles of dharma were given to the world by Emperor Manu.

Similarly, Sage Gautama gave a system of logic (nyaya sastra) and Chanakya a system of economics (artha sastra).All these philosophies had their origin in Bharat. Similarly, Bharat is the storehouse of all powers of mantra, yantra, and tantra (incantations), mystic diagrams, and esoteric doctrines) Without trying to know the great powers and capabilities of this sacred land of Bharat, modern students are turning toward the West for their education.

Not only this; Bharat is the land where womanhood found its glory in women like Savitri, who could bring her dead husband back to life. It is necessary for you to know the powers and capabilities of Bharat. Another Indian woman who brought glory to women was Sumati, who could even stop the sun from rising so as to save her husband from death. Men and women of Bharat have been exhibiting such great powers from ancient to modern times.

Nobody can say that Bharat is the land of an ordinary culture. Her culture is as vast and limitless as the ocean. If you try to pump out the water of the ocean with the help of a number of huge pipes, the level of its water does not decrease even by an inch. So much water evaporates daily from the ocean by the heat of the rays of the sun, but there is no decrease in the level of the ocean. Similarly, many rivers may flow into the ocean but they do not cause any increase in its level.

Indian culture is like the ocean, which remains unaffected by the influence of external factors. It is always balanced and changeless. Equanimity is called true yoga (Samatvam yogamuchyate).

Although the Indian (Bharatiya) culture was subjected to many dangers, it withstood all those, and it is as vibrant today as it was in the past. Many countries tried to destroy this culture, but none was able to shake it. Hence, Indian culture, in fact, represents the eternal form of the Atma.

But the people of many overseas countries do not give due importance to it; even Indians (Bharatiyas) do the same. They limit its importance by interpreting it as 'the way of life'.

In this definition, what is the meaning of 'life'? Also, we should understand the meaning of the term 'way'. 'Life' connotes sacredness and auspiciousness. It bestows on humans all types of sacredness, idealism, convenience, and happiness. Every Indian should understand this principle of culture.

However, the scope of Indian (Bharatiya) culture is not limited to Bharat alone. It forms the foundation of all the cultures of the world because it gives the message of humanness and teaches mankind to live together happily with unity and harmony.

People may be born in different countries; they may have different colours, forms, and names; but all of them belong to the same human race. Wherever we may go, we will find the same human race without any differences whatsoever. This is the basic principle of Bharatiya culture.

Not only that; Bharatiya culture has given many languages and systems of philosophy to the world. It gave to the world an ideal economic system, which can withstand many ups and downs. Chanakya laid down an ideal economic system in his famous work Artha Sastra. The country is in the grip of many economic problems because it has ignored the principles laid down by Chanakya.

The basis of Chanakya's economic system is the principle of "discovering God (Daivanveshana). From time to time, many other learned men interpreted it as 'search'. But this is not the real meaning. Where should one search for God, who is present everywhere? Who can search for Him, who is immanent

in every being? How do we search for God?

He cannot be attained by spiritual practices like chanting (japa), meditation (dhyana), devotional singing (bhajans), or worship. All these are noble acts, which help to make the mind steady.

Remove the veil of evil qualities to see God

What do we really mean by discovering God? Getting rid of attachment, hatred, and pride is what leads us to find God. When fire burns, it gives rise to flame. If we ignore the fire, it will be covered with ash. How to remove this ash? In fact, where did this ash come from? It came only from fire, and it has covered the fire.

Similarly, where do clouds come from? They come from the rays of the sun. The clouds that are born out of the rays of the sun cover the sun. In the same way, if you do not use the water of a well, moss starts forming on its surface. In due course, this moss covers the water. Similarly, when eyes develop cataracts, they block the eyesight. Where did the cataract come from? It came only from the eyes, not from anywhere outside.

The ash that comes from fire should be blown away to uncover the fire. When the ash is removed, the fire becomes visible. Similarly, when a strong wind drives away the clouds, the sun becomes visible; it is not born anew. When moss is displaced, water becomes visible. And when a cataract is removed, our eyesight is restored.

In the same way, attachment, hatred, and pride cover up man's divinity. Hence, if we cast away our attachment, hatred, and pride, then the divinity immanent in us will become visible to us. This is what the sacred texts of Bharat (India) have been directing the people to act upon since ancient times.

In ancient India, all the people knew Sanskrit. As the time passed, Sanskrit suffered a decline. All the great teachings of Bharat and its entire history are

contained in Sanskrit only. Unfortunately, people are not aware of this great and rich treasure of Bharat. Today Indians (Bharatiyas) are unaware of their divinity and reality because they have forgotten their culture, which treasures this supreme knowledge.

Humans today is beset with worldly desires. The aspiration for the realisation of inner divinity is on the decline. Therefore, first and foremost, one should develop inner aspiration; all that is outer is fleeting and momentary.

Dear Students!

You are all young men and women. It is at this age that the waves of desires are strong and powerful. That is why Adi Sankara said:

> Do Not Be Proud Of Your Wealth, Progeny, And Youth.
> The Tide Of Time May Destroy Them In A Moment.
> Ma Kuru Dhana Jana Yauvana Garvam, Harathi Nimeshath Kalah Sarvam.

Why should one be proud of one's youth? It comes in the middle of one's life, stays for a fleeting moment and goes away. But we consider this transitory stage of our life as permanent; that which gives us permanent happiness, we consider it as ephemeral. We should not act in this manner.

All the education that we acquire should bring about refinement in us. But, due to the effect of Kali Yuga, even learned people consider the acquisition of secular education as the main goal of life.

Once Sankaracharya went to Kasi (Varanasi) with his disciples. There he found an old Brahmin who was repeating "Dukrun Karane, Dukrun Karane ..." while learning the rules of Sanskrit grammar written by great grammarian, Panini. When Sankaracharya heard him repeating this phrase again and again, he thought how foolish it was for this man to engage himself in such a futile pursuit. By merely learning the rules of grammar, he could not achieve anything worthwhile. He wondered why he was wasting his time by acquiring

this type of education.

So, he asked him, "Oh foolish man! How will this learning liberate you? How will repetition of 'Dukrun Karane, Dukrun Karane' protect you?" Thereafter, he recited this famous verse:

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

Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam, Govindam Bhaja Moodha Mathe,
Samprapthe Sannihithe Kale, Nahi Nahi Rakshati Dukrun Karane.

There is no mistake in learning grammar. Moreover, the grammar of Sanskrit written by Panini is very valuable. In fact, the existence of a language depends much on its grammar. But it is not the grammar that people need today. In fact, there have been so many distortions in language that the language itself has not remained the real language. In any case, learning the rules of grammar does not help and protect one.

One should constantly chant the divine name of Govinda (Lord Krishna). Where does this Govinda live? He is in you only. There is no place where God is not there; He is present everywhere. That all-pervasive God is present within and without (Antarbahischa tatsarvam vyapya Narayana sthita). God is present both inside and outside.

But those with little knowledge say, "I am searching for God." This is sheer foolishness. God is not the subject of search but the subject of realisation. Your Divinity will manifest before you when you get rid of your bad qualities. Your evil qualities have covered up your divinity. When you remove this covering, you will have the vision of your true form.

Man is the repository of many powers. Scientists today have made many inventions. The powers that these inventions show are, in fact, immanent in every person. Scientists do research on outer objects; they do not undertake

inner research.

Suppose, we take a picture of a man with a camera. What will the picture show? It will show the clothes that he has put on his body; it will also show the colour of his clothes. It will show his outer form, not the inner limbs of his body. Only an X-ray will show his inner limbs and bones.

The type of education that we have today islike the camera photograph. Our culture and spirituality are like X-ray, which show our inner reality. Spirituality is most essential for the human being. But modern education is without ethical, religious, and spiritual content.

Do you cry for God?

Sage Viswamitra performed great penance (tapas). Through penance, he invented many types of weapons. Possessing such potent weapons, why did he seek the refuge of Rama? Why did he solicit the help of Rama to kill the demons? He did so because he was bound by certain rules. He wanted to perform a ritual (yajna), and the injunction is that the person who performs the ritual should not indulge in any kind of violence while performing the ritual. Having taken the vow to perform the ritual, he was not to harbour feelings of anger and hatred. He had to have total purity. Therefore, he wanted Rama's help.

But who is Rama? Not the son of Dasaratha. "One who pleases is Rama (Ramayati iti Rama).Rama is our Atmarama (inner Self). The principle of the Atma is present everywhere and in everyone. It is the conscious divine power in every person. It is immanent in everyone in the form of their conscience.

Never act against your conscience. Consider this as divine command. We make many efforts to have the vision of God, but there is no need to make any efforts. If you love wholeheartedly, that is enough. Then, your conscience will manifest itself on its own. Here is a small example.

Mother gets engaged in her work after making her child lie down. The child falls asleep. But soon it wakes and starts crying. Hearing the crying of her child, the mother leaves her task and comes down. She lifts the child in her arms and the child stops crying.

In the same way, a person cries for God's help when they become the victim of many troubles and difficulties in this world. Then God comes down immediately. What type of crying makes God rush to a person? Only when that person loves God and prays to Him wholeheartedly. This prayer is the person's crying for God.

Not only that. The mother comes down and runs to the child without considering the musical mode and rhythm (the raga and tala) in which her child cries. The child's cry is the only thing that she considers while rushing to it. People cry today also. In fact, they all cry. But what do they cry for?

People Cry At The Time Of Birth And At The Time Of Death.
In Between, They Cry For Many Things.
Do They Ever Cry For The Redemption Of Dharma? Why Do They Cry?
Do They Cry For The Sake Of Crying?
(Telugu Poem)

People do cry today. But they do not cry for God. That is what Ramakrishna Paramahamsa said. Someone asked him, "Swami, can we also have the realisation that you have attained?" "Y es, surely you can attain. You can talk to God as I am talking to you," he replied. "But how? You cry for your wife, your children, for your job, for your position. But, do you cry for God? If you cry for God, surely God will become manifest before you." God is not somewhere away from you. He is in you only. But you are not able to know God, who is within you.

Realise your innate Divinity

Many people wear spectacles on their nose. They take them off while washing their face and put them on again afterward. Can you find your spectacles if you search for them elsewhere when they are there on your nose?

Similar is the state of humanity today. One is searching for one's spectacles, saying, "where are my spectacles? where are my spectacles?" while having them on his nose all the while.

Those who search for God, who is within them, behave like fools. Where will you search for yourself? You yourself are God. God is present everywhere. There is nothing without God; there is no one without God; there is no sound without God; there is no object without God. God is immanent in every object and every person.

How can you know Him? Air is all around you. Can you see it with your eyes? No, you cannot. But you can hear its sound with your ears. Can you deny the existence of air only because you are not able to see it with your eyes? How can you live if there is no air? There is air, but it is not visible. You cannot catch it. But you cannot say that it is not there.

Similarly, you cannot deny the existence of God merely because you are not able to see Him with your eyes. You exist. So does God. You are there only because God is there. Develop this faith in you more and more.

How can you attain God if you have no faith? Have faith in yourself. Faith in yourself, faith in God; this is the secret of greatness. If you have no faith in yourself, you cannot have faith in God. Then, how can you attain God? It is not possible even in many births. You do not recognise the Self that is within you and search for it everywhere. You need not go anywhere; you need not search anywhere.

The search that man makes these days is also very peculiar. It is an artificial search, whether it is in the field of worldly matters, science, or spirituality. Our search should be suffused with love. That is the only method to know God. All our efforts are futile without love.

Our research is only for selfish ends, and all our education is meant merely to earn our livelihood. When you conduct research with the broad feeling of "May all the people of the world be happy (Loka samasta sukhino bhavantu)," you will certainly attain your objective.

Many countries today are conducting research in many new areas of science. But these are not new. Bharat was quite advanced in many areas of research thousands of years ago.

How long ago did Hiranyakasipu live! He was a great scientist, who conducted research on the five elements and established complete mastery over them. He even reached the moon and tried to reach the stars. He made an attempt to destabilise the Pole Star (Dhruva Nakshatra). As a result of that, the world began to be plunged into total devastation (pralaya).

Can any scientist today equal him? Modern scientists have not been able to achieve even one thousandth part of what he achieved thousands of years ago.

Students should understand the divine power of Bharat. Even child Prahlada taught his father, "Oh father! You have conquered all the worlds in a trice but when you are unable to conquer your own senses and mind, what is the use?" What is the use of all your achievements when you are unable to have control over your senses?

Prahlada told his father that he had learnt everything and his guru had taught him all aspects of education. When Hiranyakasipu asked him what he had learnt, Prahlada replied,

Father! The Teachers Have Taught Me Many Things.
I Have Studied Everything Relating To Righteousness (Dharma) And Wealth (Artha) And Many Other Scriptures.
I Have Studied Many Things. In Fact, I Have Understood The Very Essence Of Education.
(Telugu Poem)

When his father asked him what the essence of education was, Prahlada replied that the essence of all education was "Om Namo Narayanaya". Om is the primordial sound principle (pranava), which was present in the beginning of the universe. That is the primordial sound from which all the Vedas emerged.

It was Sage Saraswata who taught the Vedas and Upanishads to his disciples during Vedic times. "The Vedas are infinite (Ananto vai Veda). The infinite Vedas originated only from the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet.

Children know that there are 26 letters in the English alphabet. Any number of voluminous books can be written with these 26 letters. The violin has four strings, using which four hundred Ragas can be played.

Since knowledge of the Vedas was acquired by the sages by hearing, they are called "srutis," which means the texts that have been obtained by hearing. In the beginning, only three Vedas emerged: Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, and Sama Veda. Together, they are referred to as "Trayee (Three)".

The Rig Veda is in the form of mantras. What is the meaning of mantra? It means contemplation on what is heard and putting it into practice (Manana trana sammilitam iti mantra). That is mantra.

One who does all the three, i.e. hearing, contemplation, and practice, is a real human being. This is what is meant by "The proper study of mankind is man." There should be complete harmony between thought, word, and deed. That is real mantra. Many learned people have taught this principle of mantra.

There is immense power in mantra. There is great power in Pranava. What is Pranava composed of? It is composed of (the syllables) akara, ukara, and makara represented by three letters A, U, M. When we chant AUM, all three sounds merge into one.

For example, GOD is one word. What is the spelling of GOD? G, O, D. These three letters constitute this word, GOD.

Every letter has a meaning. The three letters A, U, M denote the three words referred to as "Bhur bhuvah suvaha" in the Gayatri Mantra. These three words refer to three worlds, namely, bhuloka, bhuvarloka, and suvarloka.

Where is bhuloka? People say bhuloka refers to this world. That is not true. It refers to materialisation, i.e. physical body.

The body cannot move on its own, it is inert. Bhuvah refers to vibration, i.e. the life-principle.

Suvaha is radiation, i.e. Prajnana (highest wisdom). Hence, Bhur Bhuvah Suvaha denote the unity of body, life principle, and divine consciousness. Bhuloka, Bhuvarloka, and Suvarloka are not present elsewhere; they are within us. You are not one person, but three: The one you think you are, i.e. body, the one others think you are, i.e. mind, and the one you really are, i.e. Supreme Consciousness (Prajnana).

"Brahman is Supreme Consciousness (Prajnanam Brahma). Hence, God is not somewhere else, He is present in you.

The iron safe has little value, but the jewels that are inside it are very valuable. Our body is like an iron safe. Inside it are good thoughts, good feelings, good practices, and good behavior, which are like valuable jewels. We have to safeguard these valuable jewels and make the best use of them.

What is not there, inside us, cannot be manifested outside. All learning is there in you. Gradually, it manifests from within. What is not there within, there is no possibility of its coming out.

Similarly, what is there within cannot be lost. Everything is present within us. Everything in this world is the reaction, reflection, and resound of the inner being.

Research should be suffused with love

Develop pure love to attain God. People may do any amount of scientific research. But all research should be suffused with love. No real research can be done without love.

What is research? What is the subject of research? Who is doing research? Why and how is someone doing it? These questions should be asked.

First, 'search' yourself: "Am I good or bad?" When you conduct such a self enquiry, you do not need any other witness. That is what is meant by self-witness (Atma sakshi). You should have sacred feelings.

This fundamental principle of research was done in ancient times. Sage Viswamitra could perform intense penance because he had total love for God. The same can be said about Sage Vasishtha. The word vasishtha means 'special'; his name itself has a special significance. He was the one who adhered to proper discipline in life.

Everyone is endowed with magnetic power, which attracts others. God is the greatest magnet who attracts everyone. Human beings have the magnetic power of varying degrees, but God's power is 100 percent. That is why the entire world is attracted toward God.

When we go near this greatest magnet, we are charged with His power and become one with Him. "The knower of Brahman becomes verily Brahman (Brahmavid Brahmaiva bhavathi). If you bring an iron piece near a magnet, it is attracted toward the magnet. If you keep this iron piece with the magnet for a few days, the iron piece also becomes a magnet. When you attain the proximity of God and become a recipient of His love, you become God yourself. This is true research.

Hence, you need not undertake any other practice to attain divinity. Develop

only the feelings of love in you. This will transform you into a divine being.

In the beginning, the Vice Chancellor prayed to Me to speak about the special features of Bharatiya (Indian) culture. Yesterday, the Vice Chancellor and some other students said, "Swami, this is our adrishta." What does adrishta mean? They interpreted it as good luck. By good luck they meant good deservedness.

But this is not the real meaning of the word adrishta. A-drishta means that which cannot be seen by the eyes. That is God, who can grant everything to you. He enriches and illumines all your physical, mental, and spiritual faculties as well as furthers your worldly, ethical, religious, and scientific progress. That is adrishta thatis, the benign look of God.

Therefore, adrishta does not merely connote good luck. If you want to attain this adrishta, you can do so only by love. There is no power greater than that of love.

Love is present in everyone - but what type of love? Love today is full of selfishness. We do not want love that is steeped in selfishness; we want love that is selfless.

There is an element of selfishness in the love between husband and wife, between mother and son, between one brother and another, and between relatives and friends. That is worldly love.

Only God's love is heart to heart. It stays forever and never changes. It can be attained only by love. Bereft of love, if you keep on sitting for chanting and keep rotating the beads of your rosary while your mind is roaming in the market, then what is the use?

You sit for meditation. What is meditation? Are you sitting for meditation or posing for a photograph? You cannot attain God by posing to meditate. There is only one path by which you can attain God, and that is the path of love.

It is not possible to attain God without love. Therefore, transform your worldly love into love for God. Then whatever work you do, it will be transformed into worship. You work in an office or work as a doctor, engineer, or teacher. Do all work to please God.

Your love for God should not be limited to speech alone; it should come from your heart. Then you can attain God in a moment.

You need not search for God because He is present wherever you are. Your father and mother may be a little distant from you, but not God. God is always with you, in you, above you, below you, and around you. To attain such a God, love is enough. Strengthen the bond of your love with God. Only then can you attain God.

As the Vice Chancellor also said, the culture of Bharat (India) shows the easy path of Godrealisation. People in earlier days used to tie buntings of green mango leaves on the doors of the houses on festive occasions for decoration. But now people use plastic leaves for such decoration.

During a marriage function, our ancients used to erect a pandal with green leaves. Why? Do you think that they did so because Shamianas were not available in those days? No, no. During marriages and other functions, a large number of people gather at one place. In those days, even the illiterate villagers knew the scientific principle that the green leaves take carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, absorb carbon, and release life-giving oxygen for us. Hence, scientific knowledge is not new.

In those days, villages were located in the centre of a vast forest, where ample supply of oxygen was available to the people. That is why they were free from diseases. Heart diseases were not even heard of. Asthma had no existence at all; so was eosinophilia.

Trees do so much good to man by giving lifesustaining oxygen. People are not able to realise this truth. They are cutting down trees with increase in population with the result that today there is deficient supply of oxygen. In

this way, we are ourselves inviting dangers for us.

Forget world to realise your Divinity

Science and technology have assumed great importance in the world today. Without these two, you cannot exist. We cannot live without electric light. We get bright light when positive and negative currents combine. Both are essential. We also have negative and positive thoughts in us. When your mind is filled with negative thoughts, you cannot have positive divine thoughts.

First of all, develop positive desires in you. Then there will be no scope for negative thoughts to enter. Our negative thoughts are the cause for our difficulties and sufferings. All the worldly and negative thoughts are, in fact, lifeless thoughts. Hence, develop positive thoughts.

Your physical body is negative, and the lifeprinciple is positive. The combination of these two results in radiation, which is, "Brahman - the embodiment of truth, wisdom, and eternity (Sathyam Jnanam Anantham Brahma)." That is truth. That is wisdom. Wisdom is divine knowledge. We should have the power of wisdom and it can be attained only through love.

Today, people try to acquire only general knowledge. But what is the use of having mere general knowledge? They should add common sense to it so that they will have practical knowledge also.

Students!

Do not think that all scientific knowledge is only with countries like America, Russia, and Germany and that Bharat (India) lacks it. In fact, all knowledge of science to overseas countries has come from Bharat. Bharat has given the entire scientific knowledge to the world. The entire knowledge of weaponry is there in Atharvana Veda. Not only this, the science of health is also contained in the Atharvana Veda, on the basis of which Sage Bharadwaja made many inventions in the field of health.

In fact, all types of education have come from Indian sages (Bharatiya rishis). Even knowledge of arithmetic has its origin in Bharat.

In arithmetic, 1+1 = 2. But in spirituality, it is not true. Similarly, you say, 3-1 = 2. This is a worldly, negative answer. But spiritually speaking, 3-1 = 1. How? The world may not accept this, but I do accept it. According to Me, it is true. How? Here is a small example.

Suppose you are standing before a mirror. Here, there are three entities: you, your reflection, and the mirror. If you remove the mirror, the reflection also goes (loud applause). In the beginning, there were three entities: you, your reflection, and the mirror. Remove the mirror from these three entities and only you remain, because the reflection also goes with the mirror.

You are God. Your reflection is the individual soul (jiva) in the mirror of nature. When you forget nature, you become God. Then there is no individual soul. You consider yourself the soul when you are associated with nature.

Did you understand the meaning of this or not? Let Me give you another example.

It is daytime. Therefore, you can see the entire world - and also the sorrows that envelop it. At night, you go to sleep. Then there is no world; nothing is seen, and sorrow is also not there. When the world is not there, sorrow is also not there. Only when the world is there does sorrow exist. Hence, we say we forget the world in meditation, perhaps for a short while.

When we are immersed in bliss, we forget the world. When existence and knowledge (sat and chit) combine, bliss (ananda) results. Students should realise this.

What is the meaning of 'existence (sat)'? It means 'being', which connotes existence. It always remains without change How does it not change? There is sugar in your hand. You may put it in coffee, tea, laddu, Mysorepak, or payasam. You may put it in anything, and its sweetness remains the same.

That is 'being (sat)', which remains changeless everywhere. Besides, it gives sweetness to whichever thing it is added.

Sugar is 'being, water is, 'knowledge (chit)'. The nature of water is that it flows downward. Even if you pour it on the top of a hill, it comes down.

Sugar is sugar, water is water. When sugar and water combine, then there is no sugar and no water: Only syrup remains. What does it mean? It means that when being (sat) combines with knowledge (chit), bliss (ananda) results.

Therefore, you should unify both. This symbolises the unity of the true self at the individual level (jivatma) and the Supreme Atma (Paramatma). It denotes eternal and non-dual bliss. There are no two entities, only one exists.

God is one without a second (Ekameva adviteeyam Brahma). Hence, we need not make efforts in many ways to attain God.

Love all. Have faith that God is present in all. Merge your individual self with the divine Self.

Combine chanting with meditation and meditation with chanting

For students, there is so much to know about the culture of Bharat (India). What is not in our culture is not anywhere else.

Modern students have a peculiar way of thinking. On the pretext that Swami has said there is only one caste of humanity, these students think of marrying someone out of their caste whom they like. Yes, it is true that there is only one caste of humanity, one race, and one religion. But what about culture? Do not merely think of caste, think of the culture also.

There are different cultures. One culture is different from the other. Similar cultures may combine with each other, dissimilar may not. Hence, whatever work we undertake, we should first give a thought to our culture also. That

means tradition. You can attain progress and prosperity when you follow your traditions. Therefore, certainly adhere to our traditions.

Due to the influence of modern education, students today do not understand what equality is. Thyagaraja said, "Oh Rama! In Your pure and unsullied form of love, You in-dwell all beings, from an ant to Brahma as also Siva and Kesava. Please be my protector too." He said, "Oh God! You are present in both an ant as well as Brahma." However, when an ant bites us, we kill it; when Brahma comes before us, we offer our salutations to him. Where does the equality go then? When God is present in an ant, shouldn't we offer our salutations to it? But, we don't do it because we keep only the form in view.

Form (akaram) is not important, but bliss (anandam) is important. Divinity is present in both the ant and Brahman.

The ant is so small, but when it bites, it causes so much pain! Where does so much power come from? Even a scorpion is small, but when it stings, it causes unbearable pain. From where has it acquired so much power?

When a tiny creature like an ant is endowed with such great power, then how much power would a person have? People are endowed with all powers. No human being is without such powers. A person unaware of their powers undergoes sufferings. The person can easily attain bliss (ananda) once they are aware of their powers. Therefore, imprint God on your heart and enjoy the bliss derived therefrom.

It is essential to keep our body sacred. In order to keep it sacred, we should chant the divine Name. We should perform meditation to make our mind sacred. Do chanting (japa) with meditation (dhyana) and meditation with chanting. Love should be the undercurrent of both chanting and meditation.

We hold a cymbal in one hand and another in the other hand. The sound is produced only when both are brought together. In the same way, when chanting and meditation are in unison, we can enter into the state of nondual state of Supreme Consciousness (nirvikalpa samadhi), which is our true state.

This cannot be attained by merely doing some spiritual exercises. For this, deep love and faith are required. Therefore, develop more and more faith and cultivate more and more love.

55. Rich Cultural Heritage of Bharat

Date: 17 June 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, July 2008.

A Foolish Man Is Respected Only In His House,
And A Village Headman Is Respected Only In His Village.
Similarly, A King Is Respected In His Kingdom Only.
But A Learned Person Is Respected Everywhere.
(Sanskrit Verse)

Howsoever foolish a man may be, he will be respected in his house. Parents will love their children even if they are foolish. What is the reason? Parents are bound by the bond of love, and they cannot give up their feelings of attachment for the child.

A village headman may commit any number of foolish acts, still the villagers will give him respect. What is the reason? The reason is that he holds the authority in his hands. Since people give respect to authority, they also give respect to the person who possesses it.

In this Kali Yuga (the age we are in), people give respect to wealth and power, and not to virtues and character. Whatever type of person a king may be, his subjects will have to give him respect. The reason is that he wields power. It is only the learned man who is respected everywhere.

Profundity of Indian culture

What sort of knowledge earns respect? "The noblest knowledge among the types of knowledge (Jnananam jnanamuttamam)." It is the knowledge of the Self (Atma vidya). Knowledge of the Self is respected everywhere, without

any limitations of place, time and circumstances.

This is the knowledge of the Brahman (God), which has its origin in the Vedas. It is this knowledge of the Vedas that the Vedic scholar Griffith taught in many ways and declared, "Veda is the first word spoken by man." Similarly, the German Sanskrit scholar Max Muller held the Vedas in high esteem. He translated the Vedas into English and imparted the sublime knowledge of the Vedas and Indian culture to the students of Oxford University and to the candidates of Indian Civil Service (ICS) in England. His book, "India - What Can it Teach us?"2 describes the profound teachings of the Vedas and pristine glory of Indian culture. What does India teach to the world?

It teaches us to speak truth, practise righteousness (Sathyam vada, dharmam chara), to revere your mother and father as God (Matru Devo bhava, pitru Devo bhava). He said, "These are the four main pillars of the edifice of the Indian culture." All the codes of conduct that originated from the Vedas are also a part of the Indian (Bharatiya) culture. Greatly influenced as he was by the greatness of the Indian culture, Wilson described its pristine glory. He translated into English Vishnu Purana, written by Sage Parasara, and other Sanskrit scriptures. During the course of his translations, he came across many prophecies described in them including the prophecies about Sai Avatar in this Kali Yuga (the age we are in), which stated that His name would be Truth (Sathya); He would be the biggest magnet and would attract the whole world. Many similar prophecies are mentioned in the Nadi books written by Indian sages (rishis).

Another great Sanskrit scholar William Jones translated emperor Manu's "Manusmriti" into English under the title "The Laws of Manu".

Indian (Bharatiya) culture attracts the entire world by its teachings pertaining to various fields of knowledge. It is said, what is not there in India (Bharat) cannot be found anywhere else. The bounty that is in this country cannot be found elsewhere. Everything is there in Bharat. Unfortunately, the Bharatiyas themselves today are ignoring the principles of such a great culture.

Your thoughts make your destiny

Whatever fortune and misfortune that you experience depends upon the type of thoughts you have. Yesterday, I talked about adrishta. A-drishta means that which cannot be seen by the eyes. It also means destiny or fortune, both good and bad.

When we sow a thought, we reap a action (karma). When we sow an action, we reap a tendency. When we sow a tendency, we reap character. When we sow character, we reap destiny. Therefore, destiny depends upon character, character depends upon tendency, tendency depends upon action and action depends upon thoughts. Hence, good thoughts are the fundamental basis of our good fortune.

What is the cause of misfortune? When we sow a bad thought, we reap a bad action (karma). When we sow a bad action, we reap a bad tendency. When we sow a bad tendency, we reap bad character. When we sow bad character, we reap misfortune.

Hence, Both Good Fortune And Misfortune Depend
Only Upon Our Thoughts. Therefore, We Should Always Have Noble Thoughts.

Here, we have said that a foolish man is respected only in his house. But who is a foolish person? One who knows what is good, and is also made aware of it by many people, but neglects what is good and takes to the wrong path is a foolish person. In spite of being told what is good repeatedly, he does not leave his bad qualities even a bit. He doggedly sticks to his evil nature. He knows what truth (sathya) is and what right conduct (dharma is. Still he does not follow them.

Duryodhana and Dussasana knew very well what Dharma was, but they never put it into practice. They were also aware what truth was, yet they followed the path of untruth.

It is sheer foolishness to forget all that is divine and follow all that is worldly. This type of foolishness is on the rise these days. Therefore, man today should develop divine feelings.

A true devotee follows God's command implicitly

Divinity is beyond all attributes. What is God? The love that is immanent in everyone is God. Love is God. It is present in everyone. The way God gives His love to one and all, people should also love everyone in the same manner. Love deserves highest worship. Love is limitless and immeasurable (Ananto vai prema). It should be considered as divine.

Nobody can buy love like a commodity, howsoever wealthy and intelligentpowerful they may be. Love cannot be given or taken on rent or loan. It is present everywhere in its totality. But today people are treating love as business. We should attain love only through love. This is the primary goal of man.

Today, people are acquiring many types of education and power. They occupy many positions of authority. But this is not important. We should attain the deservedness to earn this sacred love. It is to teach this supreme principle of love that the Vedas developed into many branches and subbranches.

What is the form of the principle of love? It has no form. Yet, it can be experienced in all forms. It acquires the form to which it is projected.

If someone asks, what the form of air is, we can say it has no form. But air exists. Without air we cannot live. How can we determine its form? When it is pumped into a football, it acquires the form of the football. When you fill a balloon with air, it acquires the form of balloon. Similarly, love acquires the form of the person in whom it is projected.

Similar is the case with water. It has no form of its own. It acquires the form of the container in which it is put. Hence, love can be manifested only through a

form.

Today, people see only the outer form and don't see the inner feelings. They follow only the path of worldliness (pravritti marg) and do not understand the path of spirituality (nivritti marg) at all.

What is the meaning of devotion? People think that doing meditation, quiet recitation of the name of God, and chanting the name of God is devotion. However, there are nine paths of devotion.

1. listening (sravanam)
2. singing (kirtanam)
3. contemplating on Vishnu (Vishnusmaranam)
4. serving His Lotus Feet (Padasevanam)
5. salutation (vandanam)
6. worship (archanam)
7. servitude (dasyam)
8. friendship (sneham)
9. Self-surrender (Atmanivedanam)

What comes before Self-surrender in these nine paths of devotion? Friendship. Total surrender comes only after friendship. Until then, total surrender is not possible.

What is the meaning of surrender? It is not giving something. It is to offer oneself.

First, we should develop friendship. What does friendship mean? Is it merely to say 'hello, hello'? No, no. In true friendship, bodies may be different but life principle is one. There should be the same feelings in both. Friendship is also termed as 'maitri' or 'mai - tri'. 'Mai' means I; 'tri' means three, viz. body, mind, and spirit. There should be total unity of body, mind, and spirit. That is true friendship.

The same is to be said about surrender. Total surrender means the surrender of body, mind, and spirit. Then only can we attain divinity.

As long as we maintain the difference of I and you, we cannot attain divinity. That is why Lord Krishna said in the Gita, "The eternal Atma in all beings is a part of My Being (Mamaivamsho jivaloke jivabhuta Sanathana)." He declared, "Everyone is an aspect of My Divinity, and every being is a part of My Self." Hence, you are not a separate entity. You consider yourself separate only due to your body attachment.

We should follow the command of God in order to develop friendship with Him. The type of devotion the devotees have today is such that their selfishness is uppermost in their mind. They do not follow the command of God.

Then, what is the meaning of your Bhakti? Why should God talk to you and give command? When you do not put into practice what God tells you to do, where is your devotion? You should lead your life according to the command of God and follow it in everything you do in life. This is the true path.

That is why Purandaradasa said, "Oh God! I am born again in this world because I forgot You. If only I had installed You in my heart, I would not have been born again." There is only one cause of all doubts, that is body attachment. Doubts do not leave you till you give up body attachment. Think for a while.

Who Provides Food To Sustain The Tadpole In The Crevices Of A Rock?
Who Waters A Growing Plant On The Top Of A Cliff?
Who Painted The Several Colours On The Plumes Of A Peacock,
And Who Made The Parrot Look So Attractive With Its Multihued Feathers?
(Kannada Poem)

Trees grow on stones in mountainous regions. Who provides water and manure and looks after their growth? Only God does all this.

Who gave such beautiful colours to the peacock? Howsoever great painter one may be, one cannot give such natural colours to one's paintings. What a great artist God is!

How beautiful is the red beak of a green parrot! Who created it? Can scientists understand this?

They think this is only some sort of natural phenomenon. It is not so. You can understand this truth only when you follow the path of spirituality (nivritti marg).

Everything happens by the Will of God. Nothing happens without His Will in this world. We should develop such firm faith.

Many people consider themselves poor and inferior but this is not true. That is why Purandaradasa said, "Oh God! How can I be poor when You are there? How can I be a stranger? No, no. You are the only doer. It is only You who imparts knowledge to me, who shows me the right path, who protects me, and who punishes me. There is nothing that is not there in Your hands. You have every right over me. Then how can I be an orphan? If I am an orphan, You will not exercise Your right on me. I am Yours. That is why You exercise Your right on me." Fill your heart with divine feelings All are the embodiments of God. Know this truth and make efforts to attain God. Otherwise, what is the use of all types of education and high positions you acquire? You will have respect as far as you hold the position. Once the position goes, who will give you respect?

Only those who attain the proximity of God will be respected wherever they may be.

God Is Your Sole Refuge Wherever You Maybe,
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)

If He fulfills all your desires, you consider Him as God (Daivamu). Otherwise, you call Him a demon (dayyamu). In fact, one who considers God as a demon is themself a demon.

Do not make your heart the house of demon (dayyam) of worldly desires; fill it with compassion (daya). When you fill a tank with pure water, only pure water will flow from the taps connected to it. But when you fill it with dirty water, dirty water will come out of the taps.

As are the feelings, so is the result (Yad bhavam tad bhavathi). God manifests before you accordingto the feelings of your heart. The same thing is said in the Ramayana also. Who is Rama? Who is Yama (God of death)? In fact, Yama is Rama, Rama is Yama. They are not different from each other.

Vibhishana who took refuge at the feet of Rama saw Him as God. But for Ravana, who took to evil path, He was Yama.

Similarly, Prahlada, who constantly chanted "Om Namo Narayanaya", saw Narayana as God. But the same Narayana became Yama for Hiranyakasipu, who observed differences on the basis of name and form.

For Kamsa, who harboured evil qualities and tortured his own sister in a most heartless manner, Krishna appeared as Yama. But Kamsa's father, Ugrasena, saw Krishna as God. Therefore, Rama and Yama are not different from each other.

Everything happens according to the feelings of your heart. Good and bad feelings are the main cause of your good fortune and misfortune. You should become fortunate. To become fortunate, you should cultivate good qualities, which build your character. When you cultivate good qualities, you develop good tendencies. Only such a virtuous person will undertake good deeds.

How should one perform actions? Do all actions to please God (Sarva karma bhagavad preetyartham). Then whatever work one undertakes, one will

consider it as the work of God. Such a person will have only good thoughts. Bad thoughts will not come near them. We should perform all our worldly duties with our heart filled with divine feelings.

The same type of lesson was taught by Max Muller to all those who went to study ICS in England. After completing his studies, an ICS officer, went to meet Max Muller. At that time Max Muller was translating the Vedas. There was no such great Sanskrit scholar like him, even in India (Bharat). He translated many Vedic texts into English. He aspired that if he was to be born again, he should be born in Bharat! He considered himself most fortunate if he could put the dust of Bharat on his forehead.

The ICS officer went to see Max Muller, who was filled with such feelings of love and enthusiasm for Bharat. The officer sent in his visiting card. At that time, Max Muller was trying to understand the meaning of the Gita verse:

One Who Contemplates On The All-Wise, Ageless Being, The Ruler Of All,
Subtler Than The Subtle, The Universal Sustainer, Beyond Human Conception Of All Forms,
Refulgent Like The Sun And Far Beyond The Darkness Of Ignorance,
That One Reaches Verily That Supreme Divine Purusha Or God.
Kavim Puranamanushasitaram Anoraniyansamanusmaredya,
Sarvasya Dhataramachintyarupam Adityavarnam Tamasa Parastat.

He was thinking about the meaning of this verse. Then he saw the visiting card. What was written on the card? The name of the ICS officer given on the card was, Chaturvedi Amareswara Sastri. Seeing this, Max Muller was filled with happiness and asked his servant to prepare two cups of tea. He thought, "I don't know even one Veda properly. But here is Chaturvedi Sastri, whose very name indicates that he is the master of four Vedas. How fortunate I am to meet such a great person!" That very moment, Max Muller went out and escorted the ICS officer to his room, saying, "I am very fortunate to meet you." He offered him a seat and served him tea.

When Max Muller asked where the officer had come from, he replied that he had come from India. Then Max Muller said, "I am translating the Vedas. Since you are Chaturvedi Sastri (master of the Vedas), kindly tell me the meaning of this verse." The ICS officer replied that he did not know anything about the Vedas and that he considered them to be of no use.

Max Muller was shocked to hear this. "What is this? Having come from India (Bharat) and bearing the name Chaturvedi Sastri, he is criticising the Vedas. How unfortunate! It is my bad luck that I have met such a person." Associate with good people and keep good things with you You can see that the faith and sacred feelings the overseas people have are lacking in many Indians (Bharatiyas), who drink Bharat's sacred water, eat its food, and breathe its air. From that day, Max Muller thought to himself, "There is no need for me to go to Bharat. Now my mind is sacred, pure and steady. I do not know what will be the condition of my mind when I associate with such people of Bharat." Tell me your company, I shall tell you what you are. By associating with bad company, a person becomes bad, and by keeping company with good people, the person acquires virtues. Therefore, we should have good company and good things around us.

You think that Swami gives rings, watches, and talismans for the satisfaction of your worldly desires. This is a great mistake. Don't think like that. When you wear these sacred objects, you will develop sacred feelings. These are the steps that lead you to noble and virtuous life in future.

That is why Sita told Rama during their sojourn in the forest, "Rama! You are dressed like a hermit and are living in a forest after giving up all royal comforts and luxuries. You had every right to enjoy these royal comforts but You sacrificed them on Your own. You have come to the forest to lead a noble life. Then, why are You carrying bow and arrows with You? If You keep them with You, You will develop a tendency to commit violence." Whatever type of things we carry with us, our feelings develop accordingly. Children know it very well. If they have a pen in their hand, they will start writing something or the other, either on their hand or on the wall. Writing like this is their habit. If they have a knife in their hand, they will start cutting their nails or poke it into

a wooden stick. They will do something or the other like that. This is the tendency of their previous life of a monkey. Hence, never keep such things with you.

Truth is the true necklace (Sathyam kanthasya bhushanam). We should speak only the truth, which is the form of God.

Charity is the ornament of the hand (Hastasya bhushanam danam). In addition to performing charity with your hand, you should also wear the rings or other articles given to you by God out of His grace. Many people think that they need not wear them. Only those who do not know the reality think like that. There are many such sacred teachings in the Indian (Bharatiya) culture.

You should know the real meaning of culture. Culture is that which brings about refinement. How? When the paddy crop becomes ripe, do we eat it along with the husk that covers it? No. First, we remove the paddy from grass, then we remove the husk and obtain rice, which we cook. Then only does it become our food.

Refinement includes separating paddy from grass, removing the husk that covers it, and cooking the rice on fire. Refinement consists of removing all that is unnecessary and unwanted.

The price of a bag of paddy may be two hundred rupees. But a bag of rice after refinement may be valued at one thousand rupees. With refinement, the value of a thing increases manifold.

Then, what is the meaning of refinement? Refinement means to throw away all that is bad and cultivate all that is good. This is what is called 'way of life'.

Without going through these processes of refinement, paddy has little value. There are many things like that. This is a silver plate. If the silver remains silver, we cannot make any use of it. When it is burnt in fire, beaten with hammer, and moulded into a plate, it becomes useful to us.

This is a cloth. How did it acquire this form of cloth? First we have cotton. From cotton, we make threads and weave the threads to make cloth. Only then can we make use of it. This is what we call 'way of life'. Refinement means converting things from their raw form into useful items. For everything, refinement is essential.

When we come from outside, we wash our feet before entering the house. Why do we do it? While moving outside, many harmful bacteria may stick to our feet. That is why we should wash our feet.

Purification is necessary for everything. Before eating their food, Brahmins perform "aposhanam". They take water in their hand and sprinkle it around the plate of food while chanting,

Pranaya Namah, Apanaya Namah, Vyanaya Namah, Udanaya Namah, Samanaya Namah.
I Pay Homage To The Five Vital Airs: The Vitalizing Force, The Descending Force,
The Distributive Force, The Ascending Force, And The Equalizing Force.

In this way, they worship the five life principles. Why do they sprinkle water all around their plate? This is also a form of purification. During the process of serving the food and eating it, ants and other small insects may try to enter the plate of food. When you put water around the plate, they cannot enter the plate.

You can see that, even for such small matters, the culture of India (Bharat) has appropriate solutions. You cannot find even a single meaningless word in this culture. Bharat is the birthplace of such a great culture. Only those who do not know the meaning of these practices consider them useless.

Students should understand the greatness of Indian culture

People who do not know do not accept that they do not know. They pose as if they know everything. That is sheer foolishness.

One should make efforts to know what one does not know. All powers and potentialities are enshrined in the principle of divinity. The Vedic mantras are also suffused with divine powers.

The entire world consists of matter (padartha). For example, this is a rose flower. The word 'rose' denotes this particular flower. Similarly, the word 'handkerchief' denotes this particular cloth. In this way, all objects in this world denote the meaning of words.

But there are words that have another meaning behind their common meaning. Take, for example, the word 'akshara'. The word 'akshara' contains in it a great spiritual principle. What is the real meaning of the word 'akshara'? People think that 'akshara' means a letter of the alphabet.

But in the language of the Vedanta, 'akshara' denotes that which is eternal. God is described as 'Akshara Swarupa' (eternal divine principle).

The word 'akshara' contains two syllables - "Akshara". 'Kshara' means that which is perishable, i.e. the individual soul (jivatma).

'Akshara' means imperishable, i.e. God (Paramatma).

The former is a temporary entity while the latter is the eternal divine principle. The word 'akshara' denotes the union of the individual soul (jivatma) and God (Paramatma). There is eternal principle in the ephemeral and the ephemeral entity in the eternal.

There is an inner meaning in many such words of the Vedas. This is what we have to understand from our culture.

Students! There is so much for you to know about Indian culture. It

gives you guidance in the performance of all your functions. Every word of the Vedas and mythological texts (Puranas) has a charm and attraction of its own.

Once, Gajendra (king of elephants) was caught by a crocodile and was unable to escape from its clutches.It prayed loudly and prayed hard, "Oh Easwara! Oh bestower of boons! Come and protect me." God responded to its prayer immediately and saved it.

On the basis of this incident, some people questioned, "How far is God?" Some foolish intellectuals said, "God is as far away as He can hear the cry of an elephant." What a great foolishness! God does not need to go from one place to another.

God assumes whatever form of God you pray to. Some people pray to God, "Oh God! Be with me and protect me." They can hear only the steps of God behind them.

Those who pray, "Oh God! Can't You see my difficulties and my crying?" see only the eyes of God. Those who pray, "Can't You hear my cry and prayers?" can see only His ears, because God has His ears and eyes everywhere.

A similar incident happened in Shirdi. Once, Shirdi Sai Baba told a devotee, "Oh madcap! I am always with you and I am always present at your back." After walking some distance, that devotee turned back and looked, but he did not find Baba there. Then he thought that Baba had told him a lie, "He told me that he would be behind my back. But he is not to be seen." He went back to Baba and said,

"Oh Baba! You are such a great person. How could you tell a lie? You promised that you would be at my back. But when I looked behind me, I did not find you." Baba replied, "Oh Saitan (devil)! Is this your intelligence? When you looked behind, you turned your back also. Hence, I also turned to be at your back." See! When the devotee looked behind, his back also turned. That is why he could not see Baba, who was at his back all the time.

The words of God are mysterious and wonderful, and they have a deeper meaning. Not all can understand God. So, do not try to understand God. Follow His command. That is your duty.

You have to know so much about God. Nobody can completely understand God. Outwardly, God may appear to be an ordinary person, but He can reveal His transcendental powers at any time, which is not possible for ordinary mortals.

Therefore, perform your duty. Offer your heart to God. That is your foremost duty. Then all your doubts will be removed.

Prof. Ralph T.H. Griffith (1826-1906), a great Sanskrit scholar, who became the Principal of Benares College. He translated the Vedas, the Ramayana, and works of Kalidasa into English.

"India - What Can it Teach us?" is a compilation of seven Cambridge lectures delivered by Prof. Max Muller in 1882 to the candidates for Indian Civil Service. These lectures were brought out in book form in 1883. Prof. Max Muller (1823-1900) was a great Sanskrit scholar at Oxford University, where he worked as Professor of Comparative Philology for many years. He translated the Rig Veda and exposed the West to the Aryan culture and other ancient cultures of the East through a set of 50-volume series of scriptures titled "Sacred Books of the East." which were translated into English and brought out under his direction.

Prof. H. Hayman Wilson (1786-1860), Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford University. He was a great orientalist who stayed in India from 1808-1832 in the service of East India Company. His best known works are English translations of Vishnu Purana and Rig Veda.

(Bhagavan brought His divine discourse to a close with the bhajan, "Prema MuditaManase Kaho Rama Rama Ram ...")

56. Divinity Manifests the Effulgence of Truth

Date: 21 June 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, September 2009.

Modern Education Develops Only Intelligence And Does Not Help The Intellect (Buddhi) To Blossom.
One May Acquire All Types Of Education, But What Is The Use If The Intellect Is Not Blossomed?
Such Education Neither Has Any Value Nor Is Of Any Use.
(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

In this world, people equate intelligence (medha sakthi) with wisdom (buddhi) in their day-to-day affairs. But this is not correct. King Vikramaditya once convened a big conference to discuss the difference between wisdom and intelligence, in which he invited many scholars, intellectuals, and learned men. Addressing them, he said, "Oh great scholars! If you tell me the difference between wisdom (buddhi) and intelligence (medha sakthi), it will make me very happy. Which of the two is greater, nobler, and superior? Kindly let me know." All the scholars were unanimous in their opinion that wisdom was far superior to intelligence. They observed that intelligence lacked the qualities of equality and fraternity, which wisdom possessed.

Vikramaditya was surprised to hear this, since he had all along been thinking that there was not much difference between the two.

Difference between intelligence and wisdom

Wisdom (buddhi) has five precious attributes. These are: steadfast faith,

practice of dharma, truth, yoga, and supreme divine power (sraddha, ritam, sathya, yoga, mahattar sakthi).

These are actually the five powers of wisdom.

Intelligence (medha sakthi) is related to worldly and physical intelligence. It does not possess the attributes of wisdom (buddhi). One who is endowed with intelligence is full of doubts and lacks faith. That one has unlimited ego. Ego covers up the Atmic principle, resulting in the decline of the power of wisdom. Mere intelligence is not the sign of true learning.

Unfortunately, in modern times, those who are endowed with intelligence are considered great and worthy of respect. But in ancient times, only those with wisdom were held in high esteem, but not those with mere intelligence.

The first attribute of wisdom (buddhi) is steadfast faith (sraddha), which connotes yearning and steadiness. Mere yearning is not enough; you should also have firm faith.

Wisdom fosters the practice of dharma (ritam). The practice of dharma denotes purity of thought, word, and deed (trikarana suddhi). Only when you attain purity of thought, word and deed will you be endowed with the virtue of practice of dharma.

The practice of dharma (ritam) helps one to enquire whether one's faith is steadfast or not. After understanding the principle of ritam, when you express it in the form of speech, it becomes truth. When you develop total faith in the purity of thought, word, and deed, then all that you speak will be truth only.

Speaking what you have seen, heard, and known through your senses does not necessarily mean truth. You may call it factual knowledge (nijam). There is a lot of difference between truth (sathyam) and factual knowledge.

The fourth attribute of wisdom (buddhi) is yoga. What is meant by yoga? Many types of yoga are prevalent in this world. But according to the

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras (yoga aphorisms), yoga is control of all mental modifications (chitta vritti nirodha). Yoga denotes control of speech, seeing, hearing, thinking, and desiring. It connotes mastery over all the senses and inner impulses.

Control of senses is the first lesson for students

Say whatever is necessary; do not talk too much. Speak only the truth. Do not indulge in argumentation on what is untruthful. It is sheer ignorance to debate upon something about which you have no knowledge because such futile debate gives rise to hatred. It does not promote unity. Vain argumentation will lead to enmity.

Control of senses is very necessary for students because this age is very sacred and divine. You can build the royal road to your bright future only at this age. Modern youth are the future emancipators of the nation. Control of senses is the first lesson that students should learn.

Supreme divine power (mahattar sakthi) is the combination of steadfast faith, the practice of dharma, truth, and yoga. That supreme divine power is God Himself. When you are endowed with divine power, you will have unity of thought, word, and deed.

Only in divinity do you find the effulgence of truth. Therefore, it is said, "Truth is God." Not only this, faith (sraddha) is also the form of God. That is why the Gita declares, "One with steadfast faith attains wisdom (Sraddhavan labhate jnanam)." What is wisdom (jnana)? It is the very form of God. Brahman is the embodiment of truth, wisdom, and eternity (Sathyam jnanam anantham Brahma). Therefore, truth is God, practice of dharma is God, faith is God, yoga is God, and supreme divine power is God.

Since these are the five attributes of wisdom (buddhi), the Bhagavad Gita declares, "The Atma is beyond the ken of senses and can be understood only by the intellect (Buddhigrahyamatheendriyam). Wisdom (buddhi) is beyond

the senses. It is not proper to equate it with supreme divine power.

Students should know the difference between wisdom (buddhi) and intelligence (medha sakthi).

Intelligence can help you to secure high marks in the examinations, make a mark in debates, and deliver an eloquent speech. But all this corresponds to worldly knowledge and the path of worldliness (pravritti). Wisdom leads you to the path of spirituality (nivritti).

You have to recognise how close wisdom is to the principle of the Atma. The senses are above the body, the mind is above the senses, wisdom is above the mind, and the Atma is above wisdom. Hence, wisdom is closest to the Atma and is illumined directly by the Atma. In fact, wisdom is the reflection of the Atma.

It is a mistake to compare such a sacred wisdom (buddhi) with intelligence (medha sakthi). The latter is related to the senses. It is not beyond the senses, like wisdom. Intelligence is useful only to earn a livelihood. It cannot help you to experience the oneness of the Atma.

Good thoughts originate from wisdom

A wealthy person built a big mansion, consisting of a drawing room, a kitchen, a dining hall, bedrooms, and bathrooms. The walls between the different rooms separated them from each other. When there are no walls, the entire mansion becomes a big hall.

It is the walls of differences created by people that separate them from each other. Otherwise, they can experience the bliss of the oneness of the Atma, which is the same in all.

The head of the family is addressed in many different ways by the family members. His son addresses him as father, his wife addresses him, 'my dear

husband', his grandson addresses him, 'my dear grandfather' and his daughter-in-law calls him, 'my dear father-in-law'. All the members of his family have a different relationship with him, but the person is the same.

All these physical relationships are related only to the body, and not to the Atmic principle. All these differences will disappear when you develop faith in the principle of oneness.

There is no need for any particular spiritual practice to give up body attachment. Body is negative and the life principle within it is positive, which makes the body function. Its functioning is like the functioning of a clock. When you wind the clock with the help of a key, the hands start moving and the clock starts functioning. Without the winding, the hands do not move and the clock does not function. You cannot know the time unless the hands move.

In the same way, in the clock of the body, the life principle is the key that is responsible for the functioning of all its parts like hands, feet, and nose.

The other day, I explained to you the meaning and significance of the Gayatri Mantra. Its first three words are: Bhu, Bhuvah, Suvah. Bhu is related to the body, which is made up of various materials like iron, phosphorous, lime, water, etc. Since it is formed by the combination of worldly materials, it signifies materialisation.

Bhuvah refers to the life principle, which signifies vibration.

Suvah relates to Supreme Consciousness (Prajnana). It connotes radiation, which is the driving force behind materialisation and vibration. That is why the Vedas declare, "Brahman is Supreme Consciousness (Prajnanam Brahma)." It is by the radiation of Supreme Consciousness that the vibration of life principle and the materialisation of the body are able to function.

Materialisation, vibration, and radiation correspond to earth, space, and heaven (bhuloka, bhuvarloka, and suvarloka). They are not somewhere at a

distant place; they are all within you. In fact, everything is within you - animality, humanness, and divinity. In reality, the entire world is within you.

Your thoughts are the basis of everything. Therefore, develop good thoughts. Wherefrom do you get good thoughts? They originate from wisdom (buddhi). A person who does not give expression to good thoughts in his talking is termed "one who is devoid of wisdom (buddhiheena). Such a person is more like an animal. One who is endowed with wisdom will have purity of the three instruments mind, tongue, and hand (trikarana suddhi).

One with intelligence (medha sakthi) will be proficient only in worldly affairs. Wisdom is beyond worldliness.

Follow the Atmic principle

All limbs of the body perform their functions in accordance with the rules and regulations laid down by God. For everything, the Atmic principle is the basis.

Take the physical body, for example. When the mind thinks of going somewhere, your feet move in accordance with the thought of the mind. When the mind thinks of doing a particular work, your hands move accordingly. Similarly, when the mind gives the command to the eyes to see somebody, the eyes obey the command immediately. When the mind wants to listen to the tape recorder, your ears will act accordingly. When the mouth gets the order to eat food, it functions accordingly.

In this manner, all the limbs of the body such as hands, feet, eyes, and mouth work according to the thoughts of the mind. They all perform their respective duties. The ears, which have the duty of hearing, do not try to speak. Similarly, the mouth does not try to hear. The mouth performs its duty of speaking and the ears, of hearing. Your life would be in turmoil if the various limbs did not perform their respective duties.

Once, all the senses decided to abandon their prescribed duties. They

thought, "We gather all delicious food items with great effort, but only the mouth eats all of them without giving anything to us. Effort is ours and enjoyment is that of the mouth! The jewels belong to somebody, but someone else uses them to decorate themself, as the saying goes." Thinking in this manner, all the limbs stopped their respective duties. Then what happened? The entire body became weak.

It is God who has prescribed duties for each limb of the body, which they should perform implicitly.

All the senses perform their prescribed duties, but the mind of a person does not perform its assigned duty. On the one hand, the mind tells you that something is bad, and on the other hand, it makes you do the same. Is it proper for the mind to make you do something that it itself considers as evil? That is why the mind is called a mad monkey.

The body is like a water bubble; nobody knows when it will burst. Therefore, do not follow the body, do not follow the mind, follow the conscience. Follow the Atmic principle. Only then will you experience all that is good.

People are caught in a state of turmoil because they are not performing their duties and are following the wrong path. Not only are individuals today in a state of restlessness, they are causing unrest in the world also.

Everybody should perform their duty diligently. That is why it is said: work is worship. Every work should be treated as service to God. But people today are not adhering to this principle. On the contrary, they say one thing and do something else. Those whose thoughts, words, and deeds are in perfect harmony are noble ones (Manasyekam, vachasyekam, karmanyekam mahatmanam).

Of the five attributes of wisdom (buddhi), Supreme Divine Power is the highest. How can one attain this power? By developing unity of thought, word, and deed. People today have become evil because they do not observe unity of thought, word, and deed. Those who lack harmony of thought, word, and

deeds are wicked (Manasyanyath, vachasyanyath, karmanyanyath, duratmanam).

You can achieve everything with devotion and faith

Steadfast faith, practice of dharma, truth, yoga, and supreme divine power (sraddha, ritam, sathya, yoga, mahattar sakthi) are the five attributes of wisdom (buddhi).

The words Dhiyo yo na prachodayat in the Gayatri Mantra convey the prayer for the blossoming of wisdom. Just as the darkness that covers the world is dispelled by the light of the sun, in the same way, one's ignorance is destroyed by the light of wisdom (buddhi).

What is the source of the light of wisdom? It is faith in the Self. Therefore, develop faith in the Self. You cannot perform even a small task without faith in the Self. People today have lost faith in themselves. Life itself will become meaningless and chaotic without faith in the Self. One should develop faith that one is divine.

The Upanishads declare that one who is endowed with faith is a real human being. People today have no faith. An animal has faith in its master. Even a dog looks at its master with love. But people today have no faith in their fellow human beings.

When one has no faith in one's fellow human beings, how can one have faith in God (Narayana)? Only when one develops faith in fellow beings can one have faith in God. So, lead your life with faith in God.

In order to develop faith, first develop faith (sraddha). Faith has two aspects: yearning (asakti) and steadiness (sthiratwam). When these two qualities combine, faith manifests. You may have the yearning to attain God, but it should be constant and steady. Only then can you attain God.

Students!

There are many things for you to learn. I have told you the difference between wisdom (buddhi) and intelligence (medha sakthi). Similarly, you should know about the mind and its vagaries.

The mind is very pure and sacred, but it becomes unsacred and dirty by evil thoughts. It is like a white cloth that is totally clean and spotless but becomes dirty when it is put to misuse.

You give your dirty clothes to the washerman for washing. He removes the dirt and gives back clean clothes to you. What do you say then? You say that the washerman has made the clothes clean and white. The washerman does not have the power to make your clothes white. Whiteness is the original colour of your clothes. The washerman has only removed the dirt.

In the same way, the mind is totally pure. You make it dirty by indulging in evil practices. The washerman removes the dirt of the clothes by hitting them repeatedly on a rock. Similarly, the dirt of the mind can be removed by constant repetition of God's Name. This practice develops steadfast devotion (sraddha). In this manner, you should develop steadfast devotion and viswas (faith).1 If you have both devotion and faith, there is nothing that you cannot achieve in this world. You can even reach the sun and the moon.

The two words sraddha and viswas are related. Sraddha means implicit confidence, reverential belief, steadfast devotion, devout faith. Viswas means trust, confidence, reliance, assurance, faith.

Here, the sun doesn't refer to the sun that shines in the sky. Your vision itself is the sun. As the Vedas say, the moon was born out of the mind and the sun out of the eyes of the Supreme Being (Chandrama manaso jataha chaksho suryo jayata).

You can have the sacred vision when you have both steadfast devotion and faith (sraddha and viswas). This sacred vision is called sudarshan, which

means good vision.

As described in the Bhagavatha story, when Gajendra (king of elephants) was caught by the crocodile, he prayed to Lord Narayana wholeheartedly, "I have lost courage and strength. I am tired and totally exhausted and am about to lose consciousness. Oh Lord Narayana! Come and protect me." Here Gajendra is not an elephant. One's pride is the elephant. After giving up his pride on his strength, Gajendra turned his vision toward God. Then Lord Narayana also cast His benevolent look toward him. That look itself became Lord Vishnu's discus (Sudarshan Chakra), which saved Gajendra.

Divine power is the basis of all powers

One's eyes signify the splendour of the sun. It is the combination of the external light and the light of your eyes that makes you see. Even if the sun is shining brightly, you can't see anything if you close your eyes. Why? The sun in your eyes should combine with the sun outside. Only then can you see the world.

You can't see anything when you are in a dark room. Why? There is no external light. Without sunlight or any other light, your eyes cannot see. When the light of your eyes combines with the light outside, only then are you able to see everything. It means that your eyes should be open, and there should be light outside. The unity of both is necessary for you to see.

Eyes by themselves do not have the power to see. Similarly, ears have no power of their own to hear and the tongue has no power to speak. It is the divine power that makes them function.

Suppose a man is dead. He does have eyes, ears and a tongue, but they cannot function. Why? The reason is that he has lost his innate divine power.

People today have eyes and ears. But they can neither see nor hear what they are supposed to see and hear. Why? The reason is that their mind is

polluted.

Once, Lord Krishna manifested before Surdas and said, "Do you wish to see Me? I will restore your eyesight." Surdas asked, "Oh Lord! Are all those who have eyes able to see You? People have ears, which are as big as winnowers, but they cannot listen to the sweet music of Your flute. Similarly, people have eyes, but they are more like cotton seeds. They cannot see Your divine form. I want eyes with which I can see Your divine form. I want those ears that can listen to the sweet music of Your flute. I don't require, physical eyes and ears, which are of no use to me." This is real knowledge. This is real renunciation.

Oh Lord! In spite of having eyes, people are verily blind as they do not yearn to see Your auspicious form.

Though They Are Endowed With Ears, They Are Deaf To Your Teachings.
Though God Is Immanent In Them, They Have Drowned Themselves In Worldly Life.
(Telugu Poem)

You should understand the principle of the intellect (buddhi) if you want to develop such divine feelings. You can attain everything with the help of the intellect.

Divine power is present in everyone. But people have no faith the divine power. Whatever they do, they think that they are doing it with their own power. This is not only their ignorance, but also their foolishness. Divine power is the basis of all other powers.

To know such a divine power, you should have yearning and steadiness in the first place. You should develop love and affection for God. Your love should not be like a leaf that flutters in the wind or the pendulum of a clock that keeps oscillating. It should be steady. Only then can you become deserving of divine grace.

Happiness is union with God

There are so many things that our students should know. Many people think, Swami is repeating the same things again and again. Yes, things have to be told again and again till you can learn and put them into practice.

Are you not filling the same stomach every day? When you have eaten in the morning, why do you eat again in the evening? "I ate yesterday. Why should I eat today?" Why don't you think like this? It is because whatever you eat gets digested. That is why you are filling the same stomach again and again.

You wash your face again and again. Then why should you not hear what you have already heard? If you have derived bliss by practising what you have heard, there is no need for you to hear it again. But until you put into practice, these things have to be told again and again.

Here is a small example. You teach A, B, C to small children. When they reach first standard, you teach them the spellings of words. If you have to learn the spelling of the word 'milk', you have to keep repeating 'm-i-l-k' many times. Only when you repeat it again and again can you remember the spelling of the word 'milk'. Until you learn the spelling and the meaning properly, you have to keep repeating.

However, every time I repeat something, there is something new in it. You have to recognise this truth. I have told you the meaning of Gayatri Mantra many times. But every time I tell it, there is a new meaning of this mantra. This is the greatness of Sai. The interpretation I give is ever new.

Not only My words, even My form is ever new. That is the sign of Divinity. Divinity is ever new.

You should also be ever new. Never give room to old and rotten feelings in your heart. Always be happy. That is the reward for being in the presence of God.

Where is happiness? Happiness is union with God. Look at the faces of those who do not think of God. They may sport an artificial smile on their face like in a cinema, but in reality they have a 'castor oil' (melancholy) face.

Those who have become the recipients of divine grace have an effulgent face. Those who live in God consciousness radiate divine effulgence. That is the mark of Divinity. As the rays of divine grace fall on them, they shine with brilliance.

Steadfast devotion and faith (sraddha and viswas) are necessary to attain divine grace. The ladder of divine grace has faith as support at its lower end and steadfast devotion at the upper end. You cannot climb the ladder unless it has support at both its ends. If you have both steadfast devotion and faith, you can achieve anything in this world.

Wherever you may go, God is in you, with you, around you, above you and below you.

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.

57. Your Thoughts Are Responsible For Your Happiness And Sorrow

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One Who Entertains Evil Thoughts Comes To Grief.
One Who Develops Noble Thoughts Becomes A Noble Person.
Only The One Who Attains The State Of Thoughtlessness Can Attain Peace,
Do Not Forget This Good Counsel.
(Telugu Poem)

The face is the index of the mind. All your thoughts and feelings, whether positive or negative - like happiness, sorrow, anxiety, anger, and hatred - are reflected on your face.

Evil thoughts cause sorrow

One should not harbour evil thoughts because they lead to sorrow. The evil thoughts of harming or hurting others may not cause as much harm to others as they may do to the one who entertains them.

When you throw a small stone in a well, the ripples caused by it spread to the entire surface of water. Similarly, any thought arising in your mind causes ripples in it, the effect of which spreads to all the limbs of the body.

For example, if there is an evil thought in your mind, your eyes will see evil, your ears will hear evil, and your tongue will speak evil. Consequently, your organs of action, like the hands and feet, will also perform evil deeds.

What is the root cause of sorrow? It is nothing but evil thoughts. All sorts of

miseries afflict a person only because of their evil thoughts. Therefore, as soon as a thought arises in your mind, enquire whether it is good or bad. If it is a bad thought, try to keep it away as far as possible. On the other hand, good thoughts will make a person noble (sadhu).

All good thoughts for the good of others and welfare of society at large will make a person noble. A sadhu does not mean a person wearing an ochre robe. It is the noble qualities that make one noble and saintly.

As declared by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita, God incarnates on earth to protect the virtuous and to destroy the wicked. Every person is endowed with virtues. In order to protect these virtues, you have to entertain only good thoughts.

Where do you get peace? Peace is not in the outside world. It is neither in the worldly objects and materials nor in worldly education and endeavours. It has to be manifested from within. When can you have peace? You can have peace only when you make your mind still and focus all your thoughts on God.

All your good thoughts originate from the heart, which is the altar of God. The good or bad that you experience in life is not caused by others. Your thoughts are responsible for your good or bad and nothing else. Only a person who is free from all thoughts can attain peace. Therefore, entertain only good thoughts and thereby ultimately achieve a state of total thoughtlessness.

As are the feelings, so is the result (Yad bhavam tad bhavathi). Everything is the reflection of the inner being.

Develop good thoughts

Once, Krishna thought of testing the nature of Yudhishthira and Duryodhana. First, He called Yudhishthira and said, "I have a task to perform. For that, I need a very mean-minded person who is given to untruthful and evil ways. Can you bring such a person?" Afterward, Krishna called Duryodhana and said

to him, "Duryodhana! A great task is to be performed. For that, a noble person is required who is pure, kind-hearted and virtuous." Both of them agreed to perform the tasks assigned to them by Krishna. Yudhishthira went in one direction and Duryodhana in another direction in search of the persons asked for by Krishna.

After some time, Yudhishthira came back, and said most humbly to Krishna, "Oh Lord! There is no wicked person in our kingdom. I am the only one who has some wickedness or the other. Please make use of me." Some time after this, Duryodhana also came back and said to Krishna, "Krishna! A thoroughly noble person is nowhere to be seen in this kingdom. I think, I am the only such person. If You tell me the task, I will surely perform it." In the egoistic outlook of Duryodhana, all appeared to be wicked. In the humble nature of Yudhishthira, all appeared to be good. Hence, whatever the colour of the glasses that you wear, everything will appear to you of that colour. If your vision is evil, everything will appear evil to you.

Duryodhana was extremely wicked and evilminded. On the other hand, Yudhishthira was the epitome of virtues. He was the very embodiment of truth and righteousness (sathya and dharma). Therefore, everyone appeared noble and good to him.

In conclusion, we can say that both for the wickedness of Duryodhana and the nobility of Yudhishthira, their thoughts were responsible.

One considers some people as wicked and some others as noble based on one's own feelings. In fact, there are no good or bad people in the outside world. Whatever good or bad that you see in this world is merely the reaction, reflection, and resound of your own thoughts. Therefore, for everything good or bad, you yourself are responsible and none else. Even for your good or bad thoughts, only you are responsible, not others.

Your mind is a bundle of thoughts. All your actions are directed by your mind. Your actions are responsible for your happiness or sorrow. Therefore, if your thoughts are good, your mind also becomes good, and when your mind

becomes good, your conduct becomes good.

But today man is taking to evil ways. The ancient sages said: The mind is the cause of bondage and liberation (Manah eva manushyanam karanam bandhamokshayo). The mind is responsible for everything. Therefore, first and foremost, develop good thoughts.

Due to your wrong food, wrong habits, and wrong tendencies, your thoughts get vitiated. Your thoughts are responsible for your merits as well as demerits. Therefore, as soon as a thought arises in your mind, take time to enquire, "Is it good or bad? Is it right or wrong?" Haste is not at all good. Haste makes waste, waste makes worry. So, do not be in a hurry. Always remain calm and composed and never do anything in hurry. That is what is meant by patience. When you remain calm and composed, you can experience all types of happiness.

A person is the master of their destiny

Your destiny is related to your deservedness. I have already explained the meaning of destiny (adrishta). Adrishta is that which cannot be seen by drishti (physical eye).

Sow a thought, reap a tendency. Sow a tendency, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap character. Sow character, reap destiny.

Therefore, your destiny depends on your qualities. Your qualities depend on your way of thinking. Your actions are decided by your thoughts. Therefore, your thoughts are responsible for your happiness and sorrow. As are the thoughts, so is the human nature. Therefore, first and foremost, try to channelize your thoughts in the right direction.

People blame others for their suffering. You think others are responsible for your misery and misfortune. This is a great mistake. Others are not the cause of your good fortune and misfortune. Your own thoughts are responsible for

both.

The type of actions that you perform depend on the nature of your feelings. You pass the examination when you make the right effort. On the other hand, lack of proper effort results in your failure. When you make an effort sincerely and wholeheartedly, you will surely pass. But when you fail, the defect lies in your effort. The same is true in all fields of human endeavour. If you want to be successful in all your endeavours, develop good thoughts bereft of selfishness and self-interest.

Your thoughts and feelings should reflect your true nature. Human nature is termed as swabhava. Swa means Atma. Therefore, the feelings that are rooted in the Atma denote your true nature.

In the same way, swadharma is related to the Atma and paradharma to the physical body and senses. Swabhava means innate nature and prabhava denotes worldly nature. Swadharma and swabhava manifest from spiritual heart. They cannot be acquired from outside.

A heart suffused with spiritual feelings experiences infinite bliss and divine ecstasy. It leads to divine intoxication and makes one forget oneself. That is why Sage Narada said: Having attained that, one gets total satisfaction, fulfillment, ecstasy, and bliss (Yallabdhwa puman, ichchharamo bhavati, trupto bhavati, matto bhavati, Atmaramo bhavati).

One's thoughts are responsible for everything. One should realise, "I am responsible for everything, my thoughts are responsible, and none other is the cause of my happiness or sorrow." Such a person becomes noble and one of fruitful resolve. That one alone manifests their innate nature and realises that the Atma is the source of everything.

It is the power of the Atma that makes the tongue speak, the ears hear, and the eyes see. When one realises that the source of everything is the Atma, one attains the state of thoughtlessness and supreme peace.

What is peace? Even those people who march forward in life facing all types of difficulties and sufferings do not necessarily experience peace. One should remain equal-minded in happiness and sorrow, gain and loss, victory and defeat (Sukhadukhe samekruthwa labhalabhau jayajayau). Only those who treat happiness and sorrow alike can experience peace.

Both happiness and sorrow are temporary and transient like day and night. Both are like passing clouds. None of them is permanent. If today you are feeling the happiness of the full moon day, tomorrow you will be facing the sorrow of the dark night. Both are temporary and impermanent.

That is why Lord Krishna said: Because the world is temporary and full of misery, contemplate on Me constantly (Anityam asukham lokam imam prapya bhajasva mam).

Who in this world is experiencing eternal happiness and everlasting bliss? None. One moment you experience happiness and the next moment you are engulfed in sorrow. Therefore, peace and happiness have to be manifested from within. These cannot be acquired from outside.

Everybody desires peace and says, "I want peace, I want peace, I want peace..." When I ask the overseas devotees who come here, "What do you want?" they usually say, "I want peace." How many words are there in this sentence? There are three words. If you remove two words, I and want, meaning ego and desire, you get peace readymade.

Peace is always in you, with you and around you. You cannot have peace from the world. In the world, you have only pieces, pieces and pieces! Peace is within you. You are the embodiment of peace. You are the embodiment of truth. You are the embodiment of love. You are the embodiment of Divinity. You can experience peace only when you realise this truth.

World: the manifestation of cosmic consciousness

People are a combination of body, mind, and the Atma. On that basis only, it is said that you are not one person but three: The one you think you are, the one others think you are, and the one you really are.

The one you think you are is related to your physical body. The one others think you are is related to your mind. The one you really are is related to the Atma.

You are not the body or the mind. You are the embodiment of Atma.

You can attain the knowledge of the Atma (Self) by self-sacrifice and experience divine bliss, which is your real innate nature (swabhava). Swa symbolises swan (hamsa), which is said to have the ability to separate milk from water. The Hamsa Gayatri or Soham Mantra gives one the discrimination to distinguish between the Self and the non-self.

You yourself are hamsa. (supreme spirit typified by the pure white colour of the swan), but when you realise your true Self and develop the knowledge to discriminate between the Self and the nonself, you become Paramahamsa (realised soul).

Many sages are given the title Paramahamsa because they have the knowledge to discriminate between the Self and the non-self. They are established in the Self and have no body attachment. To distinguish between the Self (Atma) and nonself (anatma), between the field (kshetra) the knower of the field (kshetrajna) is the hallmark of a realised soul.

One cannot separate oneself from the world and nature. But one should try to gradually give up physical and worldly outlook.

The world (jagat) is the combination of nature and God. God is the cause and nature is the effect. The name jagat itself signifies that which comes and goes. Jagat is the combination of two syllables: ja + gat. Ja means to come and gat means to go. Therefore, it comes and goes. It is only temporary and not permanent.

Nothing comes permanently, nothing goes permanently. What goes, comes back, and what comes, goes back. That is why it is called unreal (mithya). There are so many words, like mithya, that describe the unreal nature of the world.

It is not possible to give up the world. One should visualise God in it. The world is nothing but the manifestation of cosmic consciousness. This consciousness is God, verily.

One's conscience is an aspect of consciousness. It is the presence of conscience that makes one conscious or aware at the physical and worldly level. Conscience is the witness, and consciousness is awareness. Conscience, consciousness, and awareness are all related to each other. They belong to the same family.

Discard evil qualities and imbibe good qualities

You go to a market and buy an orange, paying some money. You discard the outer skin and seeds in it and drink only the juice.

Just because you have paid money for the entire fruit, do you eat the rind and seeds also? No. If you eat the rind and seeds, your tongue will have to experience bitter taste. Though you have paid money for the entire fruit, you have to discard the rind and seeds and drink only the juice.

Similarly, in life, you have to discard those things that are harmful and accept those that are beneficial. You have to give up bad thoughts, bad qualities, bad feelings, and bad actions, which are like the seeds of a fruit, to be discarded.

Then what do you have to accept and experience? You have to accept all that is sweet (madhuram).

God is the embodiment of sweetness. His speech is sweet, His look is sweet;

everything about Him is sweet. This sweetness you should imbibe. You have to accept all that is good and sweet and reject all that is bad and bitter.

What leads people along evil path? Their bad qualities and bad thoughts lead tem to the path of evil.

Whenever any bad thought arises in your mind, drive it away, thinking, "Evil thoughts are not proper for a human." Remind yourself, "I am a human, I am a human; I am not an animal, I am not an animal." A human being should have human qualities. Hatred, anger, lust, jealousy, etc., are animal qualities.

You should enquire, "What are my natural qualities?" Your natural qualities are truth, righteousness, love, nonviolence, forbearance, and noble conduct. Evil thoughts are not natural to man.

Compassion is the true quality of a human being. One should lead one's life with compassion. Lord Rama was the epitome of compassion. It was the quality of compassion that added to His divine glory.

Every human being should imbibe this quality of compassion. One who imbibes such good qualities will have no room for sorrow because sorrow is the result of evil qualities.

First and foremost, suffuse your heart with love. If you fill your heart with love, only words of love will come out of your mouth, and you will look at everyone with love.

Whatever is the type of water you store in a tank, the same type of water will come out of the taps. Therefore,

Start the day with love, Fill the day with love, Spend the day with love, End the day with love, This is the way to God.

Treasure love in your heart. A person without love is like a living corpse. You should become the embodiment of love. If only you fill your heart with love, it

will take care of everything.

If you sow a seed in the soil, it will grow into a tree with branches, sub-branches, leaves, flowers, and fruits. You have sown only one seed. From where did the branches, sub-branches, leaves, flowers, and fruits come? They all came from the seed only. Likewise, sow a seed of love; it will grow into a tree of love. Then all your thoughts and your entire life will be suffused with love.

As Adi Sankara Said, Many Sorrows Afflict Humanity:
Birth Is A Misery, Old Age Is A Misery, Family Is A Misery,
And Death Is A Terrible Misery. So, Be Careful! Be Careful!
Janma Dukham, Jara Dukham, Jaya Dukham Punah Punah,
Antya Kale Maha Dukham, Thasmat Jagratha Jagratha.
(Sanskrit Verse)

Worldly sorrows will not afflict you if you take shelter under the tree of love. But the birds of evil qualities may sometimes come and sit on this tree. What should you do to drive away these birds? When you clap your hands and sing bhajans like "Rama, Krishna, Govinda, Narayana," these birds of evil qualities will fly away.

(Bhagavan brought His divine discourse to a close with the bhajan, "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin ...".)

58. Make Faith The Basis Of Your Life

Date: 07 July 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, May 2011.

People Have Become Blind In This World Because They Have Lost Their Eyes Of Faith.
They Deny The Existence Of God Because They Cannot See Him.
God May Not Exist For Them But He Does Exist For Us.
(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Since ancient times, people have been wasting their valuable time in debating the existence and nonexistence of God.

Even if the sun is shining, a blind person cannot see it. Similarly, one cannot see the world if one closes one's eyes. Does it mean that the sun does not exist or the world does not exist? No. The sun does exist, but one without eyes cannot see it. Likewise, the world also exists, but one who closes their eyes cannot see it. The defect lies in your vision and not in the creation.

Faith is essential for all human endeavours

Faith is the very life of a person. One cannot perform even a small task without faith. How can one achieve success in any endeavour if one does not make any effort with faith? In fact, one cannot take even ten steps forward if one lacks faith. In this vast world, faith is very essential even for performing small tasks.

Not only in matters relating to God, faith is very important in all fields of

human endeavour. Faith is most essential for success in all fields - worldly, ethical, moral, spiritual or scientific Faith is the basis of your love for your mother, father, husband, wife, etc. One will not have love even for one's mother if one doesn't have the faith that she is the mother. Similarly, the husband won't love his wife if he doesn't believe that she is his wife. A mother cannot love her own children if she does not have faith that they are her children.

One can experience the all-pervading principle of love and derive bliss therefrom only when one has faith. Without faith, one cannot experience love and derive bliss. It is not possible to live in this world without faith.

Today, many people in this world have no faith in God. Many others pretend that they have no faith even if they have it. Others have faith in God but don't publicly express it for the sake of political gain or public acclaim. They question, "If God exists, why can't we see Him?" Do you believe all that you see and deny everything that you cannot see?

This morning, an M.B.A. student asked a question, "Swami tells us that we should love all. Why should we do that?" I put a counter question to him, "You are asking Me why should you love all. I am asking you, why should you hate anyone." Whatever your reason for hating others, the same is the reason for loving them. Love and hatred are like an object and its image. Where there is hatred, there is love. Where there is the feeling of absence, the truth of presence is also there.

Here is a small example. Is Sai Baba present on the stage or not? If you say He is present, what is the basis of your saying that? You see His form and say that He is present.

Suppose, I go inside after giving this discourse. If somebody then asks you, "Is Sai Baba there on the stage?" you say, "He is not there." What does this mean? This means that Sai Baba is there but He is not present on the stage. If Sai Baba doesn't exist, then the question of His being present or absent does not arise at all.

In the same way, people deny or accept the existence of God because He is there (loud applause). It is only because God does exist that people deny His existence. If really there is no God, how can the word 'God' exist?

Just now, Anil Kumar said, 'There is God.' The first part of the sentence is 'there is', which denotes the truth about God's existence. When we say 'there is', then the next question is who is there? It is God.

Some people say, 'There is no God.' The first part of this sentence is also 'There is,' which denotes the truth about the existence of God; 'no God' is only the next part of the sentence. Even this negative sentence, 'There is no God,' begins with the positive assertion 'There is.' Atheists say, "God is nowhere." This sentence consists of three words, the first part of which is 'God is.' If you break the word 'nowhere', nowhere becomes 'now here' (loud applause). Merely by joining 'w' with 'no', the negative sentence changes into positive.

Those who believe in God say, "God is now here," and those who don't believe in God say, "God is nowhere." Faith, or the lack of it, is the basis of both statements.

Faith is like the two eyes. Similarly, the scriptures (sastras) are the eyes (netras) of humanity. Srishti (creation) exists because people have drishti (vision). As is the drishti, so is the srishti. One has to view this creation from the vision of the scriptures.

There is an intimate relationship between the eye (netra) and the scripture (sastra). The scriptures describes what the eye sees and the eye sees what the scriptures describe.

Three steps to God-realisation

As the scriptures say, there are three steps to Godrealisation that a spiritual aspirant should undertake: to know, to see, and to experience (jnatum,

drashtum, and praveshtum).

1. First, you hear from someone that a particular item is available in the market. That is to know. Listening is the first step.
2. Then you go to the market and see the particular item. That is to see.
3. However, merely by hearing about it or by seeing it, your hunger will not be satiated. Your hunger will be satisfied only when you partake of it. That is to experience.

These three steps correspond to listening, contemplation, and practice (sravanam, mananam, and nididhyasanam). The first step is listening to the spiritual truth. Thereafter, one should contemplate upon that. And then ultimately put it into practice. These are the three very important steps on the spiritual path.

In every field, listening (sravanam) is the most important first step. Even in the nine paths of devotion, listening is the first step:

> Listening (Sravanam), Singing (Kirtanam), Contemplating On Vishnu (Vishnusmaranam),
> Serving His Lotus Feet (Padasevanam), Salutation (Vandanam), Worship (Archanam),
> Servitude (Dasyam), Friendship (Sneham), Self-Surrender (Atmanivedanam).

You begin with listening and gradually reach the stage of total surrender (atmanivedanam), which marks the completion of the journey.

> That Is Full, This Is Full.
> When The Full Is Taken Out Of The Full, What Remains Is Again The Full
> Poornamada Poornamidam, Poornat Poornamudachyate,
> Poornasya Poornamadaya, Poornamevavashishyate.

The completion of the journey marks full circle. If you leave the journey in the middle, then it is incomplete, like a semi-circle. When you complete the full circle, you reach the point from which you began.

But if the journey is incomplete, it is like the letter C of the English alphabet; it begins at one point and ends at another. There is a wide gap between the beginning and end points. This wide gap denotes doubt.

Doubt is like a deep valley that is impossible to cross. Therefore, get rid of doubt and endeavour to complete the journey.

Your learning of the alphabet is complete only when you start from A and reach Z. But if you start from A and reach only up to S or any other letter in the middle, your learning is incomplete. Once you start the journey, continue till you reach the goal.

Likewise, the spiritual journey begins with faith and ends in bliss. On the nine-fold path of devotion, you begin with listening and end with selfsurrender.

Many people who come to Prasanthi Nilayam go back to their villages and tell others, "We saw Sathya Sai Baba in Prasanthi Nilayam," and describe what they saw in Prasanthi Nilayam. Only after hearing all this are others motivated to come here. Unless and until they hear something about Prasanthi Nilayam, people do not book their tickets to come here. Hence, listening (sravanam) is the first step for all human endeavours.

Divinity can only be experienced

For all spiritual endeavours, faith is the first step. Without faith, life has no meaning. Everyone should make faith the basis of their life. But some people lack faith. Why worry about them? It is their fate. Don't enter into argumentation with them. Leave them to their fate.

For Those Who Say Yes, He Will Say Yes. For Those Who Say No, He Will Say No.
It Is Only Your Tongue That Says Yes And No. For Sai, Everything Is Yes, Yes, Yes.
(Telugu Poem)

The yes or no that your tongue utters are related to you. God has nothing to do with them. The same tongue that says 'no' also utters 'yes'. The same tongue utters both. Which would you believe? Would you believe 'yes' or would you believe 'no'?

As Jayadeva said, one should make sacred use of the tongue.

Oh Tongue, The Knower Of Taste!
You Are Very Sacred. Speak The Truth In The Most Pleasing Manner.
Chant The Divine Names Govinda, Madhava, Damodara Incessantly.
This Is Your Foremost Duty.
(Sanskrit Verse)

It is the tongue that enables us to chant the divine names Govinda, Damodara, and Madhava. These sacred names of God dance on the tongue. The tongue is like a stage on which all types of characters in the form of dolls come and perform their dance. The king comes, the queen comes, the soldier comes, and also the peon. Similarly, there comes Rama and also Ravana.

Therefore, the tongue is the stage for all the good and bad one speaks, and all types of characters perform their dances on it. The tongue is only a witness and has nothing to do with the dance.

A dumb person cannot speak. When they eat a sweet dish, they can experience its sweetness but cannot express it in words.

Likewise, Divinity can only be experienced and cannot be described. If

somebody asks you to describe it, the only answer is silence. Don't waste your time and energy in unnecessary argumenttation. Argumentation leads to enmity (V ade vade varjathe vairam). It does not develop love. Therefore, develop faith in God.

It is utter foolishness to proffer arguments about the nonexistence of God. Why do you say that He doesn't exist? You say God doesn't exist because He cannot be seen.

Suppose, there is a man who is two metres tall, is fair-complexioned, is bald, and weighs sixty kg. These are all only his physical attributes, which you can see. Do the physical features alone convey the truth about that man? The real truth about the man is what you are not able to see with your physical eyes. These are his good or bad qualities like compassion, love, sympathy, hatred, forbearance, etc.

Since you are not able to see these qualities, can you say that they are not there? It is an act of foolishness to say what you do not see does not exist. These qualities, which you are not able to see, determine his humanness or the lack of it.

Oh Soul (Jiva)!
Understand The Mystery Of This Puppet Show.
It Is Your Unseen Qualities That Make You Experience The Results Of Your Actions.
(Telugu Song)

God permeates the entire universe

The physical body that you see is not responsible for your happiness or sorrow. Your unseen qualities are the cause of your happiness or sorrow. Therefore, it is foolishness to put your faith in all that you see.

There is air all around you but you cannot see it. Can you say air does not exist? Can anybody live without air? Air does exist, but it cannot be seen.

The same truth was taught by Sage Uddalaka to his son Swetaketu. Swetaketu asked, "Oh father! Where is God? The Vedas and the scriptures say that He is all-pervasive." Uddalaka said to his son, "My dear! This truth cannot be explained in words. You can know it only by undertaking spiritual exercises and by the grace of guru and God. Let me illustrate this with an example." Uddalaka asked his son to bring a tumbler of water and a little salt. He then told him to mix salt in the water and stir it. When Swetaketu did as instructed by his father, the salt got completely dissolved in water. The salt that he had brought inhand was now nowhere to be seen. The eyes that had seen the salt earlier were not able to see it now. Does it mean the salt has disappeared altogether? No. The salt is there but it has got dissolved and totally mixed with water.

Similarly, God exists. He permeates everything in this universe in such a way that He cannot be seen by thephysical eyes. However, He can be seen by the eye of wisdom. When you bring the salt, you can see it with your physical eyes. But when it gets dissolved in water, you have to experience its presence with the eye of wisdom. Therefore, it is foolishness to ask for direct evidence of God's presence. You have to take into consideration the indirect evidence.

In this way, Uddalaka explained the principle of all-pervasiveness of God.

Fire is bound to exist where there is smoke. Without fire, there can be no smoke. Similarly, without God, there can be no world. How can there be life without God? It is impossible, totally impossible.

Everything happens as per God's Will. Here is a small example. When a cow gives birth to a calf, it licks the calf's body with its tongue and makes it clean. As soon as the cow cleans the calf's body, the calf stands up on its legs and goes to the cow's udder to drink milk. Who has shown the udder to the calf and made it understand that milk is available at the udder? It is all

predetermined by God.

Without understanding such subtle truths, people foolishly argue that there is no God. When you do not know what is the next thought that will arise in your mind, how can you understand God? Since people don't listen to good teachings, foolishness is on the rise.

Oh Man! Listen To Words Of Good Advice,
But Do Not Pay Heed To Good Advice And Indulge In Foolish Acts.
Not Knowing How To Get Rid Of Your Desires, You Have Become Their Slave.
Get Rid Of Your Desires And Give Up Hatred. Take Refuge In Sai And Pray To Him.
(Telugu Song)

Do not doubt the existence of God

People are unable to get rid of their cravings (vasanas). What are these cravings? These are the impressions of the actions of their past lives. When I tell you something about your past life, you will not believe it. How am I concerned whether you believe it or not? Whether you believe it or not, your past life does cast an influence on your present life.

Everybody has a past, present, and future. Without a past, how can there be a present?

The seed of present has come from the tree of the past. It is from this seed of present that the tree of future will grow. Therefore, past and future are like trees whereas present is like a seed. A gigantic tree is hidden in a tiny seed.

The Vedas declare, Brahman is subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the vastest (Anoraneeyan mahato maheeyan). God is smaller than the smalllest and bigger than the biggest. Though He is not visible to the physical eye, you can experience Him.

This is a rose, which you can see. But its fragrance cannot be seen; it can only be experienced. Fragrance has no form, but the flower that gives the fragrance has a form.

Similarly, love has no form, but the mother who gives you love has a form. Love, bliss, fragrance - all these have no form, but the objects that give them have a form. It is the form that is the source of the formless attribute. Therefore, it is foolish to ask for direct evidence of God's existence.

Many things are beyond the realm of direct evidence. Here is a small example. Can you see your own eyes? How can you say that you have eyes when you cannot see them? Only when you have a mirror in front of you can you see your eyes.

You say, "my mind". What is the form of the mind? Can you see your mind? If you cannot see it, how can you believe that you have a mind? In the same way, you cannot see God, but it is foolishness to doubt His existence. Though He is not visible, He is the basis of the entire universe.

You see a gigantic tree. But it was not visible when it was in the form of a tiny seed.

Though air is all-pervasive, you cannot see it. Similarly, God is everywhere but is not visible to the physical eye. God is all-pervasive. He is present in the form of air and all the five elements.

God is described as embodiment of sound, mobility and immobility, light, speech, eternal bliss, perfection, delusion, and wealth (sabda brahmamayi, characharamayi, jyotirmayi, vangmayi, nityanandamayi, paratparamayi, mayamayi, and sreemayi).

Sound cannot be seen, it can only be heard. Form can only be seen; it cannot be heard. The tongue can only speak but cannot see. In this manner, every element is endowed with a particular power.

Speaking truth is easier than telling lies

Blood is present in all parts of the body. When doctors perform blood tests, they take a sample of blood from one part of the body and find out if there is any malady in it. There is no need for them to take blood from every part of the body for this purpose. Though blood is the same in all the limbs of the body, each limb has a specific function to perform.

Can you know the taste of laddu (a sweet) by merely holding it in your hand? No. You can know its taste only when you place it on your tongue. When the same blood is present in the hands and also in the tongue, then why can't hands know the taste of the laddu? Only the tongue is endowed with the power of taste.

Similarly, though God is all-pervasive, one can experience the power of Divinity depending upon one's capability. God does exist, there is no doubt about it. Without God, there can be no world. If you deny the existence of God, it means you deny your own existence.

Your Atma is your God. You should have faith in your Self and faith in God. If you lack faith in God, it means you lack faith in yourself. If you don't have faith in yourself, then how can you have faith in God? First of all, have faith in yourself. That is self-confidence. Faith is very important for a person. It is the very life-breath. If you lack the life-breath of faith, then you are no better than a corpse.

As long as there is life-breath in the body, it is auspicious (sivam). Once the life-breath goes out, the body becomes a corpse (savam). Therefore, one's life-breath is sivam and the body devoid of it is savam.

You see the idol of Siva made by a sculptor and imagine Siva is the one with the Ganga flowing from his matted locks. No. Your life-breath is Siva. Every being is endowed with life-breath.

God is the indweller of all beings (Easwara sarva bhutanam). Easwara (God) is present in all beings in the form of life-breath. God is all-pervasive. It is possible to experience Him.

The boy who spoke earlier talked about the Vedic teaching "speak truth, practise righteousness (sathyam vada, dharmam chara)." He said, it was not easy to put it into practice. It is a great mistake. There is nothing easier than that.

It is very easy to report events as they happen. For example, when you say that Swami today came at 4 o'clock and started His discourse early, it is true. How easy it is to report any matter as it is! It does not require any planning.

But if you have to speak untruth, you have to do a lot of scheming so that people may believe it. In order to speak untruth, you have to resort to nasty tricks. How difficult it is to tell a lie, whereas speaking truth is so very easy! It is a mistake to think otherwise.

You think speaking truth is difficult because you are habituated to speaking untruth. Since you have developed this bad habit of telling lies, you are unable to recognise the importance of truth. This weakness is prevalent everywhere and afflicts everyone in this world. Here is a small example.

Suppose, somebody dies in a house in your neighbourhood, and you go there to offer your condolences to the family. In such a situation, suppose you tell them the truth: "What is this? Birth and death are natural for everyone; one who is born is sure to die." Then the people in the house will be very angry with you, thinking what a stonehearted person you are!

But instead, suppose you say, "How did he die? Which doctor treated him? What medicine was he using? How long was he in hospital?" Then they will be satisfied that you have sympathised with them and shared their grief.

But this satisfaction is only temporary. The truth is: where there is birth, there has to be death. Whoever is born is bound to die.

You would have seen that the return date is always mentioned on railway compartments. After reaching the destination, the compartment has to return by the due date. This body is also like a railway compartment. Although the return date is not seen on it, it has surely to return by the stipulated date. When it is sure that the body has to return by a certain date, then why should you worry about it? Why should you feel sad?

You are worried because you have made a habit of worrying. Mistaken thinking is the cause of this worry.

You don't have faith in the truth of your reality. Faith is truth, truth is faith. Faith leads to truth; truth leads to peace; peace leads to happiness. Happiness is heaven, sorrow is hell. Therefore, never give room to sorrow.

Face all situations with faith. With faith, you can achieve anything. Without faith, you can achieve nothing. Therefore, develop faith. You can develop faith only by contemplating on God.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Govinda Hare Gopala Hare Hey Gopi Gopa Bala ...".)

59. Students are the Future Saviours of a Country

Date: 08 July 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, June 2011.

Iron Gets Rusted When It Keeps Lying In Dust, But Its Rust Is Removed When It Comes In Contact With Fire.
In The Same Way, Humans Are Affected By The Company With Which They Associate.
(Telugu Poem)
Rain Water Gets Absorbed When It Falls On Sand.
When The Same Rain Water Falls On Fine Clay, It Becomes Sweet.
In The Same Way, The Devotion Of A Person Shines According To His Deservedness.
(Telugu Poem)

Students!

Embodiments of Love!

Human life by itself is very sacred. But it becomes good or bad according to the company with which it is associated. When you keep iron in dust, it gets rusted. But when the same iron is put in fire, it gets rid of its rust, becomes soft, and starts shining.

Particles of dust rise up in the sky in the company of wind but fall down into ditches when they are associated with rainwater. The dust particles do not have wings to fly up in the sky, nor have they feet to jump down. Both their rise and their fall happen by the effect of the company. Your good or bad depends upon the type of company you join.

Good Company Leads To Detachment; Detachment Makes One Free From Delusion;
Freedom From Delusion Leads To Steadiness Of Mind;
Steadiness Of Mind Confers Liberation.
Satsangatwe Nissangatwam, Nissangatwe Nirmohatwam,
Nirmohatwe Nischalatattwam, Nischalatattwe Jivanmukti.
(Sanskrit Verse)

Good company makes a man noble and divine

Good company makes you sacred and divine. On the other hand, bad company gives rise to bad feelings and bad thoughts, which prompt you to perform bad deeds. Therefore, it is essential for you to join good company and develop your humanness.

Good company can elevate one to the level of Divinity, whereas bad company can degenerate one to the level of an animal. The animal level is below the human level, and Divinity is above; the human level is in between these two.

You should make efforts to rise above the human level. No effort is needed for your downward fall. To become bad is easy. But it is difficult to attain the higher level. Though it may be difficult, you should still make efforts to reach higher levels.

But, unfortunately, people today associate with bad company, because of which good feelings are turned into bad feelings and good actions into bad actions - ultimately one's life becomes miserable.

Cultivate friendship only with persons of good character

Your thoughts are the root cause of everything. Therefore, you should have only noble, sacred, pure, and meaningful thoughts. But young people today

entertain bad thoughts and bad feelings and perform bad actions, thereby wasting their precious young age.

When the iron is kept in dust, it acquires rust and loses its strength. When it undergoes the test of fire, it gets rid of the rust and regains its strength.

In order to get back its strength, the iron has to get rid of dust. What is this dust? This dust is nothing but the bad feelings of people, which arise out of bad company. One acquires all sorts of bad feelings due to bad company. As is the company, so you become. Therefore, it is said, Tell me your company, and I shall tell you what you are. There is no harm in taking time to enquire whether the person with whom you want to make friendship is good or bad.

When you have high status and good position in society, everyone will run after you, saying, hello, hello! But when you lose your position and fall on bad days, everyone will run away from you. This is not true friendship.

What is true friendship? A true friend is one who will follow you like a shadow in times of both pleasure and pain, profit and loss.

When the tank is full of water, thousands of frogs will come into it. But when the tank becomes dry, not even a single frog will be seen there. Similarly, when you have a good position and high rank, everyone will follow you. But you will find none in your times of difficulty. Such friendship is not true friendship.

A true friend is one who remains with you in joy and sorrow and in prosperity and adversity.

Make friendship with only such persons with proper discrimination. Don't make friendship with everybody who says hello, hello to you. This is a great mistake. You should know the background, habits, behaviour, discipline, and other qualities of the person with whom you want to make friendship. You should also try to know with whom they associate and what type of company they keep.

If you come to know that someone is in bad company, do not even look at their face. Even if they say hello to you, move away from them, saying goodbye, because such company can even endanger your life.

But today, due to the effect of modern education, students develop friendship with all types of people. It cannot be called true friendship. Such a type of friendship is temporary, like passing clouds. Entertain such friendship only to the extent necessary.

Character is very important for a student. A student without character is like a living corpse. Never make friendship with those who have no character. One who does not have individual character will not have social character also. How can a person without social character have national character?

Therefore, first and foremost, you should have individual character. You should develop steady vision and unwavering mind. You should not even look at the face of someone who has a wavering mind like the pendulum of a clock. Such students are very bad boys. You should develop no intimacy with such bad boys. Otherwise, you will also ultimately become a bad boy.

Develop friendship with only those who are good. As I have already said, if iron is kept in dust, it loses its strength. Iron is a very hard and strong metal. But when it is put in dust, it loses its strength. When it is put in fire, it becomes bright and soft. All its impurities also get removed. When it becomes pure and soft, it can be changed into any shape by beating it with a hammer. It can be made into a circle or a semicircle or any other shape. All types of instruments can be made from it.

Good company is also like fire, which makes your heart pure by removing the dust of all impurities. Only when your heart becomes free from all impurities is it possible for you to overcome all your sorrow, grief and misery. As long as your heart is full of impurities, there can be no transformation in you.

Education should lead you to the goal of life

Everyone should undergo the process that is called refinement (samskar). What does samskar mean? Samskar means to get rid of impurities and cultivate good qualities.

Many edible food items are produced in their natural form. We eat rice and many types of pulses. However, we do not partake of them in their raw form, in which they are harvested.

Take paddy, for example. First, you have to separate the paddy plants from weeds. Then you have to remove the husk to get rice. After getting rice from paddy, you have to put it on fire to cook. Only then does it become fit for eating.

In the same manner, precious metals like gold and silver have to be refined. They cannot be used in the form they are obtained from mines because they are mixed with dust and other impurities. They have to be made pure by putting them in fire and by various other means. Only then can they become pure metals, which can be made into many types of ornaments. Therefore, refinement is necessary for everything.

This is a cloth. First, it is in the form of cotton, mixed with seeds. If you want to make cloth out of it, you have to separate seeds from cotton and make yarn out of cotton. For cotton to become cloth, it has to undergo many processes of refinement.

Similarly, only when one undergoes refinement can one attain purity. Whatever you study today is limited only to bookish knowledge. Refinement is required with respect to your studies also. Howsoever highly educated you may become, your knowledge is useless without refinement.

In Spite Of His Education And Intelligence,
A Foolish Man Will Not Know His True Self,
And
A Mean-Minded Man Will Not Give Up His Evil Qualities.

Modern Education Leads Only To Argumentation, Not To Total Wisdom. (Telugu Poem)

Modern education makes you fit only for argumentation. This is not the purpose of your education. Education is not meant merely to fill your belly. Agriculture is for food, culture is for wisdom. But you entertain wrong thoughts and consider that education is only for eking out a livelihood. Education is of two types: one for life and the other for a living. Besides providing the means of a living, education should also lead you to the goal of life.

Leading a purposeless life and ultimately meeting one's end is not the goal of life. You should lead an ideal life and set an ideal for others to follow. Man may die, but his ideals always live. Therefore, all of you should become ideal students. Ideals never die; they are immortal. For generations together, high ideals will be followed by others.

But people today do not know what ideal life means. They acquire some high degrees and become egoistic, considering themselves to be highly educated. As long as a person is beset with ego, ostentation, and jealousy, they will be of no use to society. Society will also not respect them. A foolish man is respected only in his house. The head of a village is respected only in the village. The king is respected in his kingdom. But a cultured man is respected everywhere in the world.

Therefore, first of all make efforts to imbibe cultural values and protect Indian culture. To whichever country you belong, protect the culture of that country. That is the real purpose of education.

Respect and serve your parents

You should maintain your relationship with others on an even keel. There is no need for you to hate anyone. But use your discretion to choose your

friends. It is better not to have any friend at all rather than developing friendship with a foolish person. Cultivate friendship only with good people.

Who is a good person? Those whose thoughts, words and deeds are in perfect harmony are noble ones (Manasyekam vachasyekam,karmanyekam mahatmanam).

You should choose a person as your friend who has unity of thought, word, and deed (trikarana shuddhi). Do not even go near a person who thinks something, speaks something else, and acts without any relation to their speech or thinking. Those who lack harmony of thoughts, words, and deeds are wicked (Manasyanyath vachasyanyath, karmanyanyath duratmanam).

A true human being is one who maintains harmony between their thoughts, words, and deeds. Try to become such a person. The proper study of mankind is man. But today people do not pay attention to this noble principle. They do not try to understand the feelings of others. Here is a small example.

Suppose there is a dog in a ditch twenty feet, away from you. If you go your way without bothering about the dog, the dog will also not take any notice of you. It will not even get up. But if you go near it with a small stone in your hand, it will immediately run away.

A dog is able to know the thoughts of a person, but today, one does not try to know the thoughts and feelings of one's fellow beings. In this way, a human has become even inferior to a dog. A human has to become not a dog but God.

The three letters that make the two words DOG and GOD are the same. The only difference lies in the way we arrange them. If you start from 'D', it becomes DOG; if you start from 'G', it becomes GOD. This is the discrimination that a spiritual aspirant should develop. You undertake many spiritual practices like chanting, penance (japa, tapa), etc., but they are not the real spiritual practices. The real spiritual practice is to know the truth.

Neither By Penance Nor By Pilgrimage Nor By Study Of Scriptures,
Nor By Chanting Can One Cross The Ocean Of Life.
One Can Achieve It Only By Serving The Pious.
(Sanskrit Verse)

You should serve noble people. Respect and serve your mother, father, guru, and elders. Any amount of spiritual practices that you undertake cannot be considered as spiritual practice (sadhana) in the true sense if you disobey your elders and ignore the words of your parents. Even God will not accept this type of spiritual practice.

If you hurt living beings and worship God, God will not be pleased. First and foremost, have love for all living beings. Only then will you have loved God. God is the indweller of all beings (Easwara sarva bhutanam). God is immanent in all living beings.

You should respect noble people in a befitting manner, with heart full of sacred feelings. All are equal in society. However, you should follow certain principles for your own good. Without discipline, there can be no well being (Na sreyo niyamam vina). Don't have a relationship with people who lack character and good qualities.

However, there is no harm in offering your respects to everyone. Whomsoever you salute, it reaches God (Sarva jiva namaskaram Kesavam pratigachchhati).

Purpose of education is to foster virtues in students

A student should not develop relationship with all sorts of people. There are students, both boys and girls. Neither should boys develop any connection with girls nor girls with boys. Boys and girls who develop such relationship and go on the wrong path are worse than dogs. Such boys and girls deceive even their parents. They waste their life, and their birth is itself a curse. Do

not lead such a useless life.

What Sort Of Life You Should Lead?
A Person, Who Does Not Utilise Their Hands In The Worship Of The Lord,
Who Does Not Sing His Glory Till The Mouth Aches, And
Who Is Bereft Of Compassion And Truth
Is Verily A Curse On Their Mother's Womb. (Telugu Poem)

Is the birth of such a person meant only to give pain to their mother's womb? What is the purpose of all their studies? The purpose of education is to foster virtues. This is the essence of all education. Books are full of knowledge but what is the use if the head is full of mud? Can you call it learning? No, no. First of all, you have to get rid of impure thoughts from your mind.

If The Head Is Empty, One Can Fill It With Something.
But If It Is Already Filled With Trivial And Mundane Matters,
Where Is The Place For Anything Else?
How Is It Possible To Fill The Head With Something Sacred If It Is Not Emptied?
(Telugu Poem)

This tumbler is full of water. How can you pour milk into it? First, you have to empty the tumbler; then you can pour milk into it. Moreover, if you pour milk into water, you will spoil both.

Cultivate sacred thought to love and respect your parents; show them gratitude and give them happiness. There will be no worse sinner than you if you deceive your parents and take to an evil path. If you perform such a heinous act, what is the use of all your education? Even earning your livelihood by begging is better than acquiring this type of education. Therefore, acquire the education that develops virtues in you.

A Son Without Character, Education Without Purpose,
Human Race Without Morality, And A Human Without Peace

Are Like Night Without Moon.
(Telugu Poem)

Your education should make you a paragon of virtues. You should become the ideal leaders of this country. In fact, you are the future saviours of the country. If the youth of the nation go astray, the entire nation is bound to come to grief. If there is a bend in the sapling, there will be a bend in the tree also. The future of a country depends on its students. Students are the very foundation of the mansion of the country.

Young age is the foundation of the mansion of life. This is the celibate stage (brahmacharya ashram), on which the first floor, the householder stage (grihastha ashram), is built. The floor of the recluse stage (vana- prastha ashram) is similarly built on the first floor, the householder stage. The top floor, the renunciant stage (sanyasa ashram), is similarly built on the recluse stage. Thus, the mansion of life is a multi-storied building. If the foundation of this mansion is not strong, the entire mansion will collapse. Therefore, you should make the foundation strong.

Young age is very important and sacred. In fact, it is the golden age. It should be free from the rust and dust of evil qualities. Students should have good qualities. All that they see, speak, hear, and do should be sacred. It is, therefore, necessary that first of all they fill their heart with love for God.

Your heart is like a big tank, and your senses are like the taps. If you fill your heart with the water of love, the same sweet water will come out of the taps of your senses. As your heart, so will be your actions. Therefore, when you fill your heart with love, all your actions will be suffused with love.

Do not waste precious human birth

If you throw a stone in a well, it will give rise to waves. How far will the waves go? They will spread in the entire well and go up to its edges.

Similarly, when you drop a stone of a good or a bad thought in the lake of your mind, its effect will spread to your entire body. If it is a bad thought, your eyes, ears, and tongue will see, hear, and speak all that is evil. Your hands will also perform evil actions and your feet will take you to undesirable places. The effect of your thoughts will spread to your entire being right from head to toe. Therefore, the heart is very important.

But students today pay attention only to art but not heart. Heart is inside, art is outside. Art is worldly, heart is divine. Art is related to worldliness (pavritti) whereas heart is related to spirituality (nivritti).

The principle of nivritti is most sacred and sublime. This is described in Vedanta as: It is attributeless, unsullied, final abode, eternal, pure, enlightened, free, and embodiment of sacredness (nirgunam, niranjanam, sanathana niketanam, nitya, shuddha, buddha, mukta, nirmala swarupinam).

One should have mental purity (chittha shuddhi) to attain this. Good deeds give mental purity (Chittasya shuddhaye karmah). All the actions that we perform should contribute to purity of heart.

There was a sage by name Thiruthondar Alwar in Tamil Nadu who prayed,

"oh Lord! I Worship You With All The Purity Of My Heart.
I Have Attained This Precious Human Birth With Great Difficulty.
It Is Not So Easy To Attain Human Birth.
It Can Be Attained Only By The Accumulated Merits Of Many Past Lives.
Let Not This Golden Opportunity Slip Away From My Hand."
The Same Feelings Were Expressed By Mira Also. She Prayed,
"oh Giridhari! I Went Deep Into The Ocean And Found This Pearl Of Human Life.
Please Shower Your Grace On Me So That This Precious Pearl Of Human Life Does
Not Slip Away From My Hand And Fall Into The Ocean Again.
If I Lose This, My Entire Life Is Doomed."

You are blessed with rare human birth, which you attained as a result of merits of so many past lives. Make sure that you do not waste this human life by taking to a wrong path. Even if one does not attain the level of Divinity, one should at least remain at the level of a human being and should not degenerate to the level of an animal. It is very important for students to learn this.

Both good and bad are prevalent in the world. See to it that you take to a good path without bothering about what others are doing. Consider even your small defects as big, and at the same time, do not magnify the small defects of others. First of all, get rid of your own defects and cultivate virtues. Only then will humanness blossom in you.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajans, "Madhura Madhura Murali Ghana Shyama..." and "Subrahmanyam Subrahmanyam...")

60. Equal-Mindedness is the Hallmark of a Human Being

Date: 09 July 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, July 2011.

A True Devotee Is One Who Remains Equalminded In Both Happiness And Sorrow, Prosperity And Adversity, Praise And Blame.
(Telugu Poem)

Students!

Embodiments of Love!

Good and bad, wealth and poverty, praise and blame go together in this world. There can be no sorrow without happiness, and happiness has no value without sorrow. One cannot derive happiness out of happiness (Na sukhat labhate sukham). Happiness does not come out of happiness; it comes only out of sorrow.

A wealthy man today may become a pauper tomorrow. Similarly, a pauper may become a rich man some day or other. Today you are being praised, but tomorrow you may be criticised. To consider praise and blame, hap- piness and sorrow, prosperity and adversity with equal-mindedness is the hallmark of a true human being.

Develop equal-mindedness

The Gita declares the same thing: One should remain equal-minded in happiness and sorrow, gain and loss, victory and defeat (Sukhadukhe samekruthwa labhalabhau jayajayau).

You can really enjoy your life as a human being only when you consider both sorrow and happiness, profit and loss with equanimity. If there is no sorrow, one will have no value for happiness. Therefore, one should welcome sorrow if one wants to experience real happiness.

Pleasure And Pain, Good And Bad Coexist; None Can Separate Them.
You Cannot Find Pleasure Or Pain, Good Or Bad To The Exclusion Of The Other.
Pleasure Results When Difficulties Fructify. (Telugu Poem)

In our day-to-day life also, we will have no value for day if there is no night, and vice versa. It is very difficult to understand this truth and act accordingly. People who do not understand this truth desire only happiness at all times. They are under the delusion that they can always remain happy. But this is not possible.

First of all, you should understand what happiness really means. Only when one is tired of walking in the sun can one understand the value of taking a rest in the shade of a tree. People who question why man should undergo sorrow and suffering lack common sense.

The student who spoke earlier said that modern education did not develop common sense. Not only common sense, it does not even foster general knowledge. In fact, both common sense and general knowledge have become zero in the present system of education.

Who will desire food when they are not hungry? Similarly, who will buy an air conditioner when it is not hot? Only those who have both common sense and general knowledge can really understand the value of the pairs of opposites like happiness and sorrow, profit and loss, prosperity and adversity.

In all fields of life, whether worldly, physical, moral, or spiritual, one can attain name and fame only when one undergoes difficulties.

King Harishchandra underwent many difficulties and sufferings in order to uphold truth. It was his firm determination, "Come what may, I will never leave truth." He sacrificed his kingdom, sold his wife and son, and himself became a servant to uphold truth. He earned the exalted name of Sathya Harishchandra only after undergoing enormous difficulties, sorrows and sufferings. Otherwise, he would have been remembered as Harishchandra and not Sathya Harishchandra. He sacrificed everything at the altar of truth. This signifies true determination.

One should develop such firm determination. Being unmindful of all sufferings, sorrows, and difficulties, one should be prepared to sacrifice even one's life to achieve his goal. This is the sign of a man who relentlessly pursues the path of truth.

You know the story of the seven-year-old little boy, Prahlada. He constantly contemplated on the Name Narayana. His own father subjected him to untold suffering and even tried to kill him. But Prahlada faced all difficulties and sufferings with courage and determination and ultimately achieved victory. He could earn great name and fame because he bore all sufferings with enormous fortitude.

Did he ever get bogged down by difficulties? Did any sorrow break his determination? No, no. He achieved victory against all odds.

Hence, difficulties are the stepping stones to high esteem and reputation as well as true happiness. But people do not welcome sorrows and difficulties at all. This is a great mistake.

In order to understand the mystery of human life, you have to experience both happiness and sorrow. Otherwise, you can never enjoy true peace and happiness. You should welcome difficulties and sorrows in order to experience everlasting bliss. Pleasure is an interval between two pains. One who understands this truth will be neither elated by happiness nor depressed by sorrow.

But people today are prepared to ruin their precious reputation for the sake of trivial, mean, and momentary worldly pleasures and petty gains. Thereby they subject themselves to disrepute. This may be due to the influence of Kali Age (the age we are now in).

Unfortunately, people today are running after petty gains and not making any effort to attain everlasting happiness. Here is a small example. The owner of a 50-seater bus going from one village to another overcrowds it with 70 people for a little more money. He may earn twenty rupees extra by overcrowding the bus, but he does not realise that the tyres worth two thousand rupees will be spoiled in the process. Similarly, man today is ruining his precious reputation for the sake of petty gains.

Make sacred use of your senses

How should people in general and youth in particular conduct themselves to earn a good reputation? They should enquire how they should use their eyes, ears, and tongue and exercise control over them. It is not proper to look at everyone and everything just because you have eyes. See only what is required to be seen. It is a sin to look at everyone and everything. What do you achieve by using your eyes in an unsacred manner?

People try to derive mean pleasure by casting evil glances at women. But they do not understand how much disrepute they earn by craving such mean pleasures. Such persons cannot move in society with their head held high.

See only what is necessary for you to see. Never look at anything that is unnecessary. You are all young, and you should not think otherwise when Swami tells you these things. It is My duty to make you aware of the ways of the world and put you on the right path.

Suppose a twenty-five year old young man is traveling with his twenty-year-old younger sister. Though they are brother and sister, people may consider them as husband and wife, looking at their age. You can yourself see what a

bad reputation they earn by traveling together! According to our ancient traditions and culture of Bharat (India), young brothers and sisters should not travel together. They should avoid going to a cinema, beach, or shopping centre together. They should go along with their parents. In ancient days, people strictly adhered to such principles.

Take another example of a sixty-year-old man and a sixteen-year-old girl traveling together. People may consider them to be grandfather and granddaughter, though they may not be. When a young brother and his young sister travel together, people form wrong opinions about them. On the other hand, when an old man goes with a young girl with evil intentions, people consider them as grandfather and granddaughter. We should not give scope to such situations.

If it is necessary, you may travel alone. But if you have to go with your young sister, take your mother also with you. This is the teaching of our ancient culture. Such principles and practices are meant to uphold our family name and reputation in society.

But, unfortunately, the vision of youth today is tainted with evil intentions. This is not the vision of a human being but the vision of a crow, which is not steady at all and keeps shifting here and there. It is natural for a crow because it has a long beak. But, why do you look here and there like a crow when you do not have a long beak like a crow? Keep your vision always straight. Such sacred vision is very essential for youth. It is termed good vision (sunetra and sudarshana). When you develop such vision, you will earn a high reputation.

Exercise control over speech, vision, and laughter

You should also know how you should use your tongue in a proper way. It is necessary for students to know what they should speak before whom, when they should laugh, and when they should not. Sometimes, you start laughing when you see something funny. But improper laughter can put you to great

harm.

This improper laughter was the main cause of Draupadi's difficulties. Dharmaraja got a beautiful palace built by the architect Maya. Therefore, it was called Maya Sabha. It had many wonderful architectural features. For instance, doors appeared to be where they did not exist really, and where doors actually were, they could not be seen. Similarly, the flooring was such that it would cause the illusion of a tank where there was none, and it would appear like a dry area where there was really a water tank.

Duryodhana was filled with jealousy on seeing this wonderful palace built by the Pandavas. When he entered the palace, he did not see the door where there was actually one. He rushed forward, thinking that there was no door, and banged his head against it. However, he did not bother much about it. Filled as he was with jealousy and pride, he walked haughtily looking here and there. When he proceeded further, he saw only a plain floor where there was a tank of water. Consequently, he fell into the water tank.

At that time, he heard somebody laughing at him. Anybody could have had fun on seeing such a situation. It was not Draupadi but her friends who laughed at Duryodhana. In fact, Draupadi was nowhere around at that time.

But when she heard her friends laughing, she came out to see what had happened.

Unfortunately, Duryodhana saw her when she came out and by mistake thought it was she who laughed at him. He vowed to avenge this humiliation and resolved that he would humiliate her in the open court so that people in the court would laugh at her.

Therefore, you should know where to laugh, when to laugh, and in what manner to laugh.

Laughter is of two types: hasan and prahasan. Hasan means to flash a gentle smile. Prahasan means to laugh loudly, making the sound Haha Haha Haha...

This is a very bad practice.

Suppose two or three friends laugh loudly when they are going on a road. Their reason of laughter may be anything, but the women passing by may think that they are laughing at them. Therefore, do not laugh loudly at least when you are walking on a road, especially when there are women around. In any case, never laugh at women.

In towns and cities, some people keep loitering before shops, laughing at women and teasing them when they come for shopping. If they laugh at others' women, will not others laugh at their women when they go shopping?

Nobody can escape from the reaction, reflection, and resound of their actions. Everybody has to suffer the consequences of their own actions. People who indulge in such evil practices become distant even from God. What is the reason? The reason is that people who earn a bad reputation by their evil deeds have no place in divine proximity.

Therefore, have a check on your laughter. Not only on your laughter, but your speech and vision also. You should know what to speak where.

Some people sing vulgar songs on seeing women walking on the road. Has God given you a tongue to sing such vulgar songs? How sacred is the tongue, and what an evil use you put it to by singing such vulgar songs! By acting in this manner, you ruin your reputation and subject yourself to ridicule by others.

Therefore, exercise control over your speech, vision, and laughter. If you want to have good respect in society, conduct yourself in a befitting manner. When your behaviour is good, your reputation in society will also rise high.

Obey the command of God

One should be equal-minded both in praise and blame, good and bad. Equal-

mindedness is the hallmark of a human being. Only such a person has the chance to rise to the level of divine.

On the other hand, if one conducts oneself contrary to human nature, one will degenerate to the level of an animal. What does that mean? One moves in the reverse direction and degenerates from human level to animal level. One should always move forward and make progress; one should never retrace their steps.

Some officers earn reversion instead of promotion. What is the reason? The reason is their defects. You get promotion when you are free from defects.

When one has to undergo the process of promotion or reversion in a small office due to one's good or bad behaviour, how much more careful one must be if one wants to attain divine grace!

When you take to the sacred path, God will give you promotion accordingly. If you develop virtues, there is no need for you to undertake any spiritual practices to please God. God Himself will call a virtuous person, saying, "My dear, I am pleased with your virtues. Come on." You don't even need to pray to Him; He Himself will welcome you.

You should obey the command of God and develop firm faith and sacred feelings. On the other hand, if you act contrary to His expectations and commands, He will give you a reversion instead of a promotion. Sasanam Vachanam Iti Sastram. What is Sastra? Sastra is that which propounds the rules and regulations for the conduct of humanity. It says, don't see anything bad, don't hear anything bad and don't speak anything bad. This is not good for you.

See no evil, see what is good; Hear no evil, hear what is good; Talk no evil, talk what is good; Think no evil, think what is good; Do no evil, do what is good; This is the way to God.

This is the code of conduct the scriptures (sastras) prescribe for humanity.

When you follow these principles, God will welcome you. If you act contrary to this code of conduct, you will become distant from God. Not only will you become distant from God, He will not even look at your face. What is the reason? The reason is that you have violated the command of God.

Consequently, you will lose your reputation, your wealth, and your respect in society. If you don't follow His command, how can God draw you nearer to Him? Therefore, develop good qualities in you in the first instance.

Make efforts to develop equal-mindedness. The Bhagavad Gita also declares: Equanimity is called true yoga (Samatvam yogamuchyate) and Perfection in action is true yoga (Yoga karmasu kausalam).

Many people may criticise you. Be neither depressed by criticism nor elated by praise. When you don't have any defect in you, what does it matter if others criticise you? Face the situation with courage, thinking, "There is no defect in me. Then why should I be disturbed by criticism? This is not my fault." In order to develop such courage and conviction, you should follow the right path. Sometimes, students laugh loudly. Yes, certain situations will make them laugh. When you see some funny incident in a drama, you naturally burst into laughter. In such situations I also laugh. However, we should control our laughter when we are in the company of others.

As the food, so is the head

During the Mahabharata war, Bhishma lay on a bed of arrows for 56 days. As Bhishma's end approached, Krishna one day took the Pandavas to him with the intention that they should learn the principles of dharma (righteousness) from him. Everybody knew his greatness and wisdom. Great sages sat on one side, and the relatives of Bhishma sat on the other side.

The Kauravas were already killed in the war. Their wickedness destroyed them. Even Sakuni and Karna were no more. Only five Pandavas along with Draupadi were there. Vidura also came. Draupadi always followed the

Pandavas. Neither the Pandavas nor Draupadi could bear separation from each other.

The Pandavas along with Draupadi offered their salutations to Bhishma. Draupadi always had great respect for elders. In fact, she was born out of fire. Even Krishna highly praised her virtues. When somebody questioned as to who was the greatest chaste woman (pativrata), He did not mention the names of Sathyabhama or Rukmini. He said that Draupadi, who had to serve five husbands, was the greatest chaste woman. When they asked for the reason, He explained thus:

Draupadi Dutifully Obeyed The Command Of Her Husbands.
She Would Never Say To Any One Of Them That She Had No Time To Serve Him.
She Was Satisfied With Whatever She Got In Life.
She Was The Supreme Example Of Chastity, And
None Could Match Her In This Respect. (Telugu Poem)

At that time, Bhishma started teaching the principles of dharma to the Pandavas. He said, "Dharmaraja! You won the war only by the grace of Krishna. Who do you think Krishna is? You think that He is your friend and brother-in-law. You are deluded with this feeling. He is the direct manifestation of Lord Narayana. Do not be deluded by your physical relationship with Him. How fortunate you are that you are able to converse with God, play with Him, and spend your time in His company blissfully!" These teachings of Bhishma form the Santhi Parva of the Mahabharata, which guides humanity - how one should conduct oneself in a particular situation, how one should face all situations with courage and confidence, and how one should lead one's daily life in a righteous way.

The Pandavas were listening to the teachings of Bhishma with their heads bent in humility, but Draupadi could not restrain herself and laughed loudly. Her laughter was not meant to show disrespect to Bhishma. It was just an expression of her inner feelings.

While Bhima expressed his displeasure by his physical gestures, Dharmaraja cast a stern look at Draupadi. Similarly, Arjuna looked at her disapprovingly as if to say, "What is this? You lack common sense and general knowledge. How can you laugh loudly in the presence of so many people?" But Bhishma understood the inner meaning of her laughter and told the Pandava brothers, "You have formed a wrong notion about Draupadi's laughter. She is one of great chastity. None can find fault with her. She laughed not without any cause. I myself am the cause of her laughter." Then he lovingly called Draupadi near him and said, "Please explain the reason for your laughter to all, so that they can know the truth and their misunderstanding is removed." Draupadi said, "Grandfather! I always respect your words. You have dedicated your life to uphold truth (sathya) and righteousness (dharma). In such a situation, how can I dare laugh at you?

"But you were the commander-in-chief of the Kaurava army. You are the one who brought them up from their very childhood. How is it that you never imparted these teachings to the Kauravas? On the other hand, you are imparting these teachings to my husbands, who are the very embodiments of truth and righteousness.

"Where your teachings were needed, you did not give them, and where they are hardly needed, you are giving them. That is why I could not restrain my laughter." Bhishma said, "Yes, this is my fault. I have been eating the food provided to me by the Kauravas and living in their company. Because of the unsacred food that I ate, all the principles of dharma were subdued in me and only sinful feelings became prominent.

"All the bad blood in me has now drained out due the arrows shot at me by your husband Arjuna. My bad feelings and evil thoughts have also gone out with this bad blood. That is why sacred feelings and sacred thoughts are only now emerging from me. That is why I am able to teach dharma to the Pandavas now.

"It was the unsacred food provided by the Kauravas that made me incapable of imparting these sacred teachings all these days." The food one eats

influences the mind to a great extent. When you eat unsacred food, you get only unsacred feelings. Bhishma was one of great wisdom. But even his mind was influenced by the unsacred food he ate. As the food, so is the head.

Thus, Bhishma accepted his fault and told everyone that there was no fault in the laughter of Draupadi. Then all the sages, yogis, and all those who assembled there understood the truth that the food eaten has a great influence on one's mind.

Draupadi had every right to laugh at the teachings of Bhishma because she had led a life of truth and righteousness. In fact, she had dedicated her entire life to upholding truth and dharma.

Make yourself deserving of God's love

Once, during the exile of the Pandavas, Sage Durvasa came to their hermitage with thousands of his disciples and asked for food. He told them that they were going for a bath in a nearby river and would come back to have food.

The Pandavas were gripped by anxiety as to how to provide food to so many guests when they had nothing with them. Fearing the curse of Sage Durvasa, Draupadi prayed to Krishna to save them from this predicament.

Krishna promptly appeared on the scene and asked Draupadi to give Him something to eat. Draupadi replied, "Krishna, if we were living in Hastinapur, I would have certainly given You a sumptuous feast. But alas! We are living in a forest eating roots and tubers. In such a situation, what can I offer You?" Krishna told her to look into the vessel, which she had already cleaned, to see if there was any food particle left in it. She did accordingly and found a tiny piece of leaf sticking to the vessel. Krishna ate that leftover leaf.

As soon as He did so, the hunger of Durvasa and his disciples was satiated and they went away without bothering the Pandavas. In this way, Krishna

saved the Pandavas from the curse of Durvasa.

When you satisfy God, the entire world will be satisfied with you. If God disowns you, then the world will also disown you. One who is disowned by God will not be accepted by anyone. If God accepts you, everyone will accept you.

Thus, when Krishna's hunger was satiated, Sage Durvasa and all his disciples felt satiated. After their bath in the river, they did not come back to the Pandavas for food.

Draupadi's devotion and sense of surrender to Krishna were matchless. God Himself extolled her virtues as she bore all her difficulties with fortitude.

There is no need for you to make efforts to please this person or that person. Do not waste your life in the pursuit of mean and petty desires. Make earnest efforts to please God. When you please God and become dear to Him, the entire world will become yours.

Thyagaraja also said, "Oh Rama! If I have Your Grace (Anugraha), all the nine planets will become subservient to me." In order to become recipients of God's grace, treat the pairs of opposites like pleasure and pain, happiness and sorrow, praise and blame with equal-mindedness. Always contemplate on God's Divine Name and become deserving of His love. Once you become the recipients of God's love, you need not be afraid of anything. You will achieve everything in life.

Therefore, develop equal-mindedness and make efforts to earn divine grace.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Govinda Gopala Prabhu Giridhari ...")

61. Follow the Religion of Love

Date: 10 July 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, August 2011.

A Vessel Of Brass Makes Much Sound, While One Of Gold Does Not Do So.
Similarly, Only Mean-Minded Persons Indulge In Pomp And Show.
Where Is The Need For A Real Devotee To Indulge In Showmanship?
(Telugu Poem)

Modern students aspire for wealth, friendship, and high position but not virtues. Students have no business indulging in ostentation. Good qualities, good practices, and good behaviour are the hallmarks of a student. Pomp and show is not expected.

But, unfortunately, students today are acting contrary to all that. They waste their time in bad company, bad thoughts, and bad behaviour.

To realise is religion

Brass and gold both look alike. But a vessel of brass makes much more noise than one made of gold. Students should not indulge in showmanship and tall talk. Always talk sweetly and softly, with humility. You cannot always oblige, but you can always speak obligingly. Always talk decently and respectfully and conduct yourself befittingly as an ideal student.

One's mind, destiny, position, and wealth (mati, gati, stiti, and sampatti), are gifts of God. How is one to make use of them? It is most important to develop the qualities of equality, solidarity, integrity, and amity.

But man today has changed his mati (mind) into durmati (wicked mind). It is

mati that makes man good or bad. Improper use of mati makes a man egoistic. All the matas (religions) have their origin in mati. It is the source of all the religions of the world.

All religions impart only good teachings. One should understand this truth and act accordingly.

If Mati (Mind) Is Good, How Can Any Mata (Religion) Be Bad?
Listen! Oh Valiant Sons Of Bharat. (Telugu Poem)

All the religions of the world teach the same fundamental truths and prompt man to follow dharma (right conduct). All of them teach one to respect one's mother, father, and preceptor. One should develop broad-mindedness, respect the elders, and earn a good name.

You find fault with other religions only due to defects in your own mind. Therefore, make proper use of your mind.

What is the real meaning of religion? To realise is religion. Follow the religion of love. This is the sacred principle that all religions of the world teach. Even if one is not able to rise to the level of God, one should at least lead a life like a true human being.

Only one who leads life with humility and amity is a true human being. This truth is propounded by the Gita:

One Who Contemplates On The All-Wise, Ageless Being,
The Ruler Of All, Subtler Than The Subtle,
The Universal Sustainer, Possessing A Form Beyond Human Conception,
Refulgent Like The Sun And Far Beyond The Darkness Of Ignorance,
- That One Reaches Verily That Supreme Being.
Kavim Puranamanushasitaram Anoraniyansamanusmaret Ya,
Sarvasya Dhataramachintyarupam Adityavarnam Tamasa Parastat...
(Sanskrit Verse)

Who is a kavi (poet)? Is kavi a human being? No, no. Some people may join a few words, write rhyming lines, and call themselves poets. Unless the words already exist, how can they join them together? Words did exist before man, and God created them.

Then who can be truly called a poet? One who knows the past, present, and future is a true poet (Trikala darshana kavi). Therefore, God alone is the true kavi.

What does the term puranam signify? It does not refer to the puranas like the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The Vedas refer to the human body as puram (city). Therefore, the consciousness that pervades this puram is called puranam. This divine consciousness shines in every individual.

Puranam therefore refers to divinity in humanity. This divinity is not limited to an individual but is immanent in all (it is not vyashti swarupa but samashti swarupa). Divinity is uniformly present in all in the form of consciousness. That is why the Vedas declare: God is the indweller of all beings (Easwara sarva bhutanam).

In this world, various rules and regulations prescribe different types of punishments for mistakes or crimes. That which prescribes the code of conduct for humanity is Sastra (the scriptures) (Sasanam vachanam iti sastram).

A thief who commits theft is caught by police and put in jail. Only his body is under lock and key in the jail. Nobody can imprison his mind, which is free to roam wherever it likes. It may go to his home or to the market or to his friend's house. A ruler can exercise control over the body of his subjects, but he has no power to control their mind.

God alone can control the mind of individuals. Therefore, the word Anushasitaram refers to God.

Man should live like a human being

The Upanishads refer to God as: He who shines with great brilliance and who is beyond the darkness of ignorance (Adityavarnam tamasa parastat). He shines with the effulgence of a billion suns and illumines the mind and intellect of everyone.

The realized sages of Vedic times declared: I have visualised the Supreme Being, who shines with the effulgence of a billion suns and who is beyond the darkness of ignorance (Vedahametam purusham mahantam adityavarnam tamasa parastat).

These sages declared that they had seen God. Where did they see Him? They saw Him beyond darkness. What does darkness connote? It connotes ignorance. The sages saw Him not in this physical and external world but in the inner world, in the firmament of their inner being. In every human being, God shines beyond the darkness of ignorance with all effulgence.

When one leads one's life like a human being and conducts oneself like a human being, one can become God himself. Then one will become eternal, like gold that does not change with the passage of time.

If you sow a seed, it undergoes change after some time. But if you dig a pit and keep gold in it, it will not undergo any change, no matter how long you keep it. If you put it in fire, it does not get destroyed; rather, it shines with added brilliance. But the same cannot be said of brass. Likewise, when the human mind is subjected to the process of refinement, its effulgence does not diminish. Rather, it becomes more pure and effulgent.

People should make efforts to understand the nature of their mind. When one looks at both gold and brass, they may look alike. But when you put them on fire, you will know the difference. Likewise, salt and camphor may look alike, but when you put them on your tongue, you will know the difference.

Similarly, people cannot be judged by their outward appearance.

People should make efforts to lead their life in a manner befitting their human birth. Today, one sees human beings only in form but not in practice.

One Who Lives In This World Should First Behave Like A Human Being.
One Is A Fool Who Goes On Praising The Misdeeds Of Others.
Acquire The Knowledge Of The Atma And Have The Vision Of The Atma.
This Is The Essence Of All Knowledge. This Is The Teaching Of The Vedas.
(Telugu Poem)

These are the truths that are propounded by the Vedas. These are the goal of all paths. These are the support of all living beings and the root of all creation.

One should make efforts to conduct oneself like a true human being. All thoughts, feelings, and actions should be pure and sacred. One should develop high character and cultivate the qualities of generosity and amity and attain blessedness. Proper education is essential to attain the state of blessedness.

Make God your Charioteer

Vid means illumination. Therefore, that which illumines the intellect of man is vidya (education). It makes humanness shine in humanity. But modern education creates agitation in instead of bringing about elevation. Today wherever you look, there is agitation.

Modern students are lazy in studies and active in taking part in agitations. Laziness is rust and dust. Realisation is best and rest. Therefore, never give room to laziness. It is not the quality of a student.

Only those who are not interested in studies develop this bad quality of

laziness and waste their time, money, and energy, thereby causing great anxiety to their parents. When students indulge in strikes, their parents suffer from great anxiety about their future.

Students should bring a good name to their parents. They should realise that their blood, food, and head are gifts of their parents. Therefore, they should have gratitude for their parents. They should not cause anxiety to them. You should become such ideal students.

I lovingly call such students bangaru (nuggets of gold)! All students should become nuggets of gold. What type of gold? Not rolled gold but pure gold! How can you become pure gold? You can become pure gold only when you develop purity of heart and sacred feelings and lead an ideal life by practising purity of thought, word, and deed (trikarana suddhi).

It is said: The proper study of mankind is man. One should cultivate the qualities of kindness and compassion. Only then does one deserve the title of human. You are not only people, but humanity!

Today, people use the word mankind or humanity without understanding its real meaning. One can rise to the level of divine if one develops virtues.

God is not somewhere else. You yourself are God. You are not different from God if you have a pure heart. God is the eternal charioteer, who is always present in your heart. He is only a charioteer and not the owner; you are the owner.

Lord Krishna is called Parthasarathi because He became the charioteer of Partha (Arjuna). Krishna was only a charioteer, but the owner was Partha. In the same way, when you develop purity of heart and sacred feelings, God will be your charioteer and take you on the right path. Therefore, choose God as your charioteer and lead an ideal life.

Service to others is service to God

About 90 years ago, a wealthy person named Wadia lived in Nanded, during the time of Shirdi Sai Baba. He wanted to visit Shirdi, and he sought the guidance of Das Ganu. He told him that he was quite well to do but had no children. He said, "What is the use of all my wealth when I have no children? Since I am going to Shirdi for the first time, please tell me how I should go." In the same village, there lived a kind-hearted Muslim, whom people used to call, Moulisaheb. He worked as a coolie and led a very hard but ideal life. He spoke good and kind words to everyone and advised them to lead an ideal life. He himself first practised whatever he told others to follow.

Once he was not able to find any work for many days and had no food to eat. Consequently, he became very weak. Nobody came to help him.

One day when he was lying on the pavement, this wealthy person, Wadia, saw him in that pitiable condition. After coming to know that he had had no food for many days, Wadia told the owner of a hotel to give him food, for which he would make payment. Moulisaheb thanked Wadia and expressed his gratitude to God. He said, God is great and is the refuge of the forlorn.

God Is Your Sole Refuge Wherever You May Be,
In A Forest, In The Sky, In A City, In A Village,
On The Top Of A Mountain, Or In The Middle Of Deep Sea.
(Telugu Poem)

After getting guidance from Das Ganu, Wadia visited Shirdi, along with his wife. When he went for Baba's darshan (sight of the Lord), Baba asked him to give five rupees as a tip (dakshina). Since he was a rich person, Wadia immediately started taking money out of his pocket. He was wearing a long coat, which had big pockets.

Those days there were no five-rupee or two-rupee or one-rupee notes. Only coins were in vogue. When he offered these coins worth five rupees to Baba, Baba said, "Wadia! Now I don't need five rupees from you. Give me only one

rupee and two annas, because you have already given me three rupees and fourteen annas." Wadia could not understand what Baba was saying. He thought, "People speak very highly of Baba, but is he really a great man or only a madcap? When did I come to Shirdi before? This is the first time I am meeting him. Then, how can he say that he has already received three rupees and fourteen annas from me? How is it possible? Anyhow, I had his darshan." Thinking thus, he offered one rupee and two annas to Baba and left for Nanded.

The next day, Das Ganu came to meet him and asked, "You went to Shirdi, isn't it? What happened there?" Wadia was not satisfied after meeting Baba. He told Das Ganu, "Baba didn't appear to me like a great man. Rather, he looked like a madcap. However, there may be some divine power even in a madcap. But I don't hold him in high esteem." Das Ganu asked him to narrate what had happened. Wadia said, "As soon as I met Baba, he asked for five rupees as dakshina. I offered him five rupees, and he said that I had already given him three rupees and fourteen annas, so I should give him only one rupee and two annas. I had not seen Baba before. Why did he say this?" Das Ganu was a great devotee of Baba. He thought about the matter and said to himself, "Baba doessn't utter anything without meaning. He is present everywhere and in all beings. If Baba said this, there must be a reason for it." He told Wadia, "You are mistaken. There may be some defect in you, but there can be no defect in Baba." Das Ganu asked Wadia, "Have you given any money or performed any act of charity during this time?" Wadia said, "While I was going in a tonga three days prior to my visit to Shirdi, I happened to meet Moulisaheb, who was lying on a pavement in a pitiable condition because he was without food for many days. I instructed the owner of a hotel to give him food, for which I would make the payment." "How much did you pay?" asked Das Ganu.

Wadia sent a servant to the hotel and found that the total bill was three rupees and fourteen annas. Then Das Ganu said, "Look here, those three rupees and fourteen annas you paid only to Baba and not to anyone else. Whomever you serve, it amounts to serving Baba. Nothing happens without his Will."

Not Even A Blade Of Grass Will Move Without Divine Will.
Why To Say This Or That?
God Pervades Everything From An Ant To Brahma.
People Who Do Not Realise This Truth Get Carried Away By Their Pride Of Intelligence And Knowledge.
But No One, However Great They May Be, Knows What Lies Ahead For Them In Future.
(Telugu Poem)

How can you say what is going to happen in the next moment? Everything is the divine play of God. God is present in all. Whomever you serve, it amounts to serving God. This is the main principle of Indian culture. All religions vouchsafe this truth.

Das Ganu told Wadia, "You paid three rupees and fourteen annas to Moulisaheb, and that amount reached Baba. That is why Baba accepted only one rupee and two annas from you. The stories of God are so wonderful and mysterious! Therefore, do not form wrong notions about Baba." Wadia was surprised to hear all this. "Baba's calculation is correct and perfect. It is my lack of intelligence that I did not realise his greatness", he thought to himself.

Next day, Wadia and his wife set out for Shirdi again, taking Das Ganu with them. There is always some delay when women accompany you. Before Wadia and his wife reached there, Das Ganu went ahead and met Baba.

Baba asked Das Ganu, "What did Wadia say? How much money did he give to Moulisaheb?" By this time, Wadia reached there and heard all this conversation between Das Ganu and Baba. Realising the omniscience of Baba, he fell at his feet and sought his forgiveness.

Being a rich man, he had taken a basketful of fruits to offer to Baba, which included some bananas. Baba took out four bananas from the basket, called to Wadia's wife, and gave the bananas to her. When Baba offered these bananas to her, she took them in the loose end of her sari. Baba told her, "Eat all these bananas; do not give them to anyone else. You will have four sons."

Prior to coming to Baba, Wadia had gone to many mendicants (sadhus), renunciants (sanyasis), and astrologers. The astrologers were happy to find a rich client like Wadia and extracted a lot of money from him. They told him all sorts of things, such as this planet or that planet was not favourable to him. But none of their predictions came true. Ultimately, he came to Baba and received his blessings.

As foretold by Baba, next year Wadia was blessed with a very chubby son. Wadia and his wife brought the child to Shirdi and placed him at the feet of Baba.

Follow the principles of Indian culture

It is not possible for anyone to know the ways of God. Nobody can say when, where, and how anything will happen.

Having attained human birth, you should live like a human being. Then, God Himself will acknowledge your merit. For this, your mind should be clean and pure like a mirror. A brass vessel makes more sound than one of gold. Be like gold. Never resort to ostentation. Aspire for true happiness. Do not become an artificial human being. Be a 'heartful' person. Then you will attain everything in life.

Students!

Due to the effect of your age, you may sometimes make mistakes. Once you correct your mistake, take care not to repeat it. Don't go on repeating the same mistake all your life.

Sometimes, you commit a mistake unknowingly. Once you come to realise your mistake, do not repeat it. Be aware of what you are doing. Watch your steps and worship with proper understanding. See what is in front of you, whether it is a thorn, a stone, or cow dung, before you take the next step. Do not make any mistake out of your ignorance.

Saint Thyagaraja also said, "Oh mind, contemplate on the Name of Rama with proper understanding." He said that one should chant the Name of God with awareness and understanding.

Do not repeat the Name of God mechanically, like a tape recorder or a gramophone. Recite His Name wholeheartedly with total awareness. Chant the divine Name from the bottom of your heart and not merely from your lips. Then you will become pure gold.

Practise what you preach, and preach only what you practise. This is the fundamental principle of purity. When you develop such purity at a young age, your future path will become a royal road and a bed of roses.

Students!

Do not give scope to differences based on caste and religion. Consider everyone as your own. All are your brothers and sisters. Follow the principle of Brotherhood of Man and Fatherhood of God. Help Ever, Hurt Never. This is the touchstone of Indian culture.

When you lead such a sacred life, you will set an ideal not only to Bharat (India) but also to all other countries of the world. I bless you that you lead a sacred life and be like gold.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahi...")

62. Lack of Values is the Cause of Violence in the World

Date: 11 July 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, September 2011.

Students!

Mankind today is in a state of great confusion. The word 'God' is interpreted in many ways. According to one of the interpretations, God is one who transcends time.

God signifies Light

The word God, in reality, signifies light, which is present in all beings. Our ancients described God as the source of light, effulgence, and radiance. Light changes into darkness and darkness changes into light. Both light and darkness cannot exist at the same time, at the same place. Light is the abhava (absence) of darkness and darkness is the absence of light. Abhava means non-existence and bhava signifies existence. Light signifies knowledge and darkness denotes ignorance.

The word 'bhava' has many meanings. One of them is the feeling with which you pray to God. Accordingly, prayer is of four types: bhava prarthana (praying to God wholeheartedly), leela prarthana (extolling His divine play), guna prarthana (describing His attributes) and sankirtana prarthana (singing His divine Name). One can experience Divinity by following any of these four paths. It is the heart that is the source of all these four types of prayer.

God Does Not Exist In A Foreign Land; He Is In You.
Sin Is Not Elsewhere; It Is There Where A Wrong Action Is Committed.
(Telugu Poem)

Neither merit nor sin exists in a foreign land. They are within you. Everything is present in the human body. The Atma that is present in deha (human body) is called Dehi (indweller). Similarly, it is called Sariri (indweller) because it is present in sarira (body). It also has the name Kshetrajna (knower of the field) as it resides in kshetra (body).

Deho Devalaya Proktho Jivo Deva Sanathana
(The Body Is A Temple And The Indweller Is God).

Deha is Devalaya and Jiva is Deva.

Try to understand the difference between jiva and Deva. Body is the basis of jiva whereas the mind and the Atma are the basis of Deva. To say this in simple terms, one who vacillates is jiva and one who is steady is Deva. God is always steady. Slow and steady wins the race. One should always be steady. That is the true sign of divinity. It is jiva who is unsteady and vacillates like the pendulum of a clock.

Asthiram Jivanam Loke, Asthiram Yauvanam Dhanam,
Asthiram Dara Putradi, Sathyam Kirti Dwayam Sthiram. (Sanskrit Verse)
Life In The World Is Impermanent. So Are Youth And Wealth.
Wife And Children Are Also Not Permanent. Only Truth And Good Name Are Permanent)

Everything Worldly is Temporary

Human body, its different stages, worldly objects, happiness, and sorrow - all are ephemeral. Youth is also temporary. It is not there in the beginning and will not exist later. It comes and goes in the middle like a passing cloud. Similarly, how long does money stay with us? It flows away like running water

under the feet.

Suppose, you have a hundred-rupee note, and you say proudly, "This is my hundred-rupee note." Then the hundred-rupee note will laugh at you and say, "Oh madcap! How long can I remain with you? Just go to the bazar and buy something. Immediately, I will leave you. I am not going to be with you forever. I have seen many people like you. My own form is also impaired, since I have been handled by many people." All forms are subject to change. Even the form of a hard substance like stone will undergo change with usage. How small is an ant! But, if you watch carefully, you will see that ants will leave a trail behind even on a hard surface if they continuously keep crawling on it in a row. When a hard substance like stone can lose its form, what can be said of a currency note that is made of paper!

The next line of the verse is Asthiram dara putradi ..., meaning your wife and children are also temporary. When did your children come? Did they come with you at the time of your birth? No. Prior to birth, you had no children, and after death, they will not be there. Similarly, prior to marriage, you had no wife, and after death, she will not be there. Only after your marriage, do you say, "She is my wife." Likewise, only after the birth of your son do you say, "He is my son." Before your marriage, whom did you consider as your wife and son? Nobody.

Therefore, it is said, Asthiram dara putradi. However, two things are permanent in this world. Sathyam kirti dwayam sthiram (truth and good name are permanent). The good reputation of a man remains even after his death. Trikalabadhyam sathyam (truth remains unchanged in the three periods of time - past, present, and future). Truth is present before our birth, during our life, and even after our death. It is changeless. Ekameva adviteeyam sathyam (truth is one without a second).

Solitude means communion with God

What ultimately remains with a person? It is truth alone. God is the

embodiment of truth. Truth is God. Therefore, you should rely on truth. In fact, you are the embodiment of truth. It is not something new to be discovered afresh. Truth will manifest in you if you sit in deep silence and solitude.

What does the word 'solitude' mean? People have wrong notions about this word and misinterpret it in many ways. They think that sitting alone in a room with all doors and windows shut is solitude. This is not solitude but loneliness. Many others think that sitting under a tree in a forest or in a mountain cave is solitude. That also is not the true meaning of solitude.

Solitude means to be in communion with God, wherever you may be - in the bazar, in a meeting, or in the midst of a large number of people. Wherever you are, your mind should be focused on God without being distracted by worldly and family matters. Solitude is total communion between you and God. Nothing else should divert your attention from God. That is the real meaning of solitude. Whatever you may be doing or even traveling in a bus or train or plane, always keep your mind firmly fixed on God.

While doing meditation or contemplating on God, do not allow any other distraction to divert your mind. Then only can you have the experience of divine light.

In a forest, when branches of trees rub against each other, fire is produced. Likewise, when there is a constant communion between jiva and Deva, one can experience the light of love. There is a sea of difference between the love of God and that between husband and wife, parents and children, and brothers and sisters. Worldly love is momentary, ephemeral, transient, and unsteady. But the love between you and God is permanent, changeless, and without delusion.

One who is endowed with such true and eternal principle of love will attain all types of happiness, and everything will be under their control. That is why Thyagaraja said, "Oh Rama! If I have the power of Your grace, all the nine planets will be under my control." Purandaradasa also said, "What are the

eyes that do not see God for? What is the vision that is not focused on God for?" Use your senses to experience God Once, Lord Krishna appeared before Surdas as a young cowherd and asked him, "Sir, where are you going?" Then Surdas questioned Him, "My dear, may I know who you are?" Krishna replied, "I am a cowherd." Cowherd has two meanings. One meaning is the cowherd who takes cattle for grazing; the other is Gopala, the protector of cows. Gopala is another name of Krishna.

Lord Krishna asked him again, "Where are you going?" Surdas replied, "My dear, I am going to Dwaraka." Krishna said, "This is not the path that leads to Dwaraka. Come, I will show you." Krishna asked Surdas again, "Do you know who really I am?" "You yourself have told me that you are a cowherd", said Surdas. Krishna asked him again, "Do you know what type of a cowherd I am? I am Gopala. You are going all the way to Dwaraka to meet Gopala, who is right in front of you now. I will restore your eyesight so that you can see Me." Surdas said, "Oh Krishna! Though people have eyes, they have become verily blind, since they do not try to see Your auspicious form. In this world, how many people are there who have eyes! But what is the use? How many are able to see You? Nobody. In fact, it is enough if I have eyes that can see You.

"People have ears, but they are deaf to the melody of Your enchanting divine flute. Is there anyone who has heard Your divine flute? None at all.

"When I have God Himself with me, why should I crave for the abject worldly life? I do not want all this. When You are with me like Meru (mountain of gold), why should I crave for small coins? Oh Gopala! You are not an ordinary cowherd. I now know, You are Lord Krishna. I could visualise Your beautiful form on hearing Your sweet words." God always talks softly and sweetly.

Vachanam Madhuram, Nayanam Madhuram, Vadanam Madhuram, Madhuradhipathe Akhilam Madhuram.
His Speech, His Eyes And His Looks Are Sweet. He Is The Lord Of Sweetness And Sweetness Itself Too.

Live in world without worldly attachment

Everything about God is sweet. Tulsidas compared the feet, hands, eyes, and face of God to lotus. What is the reason? Where does a lotus grow? It is born in mud and grows on the surface of water. It is neither touched by mud in which it is born nor by water on which it floats. However, it cannot live even for a minute without either mud or water.

Similarly, you are born in the mud of past lives and are living in the world, which is like water. Just like a lotus which is not touched by mud or water, you should lead your life unaffected by your past lives and be detached from the world.

Do not be affected by the water of prapancha. What is prapancha? Pra means to manifest and pancha signifies five elements. Therefore, prapancha is the manifestation of the five elements. These five elements are there wherever you go, even if you go to the moon. You cannot exist without these five elements. You may live in this world, but you should not have any attachment with it.

Ladies apply collyrium to their eyes in such a way that it does not touch their eyeball. You eat many oily items like palav, kurma, etc., but your tongue does not become sticky. In the same way, though I live in this world, I am not touched by it. I am not affected by the dualities of happiness and sorrow, attachment and detachment, union and separation. My relationship with everyone is at the Atmic level and not at physical or mental level.

It is the mind of man that establishes his relationship with worldly objects. Therefore, turn your mind toward God. That is what is really meant by solitude.

Treasure love and righteousness in your heart

Where is God? He is everywhere. There is no place where God is not. Everything in this world is the manifestation of God. Therefore, there is no need to specially search for God.

God shines in us in the form of truth. Truth follows righteousness. Where there are truth and righteousness, there is love. Where there is love, there can be no violence. One who leads his life with truth, righteousness, love, and peace will not indulge in violence. Therefore, treasure sathya, dharma, santhi, prema, and ahimsa (truth, righteousness, peace, love and nonviolence) in your heart.

Let your tongue always speak truth, your hands perform righteous actions, and your heart experience love. Then there will be peace in your mind. Consequently, there will be no scope for violence in your life. In fact, where there are sathya, dharma, santhi, and prema there cannot be any violence. Banish violence even from your thoughts. It is due to the lack of values that there is so much violence in the world today.

First of all, develop love. When you have love, you will attain everything. Therefore, never give up love. I give prominence to love and righteousness in all My Discourses. I cannot give a Discourse without talking about these two. In fact, love and righteousness are verily My life breath. Whatever may be the subject of My Discourses, love and righteousness are common in all of them.

The main teaching of the Veda is Sathyam vada, dharmam chara (speak truth, practise righteousness). Man should implicitly follow these two in his daily life.

Students!

You study a number of books and specialise in various subjects. But how far are you able to treasure the principles of love and truth in your heart? Do perform seva (selfless service), but what sort of seva should you perform? Perform the seva that destroys your ego. There should be no place for ostentation in your seva.

Many devotees ask Me, "Swami, give me good intellect and strength to follow the right path." In My opinion, those who ask this are not devotees at all. You are endowed with good intellect, but you do not make use of it. This is not like a bank transaction where you give and take. Food is served to you on a plate, but how can your hunger be satiated unless you eat it? You will get strength only after you eat the food. But you are not eating. Consequently, you do not get strength and thus consider yourself weak and helpless.

Put into practice what you hear

Practise and experience all that is being taught to you. In what way are people putting these teachings into practice? People go to religious places to listen to discourses, hari katha, (stories of God), or bhagavata parayana (reverential reading). As long as they are listening to these, there is a feeling of detachment and renunciation in them. But, how long do those feelings of renunciation and detachment last? They disappear as soon as these discourses are over. They do not remain with them even till they reach their home.

What benefit can such type of people derive by listening to spiritual discourses? They merely listen but do not put into practice. You get the desired benefit only when you put into practice what you hear. You can know the taste of food, satiate your hunger, and get strength only when you eat the food. If you do not know the taste and do not have the strength, it only means you have not eaten the food.

What you hear, you should practise and assimilate. But due to the effect of Kali age (the age we are in), even attending spiritual meetings has become a fashion today. Everywhere there is fashion and no compassion! When you develop compassion, there will be no room for fashion. But today listening to spiritual talks itself has become a fashion. If someone asks you, "Where did you go?" you say, "I went to listen to the talk of so and so." If he asks you, "What happened there?" you say, "So much happened there." If he again asks you to tell him a little of what you heard, you say that nothing entered your

head. Then, why did you attend the meeting?

Once there was a businessman who used to attend talks on mythological texts daily. The preacher, in his talks, emphasised the importance of renunciation and exhorted the listeners to develop the spirit of renunciation. Ten years passed in this manner. Starting a special spiritual session for one week, the preacher once said to the businessman, "You should attend this spiritual session daily till its completion. Do not give any break. If you successfully complete this session, you will derive great merit." It so happened that the businessman had to go to another village on very urgent work. He asked the preacher whether he could send his son for the spiritual session in his place for one day. The preacher told him, "Yes, your son can come and attend the session." When the businessman went home, another thought came to his mind. "The preacher lays great emphasis on the spirit of renunciation in his talks. He says, the world is temporary, wealth and youth are also temporary. If my son listens to all this, he may develop the spirit of renunciation, give up everything, and leave home". As this doubt gripped his mind, he went to the preacher early in the morning next day and asked, "Sir, your talks are very good, but what will be my fate if my son becomes a renunciant and leaves home on hearing your talk?" The preacher said to him, "You have been listening to my talks for the last 10 years. How much spirit of renunciation have you developed? Will your son become a renunciant after listening to my talk for one day? It is not so easy to develop the spirit of renunciation." People listen to discourses for years together, but not even an iota of detachment or devotion takes root in them. As long as they hear the discourse, they are happy. But once they leave the venue of the discourse and cross the compound wall, they are back to square one.

What is the use of listening to discourses for such a long time? I have been giving discourses every day. I do not feel any strain while giving the discourses, but you feel a lot of fatigue while listening to them. Are you treasuring at least one teaching in your heart?

On the other hand, you ask Me, "Swami, I want this, I want that. Do this for me, do that for me." How can I do that? How can you expect to get liberation

without putting anything into practice? Are you not ashamed to ask Me like this? With what face do you ask? How much are you putting My teachings into practice?

First and foremost, try to understand this. You have been listening to My discourses for years together. But there is no check on your worldly pursuits; they go on increasing day by day. On top of it, you ask Me to do this and that. Do as I say. Then, I will do everything for you without your asking. But you are hero in asking and zero in practice!

The condition of devotees today is such that they are ever ready for food but never ready for work. They do not follow any instructions given to them. First of all, follow the instructions and try to put into practice at least one or two of them. Practice is very essential.

All the sacred texts like the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Bhagavata, the Quran, and the Bible are meant for practice and not merely for parayana. In fact, all the sacred texts of all religions are meant to be practised and not merely for studying. Practice is conspicuous by its absence today. Many people do merely religions of sacred texts. What is the use of merely doing the religions of the Ramayana or the Bhagavad Gita or Vishnu Sahasranama without practice? Such parayana is a futile exercise. What benefit can accrue from merely reading them unless you put them into practice? One teaspoon of cow's milk is more useful than barrels of donkey's milk. Therefore, practice is most important.

Do not indulge in too much talk. Lead a peaceful life. Do not develop unnecessary relationships. Never give up love. Help all those who need help. Help Ever, Hurt Never. It is enough if you put this principle into practice. Always talk softly and sweetly. Only then will your stay in the ashram, listening to discourses, and study of sacred texts be fruitful.

People live in the ashram but create problems for themselves and also for others. What is the use of their stay in the ashram? You come to the ashram because you want to get rid of all your troubles and worries. But people

develop all sorts of attachments after coming here. Ashram is the place where there should be no shram (problem). Therefore, if you are staying in the ashram, lead your life free from all problems. When I am giving discourses every day, I may repeat certain things. I do this so that you may contemplate on them and put into practice.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Rama Jayam Raghurama Jayam...")

63. Namasmarana is the Greatest Sadhana in the Kali Yuga

Date: 12 July 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, October 2011.

Oh Noble One! Just As A Powerful Army Is The Life Of A Fort,
Honour Is The Life Of A Woman, And Signature Is The Life Of A Promissory Note,
Truth Is The Life Of Speech.
(Telugu Poem)

Forgetting this principle amounts to forgetting humanness itself.

Students!

When you have to say something, speak according to the requirement of time and circumstances. Speak with humility in such a way that you do not hurt others. Never utter harsh words. Moreover, do not tell something untrue just to please someone. Whether others like it or not, adhere to truth in letter and spirit.

Speak with conviction. Only then will you be respected in society. Uphold the respect of individual, society, nation, and human race at large. Speech is the basis for all this. Consider speech as your life-breath.

Truth is the ornament of speech

Do you know what the tongue is given to you for? Is it to indulge in vain gossip? No, no, the tongue is given to you to speak truth. Truth is the ornament of speech just as charity is the ornament of hand. Good conduct is

the life-breath of man.

But people use their faculty of speech in an arbitrary way, utter falsehoods, and thereby lose respect in society.

What is the true ornament of man? Truth is the ornament of man. The scriptures say, Sathyam bruyath, priyam bruyath, na bruyath sathyamapriyam (speak truth, speak pleasantly, and do not speak unpalatable truth), Sathyam vada, dharmam chara (speak truth, practise righteousness). These two principles are the cornerstones of Indian culture. You should purify your hearts and refine yourselves by following these two principles.

Peace is the ornament of noble souls. Truth is the ornament of humanity. Bliss is the ornament of God. One can attain supreme happiness only in the contemplation of God. Worldly and physical happiness is momentary. It is not true happiness. Under the influence of pride of wealth and power, one takes to several evil ways. But wealth and power are just like passing clouds. Whether it is physical power or mental power or power of wealth, everything is temporary.

One May Have Physical Prowess And The Power Of Intelligence,
But One Will Come To Grief If One Lacks Divine Grace,
Karna Was A Great Warrior But What Was His Fate
Never Forget This Truth. (Telugu Poem)

Karna had physical power, power of intellect, and power of weapons. In fact, he was endowed with all powers. He was much superior to Arjuna in all these respects. Arjuna also did not possess the quality of generosity that Karna had. Karna would never go back on his word.

Though he was endowed with all virtues and the spirit of sacrifice, Karna became one of the four wicked Kauravas (Duryodhana, Dussasana, Sakuni, and Karna) because he could not go back on the promise given by him to

wicked Duryodhana.

Tell me your company, and I shall tell you what you are. Wicked qualities enter you when you associate yourself with wicked people. Similarly, when you are in good company, you imbibe good qualities. Coal shines like fire when it comes in contact with it. As is your company, so you become. As is the flour, so is the chapati. As is the food, so is the belch.

Desire and greed cause one's downfall

Students!

The wound caused by a fall may heal with time, but the wound caused by harsh words can never be healed. Consider truth as your life breath. When you speak to your parents, friends, and elders, make sure that your speech is suffused with truth.

Hanuman was the minister of Sugriva. He came to meet Rama and Lakshmana on the instructions of Sugriva. Rama was very much pleased with the soft and sweet manner of Hanuman's speech. He said to Lakshmana, "Dear brother, he is endowed with peace, virtues, and valour. His peace is reflected in his speech. His virtues are evident in the respectful manner in which he is conducting himself. His valour is obvious in the way he has come down from the top of the mountain Rishyamuka in the twinkling of an eye." One's good or bad qualities are revealed in one's speech. All that one experiences is the reaction, resound, and reflection of one's speech.

You all know, there is widespread prevalence of wickedness and injustice in the world today. All this is due to the influence of Kali Age (the age we are in). Man today is bogged down by desire and greed. He has unlimited desires.

There is nothing wrong in desiring things that are necessary for daily life. We need certain things in order to maintain the dignity and honour of our family. It is our duty to safeguard the honour and welfare of society. The honour of

society is the honour of the country.

First comes individual, then society, and thereafter nation. Therefore, students should first develop individual character. This imparts value and respect to an individual. Thereafter, you should uphold the honour of your family. In ancient times, people used to give great importance to the honour of the family in matrimonial alliances. But, today, nobody bothers about the character of the individual or the honour of the family. It is natural for man to have noble desires keeping in mind individual character, honour of the family and welfare of society.

Second, people today are obsessed with greed. It is not possible to say how many people have lost their lives because of their greed. Wherever we look today, virtues and friendship are not being valued; only money has become most important.

So many people accumulate enormous wealth. But where does all their wealth go? What are they doing with it? Do they spend it for any good cause or charitable purpose? Do they use it to provide education and health facilities to the poor? Nothing at all.

Were there not so many kings who accumulated wealth and earned great name and fame? Where are they now? They did not take with them even a fistful of sand when they departed from this world.

However, there is nothing wrong in earning money to meet our essential needs in our dayto-day life. You think the education that you acquire is meant only to earn money.

You May Boast Of Amassing Great Wealth, But You Cannot Attain Even An Iota Of Peace With It.
You May Boast Of High Education, But It Cannot Help You To Attain Even A Little Peace In This World.
(Telugu Poem)

This is the 'greatness' of modern education! It only promotes vain argumentation, which gives rise to enmity but not peace. Therefore, it is not good to indulge in argumentation.

One has to develop three P's to safeguard one's humanness: Purity, Patience, and Perseverance. These are the three essential human values. When you have purity, you will attain sathya and dharma and experience bliss by practising them. When you have patience, you will have righteous conduct and observe nonviolence. When you have perseverance, you will attain all the human values.

When there is love and righteousness in you, you will never resort to violence. One who has truth and peace will never feel agitated in any situation. Even if you have only one of these four human values, namely, sathya, dharma, santhi, and prema, you will certainly observe nonviolence. There is no need to make any special effort to develop nonviolence. It is enough if you have at least one of these four human qualities.

Due To The Absence Of Fear Of Sin And Love For God,
Humanness Has Declined In Human Beings.
This Is Detrimental To Universal Peace. (Telugu Poem)

One may be a simpleton without any intelligence or intellectual capabilities, but if one has fear of sin it is enough. You may have any amount of wealth, gold and worldly possessions but if you lack fear of sin, you can only be considered as an ignoramus.

Once Prahlada told his father, "Why do you kill innocent people just as you hunt wild animals in the forest? You are indulging in acts of violence in order to expand your kingdom. What do you gain by killing so many people? This is not what you are supposed to do. How can one, who has become a slave to inner enemies, conquer his external foes? You have many great enemies within you. What are they? They are kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada, and

matsarya (desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride and jealousy). Having surrendered to these six inner enemies, you are killing innocents outside. It is a great sin." First and foremost, kill your inner enemies like desire, anger, greed, etc. Only then can you develop fear of sin. What is the reason for the unrest prevailing in the country today? The reason is lack of fear of sin and love for God. There is unrest and agitation wherever you look, either in the forest or on the top of hills, either in the towns or in the villages.

All of you know, if there is only one bangle in the hand, it does not make any noise. But as soon as you have another bangle, they will start making noise. Similarly, wherever two people come together, there is unrest and agitation. Due to the impact of Kali Age, forbearance, sympathy, friendship, compassion, and kindness have become extinct. Everywhere, there is only selfishness and selfinterest.

Students today should take a pledge to work for the welfare of society and protection of the country at large. Then only can their education become worthwhile. You can attain peace only when you serve the country. You are born and brought up in society. The help and encouragement that you receive from society is responsible for your progress. Therefore, serve society and express your gratitude to it.

Help others to the extent possible

When you speak good words, you can win the trust of others. Emperor Bali said to his guru that there was no greater sin than going back on one's promise. He even disregarded the advice of his guru in order to adhere to truth. When Vamana asked Bali for three steps of land, his guru Sukracharya cautioned him, saying, "Oh Bali! He is not an ordinary person, but Lord Narayana himself. You will become a pauper if you give Him the three steps of land that He has asked for." Bali replied, "Swami, when God Himself has stretched His hand before me to beg, who am I to deny? I will certainly fulfil my promise. I don't care what my fate is. It is my great good fortune that my hand is above His hand. Can there be any greater good fortune for me than

this? I am prepared to do anything to attain this blessedness." Your honour lies in keeping up your word. Youth is like a passing cloud, which comes and goes. Neither is it there in the beginning nor will it last till the end. It comes and goes in the middle like running water under the feet. How long can it last? Do not be proud of your youth, which is so transient and temporary.

Keeping in view the future and welfare of society, develop unwavering vision and steady mind. Not only this, bring a good name to your parents. They work hard and bear all types of difficulties for your welfare and progress. Their only desire is that you study well, come up in life, and earn a good name. Therefore, you should make efforts to give them peace and happiness.

In spite of all his education, a foolish person will not know their true Self. What is all this modern education? It only gives bookish knowledge. You cannot earn good name with this type of education. You can earn a good name in society only through good actions. Try to alleviate the suffering of your fellowmen. Help others to the extent possible.

Just because Swami has told you to develop a spirit of sacrifice, do not go beyond your capacity. You cannot have more water than the capacity of your container. You can have only as much water as it can hold. If you want to have more water, you need a bigger container. That is to say, you should broaden your heart. Then you will have broad feelings.

Students!

Whenever any thought arises in you, use your power of discrimination and enquire whether it is good or bad, right or wrong. Only then should you act upon it. Do not act in haste. Haste makes waste, waste makes worry. So, do not be in a hurry. Take your time and enquire before doing anything. However, this does not mean that you should unnecessarily waste time. Time is God.

Today the situation in society is such that people try to misuse even the good actions of others. Even if you help them, they try to harm you. No doubt, one

should help even those that harm him.

There Is Nothing Great In Helping Those Who Have Helped You.
He Is A Noble One Who Helps Even Those Who Have Harmed Him.
(Telugu Poem)

But you must use your discrimination while helping others. Think to what extent you can help such people. I have told this story earlier also. When Mohammad Ghori attacked Prithvi Raj, he was completely defeated by him. But Prithvi Raj, being a large-hearted ruler, forgave him and let him go scot free. Later, Mohammad Ghori again attacked Prithvi Raj and defeated him. Mohammad Ghori made Prithvi Raj captive and blinded him. He did not have gratitude toward Prithvi Raj, who had earlier allowed him to go back unharmed.

You should, therefore, be cautious in practising forgiveness while dealing with a cruel person. No doubt, forgiveness is a great virtue, but it will do more harm than good if it is practised with respect to an evil-minded person. You should forgive such a person once or at most twice. Do not forgive him every time he harms you, otherwise you will be put to danger.

Tips to control anger

Always have good feelings and good thoughts toward everyone. However, conduct yourself with great caution as per the demands of the time and situation. Learn to talk softly, sweetly in a pleasing manner. It is only for your own satisfaction and not for others. At times, you are overpowered by anger, which creates great agitation in your mind. But you should make efforts to calm it down. Do not act immediately in a fit of anger.

One With Anger Will Not Be Successful In Any Of Endeavours.
He Will Commit Sins And Will Be Ridiculed By One And All.

His own people will abandon him. He will lose all wealth and respect. His anger will ruin him completely. (Telugu Poem) Students!

There are certain tips to bring your anger under control. The first step is to leave the place as soon as anger arises in you and drink a cup of cold water. Go inside and look at your face in a mirror. You will realise how ugly and distorted your face looks when you are angry. You will look like Surpanakha. Then you will be disgusted with your own anger and say to yourself, "Fie on me. I should never give scope to anger." Even after all this, if your anger does not subside, go to the bathroom at once, open the tap and put a bucket underneath. As the water starts pouring into the bucket, take that sound as sruti (pitch) and start singing the Divine Name. All your sins are washed away when you sing bhajans. You can also take a quick walk for a while. All these tips act like medicines and bring your anger under control.

Our ancients used to develop their natural human qualities by following such methods. At that time, there were no pills to reduce anxiety and calm down the mind. Today, as soon as you are in the grip of anxiety, the doctor gives you a pill. These pills act like sedatives and put you to sleep. Do not form the habit of taking such pills.

What is the pill that we are supposed to take?

Harer Nama Harer Nama Harer Namaiva Kevalam, Kalau Nastyeva Nastyeva Nastyeva Gathiranyatha (chanting of the Divine Name is the only path to liberation in this Age of Kali). Chanting the Divine Name is most important in this Kali Age. There is no better medicine than namasmarana (remembrance or repetition of the name of God). Therefore, always chant the Divine Name. Chanting of Divine Name will do away with all your troubles and unrest and confer peace and bliss on you.

What is the greatest power in this Kali Age?

Oh Noble One!
There Is No Yuga Like Kali Yuga Because One Can Attain Liberation In This Yuga Merely By Chanting The Divine Name.
(Sanskrit Verse)

Chant the Divine Name and attain bliss

There is nothing greater than the chanting of the Divine Name in this Kali Age. This is the best medicine for all worldly ills. Meditation, sacrifice, and worship) are prescribed as the primary means of liberation in the Krita, Treta and Dwapara Yugas, respectively. Namasmarana (remembrance of the name) is the easiest path to liberation in this Kali Yuga.

Therefore, people born in this yuga are more fortunate than those that lived in the other three yuga.

But, unfortunately, people today are not able to follow such an easy path. You are unable to sit steadily even for a couple of minutes. Then what sort of penance can you perform? It is impossible. Therefore, take refuge in namasmarana. There is no greater spiritual discipline (sadhana) than this.

When you continuously sing the Divine Name, it drives away all your evil qualities. You yourself can see how blissful you become when you sing the Divine Name. That is why God is described as Ganalola and Ganapriya (lover of music).

Sage Narada always sings the Divine Name of Lord Narayana. This is his main task. The Lord becomes ecstatic listening to his singing. There is so much bliss in singing. It captivates one's heart so that one is lost in ecstasy. That is why singing is considered most valuable.

One may not know the nuances of music like sruti, laya, raga, and tala (pitch, rhythm, tune, and beat), but one should sing wholeheartedly with feeling.

There are three ways to utter the Divine Name. You can pray in words, "Oh Rama, please protect me" or the same can be said in the form of a poem also. However, they are not very pleasing to hear. But when you express the same prayer in the form of a song, it directly enters the heart, because there is so much of sweetness and bliss in singing. That is why Narada continuously sings the Divine Name, "Narayana, Narayana..." Once, Sage Narada approached Lord Narayana and prayed to Him to explain the efficacy of Rama Nama (repetition of the name Rama). "Narada! Look, there is a parrot on the tree. Go and ask the parrot to chant Rama Nama once," said Narayana. Obeying His command, Narada went to the parrot and asked it to chant the Name of Rama. The moment the parrot heard the Divine Name of Rama, it dropped down dead from the tree.

Narada went back to Narayana and said, "Oh Lord! As per Your command, when I asked the parrot to chant Rama Nama, it breathed its last." Narayana said, "Oh Narada! Do not worry about the death of the parrot. Just now, a cow has given birth to a calf. Go and ask the calf to chant the Name of Rama." Narada was afraid lest the calf should also meet the fate of the parrot. However, obeying the command of Narayana, he asked the calf to chant the Divine Name of Rama. As soon as the newborn calf heard the Name of Rama, it also dropped down dead.

When Narada informed Narayana, He again commanded him to go to the palace of a king who was blessed with a son and ask the prince to chant the Divine Name of Rama. Narada was fear-stricken, but Narayana insisted that Narada obey His command. Narada went to the palace and asked the newly-born prince to chant Rama Nama once. The prince saluted Sage Narada and informed him that by the mere listening to Rama Nama just once, he was transformed from a parrot to a calf and from a calf to a human being as a prince. He expressed his gratitude to Sage Narada for initiating him into Rama Nama. Thus, the Divine Name confers human birth, which is considered a rare gift.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare ...")

64. Hold on to Truth Under All Circumstances

Date: 13 July 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, November 2011.

Students!

Today, jealousy and ego have become prevalent without any limit in the entire world. If one students gets first class, the others become jealous of him. Similarly, if somebody is healthy and happy, others feel jealous of him. A pauper feels jealous of a wealthy person. The same can be said of birds and animals also. Cranes make fun of swans. The melodious singing of a cuckoo is like cacophony to crows.

Worldly people are like crows. Therefore, people who are on the path of truth should not bother about what others say; they should make efforts to lead their life on the righteous path.

Do not get perturbed by others' criticism

Without bothering about the barking of dogs, the elephant continues to move forward majestically. Where is the elephant and where are the dogs! There can be no comparison between the two. Likewise, a cuckoo bird continues to sing melodiously without bothering about the cawing of crows. Does it stop singing just because the crows are cawing at it? No.

In the same manner, people may feel jealous of your goodness, progress, well-being, and purity, but you should continue to keep your heart pure without taking any notice of them.

You should not be dejected or depressed by their negative feelings and criticism.

If the feelings behind an action are good, it is bound to be fruitful. Therefore, make efforts to keep your own feelings pure and do not change them under the influence of others. Yad bhavam tad bhavathi (as are the feelings, so is the result). Whatever the nature of your action, you will have the fruit accordingly.

God is concerned with your inner feelings and not with your outward show. But worldly people see only your outward actions and may make fun of you. God is bhava priya (lover of pure feelings). He is pleased with you if your inner feelings are pure. You have to keep your feelings pure in order to realise Divinity, which is all-pervasive. All your actions depend on your feelings. They are the reflections of your inner being. Whatever you see in the external world is nothing but the reaction, reflection, and resound of your inner feelings. Therefore, you have to make proper use of your body, time, and energy in order to purify your feelings.

Leave worldly feelings and develop divine feelings

People today undertake various types of sadhana (spiritual practices). What is the meaning of sadhana? Is it to perform japa (chanting of God's Name), dhyana (meditation), or bhajan (devotional singing)? All these are mere devotional activities. True sadhana lies in giving up abhava (defects) and anatma bhava (feelings of non-self).

Perform worldly activities with a sense of detachment. Focus on Kshetrajna (the knower of the field) and not on kshetra (field). That is to say, you give up worldly feelings and develop divine feelings. Leave the path of pravritti (worldliness) and proceed on the path of nivritti (spirituality). This is the real sadhana.

Seeing, hearing, thinking, and getting attached to persons and things are worldly activities. You should transcend all this. That is the attribute of nivritti. Make efforts to understand the nature of nivritti. What is the source of nivritti? I have told this to our students on many occasions.

Aham originates from the Atma. Aham means 'I'. This is the first name of God. Every human being utters this letter 'I' in their worldly pursuits. It is from this Aham that the mind is born. Speech is born out of the mind. Therefore, Aham is the son of the Atma, mind is the grandson, and speech is the great grandson. All these belong to the same family of the Atma.

They have only one property: Sat-ChitAnanda (Existence, Knowledge, Bliss). All three, the Aham, mind, and speech, are endowed with Sat-Chit-Ananda. In fact, SatChit-Ananda is all-pervasive.

Sarvatah Panipadam Tat Sarvathokshi Siromukham, Sarvatah Srutimalloke Sarvamavruthya Tishthati (With hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth, and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe). Wherever you look, you find this principle of Sat-ChitAnanda. This is the attribute of God.

When you say God is attributeless, wherefrom does this Sat-Chit-Ananda come?

Just as fire has three attributes, namely, redness, power to burn, and heat, God also has these attributes: Sat, Chit, and Ananda.

Sat is that which exists forever. It is steady, changeless, pure, and selfless. Such is the principle of Sat.

Then comes Chit. It means awareness or consciousness.

Wherefrom does Ananda originate? The combination of Sat and Chit is Ananda. That is why everyone aspires for happiness from birth to death.

Students are happy when they pass their examinations. But this happiness is short-lived. They want to attain higher levels. Even after attaining higher degrees, they are not happy; they want to secure a job. But even after getting a job, they are not happy. They jump from one desire to another all their life. There is no end to their desires. Since they entertain limitless desires, they are unable to attain everlasting happiness.

Faith and love are essential on the spiritual path

Worldly happiness is momentary. It is not the quality of a human being to aspire for such happiness.

Ma Kuru Dhana Jana Yauvana Garvam,
Harathi Nimeshath Kalah Sarvam.
Do Not Be Proud Of Your Wealth, Progeny And Youth;
The Tide Of Time May Destroy Them In A Moment.

All these change and perish in a short time, but you consider all these to be permanent and waste your life in their pursuit.

All this is just like a dream. The mansions and palatial buildings that you see in a dream are not there when you wake up. Similarly, what you see in your waking state is not there in your dream state. One is the night dream, the other is the day dream. Both are dreams, essentially. But you are present in both. Therefore, you are omnipresent.

Such eternal principle is within you and not outside. The happiness that you get from worldly objects, matters, and individuals is not permanent. All these are like passing clouds. But you consider them to be permanent and undergo a lot of hardship to possess them.

You have to take to the path of spirituality to understand truth. Thousands take to the spiritual path and perform many sadhanas (spiritual practices), but how many are able to experience bliss? They undertake spiritual practices for a number of years and grow old in the process. Ultimately, they leave their mortal coil without achieving any result.

What is the reason? The reason is that they do not have firm faith. Moreover, they have no love in their heart. I have told you many times that there are

two main principles that support the ladder of spirituality. The principle of love supports it at the base and faith at the top. Only when you have both love and faith can you climb this ladder of spirituality and attain the goal of your life. Today, some people have love but no faith and others have faith but no love. Only faith is not enough; love is also very essential. Faith and love are closely related to each other.

Today, the hearts of many spiritual seekers are full of negative thoughts. How, then, can they attain positive results? 2312First of all, they should get rid of their negative thoughts.

One Can Fill An Empty Head With Anything,
But Is It Possible To Put Something In A Head That Is Already Full?
How Can It Be Filled With Sacred Feelings Unless It Is Emptied In The First Instance?
(Telugu Poem)

Everybody is bound to leave this world some day or the other. The human body is not permanent. Even the fruits of our actions are temporary, like passing clouds. Why should you suffer so much hardship for these temporary fruits?

People do not make efforts to attain God, who is true and eternal. They vigorously pursue education for bhukti (worldly possessions) and not for mukthi (liberation). What can this worldly education give us? It can give us only worldly gains, power, and position.

But there are only two things that you should uphold in this life, one is truth, and the other is good reputation.

Asthiram Jivanam Loke, Asthiram Yauvanam Dhanam,
Asthiram Dara Putradi, Sathyam Kirti Dwayam Sthiram.
(Sanskrit Verse)
Life In The World Is Impermanent.

So Are Youth And Wealth.
Wife And Children Are Also Not Permanent.
Only Truth And Good Name Are Permanent.

Realise unity in diversity

You should earn a good name. How is it possible? It is possible only by following the path of truth. You cannot earn this in any other way. Truth is the source of good reputation of man. In fact, truth is God; it is all-pervasive. Truth is our very life and the source of our sustenance. That is why our ancient culture teaches, Sathyam bruyath, priyam bruyath, na bruyath sathyamapriyam (speak truth, speak pleasantly and do not speak unpalatable truth). Sathyam vada, dharmam chara (speak truth, practise righteousness).

Make truth and righteousness the basis of your life. If you want to earn a good name in this physical world, your actions should also be good.

The world will respect you as long as you have wealth, gold, and other worldly possessions. Actually, what is it that people respect you for? You are deluded to think that they respect you. No, no. They do not respect you but they respect your wealth, high position, power, and intellectual capabilities.

Earn respect by your good character. Character alone confers good reputation. You should have both individual character and national character. First of all, one should have individual character. How can anybody have national character without individual character? If you have national character, you will be remembered as a good person in history.

What is the real meaning of history? His story is history, which includes the stories of Avatars like Rama and Krishna. You cannot write your own story and call it history. In fact, it would be an insult to history itself. The story of God is true history. That which describes the divine attributes of the Avatars and ideals set by them is true history.

You should not remain a mere mortal. You should become immortal by earning a place in history. You should not covet worldly gains, which are ephemeral like passing clouds. Are there not many wealthy and highly educated intellectuals in this world? But these so-called intellectuals see only diversity in unity. The world needs virtuous people who see unity in diversity and not pseudo intellectuals who divide unity into diversity. Only those who see unity in diversity find high place in history. Therefore, understand the principle of unity in diversity.

Names and forms may vary, but the principle of Divinity is one and the same in all. That principle of Divinity is truth. How do we attain this truth? It cannot be learnt from a teacher or a book. It cannot be purchased in the market, nor can it be gifted to you by a friend. It has to be acquired from your own practical life. Keep in view this principle of truth as your goal every moment of your life. That is true humanness. The proper study of humanity is the human being.

Humanness lies in the unity of thought, word, and deed (trikarana suddhi), but how many people have it today? How many are able to experience unity? Year after year, they perform spiritual practices. They do the parayana (ceremonial study) of many sacred texts like the Ramayana, the Bhagavata, and the Mahabharata. But what is the use? Do they derive any benefit out of it?

Put your hand on your heart and ask yourself. Then you will be able to know the truth. Have you made even a little spiritual progress? No, not at all. What is the use of leading such a life for any length of time? Your heart is your witness. Then what is the use of doing all these spiritual practices, participating in congregations, studying sacred texts, and performing prayers and worship? All these endeavours are like roasted grains, which get blown away with a gust of wind. This is not what you should attain. When you make real spiritual progress, your heart will acknowledge it. You should strive for that.

Protect sathya and dharma

Students!

Today, all your actions have become artificial. Whatever you do, do it wholeheartedly. Art is outside and heart is inside. Therefore, follow your heart. There is no point in following others.

Munde munde mathir bhinnah (opinions vary from person to person). There are as many opinions as there are heads. Even the actions and their results vary from person to person. Such being the case, why do you imitate others? Follow the dictates of your heart.

Imitation is human and creation is divine. Creation comes from your heart. When you follow your heart, all your doubts will be dispelled. You will move forward on the spiritual path in spite of any number of hurdles and obstacles and ultimately realise truth. This is what is called "sathya smriti" (remembering truth).

Immerse yourselves in the vibrations of truth. These vibrations are present everywhere, but you are not able to visualise them. Just because you are unable to see them, you cannot deny their existence. There is air all around us, but our eyes cannot see it. Can we deny its existence? Similarly, divine vibrations are present in you, with you, above you, below you, and around you. You have to make efforts to understand this divine principle of the Atma.

Many people perform spiritual practices and listen to the stories of noble souls in congregations, but they do not retain anything in their heart. Just as we exhale the air that we inhale, we leave out everything that we hear. You should imbibe all that is divine and cast off all that is worldly.

People today perform spiritual practices but they do not get any real Ananda (Bliss) out of them. The reason is their worldly attachment. Worldly possessions are temporary. You have to ultimately leave all your worldly possessions. That which will always remain with you, in you, around you and

protect you is only truth. This is the sacred path that you should follow.

There is no point in chanting 'Rama, Rama' mechanically. You repeat it only with your lips; it does not come from your heart. Even a tape recorder or a gramophone record can repeat the divine Name endlessly. What benefit do they derive out of it?

Many people talk about free will, free will, free will. Nobody has free will except God. You may say that you have free will, but actually you do not have it.

You should use your will power and connect your heart to God, not the physical heart, but spiritual heart. Wherever you are and whatever you may do, contemplate on God as naturally as you inhale and exhale your breath. This process of inhalation and exhalation continues when you are sleeping, working, or even quarrelling with others. This is a natural process, and nothing can come in its way. Similarly, you should contemplate on Divinity in any form continuously, whatever you may be doing. Strive to follow this path, which is ever true and eternal.

Students!

What you have to develop today is sathya and dharma (truth and righteousness). No special efforts are needed to protect this world. In fact, no individual can protect it. It is only sathya and dharma that protect this world. Therefore, what you have to protect is sathya and dharma. If you protect sathya and dharma, they will in turn protect the world. In fact, you should consider sathya and dharma as your very life breath.

Dharmayeva hatho hanthi, dharmo rakshati rakshitah (If you destroy dharma, you will be destroyed by dharma. Similarly, if you protect dharma, you will be protected by dharma.) But today people do not know what is sathya and dharma.

Trikalabadhyam sathyam (Truth remains unchanged in the three periods of

time - past, present, and future). Truth does not change. That which changes from time to time is only nijam (worldly truth). In the morning, it is yoga (spirituality), during the day it is bhoga (indulgence) and at night it is roga (disease). Such is the nature of worldly truth. It is no truth at all.

Get rid of desire, anger, and greed

The Ramayana is the story of the battle between Rama and Ravana. Ravana had only one defect in him and that was kama (desire), which brought about his ruination. Similarly, the battle of the Mahabharata was fought on account of the lobha (greed) of Duryodhana, which led to his downfall. Likewise, the Bhagavata describes the story of Hiranyakasipu, who met his doom due to his wicked quality of anger. Thus, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, and the Bhagavata teach us that even if there is one wicked quality in an individual, it causes enormous destruction and leads to his ruination.

Then, what can be said of man's fate today who has got all the three wicked qualities, namely, kama, krodha, and lobha (desire, anger, and greed)? These three wicked qualities are the main obstacles on the Godward path. In fact, as the Gita declares, these are verily the three main gates that lead to hell. One who has these wicked qualities is bound to perish.

Therefore, first of all, make efforts to get rid of these evil qualities. Only then will your life become worthwhile and will you attain good reputation. Otherwise, you will be put to disrepute.

From outside, a fig fruit may appear to be beautiful but when you open it, you may find it full of insects. Likewise, man today is shining outwardly. He acts as if he is happy. It is just like cinema acting. This is not true happiness. True happiness is that which comes from your heart. That is real fulfilment and bliss. That is your true property.

Who is the poorest man in this world? He who has many desires is the poorest man. Who is the richest man in this world? He who has much satisfaction is

the richest man. Only the one who has satisfaction can attain peace.

But who has satisfaction today? None, in fact. People have trishna (craving), but not trupti (satisfaction). Their desires go on increasing every moment. People should leave trishna and follow Krishna. When one follows Krishna, one can attain everything. Similarly, you will be free from difficulties when you follow Rama. Therefore, chant the name of the Lord and obey His command.

But how far are you following the command of the Lord? Rama set the ideal of obedience to the command of his father. But, how many today follow the command of their parents? Rama was the embodiment of truth. But what people follow today is only untruth. They perform Sathya Narayana Vrata once a year, but the rest of the year they resort to only asathya (untruth). This is not correct.

Sarvada sarva kaleshu sarvatra Hari chintanam (everywhere, at all times, under all circumstances contemplate on God). People do not make even a little effort to follow truth. Whenever they open their mouth, only untruth comes out of it. They even do not try to know what sathya (truth) is.

Man is the embodiment of Sat-ChitAnanda

Students!

Never give up truth under any circumstances. Uphold it even at the risk of your life. Sathya is in you, with you, around you, and it will protect you just as the eyelids protect the eyes.

Harishchandra earned the title Sathya Harishchandra by uncompromisingly adhering to truth. How many sufferings he had to undergo and how many difficulties he had to bear! He was even forced to sell his wife and son. He lost his kingdom and became a keeper of the cremation ground. In spite of all this, he was unnerved and unperturbed. He firmly held on to truth. Ultimately, God Himself manifested before him and restored everything he had lost. Besides,

He conferred upon him the title of Sathya Harishchandra.

The Vedas declare, Srunvantu viswe amrithasya putrah (Oh the children of immortality! Listen). Man has to earn this title of Amritha Putra (son of immortality). You are Amritha Putra and not Anritha Putra (son of falsehood). You are born to truth and not to untruth. God is the embodiment of truth and all are His progeny.

Just as water bubbles originate from water, all human beings originate from the ocean of SatChit-Ananda (Being-A wareness-Bliss). All are embodiments of Sat-Chit-Ananda. Everyone should understand this truth. You are human only in form, but you are essentially the embodiment of Sat-Chit-Ananda.

When you have such feelings firmly rooted in your heart, how blissful you will be! The feelings should not be artificial. These should be the natural feelings of your heart. You should have the firm conviction, "I am the embodiment of Sat-Chit-Ananda. The body, mind, and intellect may perish, but I am the immortal and eternal principle of oneness, that is, Atma." When you develop such firm feelings, you will attain God-realisation.

But people today do not have faith in such feelings. Then, how can they have Godrealisation? Therefore, have faith in yourself and faith in God. If you have these two, you can have everything. Be fearless. Don't be afraid of anything. Why should you be afraid when you have truth with you? Truth is not afraid of anything. That is why the Vedas declare, sathyam vada (speak truth), sathyameva jayate (truth alone triumphs).

You can attain the principle of truth only by following the path of love. All My Discourses begin with truth and love and also end with them. I may or may not speak on any other subject, but I always dwell upon sathya and prema. There is no Discourse in which I do not touch these two topics. The reason is that sathya and prema are verily the life of everyone. Both of these are like the inhalation and exhalation of our breath.

Just as man cannot live without inhalation and exhalation, he cannot live

without sathya and prema. Sathya symbolises the process of inhalation, 'So', and prema denotes the process of exhalation, 'Ham'. Sathya and prema both combine to form the immortal Soham mantra, which sustains our life.

Make God the resident of your heart

Students!

Develop truth and love from this young age itself. Never misuse sathya and prema. Adhere to sathya and follow the right path. But people distort sathya and prema because of their selfishness and self-interest.

Sathya Harishchandra could successfully uphold truth because the environment in those days was so pure. Nothing could deviate him from the path of truth. But the evil influence of Kali Age is such that even if Harishchandra were to come today, people would make him utter untruth. Many people make a firm resolve to speak truth but when it comes to practice they speak only untruth. This is due to the influence of Kali Yuga.

You should not fall a prey to this influence of Kali Yuga. Let your truth make Ananda (Bliss) overflow in your heart. It does not matter even if you do not perform any spiritual practice. It is enough if you develop truth and love.

Violence has no place where there is truth, righteousness, love, and peace. For those who are endowed with sathya, dharma, santhi, and prema, ahimsa (nonviolence) will manifest in them in full glory. Due to lack of these values today, the world is beset with violence. Wherever you see there is violence, be it in the house, outside in the bazar, in a train, in a bus, or in a plane.

Life today is full of fear, and man is caught in the maze of the world. The entire atmosphere is full of fear. People are full of fear even when they are in their house without venturing outside anywhere.

Which is the place where there is no fear? There is no fear in divine proximity.

There is no scope for fear when God is installed in you. Therefore, first and foremost make God the resident of your heart. You are endowed with hridaya (heart) so that you can install God in it and not give place to worldly thoughts. God is the indweller of your heart. Not only that. God has given His word,

Mad Bhakta Yatra Gayanti Tatra Tishthami Narada
(I Reside Where My Devotees Sing My Glories, Narada).
You Find Him Installed Wherever His Glory Is Sung.

Students should know the cultural heritage of India

Students!

Always speak truth under all circumstances. You may experience some difficulty in the beginning, but, truly speaking, it is very easy to speak truth. It does not involve any effort.

But if you want to speak untruth, you have to think a lot and plan so much. How much effort is required to speak untruth! Why do you take so much trouble to speak untruth? Speak truth, which does not involve any effort at all. Speaking truth is as easy as crushing the petals of a flower.

How easy it is to report things as they are! If someone were to ask you, "Who has done the translation?" you can at once reply, "Anil Kumar." But if you don't want to mention Anil Kumar's name, you have to do a lot of planning. Why do you undergo so much difficulty? Why don't you speak truth and report things as you see them?

Do you require a mirror to look at your bracelet? You can see your bracelet directly. But your eyes cannot see your Self. You need to have a third eye to see it. This third eye is the eye of love. You can see everything with the three eyes of truth, righteousness, and love.

The practice of yoga involves the three processes of puraka (inhalation), kumbhaka (retention) and rechaka (exhalation). There are three subtle nerve channels - ida, pingala, and sushumna - through which prana (life principle) flows in the body. Ida is the right nerve channel, pingala is the left nerve channel, and sushumna is in the centre.

When Mira sang the song, Chalore Mana Ganga Yamuna Teer ... (Oh mind! Go to the banks of Ganga and Yamuna), she actually referred to ida and pingala. Ganga and Yamuna are, in fact, within you. You don't need any ticket or a vehicle to go to their banks. It is very easy to go there. All that you need to do is to focus your vision on bhrumadhya (centre of the eyebrows). Then you will become free from all thoughts. That is where the third eye is. But you cannot see the third eye if you try to cut the centre of your forehead open. You will see only blood coming out it. The third eye is not to be found at the physical plane; it is at the subtle plane.

God is called Trinetra (one endowed with three eyes). What is the reason? Every person has two eyes, with which they can see the past and present but not the future. Only God can see the future also.

Our ancient Indian culture is replete with such inner meanings. How sacred, ideal, exalted, noble, and vibrant is our Indian culture! Students should try to know this. Unfortunately, they do not know what culture is.

Eliot did a lot of research on culture and ultimately declared, "Culture is a way of life." What does the way of life mean? This is the way that leads us to the goal of human life. It is our divine and sacred heritage.

Why are the Bharatiyas (Indians), who have got such rich cultural heritage, going astray? At least from today onward, make efforts to uphold your cultural heritage. That is possible only through love.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Prema Mudhita Mana Se Kaho ...")

65. Divine Proximity is the Real Wealth

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Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, December 2011.

When You Already Have A Lighted Lamp In Your House,
Where Is The Need For You To Go To The House Of Your Neighbour To Light The Lamp?
If You Forget God, It Amounts To Forgetting Yourself Because You Yourself Are God.
(Telugu Poem)

Students!

The culture of *Bharat* (India) affirms the allpervasiveness of God. In this world, there is no entity, living or non-living, that is not divine. From a stone to a diamond, from an ant to a lion, from a small bird to a mighty eagle, from a pebble to a mountain, everything is divine. That is why the *Bharatiyas* (Indians) have been worshipping trees, anthills, hillocks, stones, etc.

But today, people have forgotten this sacred tradition and consider such practices as acts of superstition. Modern students also condemn these ancient traditions, considering them as acts of foolishness.

The same Atmic Principle is present in all

In fact, there is a deep inner meaning associated with the sacred traditions of Bharat. The Bharatiyas do not limit the principle of love that God has bestowed on them to human beings alone. Rather, they share their love with all sentient beings and insentient objects. That is why Thyagaraja also sang:

Oh Rama! In Your Pure And Unsullied Form Of Love,
You Indwell All Beings From An Ant To Brahma As Also In Siva And Kesava.
Please Be My Protector Too.
(Telugu Poem)

Divinity is all-pervasive. Never doubt that God is here and not there. The Bharatiyas (Indians) worship even a small roadside stone. They worship even an anthill, in which poisonous snakes live. There is no object in this world that is not worshipped by the Bharatiyas. They worship every hillock, considering it as the sacred Govardhana mountain and every hillock as the Himalayas. In this manner, every hillock, anthill, tree, bird, and stone is the object of veneration for the Bharatiyas.

They feed the ants by providing food to them in the form of rice flour and look after them with love. In this way, this sacred land of Bharat earned the reputation as the land of compassion and penance. There can be no greater foolishness than considering such sacred traditions of Bharatiya culture as superstitions.

Many people in other countries believe that there is no greater principle than the principle of Brotherhood of Man. But there is a principle that is even superior to this principle of Brotherhood of Man, and that is *Ekatma bhava* (the Principle of Oneness). There is no greater foolishness than condemning the sacred culture of Bharat (India), which propounds the truth that the same Atmic principle is present in all.

It is this sacred land of Bharat that promotes the principle of unity in diversity and the principle of social justice. Since ancient times, Bharat has been sharing her spiritual wealth with other countries and promoting peace and prosperity in the world. In this modern age also, one should not forget such sacred traditions and divine feelings associated with the culture of Bharat. Only broadminded people can understand this truth. But to narrow-minded people, this will appear to be foolishness.

Follow the spiritual path

Where is the place where there is no God? What object is not permeated with Divinity? Everything is God.

Anoraneeyan Mahato Maheeyan
(Brahman is subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the vastest).

All objects in this world are a combination of atoms. Can any scientist in the world can deny the existence of Divinity in every atom of the universe? A scientist who denies this is no scientist at all. There is divine effulgence in every atom.

That is why Ramdas sang,

Anta Ramamayam Jagamanta Ramamayam
(the Rama principle permeates the entire universe).

There is no principle other than Rama principle in this world. The divine Name of Rama is that which confers bliss. Due to the defective modern system of education, students are forgetting this divine principle. Modern education is only for a living; it does not illumine the intellect.

Today There Is No Fear Of Sin. Wicked Deeds And Acts Of Cruelty Have
Become An Every-Day Occurrence. Their Magnitude Is Beyond All Description.
Devotion To The Lord Has Become Extinct. Oh Man!
Understand That You Can Attain Peace And Happiness Only By Chanting The Divine Name.

Oh Man! Do Not Feel Proud Of Your Education.
If You Do Not Offer Salutations To God And Do Not Think Of Him With Devotion,
All Your Education Will Become Useless.

Oh Man! You Struggle Hard In Life Merely For The Sake Of Filling Your Belly.
You Acquire Myriad Types Of Knowledge From Various Fields. Examine And Enquire
For Yourself What Great Happiness You Have Achieved By Spending All The Time From
Dawn To Dusk In Acquiring Worldly Knowledge And Earning Wealth While Forgetting God.
(Telugu Poem)

Jantunam nara janma durlabham
(of all living beings, human birth is the rarest).

Having attained such a precious human birth, is it what you are supposed to attain? Should you attain this type of mundane happiness in your life? No, no. Your purpose and goal of life are different. What you should achieve is true happiness.

But forgetting such an eternal and everlasting happiness, you are craving ephemeral and transient happiness. No doubt, secular education is required. I don't dispute that. Worldly education is for life here and spiritual education is for life hereafter. However, worldly education leads only to the path of *pravritti* (worldliness). What you should follow is the path of *nivritti* (spirituality).

All that is related to pravritti is momentary and transient, and all that is related to nivritti is true and eternal. That is why you should aim at attaining the happiness that comes from following the path of nivritti.

Books are no doubt full of knowledge. But what is the use if the head is filled with mud? How far is the bookish knowledge useful? If your head is filled with mud, even the knowledge contained in the books will become useless for you, like mud. What is the reason? The reason is association with wrong company. When you fill your *mastaka* (head) with knowledge contained in *pustaka* (book), your mastaka itself will become pustaka. What you need to acquire is

not knowledge of pustaka but the knowledge of mastaka. That is practical knowledge. It is possible to acquire practical knowledge only when you follow the path of spirituality.

Deservedness depends upon faith

Yad bhavam tad bhavati
(as the feelings, so is the result).

When your feeling and faith are sacred, the result is also bound to be sacred.

In olden days, there used to be a niche in the wall at the entrance of a well-to-do family, in which they used to place a small lighted lamp. The people of the village would come to their house to light their lamp from it. This tradition originated from the belief that if they lighted their lamps from the one kept in the house of a prosperous family, they would also become prosperous.

In accordance with this tradition, Yasoda also kept a lighted lamp in the outer wall of her house so that the gopikas (cowherd maidens) of the village could come and light their lamp from it. It was the time when Krishna had left Gokul and was living in Mathura.

A newly married gopika named Suguna came to Repalle after her marriage. When she heard the divine leelas (sports, plays) of Krishna in Repalle, she became ecstatic and thought it was her misfortune that she had come to Repalle only after Krishna had left for Mathura.

She felt dejected and cursed her fate, thinking: Is it possible to change one's destiny?

Earlier her mother-in-law used to come to the house of Yasoda to light her lamp. Once, her mother-in-law was laid up with fever, so Suguna had to go to Yasoda's house to light the lamp. This opportunity turned out to be her good fortune. She was overjoyed to think that she would be seeing the place where

Krishna lived and moved around.

She approached the house of Yasoda with pure heart and total faith in Krishna. Experience of Divinity depends on faith rather than on spiritual practices or scholarship. There have been many great scholars, yogis, and men of great penance and sacrifice in this world. But they could not attain the deservedness that was attained by Suguna. Right from the time when she set her foot in Repalle, she contemplated on Krishna all the time, thinking that she did not have the good fortune to see Krishna.

When she lighted her lamp from the lamp placed in the house of Yasoda, she saw Krishna in the flame. She became so ecstatic that she lost all her body consciousness. She even did not know that her fingers were getting burnt in the flame. Seeing this, Yasoda came running and asked, "Where are you, my dear? You are not even aware that your hand is getting burnt! Have you fallen asleep? Did you not sleep last night?" Other gopikas who had come to light their lamp also watched this. Suguna was seeing Krishna in the flame all the time, and, as a result, she had no body consciousness. The other gopikas surrounded her and asked, "What is the matter? What are you seeing?" When she said that she had seen Krishna, the gopikas burst into a joyous dance, singing:

Our Suguna Had The Vision Of Krishna In The House Of Nanda,
Krishna Appeared To Her In The Flame Of The Lamp.
(Telugu Song)

What type of *sadhana* (spiritual discipline) and worship did Suguna perform? She had no knowledge of spiritual practices like japa and *dhyana* (chanting and meditation). Women in those times were not educated. That, in fact, was their good fortune. If they had this type of modern education, they would not have been able to attain such divine bliss. Their entire focus in those days was on Divinity.

But the focus of modern students is always on acquiring bookish knowledge.

After they acquire it, their focus shifts to passing the examination. During the time of examination, they drink cups and cups of tea and coffee to keep themselves awake at night. Thereby they ruin their health and lose their memory power also. In this way, man today is ruining his innate powers.

But people like Suguna in those days always focused on Krishna. It was their firm faith that was responsible for their deservedness. Deservedness depends upon faith and nothing else.

When one wants to go to the terrace of one's house, one has to climb a ladder. The ladder has to have support at both ends, at the base and also at the top. Love is the support at the base of this ladder of spirituality and faith is the support at the top. Without the support of love and faith, it is not possible to reach spiritual heights. In fact, to develop love and faith is the real sadhana (spiritual discipline).

God can come to devotees' houses of in any form

During the time of Shirdi Sai Avatar, there was an ardent devotee of Baba named Hemadpant. His other name was Annasaheb Dabholkar. He always contemplated on Baba and kept repeating, "Baba, Baba, Baba" all the time. One day, he was awakened at night at 3 o'clock by a tall person who patted his back and said, "Hemadpant! Tomorrow I am coming to your house for food." He wondered whether what he saw was a dream or a reality. When he noticed that the door of his house was open, he realised that this was not a dream. Then he was filled with joy and started shouting loudly, "My Baba came to me and told me that he would come to my house for food tomorrow." Hearing this, his wife got up and asked, "What happened to you? Did you have a dream? Have you gone mad that you are talking so loudly like this? How is it possible for Baba to come tomorrow? Where is Shirdi and where is our house? All this is your imagination only." Hemadpant said to his wife, "Oh foolish woman! For God, there is nothing like far or near. How can there be any coming and going for God, who is all-pervasive? God neither comes nor goes; He is everywhere. Those who have deservedness can see Him

anywhere. But those who lack deservedness cannot see Him. It all depends on one's faith." Hemadpant told his wife, "Baba will come to our house tomorrow. Therefore, prepare befitting food tomorrow morning." She was very happy to hear that and said, "Is there any greater fortune for us than Baba visiting our house?" She got up early in the morning, cleaned the house and the cooking utensils, and prepared many delicious items such as vada (savoury snack of South India), payasam (sweet pudding), etc. She decorated the house with mango leaves and garlands of flowers and waited for the arrival of Baba.

It was 12 o'clock, but no sign of Baba's arrival was visible. She was beset with anxiety. Hemadpant tried to pacify her, saying, "Baba will never go back on his promise. Baba is the embodiment of truth. In fact, he is verily Lord Sathyanarayana. Therefore, Baba will definitely come." It was already two o'clock but Baba did not come. Hemadpant did not know what to do. At that very time, two persons came to their house and said, "Hemadpant! You appear to be very busy. Maybe you are waiting for the arrival of some relatives. That is why you have already prepared food for them. Hence, it does not appear proper for us to disturb you at this time. We will come later. But kindly take this packet." Hemadpant took the packet, and they left. When he opened the packet, he found Baba's picture in it. He put the picture close to his head with reverence and exclaimed, "Oh dear Baba! You have come to my house in the form of this picture!" Devotion is a sort of madness. Sai Baba is the embodiment of Sat-Chit-Ananda (ExistenceKnowledge-Bliss), who removes your worldly madness and makes you mad for God. Why does he make you mad for God? It is only to drive away your worldly madness. If you want to get rid of your worldly madness, you should become mad for God. Baba wipes away the tears of your worldly sorrow and makes you shed tears for God.

Hemadpant placed the food before Baba's photo, closed his eyes and prayed, "Baba! You must eat this food." When he opened his eyes, a vada was missing from the plate of food. He could also see the marks of Baba's fingers in the rice served in the plate. Then he said with joy, "Baba has eaten the food," and offered it as prasadam to all.

Baba used to satisfy his devotees in this manner. Having given his word to his devotees that he would visit their house, he would come to them in some form or the other. In order to make his devotees realise that God is present in all beings, he went to their house in the form of animals also, like a buffalo, a cat, a dog, etc., and ate the food meant for him.

God is present in all beings

Now I don't do like that. Once I promise that I will come to your house and accept your food, I will go Myself and have food there. I told many people that on coming to Mumbai, I would visit their house and have food there. Accordingly, I went to their houses and partook of the food served by them. Only then were they happy.

What was the reason of their happiness? It was the result of their love, faith, and feelings. Devotees in those days were full of love and total faith. But people today have only parttime faith. When God tells them that He will come to their house, they are very happy at that time. But, later, they start doubting whether Swami will come or not. They also think that Swami might have casually told them for their satisfaction.

Never give room to such doubts. When you develop total faith in Swami's words, they will certainly come true. God's words are divine and ambrosial. They are ever true. But if you lack faith, they may not come true.

Therefore, develop firm faith. Come what may, never give up your faith under any circumstances. Faith is your life-breath.

In My Avatar as Shirdi Sai Baba, some people could not understand the subtle meanings of My words and actions. They would come to Baba and complain, "Baba! We were waiting for you because you promised to come. Why did you disappoint us? Why did you put us to so much trouble? What sin have we committed?" Baba would reply, "You people are really very foolish. I did come to your house, but you drove me away with a stick." These devotees would

wonder and say, "What Baba! Can we ever commit this sacrilege of chasing you away with a stick?" Then Baba would tell them that he came to their house in the form of a black dog. In this manner, Baba demonstrated the truth that God is present in all beings.

When you see a rat, you try to catch it in a rat trap or kill it with a stick. But when you see it with Lord Ganesh, you offer your salutations to it. Similarly, when you see a snake, you try to kill it or call a snake charmer to catch it. But you offer your salutations to it when you see it adorning Lord Siva.

Whosoever is in the proximity of God will be revered and respected. Divine proximity is the real wealth. You will be honoured depending upon your closeness to God. But if you become distant from God, nobody will even look at your face.

In fact, you are always in the proximity of God. Whatever you look and whatever you see, there is only Divinity. The divine principle is omnipresent; it neither comes nor goes.

Bliss is the speech of a true devotee of God

Once, Parvati and Parameswara held a competition between their two sons, Vinayaka and Subrahmanya. They told them that whoever came first after going round the world would be rewarded. Vinayaka has a huge belly, and his vehicle is a rat, so his parents were curious to know how he would compete with Subrahmanya.

Meanwhile, Subrahmanya got onto his vehicle peacock and sped away. However, Vinayaka continued to be where he was without even bothering to call his vehicle rat. When he noticed Subrahmanya returning after completing his journey around the world, he circumambulated Parvati and Parameswara and declared himself to be the winner of the race.

Parvati, said, "How clever you are! What sort of knack is this? Your brother

returned after going round the world. Therefore, he deserves the reward. How can you claim to have gone round the world by merely circumambulating us?" It was not as if Parvati and Parameswara were not aware of this truth. They enacted the drama only to demonstrate to the world that God is all-pervasive.

Then Vinayaka said, "Mother! Is it not true that wherever we look, you both are present? Therefore, circumambulating you amounts to going round the entire world." Wherever you look, there are only two things in this universe: energy and matter, represented by Parvati and Parameswara, respectively. Vinayaka could win the reward due to his intelligence.

Parvati took pity on Subrahmanya and gave him a fruit, lest he be disappointed after taking the trouble of going round the world. She said to him, "My dear! You have come first after going round the world. But Vinayaka came first because he understood the inner significance of the divine principle that God is everywhere." When you enquire deeply, you will understand the inner significance associated with the divine principle. One who is totally immersed in water cannot say anything. Similarly, one who is totally immersed in divine love cannot describe it. Only those who remain at the surface can describe it in a superficial manner.

One who is totally immersed in the ocean of devotion, faith, and love for God will be saturated with bliss; that one will not know anything else. Scholars, educated people, and poets who claim to know Divinity are, in fact, those who are at this superficial level only. But one who is totally immersed in the divine principle will not be able to talk about it. Bliss is that one's speech and bliss is their language. There is nothing higher than this. Therefore, it is a great mistake to say that you are in search of God. Where is the need to search for God who is all-pervasive?

There are nine paths of devotion: *sravanam*, *kirtanam*, *Vishnusmaranam*, *padasevanam*, *vandanam*, *archanam*, *dasyam*, *sneham*, *Atmanivedanam* (listening, singing, contemplating on Vishnu, serving His Lotus Feet, salutation, worship, servitude, friendship, selfsurrender). It is said that these

paths lead a person to God. But one should realise that one is already God. In fact, everyone is the embodiment of Divinity. It is God who is in search of a true devotee.

I Am Searching.
I Have Been In Search Of A True Human Being And
A True Devotee Then And Now. (Telugu Song)

Even birds and animals have true devotion, but, unfortunately, it is not found in human beings. Human beings have only part-time devotion.

Where is God? Have firm faith that you yourself are God. The body is the temple and the *jiva* (individual soul) is the deity. Therefore, you are God. Where else can you find God when you yourself are God? But you should strengthen this faith. Only then can you have the taste of true love and bliss. When you have sugar in your hand, you will not know its taste. Put it on your tongue and start chewing it. Only then will you be able to experience its sweetness.

(Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the bhajan, "Madhura Madhura Murali Ghanashyama ...")

66. Dharma Is Our Real And Permanent Property

Date: 15 July 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, January 2012.

All Names And Forms Are The Manifestations Of The Supreme Being,
Who Is The Embodiment Of Peace And Auspiciousness.
He Is Existence, Knowledge, Bliss Absolute And Non-Dual.
He Is Truth, Goodness, Beauty. (Sanskrit Verse)

All the animate and inanimate forms that we see in this world are embodiments of peace. The physical forms of all living beings are the embodiments of beauty. Divinity, which is the embodiment of sathyam, sivam, and sundaram (truth, goodness and beauty), is present in all elements and all living beings as the principle of Oneness. The same was stated by Plato, the mentor of Aristotle, hundreds of years before Christ. He said that truth, goodness, and beauty formed the basis of the world.

Man's greed ruins his life

Truth is the basis of everything. Trikalabadhyam sathyam (truth remains unchanged in the three periods of time - past, present, and future). Goodness is the real Divinity. In fact, goodness is godliness.

Though people are endowed with the principle of sathyam, sivam, and sundaram, they are unable to realise their own truth, beauty, and goodness. Only when one realises the principles of truth, goodness, and beauty can one understand the true meaning of humanness.

People today studies sacred texts like the Vedas, the Puranas (mythological texts), the Brahma Sutras (principles of Brahman), the Ramayana, the

Bhagavad Gita, the Bible, and the Quran. In spite of reading all this, they lack peace because they do not put their teachings into practice.

Mere reading of sacred texts can be compared to drinking thin buttermilk, but putting them into practice with devotion is like partaking of thick milk. Is there any meaning in preferring thin buttermilk to thick milk? Practice is the real strength. Preaching, propagation, and scholarship without practice amounts to mere ostentation. Practice is important, not mere preaching.

What Is The Use Of Having Enormous Wealth If One Cannot Derive Any Comforts And Conveniences From It?
Even If There Is Plenty Of Water In A Lake, A Dog Can Only Lick The Water And Not Drink From It.
Similar Is The Fate Of A Miser. (Telugu Poem)

People today are endowed with all types of knowledge, wealth, and power, but what is the use? The wicked quality of greed makes all these things useless for them. Greed is limitless today due to the influence of Kali Yuga (the age we are in). One neither utilises the wealth for oneself nor shares it with others. It does not matter if one does not share one's wealth with others, but one cannot also see others being happy. Even animals do not have the foolishness of concealing and the wicked quality of plundering.

But these defects have become rampant in man today. Without getting rid of these defects, spiritual practices like japa, dhyana, and puja (chanting, meditation, and worship) become useless. W orship without love, devotion without faith is useless.

One may not have any type of knowledge, one may not listen to the teachings of the sacred texts, or one may not understand their inner meaning, it is enough if one has love and faith. What do we carry with us when we leave our body? You use your body to perform various tasks and resort to unfair practices to maintain the body and to look after your family.

One With Greed Will Not Be Successful In Any Endeavour.
That Person Will Commit Sins And Will Be Ridiculed By One And All.
One's Own People Will Abandon Them. One Will Lose All Wealth And Respect.
Ones Greed Will Ruin One Completely.
(Telugu Poem)

Make proper use of wealth

This is the evil influence of Kali Yuga. Greed has become a fashion in this age. There is no trace of sacrifice in man today. The ancient culture of Bharat (India) declared, Na karmana na prajaya dhanena thyagenake amrutatthwamanasu (immortality is not attained through action, progeny or wealth; it is attained only by sacrifice).

When A Sinner Is Rolling In Wealth,
He Does Not Show Any Regard Or Reverence Even For God.
He Realises The Truth When He Loses Everything.
(Telugu Poem)

As long as one is enamoured of one's wealth, one does not see the reality of the world. One sees it only when one loses everything.

What is this world? What is this life? How long will it last? What have achieved in this life? Everything is like passing clouds. When you are young, you work hard and acquire various types of knowledge and face many challenges in life. The pleasures of youth are ephemeral. All the worldly relationships are temporary. There is only one thing that is eternal, that is love for God. If you do not acquire love of God, what is the use of acquiring anything else? Howsoever long you may live, ultimately you have to leave the world empty-handed.

The Body, Which Is Made Up Of Five Elements, Is Weak And Is Bound To

Disintegrate.
Though Hundred Years Of Life Span Is Prescribed, One Cannot Take It For Granted.
One May Leave One's Mortal Coil At Any Time, Be It In Childhood, Youth, Or Old Age.
Death Is Certain.
Hence, Before The Body Perishes, One
Should Make Efforts To Know One's
True Nature. (Telugu Poem)

Were there not kings who had vast kingdoms and were full of pride and arrogance? But where are they now? However, you have to work hard and earn as much as sustains your life without any shortcoming. We breathe in and breathe out air. We eat food, digest it, and excrete the waste. Similarly, one should not only acquire wealth but should also spend it for the right cause. Do not accumulate and conceal it.

What you have to preserve is not wealth but dharma (righteousness). Dharma is our real and permanent property. This is the truth that you have to realise today.

There lived in a village two brothers who were great misers. Though they had amassed plenty of wealth, they did not spend even a penny. They did not even eat food to their fill. They did not keep the lamp lighted for more than five minutes, lest it should consume more oil.

It so happened that one day a person living in a neighbouring village, which was ten kilometres away, passed away. As was the custom in those days, one of the brothers had to go to that village to console the bereaved family. The elder brother got up early in the morning to start his journey on foot, because if he went by bus he would have to spend some money. He told his younger brother to light the lamp so that he could keep some clothes in his bag. As soon as he left the house, the younger brother put off the lamp to save oil.

After covering a distance of about three kilometres, the elder brother returned home and knocked at the door. The younger brother asked, "Who is knocking at the door?" "I am your elder brother." The younger brother asked him why he had come back.

"While leaving the house, I did not tell you to put off the lamp, so I have come to see if the lamp is still burning." The younger brother replied, "Brother, do you think that I don't have this much common sense? I put off the lamp as soon as you left the house. But you have walked such a long distance up and down to remind me about this. You did not think how much your sandals would have got worn out because of this unnecessary walking." The elder brother said, "Brother, I am not as foolish as you think. I removed my sandals, made them into a bundle, put them under my armpit, and walked the distance." What is the use of having sandals if one does not use them out of one's miserliness? What is the use of all the wealth and property if one is not able to draw any comfort and convenience out of it? Lead a comfortable life, and make others' life also comfortable. Otherwise, what is the use of all your wealth?

Use your education to help others

You acquire many types of education, but education is not meant for merely securing a job. Utilise your education for the welfare of society and for the betterment of your village.

There is no use acquiring degrees. Today, students use their degrees like begging bowls. They go to each and every office begging for a job.

Acquire the education that makes you selfreliant. Undertake the activities that are beneficial for the progress of your village. Educate the villagers about health and hygiene so that they are not afflicted by diseases. Teach them the importance of cleanliness and help them to improve the drainage system of the village. Teach them to undertake useful practices, like growing vegetables for their self-sustenance. Share your knowledge with the children of the

village. Therein lies the real merit of your education.

Paropakara Punyaya, Papaya Parapeedanam
(One Attains Merit By Serving Others And Commits Sin By Hurting Them).
Utilise Your Education To Help Others.

As soon as students today get their degree, they go to the employment office to get their name registered for employment. Those who are highly educated apply for jobs in overseas countries. This is not the real purpose of your education. The real purpose of education is to develop villages. You are born, brought up, and educated in your village. All that you have attained in life is acquired by you only from your village.

Society has endowed you with all types of power. You are born and brought up in society, and you lead your life in society. Should you not have gratitude for society, which has done so much for you?

But, unfortunately, students today lack such broad feelings. They lead a self-centred life and are concerned only about themselves and their family. If you lead such a selfish life, who will take care of the masses?

All are the children of God. All are brothers and sisters. Therefore, strive for the progress of all. Work for the development of society with mutual cooperation and tolerance without giving room to any conflicts. Develop the qualities of forbearance and empathy.

Unity is very essential. You should put the principle of unity into practice. Only then can it grow. Unity does not mean merely greeting each other, "hello, hello;" it should be reflected in practice. You should work unitedly. There is great merit in unity. Therefore, students should develop broad feelings and broad-mindedness.

Develop expansion of hridaya (heart). Where does hridaya lie in your body? It is not the physical heart, which is on the left side of the chest. This is not

what is meant by hridaya. Hridaya, in fact, is present in the entire body. It has no limit, it is all-pervasive.

Sarvatah Panipadam Tat Sarvathokshi Siromukham, Sarvatah Srutimalloke Sarvamavruthya Tishthati (with hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth and ears pervading everything, the Divine Principle permeates the entire universe). So, everybody who comes within the expanse of your hridaya is your kith and kin. Lead your life with such feelings of fraternity and unity.

Education is not meant merely for earning your livelihood; it is meant to make you a cultured individual. Education is a process of refinement. When you develop culture, there will not be any dearth even for your livelihood. You chant the prayer, Dharmo rakshati rakshitah (If you protect dharma, you will be protected by dharma) every day. When you protect dharma, dharma itself will protect you. Therefore, foster dharma in society. When you foster dharma in villages, it will develop in towns and cities also.

Human beings should develop humanness

Students

Today we find Indian cultural traditions being practised at least to some extent only in villages. They are nowhere to be seen in towns and cities. Only in villages do you find virtues like adherence to dharma, justice, forbearance, and love, which have become extinct in towns and cities. Though there are courts, banks, universities, and many other institutions in towns and cities, there is a prevalence of injustice, unrighteousness, and vices in them.

On the other hand, there are no such institutions in villages, yet people in villages practise morality and ethics. Even the tribals who live away from society in forests are endowed with truth and righteousness. In fact, it is they who uphold our culture.

Having acquired education, what are the people doing today? They are destroying culture, morality, and ethics in society. In fact, they are ruining humanness itself. Where is humanness today? Lakhs of years have passed since humanity took birth on this earth. But humanness is yet to be born in people. You find only humans in form, but not in practice.

Then, when will humanness blossom in humanity? How many births has one taken and how many more does one have to take? In fact, humanness should be born with one's very birth.

We say, we should speak truth, but is there any person who speaks truth? All that one utters today is untruth. All that one does is unrighteous. Then, how can humanness be born in a person?

Even birds and animals follow certain rules and regulations. They have a reason and season for what they do. But people have no reason and no season.

Then, what is the use of all your education? Why should one acquire this useless education? Acquire the education that is beneficial to society, develops brotherly relationship between person and person, and makes humanness blossom in you.

Today, hatred is prevalent between person and person, village and village, state and state. Then, how can there not be hatred between one country and the other? You are developing hatred in your own state and in your own country. Are you not ashamed to say that some other country is attacking us out of hatred?

First of all, set your own house, village, town, and state in order. If you are not able to remove conflicts from your own house, how can you bring about harmony between one country and the other?

Who are you to correct others? What right do you have? First of all, bring harmony in your own house and develop humanness. Consider all as the

children of God. This is the education that students should acquire today.

Never leave truth under any circumstances

Today wherever you look, people are craving money. Why do you want so much money? What will you do with it? Do you utilise it for the welfare of the country or to help the needy people? Do you utilise it for the spread of education? Do you at least feed the beggars? If money is not put to any good use, it is as good as dust.

Do not waste your life for the accumulation of money. Dedicate your life to foster compassion and love in society. Utilise money to keep the body fit, so that you can perform righteous actions and uphold your honour.

Be prepared to sacrifice even your life for the sake of God. Hold on to truth and follow dharma. These are the two virtues that people should cultivate.

The Vedas also teach, Sathyam vada, dharmam chara (speak truth, practise righteousness). Never leave truth under any circumstances, even at the cost of your life.

Take Harishchandra as your ideal. In the face of all difficulties, his faith in God and truth never faltered. Ultimately, only truth saved him, and he was able to get back his kingdom and wealth.

What sustains truth? It is love. Therefore, develop love. But do not limit your love to yourself and your family. If you think of only yourself and your family, it is better to live in a forest. What right do you have to live in your village or in society?

When you live in society, you should see to its welfare. Being a member of society, if you always think of yourself and your family, you are no better than a person who is afflicted with an incurable malady.

Develop unity and live in harmony with everyone. Do not become a victim of the disease of selfishness and self-centredness. Aspire for the welfare of all, and consider the sufferings of others as your own. When students develop such broad feelings, they will become the future redeemers of the nation. Become an ideal person and uphold sathya and dharma, which Bharat has been propagating since ancient times.

Students!

You are the future emancipators of the nation. You are the future leaders and pleaders. Therefore, follow the path of truth. Even pleaders today have taken to wrong path. Do you know what type of pleaders we have today? Even if Harishchandra were to be born today, they would make him utter a hundred lies. This is the influence of Kali Yuga. That is why you do not find any person like Harishchandra today. Out of fear for these pleaders, Harishchandras have run away to forests and hills! Sathya and dharma have run away, and asathya (untruth) and adharma (unrighteousness) have established their hold.

What you have to do today is to purify this prevalent environment. How can it be done? This can be done only by practising truth and righteousness. Merely speaking about truth is not enough. You have to put it into practice. What is there in your heart should be expressed in speech, and what is spoken should be put into action. A student will remain a true student as long as the student follows the path of sathya and dharma. In the absence of sathya and dharma, a vidyarthi (student) will become vishayarthi (seeker of pleasures).

(Bhagavan sang the bhajan "Sathyam Jnanam Anantam Brahma" and continued His Discourse.) Treat the new students like your brothers and sisters Here is an important point for your attention. When a new student joins our Institute, you should treat him with all love and affection, more than your own brother, and make him forget his worries and anxieties. It is not tall talk that our Institute is an ideal in this regard, where new students are treated like brothers and sisters by senior students.

Many of the outside institutes give importance to wealthy people who give big

donations. But in our Institute, love is the only donation. I give importance to people who are full of love. You have heard the boy who spoke in Sanskrit some time ago. He does not have the support of his parents. He is being looked after by his grandparents. We give admission to such students and help them to come up in life. You can see for yourself how the boy is totally free from all his past worries, so much so that he even learnt Sanskrit and gave a talk.

My Sankalpa (Will) is to give happiness to students who lack the love of their parents and make them forget their worries (loud applause). I am doing this and asking you to do the same. If you come across such students, help them to the extent possible to enable them to make progress in life.

You may be aware how the outside institutions function. If a new student joins an outside institute, he has to undergo a virtual hell in the name of ragging. Unable to bear the torture of ragging, some students even leave the institute within a week. They call it ragging; I don't understand what its purpose is. In the name of ragging, they harass and torture the students to no end.

Is this what senior students are supposed to do? They should treat the juniors like their own brothers and sisters and give them all their love and affection. They should make them comfortable and help them get rid of their worries, so that they live in a cordial and peaceful atmosphere. This is what I am doing, and I am asking you to do the same (loud applause).

In this Institute, not only do we provide free education, we also give scholarship to deserving students. We don't charge even a naya paisa in the name of games fee, examination fee, library fee, laboratory fee, tuition fee, etc.

When we are providing such ideal and free education to students, how noble and ideal the students should become! They should become ideal boys.

If a beggar comes to you to beg, you should tell him, "My dear, it is not proper to resort to begging. Why do you stoop to such a level? Come, I will show you

a way to earn your livelihood." You should help such people to become self-reliant.

Once when a hungry man approached Jesus, he gave him two fish. But how is it possible to provide food in this manner every day? Therefore, he bought a net and gave it to the man, saying, "Eke out your livelihood with the use of this net." Our students should also follow this example. They should help the needy to earn their livelihood with respect.

Humility is the hallmark of a student

All students of our Institute should live like brothers and sisters and treat everybody with love. You should develop such broad-mindedness. This is what our students should learn today. They should not give room to ego and ostentation. Develop love and idealism - this is how students can come up in life.

There are many examples in history where ordinary people rose to exalted positions by dint of their virtues and hard work. There was a person who used to sell newspapers and there was another person who used to polish shoes. After polishing the shoes of his customers, he used to say to them, "God bless you." There was yet another person who used to write addresses on envelopes and earn his livelihood. Even such a person could rise to an exalted position of Prime Minister of England, because he was endowed with humility and sacred feelings. See how much a person with humility and love can rise in life! Education is not that important. After all, what is there in modern education?

Education Confers Humility, Humility Confers Deservedness,
Which In Turn Gives You Wealth. Wealth Will Bring You Material And Spiritual Satisfaction
When You Utilise It To Perform Charity
And Righteous Deeds. (Telugu Poem)

Humility is the hallmark of a student. In fact, it is the crest jewel of education. If you come across such humble students, help them in every possible way so that they forget all their worries and experience happiness. How happy was this boy when I materialised a chain for him and put it around his neck! He does not even feel the loss of his parents.

You should also help others like this. Whatever I do is only to demonstrate an ideal to you. There is always perfect harmony between My thoughts, words, and deeds. That is why I have got the right to tell you all this.

The proper study of mankind is man. All of you should live like human beings and not like animals and demons. Don't become stone-hearted. Develop a soft heart that melts with compassion at the suffering of others. Thanks.

67. Develop Virtues and Contemplate on God

Date: 16 July 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, February 2012.

All One Without Virtues Is Not A Human Being In The True Sense Of The Term.
Understand That Virtuous Children Are The True Wealth Of A Nation.
(Telugu Poem)

Students!

The people of Bharat ((India) have been worshipping God by performing sacred practices like lighting lamps, burning incense sticks, making sacred food offerings, etc., before idols of deities in accordance with ancient Indian culture. But, unfortunately, modern boys and girls have forgotten such sacred traditions and are deluded to think that they can derive fulfilment from mundane pursuits. They have lost the power of discrimination and do not know what the priorities of their life are. They are neglecting their duties and taking to wrong paths.

Sanctify food by offering it to God

People who follow the canons of Indian culture partake of food as prasadam (sanctified food) only after offering it to God with chanting of mantras like Pranaya swaha, apanaya swaha, vyanaya swaha, udanaya swaha and samanaya swaha (hail the five life principles - life breath, downward air, the vital air diffused throughout the body, breath that moves upward though the throat, and digestive air). By partaking of sanctified food in this manner, we develop good thoughts, good feelings, good qualities, and good conduct.

The food we eat should have patra suddhi, paka suddhi, and padartha suddhi

(purity of vessel, cooking process, and ingredients). But it is very difficult to know if the food has all three qualities. Therefore, when you offer it to God by chanting the Brahmarpanam Mantra, it is sanctified and acquires all these qualities.

Brahmarpanam Brahma Havir Brahmagnou Brahmanahutam
Brahmaiva Thena Ganthavyam Brahma Karma Samadhina.
Brahman Is The Ladle As Well As The Oblation.
He Is The Sacrificial Fire As Also The Sacrificer.
Brahman Is The Goal Of One Who Is Engaged In The Act Of Sacrifice.

Before offering to God, it is merely a food item. Once it is offered to God, it becomes free from all impurities and gets transformed into prasadam. By eating such sacred food, one will not acquire any mental impurities.

We offer food to God on a clean plantain leaf. But today we have to enquire what type of food is offered and to whom. The human body is the plantain leaf, the heart of man is the sacred vessel and virtues, and sacred feelings and good conduct are like the sacred food items. But to whom are these being offered? These are being offered to demons of evil qualities, wicked feelings such as anger, hatred, and jealousy. The food that is eaten and left over by these demons of hatred, anger, and jealousy is being offered to God. That is why people today are the victims of restlessness, difficulties, sorrows, and misery.

Get rid of your evil qualities and offer your virtues to God with the prayer: Oh God, You are the resident of my heart and You are the embodiment of love, kindness, and compassion. Here I offer the sweet pudding of my virtues; please accept.

Start worshipping God at young age

Young age is like a delicious fruit. should offer this sweet and delicious fruit to

God. It is not possible to worship God after your retirement in old age, when your body becomes weak, the sense organs lose their power, and the mind becomes feeble. Start early, drive slowly, reach safely. Start praying to God right from the early age.

If you do not undertake sacred actions when your physical and mental faculties are strong, then when will you perform them? What can you do when the sense organs have lost all their power?

At The Time When The Messengers Of Yama (God Of Death) Put The Noose Around Your Neck And Start Dragging You Away, Saying, Come, Let Us Go.
At The Time When Your Relations Tell Your Family Members To Take You Out Of The House, Saying Your End Has Approached.
And At The Time When Your Wife And Children Start Weeping And Wailing,
How Can You Chant The Name Of Hari At That Time?
(Telugu Poem)

Is it possible to do any sadhana (spiritual exercise) at that stage? No, no.

It is very essential for you to contemplate on God, think of Him wholeheartedly and redeem your life at this young age itself, when your sense organs are quite strong. Why don't you worship God when your physical organs and mental faculties are full of verve and vigour?

Oh Man, Don't Take Pride In Your Beauty, Youth, And Physical Strength.
Very Soon, You Will Become Old.
Your Hair Will Turn Grey, Your Skin Will Develop Wrinkles, And Your Vision Will Be Blurred.
Children Will Make Fun Of You, Calling You An Old Monkey.
You Are No Better Than A Leather Puppet.
Try To Understand The Mystery Behind This Puppet Show.
(Telugu Song)

How can you think of God when you become a decrepit old man? Offer the fragrant flowers of your mind and heart to God with total faith at a young age, when your body is strong and sense organs are powerful. This is the true naivedyam (food offering) that you have to offer to God.

But people today do not make such offerings. When their senses become weak after indulging in all sorts of sensual pleasures, they offer them to God like offering leftover food. As the proverb goes, it is like saying, "I offer to Krishna all the flour that has got blown away by the wind." What else is left with you to offer to God when the power of all your senses is drained out and you have lost your physical and mental strength? Therefore, serve God when the power of your body, mind, and intellect is intact. But if you lose all your strength in pursuit of sensual pleasures in young age, then what service can you render to God?

Students!

First of all, understand that this age is divine and sublime. If you don't take to spirituality now, it is not possible to do so in old age.

A child first crawls using their hands and feet. As the child grows up, they start walking on two feet. When they become old, they will walk on three feet, meaning they will need the support of a walking stick.

Serve and worship God when you are walking on two feet; do not postpone it to old age when you are virtually walking on three feet. Just as two feet support the entire body, all the powers of a human being depend on sathya (truth) and dharma (righteousness).

Follow sathya and dharma and contemplate on God, who is the embodiment of sathya and dharma. In old age, you need the support of one more leg in the form of walking stick. At that age, your body becomes so weak that you will not have the strength to hold even the stick. What can you do at that age? Therefore, make the best use of the young age without wasting even a single moment.

Time is God. Time waste is life waste. Don't waste time.

Do not misuse your tongue

Boys and girls today waste a lot of time. They misuse time by indulging in vain gossip. They do not entertain good feelings and don't speak good words. What sort of words they speak and what type of songs they sing! You do not know how disgusting it is to listen to the words and songs of boys and girls in the outside world.

Only in Prasanthi Nilayam do boys and girls participate in bhajans and sing the glory of God, "Rama, Krishna, Govinda", and thus spend their time blissfully. Elsewhere, boys and girls do not know the value of singing the divine Name. They sing meaningless songs like "Chal chal re naujavan, chod de re mere kan (Oh young man, march ahead and leave my ears)." Is there any meaning in it?

Some other songs are very funny, like "Dadada dadada dada dada". What is this Dadada? What a shame to sing such songs! Has the tongue been given to sing such songs? Do you know what the tongue has been given for? It is only to make the divine Name dance on it. We are misusing such a sacred tongue. Chaitanya extolled the greatness of tongue.

Oh Tongue, The Knower Of Taste! You Are Very Sacred.
Speak The Truth In The Most Pleasing Manner.
Chant The Divine Names Of Govinda, Madhava And Damodara Incessantly.
This Is Your Foremost Duty.
(Sanskrit Verse)

The tongue has many great qualities. It is the knower of taste. It should speak truth in a pleasing manner. It should utter only soft and sweet words. Why should you utter unsacred words with such a sacred tongue? Unfortunately, people today make the tongue unsacred by speaking unsacred words.

It is necessary for students to have control over their tongue. Use your tongue to sing the glory of God, which melts the heart, attracts the mind, and makes one forget oneself. When someone is singing the glories of God, everyone will enjoy the singing and will be swaying their heads to the tune even without their knowledge, be the person an atheist, a theist, or an atheistic-theist.

Once Radha sang:

I Don't Know Where You Are And What Prevents You From Coming Here.
Oh Krishna!
Why Do You Separate Me From You? Don't You Have Compassion On This Servant Of Yours? (Telugu Song)
When Radha Was Singing Thus, All The Women Of Repalle Were Lost In Bliss, And Even The
Vessels Of Water They Were Carrying Fell Down. Radha Complained To Krishna:
What Is The Purpose Of My Living?
I Have No Refuge Other Than You.
Oh Krishna, I Carry On This Burden Of Life Only For Your Sake.
My Mind Becomes Restless If I Don't See Your Smiling Face.
At Least Appear To Me In My Dreams.
I Cannot Live Without You Even For A Moment. (Telugu Song)

People used to pray to God in those days with such intense craving and yearning. When they sang the Name of Krishna, they felt as though their burdens were removed. Only such intense prayer can move and melt the heart of Krishna.

But today, there is no 'devotion', it is all 'deep ocean'. People say divine, divine, but there is nothing divine about them, it is only deep wine. Sanctify your time by contemplating on God and singing His nectarine Name.

Victory lies in unity

What is the purpose of singing bhajans? When people come together and sing the glory of God in one voice, it has tremendous power.

Group singing was started by Guru Nanak, with the main purpose of bringing unity in diversity. Singing in chorus has much more effect than individual singing. You should follow our ancient culture and offer the sacred feelings of your heart to God.

God is the embodiment of love. You can experience Him only through love. You don't require a torchlight, a hurricane lantern, or a petromax lamp to see the shining moon; you can see it with the help of its own light. Likewise, if you want to see the embodiment of love, it is possible to see Him only through love. There is no light brighter than that of love in this world.

The Bhagavata describes the stories of Lord Krishna in great detail. The stories of the Lord destroy all sins.

The Stories Of The Lord Are Amazing,
They Purify The Lives Of People In All The Three Worlds,
They Are Like The Sickles That Cut The Creepers Of Worldly Bondage,
They Are Like A Good Friend Who Helps You In Times Of Need,
They Are Like A Shelter For The Sages And Seers Doing Penance In The Forest.
(Telugu Poem)

Consider love as your mother, truth as your father, compassion as your sister, and bliss as your brother. When you have such eternal relations, why do you develop unnecessary worldly relationships?

You can see for yourself that there is great strength in unity. Dharmaraja, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva were five brothers; they could attain victory only because they were united. Likewise, Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Satrughna maintained unity under all circumstances. Unity gives victory.

On the other hand, there was no unity between Vali and Sugriva. What was the result? Though Vali was endowed with enormous power, he ultimately met his doom.

Similarly, there was no unity between the three brothers Ravana, Vibhishana, and Kumbhakarna. Due to lack of unity between them, Vibhishana had to leave his brothers. Ultimately, Ravana lost his kingdom and everything due to lack of unity.

We can achieve anything with unity. There are five fingers in the hand. When these five fingers are together, we can perform any task. First and foremost, make efforts to maintain unity.

Students!

All of you belong to the same Sai Organisation. You are studying in Sai educational institutions. You are growing in Sai's love.

Not only here but wherever you go, manifest this principle of love. Propagate love by your example. The behaviour, discipline, and manners that you have learnt here should follow you like your shadow wherever you go.

You are a good boy or a good man only when you have good behaviour and good manners. You can be called a devotee only when you perform your duty wholeheartedly. Do your duty sincerely. Only then can you become a true devotee.

On the other hand, if you perform worship to idols. neglecting your duty, how can it be called devotion? Duty is God. Work is worship. Students should not become lazy.

First learn your lessons in the class. Use only your spare time in sports and entertainment. Contemplate on God and experience bliss. As food is necessary for the body, so is bhajan for the mind.

The body is like a cart, and the mind is the horse that pulls it. You decorate the body with cosmetics and good dress, but you don't give proper food to the mind. What is the use of decorating the cart without feeding the horse? Such a cart is fit only to be placed in a museum. That's all.

Therefore, first and foremost, make the horse strong. That is to say, you have to strengthen the mind. What is meant by strengthening the mind? Develop good thoughts, good feelings, good qualities, and good behaviour.

In the Mahabharata war, when Krishna took Arjuna's chariot to the middle of battlefield, Arjuna looked at the army of the Kauravas, turned to Krishna, and said with folded hands:

Oh Krishna, How Can I Bear The Sight Of Killing My Own Friends,
Relatives, And The Children Of My Preceptors?
On Thinking About The Slaying Of So Many Of My Kith And Kin, My Head Is Reeling.
Let Us Go Back Home Without Wasting Time Here.
(Telugu Poem)

Arjuna lost the strength of his mind because he was overcome with the feeling of attachment. He started saying, "Na varu, na varu (my people, my people)." 'Na' actually means 'no'. He said, "Oh Krishna, how can I fight against my own elders, friends, relations, and preceptors?" Due to his attachment, he became despondent and did not want to fight. Krishna scolded him, saying, "Don't you have any shame? You spoke like a big hero prior to coming here, but after entering the battlefield, you have become a coward. Do you remember what you said to Me when I was going to the Kaurava court on My peace mission?"

Will The Narrow-Minded Kauravas Give Up All The Differences And Make Friendship With Us?
Can The North And South Poles Meet Together?
Instead Of Wasting Time, Why Don't You Tell Them That We Are Ready For The Battle?

Giving A Good Counsel To The Wicked People Is Like Throwing Jasmine Flowers Into Fire.
Let Us Stop All This Talk Of Peace. (Telugu Poem)

Did you not say all this? You told Me at that time, "Why are You delaying the start of the battle? Let us stop this talk of peace treaty. We are ready for the battle. Now, how is it that your heart is filled with attachment?" Attachment is the cause of man's downfall. You may have attachment, but only up to a certain limit.

Having come here at young age and lived in such a sacred environment, you should develop good qualities, good thoughts, and good behaviour.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Govinda Gopala Prabhu Giridhari ...")

68. Humanness Blossoms In A Compassionate Heart

Date: 17 July 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, March 2012.

What Can The Evil Effects Of Kali Age Do To One Whose Heart Is Full Of Compassion,
Whose Speech Is Suffused With Truth, And Whose Body Is Dedicated To The Service Of Others?
(Sanskrit Verse)
You May Worship God With Various Types Of Flowers, But He Will Not Be Pleased With Such Worship.
If You Offer Him The Lotus Of Your Heart, He Will Accept It With Great Love.
Never Forget This Great Truth.
(Telugu Poem)

Students!

Everybody knows that people of Bharat have been offering various types of flowers to the Lord to worship Him in accordance with the ancient traditions of Indian culture. However, the beauty and fragrance of these flowers is only momentary.

Offer the flower of your heart to God

But there is one flower with us that neither fades nor withers away with the passage of time. This is the flower that is dear to the Lord. It is the flower of our heart, which is always full of fragrance and does not undergo any change. Offering of this flower is a true offering to the Lord.

Eight Are The Flowers That Please The Lord,
Offer Him The Flowers Of Nonviolence And Sense Control,
Compassion On All Creatures, Forbearance, And Peace
Penance, Meditation, And Truth Above All.
These Are The Flowers Dear To The Lord. (Sanskrit Verse)

Among all the flowers, Sarva bhuta daya pushpam (compassion for all creatures) is most important. Man alone is endowed with this virtue of compassion. This is the flower that you should offer to God.

Easwara sarva bhutanam (God is the indweller of all beings). Names and forms may vary, but the same God is present in all. Therefore, you should have compassion toward all beings with the broad feeling that God is present in all. Then only can you understand how expansive and fragrant this compassion for all creatures is.

You need not waste your time gathering the flowers that fade away and wither away in no time. The flower of your heart is eternal, ever fresh, and ever fragrant, for which you need not spend even a naya paisa. That is the real flower. One who understands the secret of this flower is a parama jnani (one of supreme wisdom).

Practise what you study

Once, Sage Narada went to Sage Sanat Kumara and asked him to grant him true knowledge. Sanat Kumara asked Narada, "I am prepared to impart true and eternal knowledge to you, but what are your qualifications?" Narada replied, "I can recite completely the four V edas and six Sastras (philosophical texts). I have understood the inner meaning of every word of these. I can recognise the secret of karma (action) and its fruition. These are my qualifications." Sanat Kumara replied, "Narada, it is true that you have studied all the Vedas and Sastras, but how much have you put into practice? You would have attained true knowledge and everlasting happiness if you had

put into practice what you have studied." Even after gaining mastery over all types of learning,

Sage Narada Was Unable To Experience Everlasting Happiness And Eternal Bliss.
(Telugu Poem)

In spite of acquiring all types of learning, why was Narada unable to experience happiness? Does happiness lie in education? Does it lie in reading of books? Then where does it lie?

Happiness lies in practice. If you spend all your lifetime reading books, when will you put them into practice, and when will you experience the fruits of putting them into practice? People keep on studying all their lives, but they do not put into practice what they have studied. How can they experience happiness without putting anything into practice? Only when you eat and digest the food you have cooked can you attain nourishment and satisfaction.

Today's education is limited to mere acquisition of bookish knowledge, which alone does not suffice; practical experience is essential.

You should practise at least a fraction of what you have studied and have personal experience. Only then can you have the taste of true happiness.

People read a number of spiritual texts. All the sacred texts of all religions propound the same truth. Various religious texts like the Bible, the Quran and the Bhagavad Gita teach the same noble principles. But how many are putting into practice the sacred principles taught by their sacred religious texts?

People hate and kill each other because they do not put into practice the teachings contained in sacred texts. What is the cause of widespread anger, hatred, and jealousy in the world? It is because people do not practise the sacred teachings they study in the sacred texts and do not understand the

true meaning of these teachings.

It is enough if you put at least one teaching from one sacred text into practice. Therefore, start practising at least in a small way. You may study a number of sacred texts, but if you do not practise them, you will have wasted all your time and energy.

Realise unity in diversity

You should have compassion toward all beings, and this is the flower you should offer to God. This is the essence of all sacred texts. The principle of Atma present in all is one and the same. Realising unity in diversity is knowledge, and seeing diversity in unity is ignorance.

Today, many intellectuals see diversity in unity, but very few noble souls see unity in diversity. You should make efforts to realise unity in diversity. How can you do it? What is this principle of unity that underlies diverse objects in this world?

Science students know it very well that the atom is the minutest particle. There is no object that is not made up of atoms. The objects of this world may have different names and forms, but all of these are made only of atoms.

The same principle is propounded in Vedanta: Anoraneeyan Mahato Maheeyan (Brahman is subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the vastest). God is smaller than the smallest and bigger than the biggest. Therefore, when you understand the principle of the atom, you will understand everything.

This is the main teaching of Vedanta, the true meaning of education, the goal of all paths, and the essence of all spiritual knowledge. That is compassion, love, and kindness. Bereft of compassion, people's hearts have become hard like a rock. Even iron can be beaten and moulded, but it is very difficult to melt the heart of a person today. It can be melted only by love. There is nothing in this world that cannot be melted by love.

Therefore, every student and every individual should fill their heart with love. Do not misuse love for your self-interest and selfish gains. There may be some amount of selfishness in the love of preceptor, husband and wife, and even parents. But there is absolutely no trace of selfishness in the love of God. Make yourselves deserving of such love.

When there is a heavy downpour, you can collect some water in a vessel if you keep it upright. On the other hand, if you keep the vessel upside down, you cannot collect even a drop of water. Likewise, divine grace is available in plenty everywhere, but you are not keeping the vessel of your heart in the upright position.

Various types of feelings emerge from the heart from moment to moment. All of you know that the clouds that originate from the sun cover the sun itself. If you leave the water unused for some time, the moss that originates from water covers the water itself. The cataract that is born in the eye obstructs its vision. The ash that is produced by the fire covers the fire itself. Likewise, there is compassion in the heart of man, but if one does not utilise it or takes to evil ways, one's ignorance will eclipse the compassion itself and make the heart hard like a rock.

God is formless and attributeless, but He also assumes a form with attributes. There is sakara (with form) in nirakara (formless) and nirakara in sakara. Likewise, there is saguna (attributes) in nirguna (attributeless) and viceversa. A block of ice has a form, but it is not different from water. There can be no ice without water. When drops of water freeze, they form ice. The difference between sakara and nirakara is the same as the difference between ice and water.

Your studies should bring about your refinement

There is oil in til seeds, but you should know the process by which you can extract oil from them. How can you get jaggery out of sugarcane unless you crush it and extract the juice? There is sweet juice in the sugarcane. But if

you ask, "oh sugarcane, give me jaggery," will it give? You have to crush it, extract its juice, and put it on fire. Only then can it assume the form of jaggery. If you think by crushing the sugarcane you are subjecting it to a great ordeal, then you cannot have jaggery from it. Its juice will dry up if you keep it aside for a few days. Thereby, its sweet juice will become useless.

Our body is like sugarcane. When it is subjected to difficulties, ordeals, and problems, the qualities of compassion, love, and kindness will manifest from it. This is called samskara (refinement). Sweetness is manifested in a person who is is subjected to the process of samskara. That is why, since ancient times, the culture of Bharat has laid great emphasis on samskara.

If you go to a goldsmith, give him some gold, and ask him to make an ornament out of it, what will he do? He will cast it in fire, beat it with a hammer, and stretch it with the help of a machine. Then he will give the desired shape to the gold and make it into a beautiful ornament. On the other hand, if you ask the goldsmith not to put the gold in fire, not to beat and stretch it, then how can he make an ornament for you?

Arjuna said to Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita, Chanchalam hi manah Krishna pramathi balavadrudham (Oh Krishna, this mind is very unsteady, turbulent and powerful). The mind is very unsteady and can cause great dangers. When you offer such a mind to God and ask Him to make it pure, leave it to the discretion of God to do whatever He wants to do with it. Do not question Him.

But, due to the influence of Kali Yuga (the era we are in), man prays, "Oh God, I offer my mind to You, kindly make it pure without subjecting it to any difficulties or ordeals." God cannot grant such a prayer.

Kashte phali (hard work yields rich rewards). Happiness is born only out of difficulties. You don't switch on a fan or buy an air conditioner unless the weather is hot and sultry. You do not want food if you have no hunger. Likewise, there can be no happiness if there are no difficulties.

People do not remember God in times of happiness but want God to save

when when they are caught up in difficulties. Nobody wants God when the going is smooth. Not only that, one even becomes egoistic when one has all comforts and conveniences.

Pleasure is an interval between two pains.

Therefore, one should be prepared to bear difficulties and sorrows. Only then can one develop the qualities of fortitude and courage and derive happiness. Humanness will blossom only when there is harmony between one's mind, hand, and speech. This is the meaning of the verse that I told you in the beginning. **The proper study of mankind is man.**

Study what you are supposed to study, but at the same time, have refinement also. Your studies have value only when they lead to refinement.

A bird cannot fly unless it has two wings. A bicycle also has two wheels. One may be able to ride a monocycle with some practice in a circus, but it is not useful in daily life. Similarly, both education and refinement are needed to lead a balanced life. Refinement means getting rid of evil qualities and developing virtues and goodness. This is the secret of samskara (refinement). You will be free from all ordeals when you understand this secret and act accordingly. You will then be unruffled even in the face of serious problems.

Carve out a niche in the hearts of people

Youth today should develop steady vision and unwavering mind. How can you attain them? It is possible when your faith is firm. Faith in whom? Faith in yourself, faith in God. This is the secret of greatness.

When you don't have faith in yourself, how can you have faith in God? Who is God? You yourself are God. But you are unable to realise this truth. Where is the need to search for God? You are looking for Him here and there. God is installed in your heart.

Deho Devalaya Proktho Jivo Deva Sanathana

(the body is a temple, and the indweller is God). Body is a temple. What type of temple is this? It is a moving temple. God follows you wherever you go. He is with you, in you, around you, below you, and above you.

First of all, you should have firm faith in this eternal truth. You should conduct yourself to the satisfaction of your conscience. Put into practice at least one or two teachings that you have learnt on the path of spirituality. Instead of listening to tonnes and tonnes of discourses, it is better that you put into practice at least an ounce of what you have heard. This will cure all the ills of your life.

An empty head can be filled with anything. But you fill it with all unwanted worldly matters. You stuff your head with unnecessary information about all the countries of the world - Germany, Japan, Russia, etc. - but you do not know what you are supposed to acquire. You should give room to noble thoughts and ideals that are necessary for your daily life.

Many noble souls took birth in this world and propagated great ideals. There were many highly educated people, but their names are found only in history books. It is only noble souls like Ramakrishna Paramahamsa who have found a permanent place in the hearts of people.

The names of educated people find place only in books, whereas the names of noble souls will be imprinted on the hearts of people forever.

What is so great about finding your name in history books? You should find a place in the hearts of people. People should extol you, saying, "Oh what a great soul he is," and put your ideals into practice. You should have samskara (refinement) along with education.

But people today do not even know what samskara means. They do a lot of research, but they do not know what refinement really means.

Eliot defined culture as a way of life. What type of way it should be? The path that leads to bliss directly is the real way of life. What type of qualities should you acquire for this?

Brahmanandam, Parama Sukhadam, Kevalam Jnanamurtim, Dwandwateetam, Gagana Sadrisham, Tattwamasyadi Lakshyam, Ekam, Nityam, Vimalam, Achalam, Sarvadhee Sakshibhutam.
God Is The Embodiment Of Divine Bliss, Wisdom Absolute, Beyond The Pair Of Opposites,
Expansive And Pervasive Like The Sky, The Goal Indicated By The Great Aphorism "you Are That",
One Without A Second, Eternal, Pure, Unchanging, Witness Of All Functions Of The Intellect,
Beyond All Mental Conditions And The Three Attributes Of Serenity, Passion, And Sloth).

Students should lead an ideal life

The entire universe is the combination of the gunas (qualities) of sathwa, rajas, and thamas (serenity, passion, and sloth). The human body is also comprised of these three qualities. One should try to transcend the three gunas.

There are four strings in a violin, with the help of which one can play four hundred types of tunes. Likewise, these three gunas give rise to many other gunas.

Science students are aware of this truth that white colour is the combination of seven different colours. White colour represents purity. The combination of seven colours symbolises unity. Unity leads to purity and purity leads to Divinity.

You wear white dress, which symbolises purity. In accordance with your dress,

you should keep your heart also pure, sacred, and selfless.

Everything in the world is the reflection of the inner being. What is inside is reflected outside. If there is no harmony between what you think and what you say, it amounts to deception.

Our students should be ideal in all respects. They should uphold the name of their institution and bring a good name to their parents. Make your parents feel proud of you.

Dhritarashtra Had Hundred Sons, But What Was His Ultimate Fate?
Did Suka Undergo Any Suffering Because He Did Not Have A Son?
(Telugu Poem)

What type of son should one aspire for? Even one good son who will bring a good name to you is enough.

Even One Virtuous Son Will Bring A Good Name To The Entire Clan, Just As Jasmine Creeper Spreads Fragrance All Around In The Forest.
(Telugu Poem)

Just as a jasmine flower spreads fragrance all around, you should try to impart good qualities, good feelings, and good thoughts to all those with whom you come into contact. Never hurt anyone, and never imitate others.

Follow your conscience. Help Ever , Hurt Never. If you follow these three principles, nothing in three worlds can shake you. However, you should follow these three principles with deep faith. If your mind wavers like the pendulum of a clock, you cannot achieve anything.

King Harishchandra took a vow that he would not deviate from the path of truth even at the cost of his life. That is why even after thousands of years, he is remembered as Sathya Harishchandra. Is it the body that is all important

for us?

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 (Worldliness);
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)

Body is like a water bubble. Mind is like a mad monkey. Don't follow the body, don't follow the mind. Follow the conscience. Your conscience is your witness.

Today, the mind of not only students but also elders is unsteady like the mind of a monkey. Not an ordinary monkey but a mad monkey. Therefore, before performing any action, take time and discriminate: is it good or bad, is it right or wrong. After due consideration, follow what is good. Don't be in haste.

Haste makes waste, waste makes worry. So, do not be in a hurry. Contemplate on God with a steady mind and ask whether what you are going to do is right or wrong; will it do good or cause harm to others. But, unfortunately, students today do not have such broad feelings.

One should not think in a selfish manner. Suppose someone prays, "Oh God, there is a heavy rain with lightning and thunderbolt, let others be struck by the thunderbolt, not me." This type of attitude is not correct.

You should pray for the welfare of the entire world. Samasta Loka Sukhino Bhavantu (May all the beings of all the worlds be happy)! This is the prayer that you recite every day.

Pray for the welfare of people of all religions and all nations. Students should strengthen their faith that all religions and their respective sacred texts are highly sacred. Do not criticise any religion, because the goal of all religions is

one and the same.

Students!

Give up hatred. Develop love and compassion, and lead your life in a righteous manner.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahi ....")

69. Do Not Waste Natural Resources

Date: 18 July 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, April 2012.

The Education That Helps You Only To Eke Out A Livelihood
- How Can It Develop Moral And Spiritual Outlook?
In Fact, It Destroys Man's Innate Natural Values.
Oh Students! Do Not Forget This Truth.
(Telugu Poem)

True education is that which promotes moral, ethical, and spiritual wealth of man. But students today are forgetting this ethical and sacred education and trying to acquire the education that merely helps them to fill their belly.

As is the action, so is the result

Right from an ant to Brahma, everything is God's creation. When we look at God's most beautiful, wonderful and sublime creation, we are filled with bliss.

Human beings in this world are constituted by five elements, five life principles, five sheaths, and five senses. They are endowed with all types of powers. From morning till night, whatever humanity requires in this world for happiness has been provided by God. There is nothing that is not available in this world.

God has created everything from dust to diamonds and provided all types of comforts and conveniences for human happiness in life. He has given all freedom to humanity and has put the entire creation at their disposal. In this universe and in this manifest world, one can enjoy everything without any fear and fulfil one's desires without any limit. One has the freedom to follow

any path and perform any action.

Humanity has been given every right to enjoy God's creation; one does not need God's permission for this. However, God has prescribed one rule. You may do whatever you want, but you have to face the consequences of your actions, whether they are good or bad, sacred or unsacred. This is the law of creation. Keeping this law in view, one should decide what path is to be followed and what type of actions are to be performed. As you sow, so shall you reap. Similarly, as is the action, so is the result.

Don't Build Castles In The Air, Thinking I Will Do This, I Will Do That And I Will Do Many More Things.
Whatever The Type Of Seed That You Have Sown Earlier, You Will Receive The Same Type Of Fruit.
How Is It Possible To Reap A Fruit Different From The Seed You Have Sown?
(Telugu Poem)
It Is For You To Decide What Is Good And What Is Bad. God Does Not Interfere In This.
He Has Given You The Freedom To Decide. People Sow Bitter Seeds And Expect Sweet Fruits Later.
As A Result, When They Have To Eat The Bitter Fruits, They Argue And Blame Me For Their Suffering
(Telugu Poem)

When people have to undergo suffering as a result of their bad actions, they blame God. How can you blame God when God has given you the independence to choose what is good and what is bad? When you exercise your freedom of choice, you should use your discrimination to decide what is good and what is bad.

When One Emerges From The Womb Of The Mother, There Is No Garland Around The Neck.
There Are No Jewels Made Of Pearls, Nor Are There Glittering Gold Ornaments.
There Are No Necklaces Studded With Precious Stones Like Emeralds And

Diamonds.
But There Is One Garland Around The Neck.
Brahma Strings Together The Consequences Of Past Deeds Into A Heavy Garland
And Puts It Around His Neck At The Time Of Birth.
(Telugu Poem)

God does not interfere in your freedom, whether you do good or bad. But you cannot escape the consequences of your actions. This is the law stipulated by God. Only those who understand this truth and act accordingly can derive happiness in life. Even before performing a small action, keep in mind moral, spiritual and ethical values and use you power of discrimination to decide whether to perform that action or not.

Perform meritorious deeds

Once there lived a wealthy man with his old parents. In this modern age, people do not treat their parents with due respect. Some of them think it proper to send them to an old age home when they grow old. This wealthy man and his wife also thought in the same manner. They constructed a small room in the verandah and asked their parents to stay there, since they considered it a big botheration to accommodate them inside their house.

In due course of time, a son was born to the wealthy man. This boy used to be with his grandparents right from morning till night, listening to moral stories and sacred teachings. The wealthy man tried to prevent his son from going to his grandparents because he thought, "What will happen to my son if he always listens to moral stories from his grandparents?" Every day he provided food in an earthen plate to his parents, without bothering to enquire about their well being. All this was being observed by this tender-hearted boy. He thought to himself, "Whose property is this in which my parents are living and enjoying all comforts and conveniences? It is only the property of my grandparents. It is only due to my grandparents that my parents have a name

in society. How unjust it is that they are illtreating my grandparents in spite of enjoying all their property!" In order to teach a lesson to his parents, this small boy one day took away the earthen plate and hid it somewhere. Next day, his parents were searching for the earthen plate in order to serve food to the old parents. "Mother and father, what are you searching for?" asked the boy.

"We are unable to trace the earthen plate in which we serve food to your grandparents," they replied.

Picking up courage, the boy said, "You don't need to search for it; I myself have hidden it somewhere." The father of the boy asked him angrily, "Why have you done this?" The boy replied, "I did it so that I can serve food to you in the same plate when you grow old!" See for yourself the result of a bad action. You will be treated by your children in the same manner as you treat your parents now. If you deceive your friend, you will also be deceived. If you respect your brothers, they will also respect you. Yad bhavam tad bhavati (as are the feelings, so is the result). You cannot escape the consequences of your actions.

God has created this beautiful world and given people all the freedom to enjoy His creation. He has endowed them with all types of powers. God does not interfere in what you do. You can do whatever you want to do. However, if you keep in mind that you have to face the consequences of your actions, you will not resort to wicked and sinful deeds. You will sanctify your time by performing good and meritorious deeds.

Education is meant to serve society

Modern education lacks moral, ethical, and spiritual values. Students today have no understanding of what morality is. Ethical values have been fully smothered today. Nobody knows where spirituality has gone; people just don't bother about it.

In such a situation, what benefit can you derive from the pursuit of modern education? Education today only helps you to secure a job and earn a living; it does not foster virtues. Why should you pursue education that does not inculcate virtues in you?

Give Up The Madness That Education Is Meant To Acquire Degrees.
Get Rid Of Your Slavish Mentality. Pursue Your Education Keeping In Mind
The Welfare And Prosperity Of Your Motherland.
(Telugu Poem)

You should understand the truth that education is meant to serve society. We are born in society, brought up in society, and ultimately end our life in society. What is it that you want to achieve, forgetting society, which has done so much for you? Dedicate all your education, intelligence, and energy to the service of society.

People today develop cunningness instead of intelligence. Such cunningness is the greatest enemy of humanity. Try to put all your powers to proper use.

You know the types of difficulties that society is facing today. Today society is in a state of great decline. People who resort to falsehood, injustice, and unrighteous conduct are occupying high positions. There is no place for people who adhere to truth, righteousness, and sacrifice in modern society.

However, it is only a temporary setback for good people. God will certainly reward them ultimately. Therefore, never give up truth and righteousness. This is the teaching of the Vedas, which propound the principle, Sathyam vada, dharmam chara (speak truth, practise righteousness). Those who give up truth and righteousness and take to the path of injustice and unrighteousness will certainly face its consequences.

Oh Man, Do Not Take Pride In Your Beauty, Youth And Physical Strength.
Very Soon, You Will Become Old. Your Hair Will Turn Grey, Your Skin Will
Develop Wrinkles And Your Vision Will Be Blurred.

Children Will Make Fun Of You, Calling You An Old Monkey.
You Are No Better Than A Leather Puppet.
Try To Understand The Mystery Behind This Puppet Show.
(Telugu Song)

What is this beauty? What is this youth? They are ephemeral like passing clouds. Getting carried away by youth and beauty is like trying to cross a river in a boat made of stone.

You are sure to be drowned if you travel in a boat made of stone.

Rather, you use the boat of Divine Name, which is sure to take you across the ocean of samsara (worldly life). Lead your life holding on to the principles of truth, righteousness, and human values and respecting parents, teachers, and elders.

Children today do not know what it means to respect elders. If you hear a father and a son talking to each other, you will wonder whether they are really father and son. Children lack love and respect that they should accord to their parents.

If the son is sitting on a sofa, he does not get up as a mark of respect when his father comes to him. On the other hand, he even questions him rudely, "Why did you come here?" Is this the respect children should show towards their parents? If you treat your parents in such a disrespectful manner, how will your children respect you in future? As is the food, so is the belch. As is the flour, so is the cake.

You should learn to respect your elders right from your tender age. Do not become arrogant just because you are educated. True education is that which annihilates ego and jealousy. Do not give room to pomp and show. Lead your life with humility and obedience and earn the respect of others.

I often tell our students, "Your food, your blood, your head, and your duddu

(money) are the gifts of your parents. Therefore, first of all, show gratitude to your parents." Revere your parents even before God because it is they who gave you birth and brought you up.

God creates soil and water, but it is the potter who makes pots and plates by mixing both. Similarly, God has created jada and chaitanya (matter and life principle). But it is your parents who combine both and give you a form. Therefore, it is the parents who have given you this body. That is why, our scriptures propound the principle,

Matru Devo Bhava, Pitru Devo Bhava
(Revere Your Mother And Father As God).

Parents are no less than God. There may be a wicked son, but there can be no wicked mother. Your parents bring you up with great love. You should always remember their love and lead your life in a righteous manner.

Lead a sacred life

Look at this world. How beautiful it is! Having been born in such a beautiful world and having been endowed with such a beautiful body, what a shame it is if you harbour wicked feelings!

Take, for example, the human body. How beautifully God has made this human body with various limbs in proper proportion! Our body's height, weight, etc. - everything is arranged in a befitting manner.

There are 600 million people in this world today. Do you find any two individuals resembling each other in every respect? Everybody has their own unique form. How mysterious is God's creation! If twins are born to a mother, even they do not look alike in all respects. There will be some difference between them.

I challenge you to bring two individuals who look alike in all respects. I will give you whatever you want. You need not go that far. Look at that neem tree, which is full of leaves. Each leaf is different from the other.

This is the mysterious and wonderful creation of God. How shameful it is if you conduct yourself with wicked feelings, being a part of such beautiful and wonderful creation of God! Since you live in the sacred creation of God, you should also have sacred feelings. Nobody knows when this body will perish.

The Body, Which Is Made Up Of Five Elements, Is Weak And Is Bound To Disintegrate.
Though Hundred Years Of Life Span Is Prescribed, One Cannot Take It For Granted.
One May Leave One's Mortal Coil At Any Time, Be It In Childhood, Youth, Or Old Age.
Death Is Certain.
Hence, Before The Body Perishes, Make Efforts To Know Your True Nature.
(Telugu Poem)

Before your life comes to an end, you should realise who you are. Wherever you look, people ask others, "Who are you, who are you?" But they do not put that question to themselves, "Who am I?" What is the use of knowing everything when you do not know who you are?

Body is like a water bubble. You are not the body. Mind is like a mad monkey. You are not the mind. Then, who are you? You are the master of the body and mind. In spite of being the master, if you do not realise this truth, how can you claim yourself to be the master?

The term master is used to describe a person holding a position of authority. There are many masters, like postmaster, stationmaster, etc. Some people address Me as Divine Master. Truly speaking, the word master should not be used for God because God is the servant of all. Everything is done by God. Such being the case, it is not proper to call Him master. He has a master plan,

but He is not the master. You should follow the master plan of God.

Make proper use of natural resources

God's creation is very sacred. Do not pollute it. How sacred are the five elements given by God!

But, today, the air we breathe, the food we eat, the water we drink, the sound we hear - everything is polluted. All these sacred elements have been made unsacred by humanity. That is why the world today is afflicted with so many diseases. That one is a true human being who makes sacred use of the five elements. Never waste natural resources.

A small incident happened some time ago. While conversing with Me in the interview room, Siva Sankar Sai, the warden of our senior boys hostel, said, "Swami, Your eyes have become red." I replied, "That is due to My own mistake. I do not waste water like you people. When you wash your face, you leave the tap open continuously. While you apply soap to your face, you waste a lot of water by leaving the tap open. But I do not do like that. I open the tap only when it is necessary and close it immediately. After applying soap to My face, I opened My eyes to open the tap. In the process, a small amount of soap entered My eyes and hence My eyes became red." I do not waste even a drop of water because water is God. Air is also a form of God. That is why I switch off the fan immediately when it is not required. Some people keep the light on throughout the night even if it is not required. But I switch on the light when it is necessary and at once switch it off when it is not needed.

This is not miserliness. I am not a miser. I am the embodiment of sacrifice. But I don't like to waste anything. Use everything as much as it is necessary. But people today are misusing the five elements.

Never waste money

There is another point I want to tell our students. Students today waste a lot of money. They should realise that their parents undergo a lot of hardship to earn money. They toil hard and sometimes even forego their food to save some money in order to send it to you.

There may be some parents who are well-todo; I am not talking about them. But parents who are not so well-to-do struggle hard to keep you happy and comfortable. So, consider each paisa that you receive from your parents like a drop of their blood.

Never waste money. If you waste money, it amounts to wasting the blood of your parents. Take as much money as is necessary. Do not be a spendthrift.

But how much money students spend today! It is not a practice in our Institute, but in outside institutions, a lot of money is spent by students in college elections. One wonders whether it is a college election or an Assembly election!

What is the term of a union leader? Should one spend so much money to get elected as an office bearer of a students union for such a short term?

Not only that. When the students go on a picnic, they waste a lot of money. They arrange dinners in high class hotels. Chi! Chi! Chi! What a shame! Such misuse of money is very bad.

You should give some thought to the financial condition of your parents and your own future. Do not spend money as you please, just because parents have sent it to you.

That is why I always emphasise the practice of ceiling on desires. Don't waste time. Time waste is life waste. Don't waste food. Food is God. Don't waste money. Misuse of money is evil. Don't waste energy. Energy is God.

You see, hear, speak, smell, and perform all actions only due to the divine

energy of God. Do not waste your divine energy by misusing your senses. If you put this divine energy to sacred use, you can attain the sacredness of Divinity. But if you waste this energy, you will be a victim of many diseases.

Make sacred use of your senses

You can see for yourself, sacredness is the root cause of this body's energy. Do you know how old is this body? It is seventy years and six months old. But how energetic I am! Even now I can run very fast and stand first in the running race. Even a sixteen-year-old young boy cannot do as much work as I do.

I do a lot of work. Every day I receive bundles of letters by hand and by post. After the bhajan is over, I go back and read all those letters. I know the contents of each letter, yet for the satisfaction of devotees, I read them. Till the time I come out again at 3.45 p.m., I read these letters. How is My eyesight? I can see things clearly even from a long distance. This is not Ddvine power; this is My natural power. It is My purity that is responsible for this.

I have no defects like short-sightedness and long-sightedness. I can read even very small letters. You can estimate the power of My ears when I tell you that I can hear even the sound of the footsteps of an ant. All My senses are perfect.

I feel very sorry when I see small children wearing spectacles. Small children of six, ten, and sixteen years of age are wearing spectacles today. What is the reason? The defect lies in their blood.

You can live long if you make proper use of your senses. Therefore, develop sacredness. I can do much more work than a young boy can do because I am endowed with such great power due to the sacred use of my senses. That is not divine power or something that I have acquired. It is My natural power.

You will be surprised to know what I eat. I eat ragi sankati in the morning. But you eat various items like korma, burma, etc. I wonder how you people eat and digest those things. No doubt, youngsters should eat well and maintain their body. But you should not eat in excess.

Today people don't observe any time for food nor do they give any proper interval between one meal and the other. They keep eating something or the other all the time. They have their lunch in the afternoon and dinner at night; in between, they keep stuffing their belly with snacks and drinks.

You should enquire what is to be eaten and what is not to be eaten. Do not eat everything, everywhere. Observe proper discipline with regard to your eating habits. One day, I will speak to you about proper food habits. As is the food, so is the head. Food, head, and God are interrelated.

Never read bad books

Don't waste your time. Study well. Some boys read bad novels keeping them inside their textbooks. To others, they appear to be reading textbooks, but they conceal their novels in between textbooks. When someone comes near them, they at once hide them.

Never read such bad books. As is the pustaka (book), so is the mastaka (head). Today, there are many bad books in the market. People indulge in such evil practice of writing bad books only for the sake of money. They write them because there are people to buy them. They will not write if you don't buy them. Therefore, never read bad books, never join bad company, never wear inappropriate dress.

I have seen some people wearing black and red shirts in Madras (Chennai). In fact, it looks like a carpet. Even animals will run away out of fear seeing such a dress. How elegant is pure white dress! How blissful it is to wear it!

Even our boys wear black pants and shirt while traveling in a bus or a train.

They say, "Swami, we wear such dress only when we travel." People may think, these boys are going to Sabarimala, seeing their dress.

Do not wear such clothes. Wear only good and neat dress. Your body, mind, and also the dress should be neat and clean. Develop purity in this manner.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Ranga Vitthala Panduranga Vitthala ...")

70. Nama Sankirtan Is The Royal Path For Man’s Redemption

Date: 19 July 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, May 2012.

Devotion Is The Basis To Attain Knowledge Of The Supreme Being.
Devotion Is The Panacea To Get Rid Of The Disease Of Birth And Death.
Devotion Leads To The Knowledge Of Eternal Truth And Confers Liberation,
Which Is The Ultimate Goal Of Life. (Sanskrit Verse)

People follow various paths of bhakti (devotion) to attain the grace of God. What is meant by bhakti? It is derived from the root 'bhaj', which means seva (selfless service). It signifies the principle of love. 'Bhaj' has many other meanings.

Chanting divine names gives eternal bliss

Devotees have been singing the glories of God in four ways: guna gana, geela gana, bhava gana, and nama gana (singing about divine attributes, deeds, thoughts, and names of God).

God is gunateeta (attributeless) and bhavateeta (beyond thoughts). By extolling the attributes of the Attributeless One, you cannot derive complete satisfaction. It is mere delusion to think that you can please God by extolling His attributes. The satisfaction that you derive out of guna sankirtan (singing about God's attributes) is only temporary. Truly speaking, God has no attributes.

Many devotees extol the attributes of God in this manner:

Oh The Lord Of The Universe!
You Are Dear To Lakshmi, The Goddess Of Wealth.
You Confer Auspiciousness On Those Who Take Refuge In You.
You Recline On The Serpent Adi Sesha And Are The Embodiment Of Wealth And Bliss.
Please Destroy My Worldly Bondages And Grant Me Eternal Happiness.
(Telugu Song)

People extol God as Sesha Sayana, Srinivasa (in whose heart Lakshmi resides), Chidvilasa (abode of bliss). Who is Srinivasa? Who is Chidvilasa? Does it not amount to extolling His attributes? Devotees who extol the attributes of the Lord in this manner can derive only temporary satisfaction.

Similarly, many devotees like Jayadeva and Gauranga sang the leelas (plays) of the Lord. Jayadeva, Gauranga, Mira, and Sakkubai tried to derive satisfaction by singing the divine leelas, but ultimately they realised that the entire world is the leela of the Lord. Creation itself is His Leela. Then how can you separate only a few acts of God as His leelas? Having realised this truth, they started performing nama sankirtan and experienced bliss. Nama sankirtan is the highest form of devotion, which can lead man to the ultimate goal of life. Mira craved for the vision of Krishna's blissful form in this manner:

Dear One! Come And Bless Me With Thy Vision.
Without Thee, Oh Krishna, I Cannot Be.
I Have No Hunger During The Day And No Sleep At Night.
What Can I Say When The Words Do Not Come Out Of My Mouth?
Come, Oh Lord, And Soothe This Burning Heart. (Hindi Song)

Ultimately, Mira realised that day is Krishna, night is Krishna, and everything is Krishna. He is time itself. Everything is His Divine Leela. Having realised this truth, Mira considered Krishna as her Hridayavasi (indweller of her heart). She said, "Oh Krishna, my heart is Your temple." Nany devotees are lost in the thoughts of God. They sing:

Oh Lord, Your Face Is As Beautiful As The Moon And Your Lotus Feet Are Worshipped By All The Gods.
You Are Dear To Goddess Lakshmi. Wherever I Look, I Find You Only. You Are There Even In Lanes And Bylanes.
I See You As The Indweller Of Everyone And As The Embodiment Of Bliss.
You Bestow Auspiciousness On Those Who Take Refuge In You.
Oh Govinda, The Bestower Of Eternal Bliss, Come Quickly And Save Me. (Telugu Song)

Spiritual import of Krishna's leelas

God is immanent in every particle of the universe. What to speak of lanes and bylanes, the entire universe is His leela (play, sport). Therefore, it is due to your imagination that you do guna sankirtan, bhava sankirtan, and leela sankirtan.

Of the four types of sankirtan, nama sankirtan (singing the Names of God) is the best and the highest. It is, in fact, the royal path for man's redemption. When many people come together and do nama sankirtan wholeheartedly, divine vibrations generated by it spread everywhere.

When God assumes a form, He takes upon Himself a name also. One should contemplate on the form while reciting the name. This is japa sahita dhyana or dhyana sahita japa (chanting with meditation or meditation with chanting). The gopikas (cowhered maids) not only chanted the name of Krishna, they were also deeply attached to His form.

Everything in this world has a name and a form. It is the attachment to name and form that gives rise to abhimana and mamakara (attachment and feelings of mine and thine).

Some people ridicule the divine leelas of Krishna without understanding their import. Similarly, even today, many people criticise God without

understanding the import of His divine leelas. When Krishna played and danced with gopikas, he was only a child of six years. Where is the scope for criticising the acts of a six-year-old child? This criticism is only born out of people's imagination.

Once Krishna went to the house of a gopika and knocked at her door when her husband was taking rest inside. The gopika took some time to respond. Krishna was not one to keep quiet. When He kept on knocking at the door, she spoke to Him through the crevice of the door and said,

Krishna! I Am Going To Open The Door. Why Are You In A Hurry?
Have Patience, Because My Husband Is Taking Rest.
Therefore, Wait For Some Time. (Telugu Song)

In spite of the pleadings of the gopika, Krishna continued to knock at the door. Then her husband got up and opened the door. He was happy to see child Krishna at the door; he was not at all angry. He took Him in his arms and brought Him inside. Seeing this, the gopika was ecstatic, thinking, "Aha! My husband is also transformed. He is showering his love and affection on Krishna." Fully immersed in the thoughts of Krishna, she lost her body consciousness.

On the face of it, the leelas of Krishna appear to be of the nature of pravritti (worldliness) but their true import is nivritti (spirituality). In fact, all the divine leelas of God lead man from pravritti to nivritti.

One can derive bliss by singing the leelas of God. It is everybody's experience how sweet and blissful it is to sing the divine glories of God. When devotees do nagar sankirtan (walking the streets, singing) early in the morning, even those who do not know singing join them blissfully. There is so much sweetness in singing. Be he a theist, an atheist, a theistic-atheist, or an atheistic-theist, everyone forgets themself listening to divine sankirtan. Sankirtan of God's Name captivates the heart of all those who participate in it; it makes them forget themselves.

Not only that, all the divine leelas, attributes, and powers of God can be described beautifully in singing. Singing pleases one and all. It is the royal road to redemption for all. Those devotees who sing God's glory, wholeheartedly forgetting themselves, develop total love for God. God becomes verily the servant of such ardent devotees. Many devotees have been propagating the divine powers of God in the world through their songs.

You Are Beyond All Description And Human Comprehension.
Is It Possible To Estimate Your Glory And Splendour?
I Have Been Waiting For Your Grace. Oh Lord!
Listen To My Prayer And Redeem Me. You Are The One Who Brought Back To Life The Dead Son Of Your Preceptor. You Are The One Who Vanquished The Serpent Kaliya, Freed Vasudeva And Devaki And Saved Draupadi From Humiliation.
You Fulfilled Kuchela's Desires. You Made Ugly-Looking Kubja Beautiful.
You Protected The Pandavas And Saved The 16,000 Gopikas.
You Are Beyond All Description And Human Comprehension.
Krishna, It Is Not Possible For Even Brahma To Describe Your Glory.
I Have Been Praying For Your Grace. (Telugu Song)

God is beyond all description and the reach of the mind. That is why the Vedas declare, Yatho Vacho Nivarthanthe Aprapya Manasa Saha (whence the words along with the mind rebound in futility without comprehending Divinity).

Supreme importance of community singing

Samashti sankirtan (community singing) has the power to make the heart blossom. It broadens the mind and spreads divine vibrations all over the world. That is why community singing is the noblest among all spiritual practices.

Guru Nanak initiated this practice. He started this type of singing in which

everybody could join together and sing in unison. It is only such type of singing through which one can attain liberation. Great saints like Kabir Das, Tulsi Das, and Ramdas attained liberation through nama sankirtan (singing the names of God). There is immense power in nama sankirtan.

People may say God has no form, but He certainly has a name. However, the name of God does not mean only Rama, Krishna, Govinda, etc. God itself is His name. People say that God has no name and no form, but there is nothing in this universe that has no name and form. Even an atom has a name and a form. How can microcosm become macrocosm if it does not have a name and a form? Each and every form is associated with a name, and every name is endowed with divine power.

That is why the Bharatiyas (Indians) have been worshipping stones, trees, birds, and even poisonous snakes. They believe that there is nothing in this universe that is not pervaded by Divinity. That is why many people do pradakshina (circumambulation) wherever they are and offer their salutations to mother earth. Where is the place where there is no earth? It is everywhere. Here is a small story.

Once a fox took five rupees as a loan from the earth. When it got up next morning, the earth asked, "Will you return my five rupees to me or not?" In order to escape from the earth, the fox started running. It ran day and night and reached a distant forest. Then it peacefully slept, thinking, "Now I can rest happily without being bothered by the earth." However, when it got up from sleep next morning, the earth asked, "What, when are you going to give back my five rupees?" The earth is also a form of God, and it is present everywhere like God. That is why the Vedas propound,

Sarvatah Panipadam Tat Sarvathokshi Siromukham, Sarvatah Srutimalloke Sarvamavruthya Tishthati
(With Hands, Feet, Eyes, Head, Mouth, And Ears Pervading Everything, God Permeates The Entire Universe).

Chanting of any name of God confers bliss

Once mother earth prayed to Lord Narayana, "Swami, I can bear the burden of any number of sinners, but not of those who do not chant Your Name. Therefore, kindly show the path of liberation to one and all through chanting of the divine Name." Valmiki wrote the Ramayana consisting of one crore slokas (verses). He wanted to distribute the slokas to the three lokas (worlds) equally, so he distributed 3,333,333 to each of the three worlds. At the end of the distribution, one sloka was left out.

The question arose how to distribute one sloka into three parts. The sloka consisted of 32 letters. Valmiki distributed 10 letters each to the three lokas. Still two letters remained. How to distribute these two letters to three worlds?

Vishnu told mother earth, "When Valmiki distributed one crore sloka of his Ramayana to all the three worlds, two letters remained. These letters were Rama, Krishna, Hari, Hara, Siva, Sai, etc.," which are the common property of all the three worlds (loud applause). These two letters signify unity in this world, which is otherwise marked by duality.

Duality is the nature of this world. Human beings are unable to have vision of reality because of their duality. One with dual mind is half blind. That person is so deluded that they sometimes say 'yes' and sometimes say 'no' as an answer to the same question. Those who chant the divine Names can overcome this duality and redeem themselves. This is true with respect to the divine Names of Jesus and Allah also. Man should therefore chant the divine Name of God constantly.

Thyagaraja sang thus:

Oh Lord! How Can I Decide Who You Really Are,
Whether You Are Siva Or Madhava?
The Letter 'ra' Is The Life Force Of Madhava Mantra And
The Letter 'ma' Is The Life Force Of Siva Mantra.

I Offer My Salutations To The One Whose Name Is The Life Force Of These Two Mantras.
(Telugu Song)

The Madhava Mantra is "Om Namo Narayanaya" and the letter 'Ra' is its life force. When we remove the letter 'Ra' from the word Narayana, it becomes Nayana, which is meaningless.

Similarly, the Siva Mantra is "Om Namah Sivaya." If we remove the letter 'Ma' from this, it becomes nasivaya, which means inauspicious. However, when you join these letters 'Ra' and 'Ma', they give the Divine Name Rama, to whom Thyagaraja offered his salutations.

There is no one in this world who does not chant the Divine Name in one way or the other in their life. Many people have children or friends who bear the divine names Rama, Krishna, etc. They do chant the divine name when they call them, saying, "Come, oh Rama, come, oh Krishna." God has innumerable names and infinite forms. You may chant any of His names and redeem your life by nama sankirtan (singing the names of God). You may describe God in any number of ways. But this will give you only temporary satisfaction. Chanting His Divine Name alone confers eternal bliss.

What greater penance can there be other than making the Divine Name dance on your tongue constantly? Only chanting of the Divine Name is the real tapas (penance), real tirtha (place of pilgrimage), and kshetra (holy place). Therefore, nama sankirtan has supreme importance in the life of man. Chant the Divine Name constantly and redeem your life.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin ...")

71. Develop Your Faith With Love For God

Date: 20 July 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, June 2012.

One May Be A Highly Accomplished Scholar Having Mastered The Vedas, The Sastras, And The Puranas,
One May Be A Great Emperor Ruling Over A Vast Kingdom,
But None Can Equal A Devotee Who Has Sacrificed Everything For The Lord.
What Is More To Be Conveyed To This Assembly Of Noble People?
(Telugu Poem)

Students!

Since ancient times, many people have been making efforts to attain God by practising four types of aradhana (worship) as prescribed by the culture of Bharat (India): satyavathi aradhana, angavathi aradhana, anyavathi aradhana, and nidanavathi aradhana (worships that are truth-based, manifestation-based, symbol-based, and slow and sure).

Various ways to worship God

The first is satyavathi aradhana (truth-based worship). In this type of worship, the devotee worships God with the faith that He is immanent in every particle of the universe, just as butter is present in every drop of milk. Like oil in til (sesame) seeds and fire in wood, God pervades the entire manifest creation. The devotee worships God with the awareness Viswam Vishnumayam Jagat (Lord Vishnu pervades the entire world) and believes that the world is the effect and God is the cause.

There is another subtle path by name angavathi aradhana (manifestation-

based wor- ship). Those who follow this path consider each of the five elements, namely, ether, air, fire, water, and earth, as the manifestation of God and worship them. These five elements are represented in the human body as sabda, sparsha, rupa, rasa, and gandha (hearing, touch, sight, taste, and smell), respectively. Even today, people worship water as Ganga Matha (Mother Ganga), air as Vayu Deva, and rain as Varuna Deva. In this manner, the Bharatiyas (Indians) have been worshipping the five elements in accordance with their ancient culture. This is angavathi aradhana.

The third path is the anyavathi aradhana (symbol-based worship). People who follow this path ascribe to God various names and forms with specific attributes, just as kodandapani (one who wields the kodanda bow) symbolises Rama and Gangadhari (one who sports Ganga in his matted locks) denotes Eswara (God).

Similarly, Vishnu holds conch, disc, mace, and lotus in His four hands. Krishna sports a peacock feather on His head and plays on His divine flute. In the same way, Saraswati is considered Veena Pani (one who holds Veena in her hand).

In this manner, our ancients worshipped God by attributing various symbols to them. One is the form and the other is the name. They wor shipped God by attributing a specific name and form. Only when you realise the unity of the name and form can you experience divinity.

This is a matchbox (Swami materialised a matchbox). The same power is present in the matchbox and also in the matchstick. One symbolises the form and the other the name. Just as fire is produced when a matchstick is struck on a matchbox, likewise jnanagni (fire of wisdom) is manifested when name and form combine. The same power is present in the name as well as in the form. The name points to the form and the form reminds of the name. The same principle of unity and divinity is present in both. When the name and form combine, divine principle manifests there.

Since Vedic times, the Bharatiyas (Indians) have been following this principle

and experiencing Divinity. They had total faith in the unity of name and form. They believed that there was no object or name that was not divine in this world. Is there any name that is not associated with a form?

Take, for example, the name God. Where did this name God come from? If there is no God, how can the name God come into existence?

However, some people may dispute this. They quote the name, Gagana Pushpam and ask, "Is there a flower in the sky? When Gagana Pushpam has no existence, how can there be a word like this?" But they are totally mistaken. Gagana Pushpam is not a single word, it is a combination of two words: Gagana and Pushpam (sky and flower). But God is single word. Without the existence of God, this word would not have originated. Therefore, since ancient times, people believed there was an inseparable relationship between name and form. None can deny this truth.

The fourth type of worship is nidanavathi. People who perform this sadhana (spiritual exercise) follow nine paths of devotion: sravanam (listening), kirtanam (singing), Vishnusmaranam (contemplating on Vishnu), Padasevanam (serving His Lotus Feet), vandanam (salutation), archanam (worship), dasyam (servitude), sneham (friendship), and Atmanivedanam (self-surrender).

By following these nine paths of devotion, people contemplated on God and attained the goal of life.

One can attain the goal of life by the power of upasana (worship). One should never forget the goal of life or deviate from the chosen path; one should attain it by one-pointed devotion.

The sadhakas (aspirants) in those days attained Divinity by following the path as prescribed by the Vedas. Due to the influence of time, space, and circumstances, modern youth are neglecting such sacred practices. They argue, "How can stones, trees, anthills, and animals be considered divine?" This reflects their narrow-mindedness.

What is the meaning of the Vedic declaration, Easwara Sarva Bhutanam (God is the indweller of all beings)? Just as the Vedas expound the truth that God is immanent in the entire creation, science declares that the entire creation is made up of atoms. There is nothing that is not made of atoms. The power of atom is present in anthills, stones, soil, trees, etc.

When the scientists argue that the power of atom is present in everything, it means that Divinity is present in the entire creation. That is why our ancients propagated the truth, Anta Ramamayam, Ee Jagamanta Ramamayam (everything is pervaded by Rama, the whole world is suffused with Rama).

Today, modern scientists boast of having made great progress in the fields of science and technology. They say that everything in this world is based on science. But one should not forget that along with vijnana (science), ajnana (ignorance) is also on the rise. One follows the other just as shadow follows the reality. What is this science? The ignorance associated with science is not present in anything else. One cannot develop faith in God unless one understands this contradiction.

Have firm faith in God

The boy who spoke earlier prayed, "Swami, bless us with strong faith and develop it." Such a prayer is born out of innocence. Faith is not something that can be developed in you by others. Faith is there in you right from the time of your birth. When you realise this truth, faith will automatically develop.

When you say, she is my mother, it is based on faith only. Without faith, you cannot call her your mother. Likewise, when you have firm conviction in the presence of God, your faith naturally develops.

Faith in yourself, faith in God - this is the secret of greatness. First of all, have faith in yourself. If you do not have faith in yourself, you cannot have faith in God. Therefore, one who denies God, denies themself. One who has faith in

themself will have faith in God.

Man is essentially divine. That is why the Vedas declare:

> Poornamada Poornamidam, Poornat Poornamudachyate,
> Poornasya Poornamadaya, Poornamevavashishyate.
> That Is Full, This Is Full.
> When The Full Is Taken Out Of The Full, What Remains Is Again The Full.

The same divine principle is present in God and human being. You may see various names and forms in this manifest world. Ek Prabhu Ke Anek Nam (one God has many names). Ekoham Bahusyam (the One willed to become many). God willed to assume many names and forms. That is why unity appears to be multiplicity.

Our ancients prescribed the paths of work, worship, and wisdom to teach this principle of unity in diversity. People followed these three paths to realise unity in diversity.

Only One exists. Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanti (truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names). All other names and forms originate from this One.

Take, for example, the two numbers one and nine. Even if you ask a child, he will tell you, nine is greater than one. But this is not true. One is the greatest. 1+1+1+1+1+1+1+1+1 = 9. How can you get the number nine without one? Hence, One is hero, this world is zero. Hero becomes zero if the hero forgets God.

Unity is Divinity. If you forget this One, nothing else matters in this world. This is what the culture of Bharat (India) has been propagating since ancient times. Therefore, you should develop faith in this principle of oneness.

In whatever form you see, only One exists, and that is God. You have to

undertake certain practices to realise God. Anything can be accomplished by practice. One becomes a singer by continuous practice. Similarly, by continuous contemplation of God, you will surely experience Divinity. Have total focus on God with single-minded concentration.

In ancient days, everyone was engaged in the contemplation of God in Bharat (India). But due to the influence of modern age, many people do not have belief in God and consider idol worship as a foolish practice. The Indian belief that God is present even in birds and animals denotes social security. Such type of social security cannot be found anywhere else except Bharat. According to the Bharatiyas (Indians), a tree is God, a stone is God, and even an anthill is God.

A sculptor makes the idol of Rama out of an ordinary rock on the hill. Has the sculptor carved Rama out of the rock or was Rama already present in the rock? Rama was already present in that rock. The sculptor only cleaned and chiseled the rock to bring out Rama from it. In the same way, Divinity is present in everything.

You install an idol of Rama in the temple and worship it, considering it as Lord Rama Himself. There will be so many small stones lying scattered on the hill. But do you worship them? No. What is the reason? Because they have not taken the shape of the idol. Nevertheless, those pieces of stone lying on the hill proclaim, "Thath twam asi (That Thou Art). The idol in the temple and we are one and the same. But the sculptor has separated us." The same truth is reflected in the great aphorism, Aham Brahmasmi (I am Brahman).

Due to your own worldly feelings and delusion, you think you are different from God. Mistake lies in the individual, not in the divine power. Wherever you look, God is present. You should have firm faith in the allpervasiveness of Divinity.

Experiencing Oneness with God

Once the elder brother of Thyagaraja threw away the idol of Rama worshipped by Thyagaraja in the river Cauvery. The reason for his anger at Thyagaraja was that Thyagaraja refused to accept the jewels and other gifts sent by the king of Thanjavur, saying, Nidhi chala sukhama, Easwara sannidhi shala sukhama, nijamuga telupumu manasa (Oh mind! Tell me, whether happiness lies in wealth or in the proximity of God).

When he noticed that the idol of Rama was missing from his altar, Thyagaraja went in search of it. He sang, "Oh Rama, where am I to search for You? How can I limit You to a particular place?" After searching for the idol of Rama for a long time, he was tired and went to the river Cauvery for a bath. As he took the river water in his cupped hands to offer oblations, saying, Keshavaya Namah, Madhavaya Namah, Govindaya Namah, the idol of Rama fell in his hands. When you have such firm faith in the Lord, you will always experience oneness with Him. You will never think that He is separate from you.

When an old friend visits our house, we address him in an informal way, "Hey, come." But when a new friend comes to our house, we offer him a seat with all courtesy and respect, requesting him, "Please be seated." You address an old friend in intimate terms, saying, "Hey, what are you doing? What brings you here?" Similarly, when you have firm faith in the Lord and feel oneness with Him, you will not address Him in a formal way.

Thyagaraja considered Rama as his old friend and addressed Him in informal terms. Ra Ra Ma Intidaka (come to our house). He addressed Rama in such intimate terms because He considered Him very close to his heart. He sang, "Where am I to search for You, oh Rama. I have no refuge other than You, oh Rama." He used the term, "Ra Ra" which in Telugu is used to address intimate friends. He enjoyed such freedom with Rama because he considered Him his old friend.

It is not possible to know God

You should realise that this is not your first birth; you had many previous

births. The very term manava (human being) signifies that you are not new. 'Ma' means not. 'Nava' means new.

Similarly, God is not new to you, He is your old friend. Never treat God as your new friend. Anadi, Ananta, and Aprameya (Beginningless, Infinite, and Incomparable) - these are some of the names of God.

W e acquire knowledge usually from four types of pramanas (experiences), namely, pratyaksha pramana (direct experience), anumana pramana (experience based on inference), upamana pramana (experience gained by analogy), and sabda pramana (experience gained from verbal testimony). God is beyond these four. Hence, He is called Aprameya (immeasurable and indefinable).

Howsoever you may try to know about God, so much will still be left to know about Him. So far, no one can say that they have understood God completely.

A sage sat in meditation, closing his eyes, in order to realise God. God Himself came to him in the form of a small boy and asked him, "Grandfather, what are you doing?" The sage replied, "My dear, I am trying to know God." "Have you come to know Him?" The sage replied, "Not yet." The boy left the place. The sage did not realise that the boy was none other than God because he was contemplating on the formless aspect of God. Similarly, many people ignore the direct evidence of God's presence and look for indirect evidences.

When the child came again after one month, the eyes of the sage were half open. The child asked him, "Oh grandfather, have you known God?" The sage replied, "Yes, I have known as much of Him as my eyes are open." The child said, "Okay, you have known half of what you are trying to know. Make efforts to know Him completely." He left the place.

The child came back after another month. By then the eyes of the sage were fully open. The child asked again, "Have you succeeded in your endeavour to know God?" He said, "Yes, I have come to know the truth." "What is it that you have come to know?" The sage replied, "I have come to know that it is

not possible to know God." How can anyone know Him? When God Himself came in the form of the boy, the sage failed to recognise Him. Then, how can anybody attribute a particular form to God? That is what Saint Thyagaraja sang, "Oh Lord! How am I to know who You really are, whether You are Siva or Madhava?" In fact, all forms are His. Sarva Jiva Na5 maskaram Kesavam Pratigachchhati (whoever you salute, it reaches God) and Sarva Jiva Tiraskaram Kesavam Pratigachchhati (whoever you criticise, it reaches God). God is the indweller of all beings. All forms are the forms of God. Daivam Manusha Rupena (God is in the form of a human being). First and foremost, you have to realise this truth.

God is described as Viswa Virat Swarupa (one with cosmic form).

Sahasra Seersha Purusha Sahasraksha Sahasra Pad (the Cosmic Being has thousands of heads, eyes, and feet). What does it signify? All heads, all eyes are His. What is there that does not belong to Him?

One must have such strong faith in God. This is not something one can give or take. Some people pray, "Swami, give me deep faith." But this is not a give and take business. You yourself have to develop faith. If you are hungry, you have to eat food to satiate your hunger. It is you who has to take medicine to cure your illness. Similarly, you have to develop your faith with love for God. Love is not something that can be given to you as a gift.

When you step on the path of love, your love for God will automatically develop. When you sow a sapling and nourish it with water and manure regularly, it will grow into a tree. Similarly, when you regularly give water of love to the sapling of faith, it will grow into a giant tree.

On the other hand, if you keep on pulling the sapling every now and then to see how much it has grown, it will break. The growth of the sapling of your faith depends entirely on you, not anybody else. You have to develop it yourself.

Love and faith are present in you. What you have to do is to turn them toward

God. Then work will be transformed into worship. Whatever you do, consider it as God's work. Consider every form that you see as the form of God. God has infinite forms. This is also one of those forms. But you should install only one form of God in your heart. Then you will realise that all forms belong to God.

In this way, ancient sages and seers followed the four paths satyavathi aradhana, angavathi aradhana, anyavathi aradhana, and nidanavathi aradhana to worship God and attained liberation. They were not foolish. In fact, they did a lot of research and deep study, experienced happiness, and shared it with others. Only the educated fools of today question the wisdom of our ancient sages.

Do bhajans with love

None can say, God is like this or that. If someone comes to you and says, "Why do you talk about God? God is nowhere," you should say, "God is now here." If you have strong faith in God, what should be your reply to him? "Oh madcap, you may say that your God does not exist. But who are you to deny the existence of my God? I have my God." When you have such strong faith, you can achieve anything in life. If your faith is shaken when any Tom, Dick, and Harry says something, you will not achieve anything. You should have firm resolve.

Earlier also I have told the importance of three Ps: Purity, Patience, and Perseverance. You can achieve success only when you have these three. First of all, have firm determination. Determination for what? Determination to do good, not bad. If your determination is for doing something bad, then it is only foolishness, not determination. Even at the cost of your life, be determined to do good.

Child Prahlada continued to chant the name Narayana in the face of all trials and tribulations. He had no fear at all. His own father subjected him to all sorts of ordeals. Ultimately, it was his firm faith that protected him and

punished his father. Therefore, develop firm determination to attain the grace of God.

It is not proper to get carried away by what any Ellaiah and Mallaiah tell you in the bazar. You can yourself see that people today do not believe in God, but they believe in the weekly magazines and meaningless novels and are prepared to believe an ordinary astrologer.

Today there are some people who wear a robe like Me, have bushy hair on their head, and claim that Sai Baba has given them special powers. They are really foolish fellows. The powers of Sai Baba cannot be given or received. But some people believe in such impostors and get deceived. Never go near them.

Divine power is not something that can be given or taken. You can attain it with your faith. If your faith remains unwavering right from the beginning till the end, that is called true devotion and surrender. That is sthira bhakthi and ananya bhakthi (steady and single-minded devotion). When you have such firm devotion, you will attain unwavering mind and deep faith, which are very essential on the spiritual path.

Sometimes, you may think that God is subjecting you to hardships. In fact, God does not give you suffering or happiness; He is only a witness. Your own deeds are responsible for your suffering. When you face difficulties, you should remain unperturbed and move forward. Whatever happens, think it is good for you. You can achieve anything when you have such unflinching faith.

Do not waste your time, money, and energy running after fake Gurus. Attain God with unwavering mind and one-pointed faith. Sai always emphasises one thing: bhajan, bhajan, bhajan. When you do bhajan with love, you can attain God wherever you are.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Prema Mudita Manase Kaho ...")

72. Expand Your Love and Experience Eternal Bliss

Date: 21 July 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, July 2012.

Oh Man!
Develop The Principle Of Love By Performing Meritorious Deeds And Cultivating The Spirit Of Sacrifice.
Subjugate Your Demonic Tendencies, Develop Divine Qualities And Lead An Ideal Life In This World.
(Telugu Poem)

Having been born in this vast universe, it is a matter of great shame that man should have a narrow mind. This universe is the form of God. As God is immanent in everyone, one's heart should be as expansive as the universe itself. Since people today have forgotten God and are enmeshed in worldly life, they have become narrow-minded. If one contemplates on all-pervasive God, the mind will also become broad and expansive. In this way, people should broaden their heart.

Safeguard the spiritual wealth of Bharat

Instead of spreading noble ideals in society, people today are promoting narrowmindedness. Every act should promote divinity, sacredness and broad-mindedness. Therefore, it is said,

Body X Infinity = Virat Swarupa (Cosmic Being),
Mind X Infinity = Hiranyagarbha (Golden Womb Of Consciousness),
Atma X Infinity = Brahman.

A person is the repository of great powers and spiritual wealth. But one is not realising one's infinite powers. One can set a great ideal to society only when one realises that one is a part of infinite Divinity. This infinite divine power is present in each and every human being.

There are three aspects of this Divinity: paramarthika, vyavaharika, and pratibhasika (absolutely real, empirical and illusory). These three are not different from each other. The same Divinity is present in all three. There can be no waves without water, and there can be no froth without waves. The waves are the basis of froth, and water is the basis of waves. Water is the same in all the three - ocean, waves and froth. Similarly, the same Divinity is present in paramarthika, vyavaharika, and pratibhasika.

One should make spirituality the basis of all worldly activities. But, unfortunately, people today consider paramarthika and vyavaharika (absolutely real and empirical) as separate from each other. People say there is no relationship between spirituality and worldly life. This is a great mistake. It is not possible for the world to exist without the foundation of spirituality. In fact, spirituality is inherent in worldliness. Therefore, the Vedas demonstrated the truth that the same Divinity is present in paramarthika, vyavaharika, and pratibhasika.

From generation to generation, Bharat (India) has been sharing its spiritual wealth with other countries and thereby promoting peace and security in the world. Since ancient times, Bharat has been spreading the broad feelings contained in the Vedic dictum, Samasta lokah sukhino bhavantu (May all the beings of all the worlds be happy)! Kings, sages, and seers have been safeguarding the spiritual wealth of Bharat by propagating such sacred ideals. The entire world would be ruined if Bharat lost its spiritual wealth. Spirituality is the fundamental basis for all nations.

Everyone has ultimately to take to the path of spirituality one day or the other. Our ancient kings, sages, seers, and women of chastity displayed great sense of sacrifice in upholding this great ideal. In fact, all Bharatiyas (Indians)

were united in spreading this ideal.

But today everybody has their own way; there is no unity at all. When there is no unity in the heart, enmity creeps into it. Therefore, see to it that you do not give room to enmity. Today the heart of man is devoid of unity and divinity. People are leading an artificial life. In fact, they are making their life worthless by harbouring narrow communal feelings.

You cannot find anyone who is free from thirst. Similarly, there is none who does not have desires. But one should develop only sacred desires. Only contemplation on God can quench the worldly and spiritual thirst. It is the water of spirituality that can free one from the thirst of desires.

Today there is lack of moral, spiritual, and social values in society. Power and wealth have become the only objectives these days. In what way should one spend one's money? There is nothing wrong in earning money, but it should be put to proper use. Modern society is in turmoil because people do not spend their money in a proper way.

Uphold human values

One should realise one's innate Divinity and perform sacred actions. What is it that has lost its value today? The value of vegetables and even firewood is on the rise. In fact, the value of everything has gone up; only the value of a person has declined. What is the reason? People have lost their value because of lack of human values in them.

In this world, birds, animals, and even insects safeguard their values by performing their respective duties. But humanity alone is destroying human values by acting contrary to humanness. In fact, one is not able to realise one's value. One questions the very existence of human values. Values come into existence from the very birth of a person. But people have forgotten such values, which are with them right from the time of birth. People are running after the shadow of worldliness and leading an artificial life. Their value will

increase manifold when they develop human values in themselves.

What is meant by srishti (creation)? It is an expression of Divine Will. Prakriti (nature) is another name for creation. One is born to safeguard the Divinity of nature. One has assumed human body to redeem oneself by developing physical, mental, and spiritual powers and fostering human values. One should first of all make efforts to uphold one's human values.

Love is the foremost quality of a person. It is only because of this quality of love that man is denoted by the term mankind. Kindness is very essential for mankind. Bereft of kindness, love, truth, and righteousness, one is not a human being at all. In fact, one is no better than a living corpse.

People talk about Brahmacharya. What does it mean? Is it to remain without getting married? No, no. Dwelling constantly on the principle of Brahman is true Brahmacharya. Focus your mind on Brahman at all times, at all places and under all circumstances.

A brahmachari is one who is always immersed in the feelings of Brahman (Divinity). This is at the level of spirituality. You should follow this principle at the worldly level also. Your conduct should be proper, your manners should be sacred, and your speech should be truthful. Even people leading a worldly life can be called brahmacharis if they lead a sacred life. God is the Father, and all the men and women of this world are His children. Therefore, all should live like brothers and sisters. When they imbibe such feelings, they can realise this truth at worldly level also. Just as coolness is common for froth, waves, and ocean, likewise one should experience divinity in all the three aspects of his life, namely, paramarthika, vyavaharika, and pratibhasika.

Kindness is the hallmark of mankind

Man's antahkarana (inner instrument) comprises manas (mind), buddhi (intellect), chitta (mind-stuff) and ahamkara (ego sense). Only when you

associate the mind, intellect, mindstuff, and ego sense with the divine principle of Atma that you can realise your humanness.

Today, one's heart is devoid of compassion and kindness. The heart has become so hard that one is ready to inflict pain on others to any extent and does not show any sympathy toward those who are in distress. Your heart should melt upon seeing the suffering of others. That is real kindness. Only such a person deserves to be called a human being. Kindness is the hallmark of mankind. Bereft of kindness, the word mankind has no meaning. Our heart should be full of compassion at all times and under all circumstances.

Such sacred principles were practised and propagated in Bharat in ancient times. But now, where does the defect lie? People today only propagate these principles without practising them. Only when you practise can you experience happiness. Unfortunately, hardly anyone is putting these principles into practice. Whatever one learns from reading sacred texts or listening to spiritual discourses should put it into practice first and shared with others. If one is not able to put into practice all the sacred teachings, one should at least practise a few of them.

Here is a small story. Once the captain of a ship had to move away from his place on some urgent work in the course of a battle. He told his son, "Stay here in my place till I come back." As the enemy guns fired at the ship, it caught fire and all the occupants started jumping into the water with lifeboats to save their lives. Some of them came to this boy and told him to move away from that place to save his life. But the boy replied, "I am ready to give up my life, but I will not disobey my father's command. My father told me to stay here, and I shall abide by his words." Though the entire ship was getting engulfed in flames, he did not move from his place and as a result sacrificed his life. Thus, he set an example of implicit obedience to his father's command. He was none other than Casabianca. He earned a great name by his sacrifice.

Practice is important, not preaching

The value of humanness will increase only when one puts into practice at least some of the good things one learns. Even when people know that something is good for them, they do not put it into practice. On the other hand, they keep telling others what is good. When they tell others what is good, why don't they themselves put it into practice? Why should they say something to others that they do not themselves accept wholeheartedly? This type of conduct is artificial, untruthful, and contrary to humanness. Do what you say and say what you think.

Since there is no harmony between thoughts, words, and deeds of people, they are unable to experience peace in spite of the rise in the number of spiritual organisations. Wherefrom can you get peace? Peace is within you; it cannot be acquired from outside. When you follow the truthful and righteous path, you will experience peace.

If you truly have faith in God, that faith will be reflected in you in the form of peace. People today pretend that they have faith in God, but in reality, they have no faith. That is why they are always in the grip of unrest and agitation. They repeat the words, sathya, dharma, santhi, and prema (truth, righteousness, peace and love) like parrots, but do they put into practice even one of these values? What is the use if such people give discourses and sermons on human values? In fact, such people bring bad name to Sai.

Sai will be pleased with you if you practise at least one of these values. It is not difficult to practise these values. How easy is it to speak truth and say things as they are! (Showing His handkerchief) It is easy to say I am holding a handkerchief. On the other hand, how difficult is it to say and convince people that there is a garland in My hand when actually it is a handkerchief! To say such a thing is an utter lie. It is very easy to speak the truth and extremely difficult to tell a lie. But people have forgotten such an easy path and are following the difficult and treacherous path of untruth.

Shed narrow-mindedness

It is a great surprise that people are so narrowminded in spite of having the ever expansive divinity in their hridaya (heart). When I use the word hridaya, I do not mean the physical heart, which is confined to the body made of five elements. Hridaya refers to Divinity. which is all-pervasive, as mentioned in the V edic dictum, Sahasra seersha Purusha sahasraksha sahasra pad (The Cosmic Being has thousands of heads, eyes, and feet). What does this refer to? It refers to the Brahma, who has thousands of heads, eyes, and feet.

What does Brahman connote? It connotes all pervasive and ever expansive divine principle.

It continues to expand all the time. Expansion of love is life, and contraction of love is death. Therefore, have expansion love. Because you are essentially divine and Divinity is all-expansive, your actions should reflect this ever expansive Divinity, and divine feelings should manifest in you. Today, people lack such broad feelings. They have become totally narrow-minded. How can your narrow mind grasp ever expansive divinity?

Divinity is infinite. That is why God is extolled as Ananta Rupaya Namah (salutations to the One who is infinite). In this vast universe, God pervades everything in His allexpansiveness. He permeates everything, sentient and insentient. Since He is present everywhere, He is called omnipresent. This principle of omnipresence is known as Brahman.

You may or may not be able to visualise this Divine Principle; it all depends on your faith and deservedness. If your faith is true and firm, you can visualise God in a moment. God neither descends from heaven nor goes away anywhere. He neither comes nor goes. There is nothing like coming or going for God; He is everywhere.

God is antaryami (indweller). What is meant by antaryami? He is the one who resides in the heart of every being. Antaratma is another name for antaryami.

However, the power of maya (delusion) that arises out of Him covers Him and

hides Him from your vision. The clouds that originate from the sun cover it. Does the sun chastise the clouds that cover it? No. Wait for some time with patience. The clouds will move away and the sun will become visible again.

Divinity is the source of everything. God is the cause of creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the universe. Everything is related to God. Therefore, you should consider everything as divine. God wants only two things that God: sathya and dharma. If you have these two, then you will have everything else,

and all other values like compassion and kindness will be added to them. Sathya and dharma are the most important values. All other values are part and parcel of these two. You should have compassion. Compassion is synonymous with love. When you have love in your heart, hatred cannot enter it.

Noble ideals live forever

Kama, krodha. and lobha (desire, anger, and greed) are the three enemies that cause immense suffering to man. Desire ruins your good actions, greed ruins your devotion, and anger destroys your wisdom. Since humanity has become the victim of desire, anger, and greed, his karma, upasana, and jnana (actions, devotion, and wisdom) are completely destroyed. Because of desire, greed, and anger, one is unable to imbibe good thoughts and feelings, undertake good actions, participate in devotional activities, and safeguard his wisdom.

Why should you entertain these three evil qualities, which are so harmful? First and foremost, get rid of them. You may have desires, but they should not be unlimited. You should limit your desires. In order to get rid of evil qualities, contemplate on God. In this vast universe, you should have a broad heart. Our heart should be as expansive as an ocean. That is the real Manasarovar (Lake of the mind). One who lacks a broad heart cannot be truly called a human being.

Never give room to narrow feelings. There are defects in everyone, and everyone makes mistakes. Do not pay undue attention to them. Never give up love. When you have love as your guiding principle in life, you can achieve anything. Entertain only noble thoughts and not mean ideas. Follow great ideals and have a broad outlook. Even after death, one's ideals will continue to live. Noble ideals live forever. Body may perish, but the ideals will never perish. Therefore, man develop sacred ideals.

Embodiments of Love!

All of you are repositories of love. But you limit your love. Never do that. Expand your love more and more. Your life will become as much ideal as much as you expand your love and keep it sacred. Among all types of love, love for God is supreme. We love our mother, father, brother, and sister, but this love is at the worldly and physical level. This is like passing clouds, which come in the middle and go. But God's love is permanent.

What do you gain by developing love? You experience bliss. As you expand your love, your bliss will also expand in the same proportion. As you limit your love, your bliss will also become limited. Therefore, if you want to experience eternal bliss, develop love more and more. The more you develop love for God, the more blissful you become.

God Is Love And Love Is God. You Can Connect With God Only Through Love.
Develop Love And Achieve The Supreme State Of Nondualism.
(Telugu Poem)

Love is non-dual. When you develop love, you imbibe the principle of non-dualism and experience oneness. Sarvatah panipadam T at sarvathokshi siromukham, sarvatah srutimalloke sarvamavruthya tishthati (with hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth, and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe). This One is present everywhere. You should attain that. You may pursue worldly education, which is useful for your existence in the world.

But also acquire spiritual education.

Love is the life force of spirituality. Therefore, develop love. When you develop love and compassion, you attain the supreme state of Divinity.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Hey Siva Sankara Namami Sankara...")

73. Become Deserving of God’s Love

Date: 22 July 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, August 2012.

All People Aspire For Easy Time, High Position. And Prosperity In Life.
Few Aspire For Good Intellect, Wisdom. And Good Character.
What Else Is There To Be Conveyed To This Congregation Of Noble Souls?
(Telugu Poem)
Only The Experience Of The Atma Is Permanent

Dear Students!

In this vast world, every living being desires happiness that is eternal. Where can we attain this happiness from? Beauty is happiness, and happiness is the nectarine essence of life. Which objects are beautiful in this world? A number of objects attract people in various ways. You think it is the beauty of the objects that attracts. But beauty is temporary, whether it is in human beings, birds, animals, or things.

For example, this is a rose. It looks so beautiful. Its beauty gives happiness. But how long will its beauty last? It may last till today or tomorrow. Thereafter, all its petals will fall down and it will lose its beauty. When it loses its beauty, it can no longer give you happiness. Therefore, in this world, you can never find permanent beauty and permanent happiness.

Everlasting happiness can be attained only from God. Only God is permanent in this world; the rest of it is all temporary, like passing clouds. Anityam asukham lokam (this world is temporary and full of misery). How can you experience eternal happiness in this ephemeral world, which is devoid of happiness? If you want to experience eternal happiness, you have to take refuge in God, who is the embodiment of happiness. God is the embodiment

of beauty. You can derive eternal happiness by contemplating on the beautiful form of God.

Therefore, take refuge in God. Only then can you experience eternal happiness. You can become immortal when you experience everlasting happiness. But people today consider the temporary happiness that they get from the world as permanent happiness. Adi Sankara therefore cautioned man:

Ma Kuru Dhana Jana Yauvana Garvam, Harathi Nimeshath Kalah Sarvam.
Do Not Be Proud Of Your Wealth, Progeny, And Youth;
The Tide Of Time May Destroy Them In A Moment.
How Long Will The Pride Of Youth, Money, Etc., Last? It Is All Momentary.

Once, a student went to a palmist. Reading his palm, the palmist exclaimed, "What a good fate line of wealth you have! My dear, you are going to be a very wealthy person." On hearing this, the student became very happy. On reading his palm further, the palmist said,

"My dear, you will be highly educated." The student's joy knew no bounds. The palmist also said, "You will earn a good name and fame." The student was ecstatic. After this, the palmist was silent for some time, looking very pensive.

"Sir, what are you thinking? Have you anything else to say?" asked the student.

The palmist said, "You have a very short span of life." On hearing this, the student was totally crestfallen.

One may be very wealthy, highly educated and may attain great name and fame. But what is the use if one does not have a long life? Similarly, a person may experience any type of temporary happiness, but unless they experiences eternal happiness, they will remain disappointed. The happiness

you get from this world is not permanent.

Gautam Buddha got up in the middle of night, looked at his wife and son, and thought of his kingdom. Then he said to himself, "How long will everything last in this world? The happiness derived from these temporary objects is not permanent. I must attain the permanent happiness of Nirvana (liberation)." Having resolved thus, he at once renounced everything.

A person who wants to experience eternal happiness in this temporary world should lead a life with care and caution. Desire for permanent happiness leads one to nivritti (inward path) while desire for worldly happiness takes man to pravritti (outward path). Therefore, you should make efforts to experience permanent happiness. Though a person today is highly intelligent and educated, they are unable to realise this truth.

Pain and pleasure are common to humans and other creatures

When the fierce Mahabharata war was being waged, Sage Vyasa noticed a small worm running away with great speed. He questioned the worm, "Why are you running away so fast?" He granted the faculty of speech to the worm and asked for a reply.

The worm replied, "Swami, very soon, Arjuna's chariot is coming this side with great speed. Feeling the tremors of the earth, I have become fear-stricken. I must reach home before the chariot comes this way. That is why I am running away." Vyasa was surprised to hear this. He asked, "You are such a tiny creature. How come you also have so much love for life?" The worm replied, "Swami, whether we are big or small, the life principle is the same in all creatures.

A person may be highly educated, intelligent, and great, but the happiness, comforts, and worldly pleasures the person experiences are the same as we experience. It is not the form that is important. Every being, whether big or small, loves its life. All other creatures experience the same type of worldly

pleasure that man experiences. Just as a person feels happy on eating delicious food, we derive the same type of happiness when we eat tasty food. Just as a person feels happy to raise a family, we feel the same." It was an eye-opening experience for Sage Vyasa. He said to himself, "Look, this worm appears to be a tiny creature, but it has told a profound truth." Every living being experiences the same type of pain and pleasure. There is no difference between humans and other creatures in this respect. Both experience the same type of happiness and sorrow. What separates humans from other creatures is their intelligence. If you find a person weeping, ask "Why are you weeping?" because sorrow is unnatural for humans. But do you ask a happy person, "Why are you not weeping?" No, because happiness is natural for humans and sorrow is unnatural.

Today you consider what is unnatural for people as natural and what is natural as unnatural. Since people today are not able to understand what is natural and what is unnatural to them, they are deluded to think there is so much difference between human beings and other living beings. There is no difference between the experiences of pleasure and pain; there is only difference in upadhi (form). You may think that smaller creatures have small pain and big creatures have big pain, or the pain experienced by a human being is much more compared to the pain of other creatures. This is a great mistake. The taste of a drop of water from a vast ocean is the same as that of the ocean itself. You may think there is a very small quantity of salt in a drop of water from the ocean. The quantity of salt may be small but the quality of saline taste is the same as that of the ocean. Similarly, the experience of pleasure and pain is the same for all living beings.

Lead your life with equal-mindedness

How should a person conduct themself in the world? As the Bhagavad Gita teaches, Sukhadukhe samekruthwa labhalabhau jayajayau (one should remain equal-minded in happiness and sorrow, gain and loss, victory and defeat). One should consider pleasure and pain, praise and censure alike. That is the state of true yoga. Samatvam yogamuchyate (equanimity is called

true yoga). Sage Vyasa propagated to the world the lesson he learnt from the worm and exhorted people to develop equal-mindedness.

Do not observe differences on the basis of form. It is not the form but the qualities and virtues that are important. Observance of equal-mindedness is the main quality of a human being. People today attach a lot of importance to the form and think that it is the ultimate feeling one should develop. Hunger is the same for the mother and her newborn child. Mother eats rice and the child drinks milk. Food is different but the experience of hunger is the same for both. In this manner, these experiences are common to all beings.

Sage Vyasa was a great yogi and one of wisdom who codified the Vedas, but even he could not understand this truth till his encounter with the worm. One can learn many lessons even from small creatures. Nature itself teaches many great ideals.

One cannot have the experience of eternal happiness merely by reading sacred texts or by listening to the teachings of preceptors. One cannot even receive it as a gift from elders. One should exercise discrimination with proper enquiry in every matter to experience this. One should enquire what is real and what is unreal in the chores of daily life. One should differentiate between the eternal and the ephemeral, kshetra and kshetrajna (field and knower of field). The human body is kshetra and the consciousness is kshetrajna.

How can you recognise this consciousness? You can recognise consciousness only with the help of this body. The body is the basis of this. Consciousness cannot be seen by the naked eye. That which cannot be seen by the naked eye can be experienced only by turning the vision inward. This is called meditation. It is the spiritual practice in which you close your eyes and try to experience that which cannot be seen by the naked eye.

It is a normal practice for people to go to temples. Why do they go to temples? You go to temples to see God and offer your salutations to Him. But once you go to the temple and stand before the idol, you tend to close your eyes and offer your salutations to God. Having travelled a long distance to

reach the temple, why should you close your eyes on seeing the idol of the deity? Why can't you feast your eyes on the blissful form of God? The reason is that the idol is the visible manifestation of invisible God. The bliss that emanates from the idol is invisible.

Therefore, you can experience the invisible happiness with the help of the invisible wisdom with which you are endowed. Consciousness is present in every person. It is a witness to all that one experiences. The boy who spoke earlier referred to this.

Experience Atma by contemplating on God

Once, while conversing with his ministers and courtiers after his supper one night, King Janaka felt a little tired and retired to his bedroom. The queen and royal servants served the king in many ways, and he fell asleep. Seeing this, the queen gestured to the servants to go out while she herself sat near the king. After some time, the king suddenly got up and started repeating loudly, "Is this true or that?" The queen was put to great anxiety and asked the king many questions. But without answering her, he kept asking, "Is this true or that?" The queen sent out servants to call the ministers. The ministers came and asked the king what his doubt was. But the king kept on giving only one reply, "Is this true or that?" The ministers then called Sage Vasishta. The sage asked the king, "Oh king! What has happened?" Even to the question of Sage Vasishta, the king gave the same reply. Sage Vasishta closed his eyes and meditated. Since he was endowed with the knowledge of all the three periods of time, past, present, and future, he came to know the reality.

He said, "The king saw a dream in his sleep. What he saw in the dream was like this: He had lost his kingdom and was wandering in a forest. In the forest, he suffered from acute hunger and started shouting, 'I am hungry, I am hungry.' A group of thieves were eating something there. On seeing him, they thought, what a pity, this fellow looks like a king! And they offered him some food. When the king extended his hands to receive the food offered by the thieves, an eagle swooped down and snatched it away from his hands.

Since he was not able to protect even the food that had been given to him, he started shouting all the more loudly, 'I am hungry, I am hungry.' At this point, the king awoke from sleep. As he got up from his sleep, he saw that he was lying on his couch in the bedroom of his palace; while in his dream, he was wandering in a forest, shouting, 'I am hungry, I am hungry.' He therefore wondered what was true, this or that!" The sage made this fact known to everybody present there.

Sage Vasishta addressed the king and made him aware of the reality, saying, "Oh king! Neither this is true nor that is true. What is true is you. You were there in your dream, and you are there in your waking state also. But the dream does not exist in the waking state and the waking state does not exist in dream. What exists in both states, in dream as well as in waking, that is true." In the true state of renunciation, life is just a dream. Knowing that this dream can vanish any moment, one should lead his life without attachment.

What is the inner meaning of this story? Whatever you experience in this world will ultimately disappear in the womb of time one day or the other. Only the experience of the Atma is permanent. It is possible to have the experience of the Atma only by contemplating on God. One can experience eternal happiness by contemplating on God, who is true and eternal. That is why God is described as nirgunam, niranjanam, sanathana niketanam, nitya, suddha, buddha, mukta, and nirmala swarupinam (attributeless, unsullied, final abode, eternal, pure, enlightened, free, and embodiment of sacredness).

You can attain eternal happiness only from God. All other experiences can never give you permanent happiness. When you are hungry, you go to the canteen, pay two rupees, eat chapatis, and satiate your hunger. When your hunger is satiated, you feel happy. But how long does your happiness last? You become hungry again after two hours. Therefore, the happiness resulting from eating chapatis is only short-lived. You have to eat again to satiate your hunger. All worldly happiness is temporary and ephemeral. That is why Adi Sankara said,

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.

Everything in this world is temporary, like passing clouds. No one knows when one will have to leave the body. The body is ephemeral, like a water bubble and, the mind is restless, like a mad monkey. Therefore, do not follow the body, do not follow the mind, follow the conscience. Your conscience is your witness. When you follow the fickle mind and the temporary body, the results are also bound to be temporary.

In this temporary world, you may experience some happiness if you have wealth and other means of comfort, but even that is not guaranteed. There are many people in this world who have everything, yet they cannot experience happiness. Dhritharashtra had enormous wealth and royal comforts, yet he lacked happiness. Though he had a soft bed of feathers to sleep on, his mind was restless and fiery like a volcano. These physical comforts cannot give true happiness. If one has money, one may buy an air conditioner. However, the air conditioner will cool only the body, not the mind. Contemplation on God alone will cool the mind.

You may have all types of conveniences in life. But they cannot calm the restless mind. Arjuna said to Krishna, "Chanchalam hi manah Krishna pramathi balavadrudham (the mind is very unsteady, turbulent and powerful). This mind is highly fickle, stubborn, and dangerous. How am I to experience happiness with this?" Krishna replied, "Oh simpleton, do as I say. Do not follow your mind. Do not think of your mind at all. Ignore it completely. Always think of God." Arjuna asked, "Swami, how can I think of You when I am fighting in the battlefield?" Krishna said, "Mam Anusmara Yuddhyacha (remember Me and fight the battle). You may be in the thick of the battle, but it is only your body that is fighting. What does your mind do? Focus your mind

on Me." When you contemplate on God in all situations and under all circumstances, you will certainly experience eternal happiness. You can do it by all means; there is no doubt about it. There is enough power in your mind to do this.

See God in everyone

Everyone is endowed with divine power. It is a mistake to think that only some people have it and others do not have. Right from a toddler to an old man, from a pauper to a millionaire, from a tiny insect to a big animal, it is present in everyone. There may be differences in form, but Divinity is present in all in equal measure. Discharge your duty under all circumstances. Do your duty sincerely. Whatever you see, consider it as divine. When you see with worldly feelings, you will see only the physical and ephemeral world. Therefore, see the world with divine feelings.

The Upanishads say: Sahasra Seersha Purusha Sahasraksha Sahasra Pad (The Cosmic Being has thousands of heads, eyes, and feet). All heads are His, all forms are His. When you have such a feeling, how happy and peaceful you become! On the other hand, if you observe differences on the basis of form, you will have a dual mind and lose your peace. This duality is the main cause for lack of peace. A man with dual mind is half blind. Dualism makes us blind to the truth. Develop the feeling that you and I are one and consider the universe as the form of God.

As the Vedas say: Sarvam Vishnumayam jagat (Lord Vishnu pervades the entire universe). The divine power is the same in everyone. Therefore, never criticise, ridicule, or hate anyone. See God in everyone, constantly contemplate on God, and surrender yourself to Him. Only then can you get eternal happiness. If you want to attain eternal happiness, you must take refuge in God. If you desire only physical and worldly happiness, then you are bound to suffer.

The Ramayana teaches many subtle truths. Ravana was highly powerful and

one of great penance. Yet, he could not control his desire. He wanted to exploit Nature, ignoring the Creator. Sita, being the daughter of mother earth, symbolises Nature. Whose property is Nature? It is the property of God. If you want to possess Nature without God's Will, what will be your fate?

Ravana wanted to possess Sita, who was the wife of Rama. What was his fate ultimately? He lost his kingdom, his kith and kin, and ultimately met his doom. If you try to steal someone's property, you are sure to come to grief. When you attain God's grace, then only do you have right over His property. Because of his desire and ego, Ravana wanted to take away Sita forcibly from Rama. This led to his downfall.

What is the main basis of the Ramayana? The main cause of Ramayana is kama and krodha (desire and anger). Manthara is the symbol of anger, and Surpanakha represents desire. Manthara and Surpanakha are responsible for the entire story of the Ramayana. Manthara became the cause of Rama's exile to the forest. Surpanakha was responsible for Sita's abduction to Lanka.

These two characters form the entire basis of the Ramayana. Similarly, desire and anger are responsible for all the sufferings of humanity.

People think they are suffering because of the influence of nine grahas (planets). In fact, these planets do not cause suffering to anyone; they only discharge their duties. However, two planets are responsible for all your sufferings. They are desire and anger, which are very powerful and cause immense suffering to humanity. What should you do to control these? You should develop friendship with God. God alone is your true and permanent friend.

Child Prahlada told his father, "Father, you may have the power to conquer all the worlds in a moment, but what have achieved when you are unable to conquer your own senses and chitta (mind-stuff)? You are deluded to think that you have achieved so much. In fact, you have achieved nothing. How can the one who has surrendered to the inner foes achieve anything in life?" In this manner, Prahlada taught a lesson to his father.

You have to subjugate your inner enemies. How can you subjugate them? It is possible only by attaining the grace of God. Many have no experience of Divinity. However, many noble souls achieved great powers with the help of prayer and penance. When you become the recipient of God's love, you can conquer the entire world. Therefore, you should become deserving of His love. Time is God. Sanctify your time and redeem your life by contemplating on God and serving Him.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Prema Mudita Manase Kaho ...")

74. Education Should Foster Virtues In Students

Date: 23 July 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, September 2012.

When Iron Keeps Lying In Dust, It Gets Rusted.
But When The Same Iron Is Put In Fire, It Gets Rid Of Its Rust.
Similar Is The Effect Of Company In This World.
(Telugu Poem)
Rain Water Gets Absorbed In Sand. But It Becomes Sweet When It Falls On Clay.
Similarly, Devotion Shines In A Person Depending On His Deservedness.
(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Man is very sacred by nature, but due to the effect of good or bad company, he becomes good or bad. When a piece of iron is buried in dust, it gathers rust. But the same iron, when it is put in fire, gets rid of its rust and becomes bright and soft. Similarly, dust rises up in the sky with wind, but with water, it goes down into a pit.

Good company leads to sacredness and Divinity

The dust has no wings to fly up in the sky, nor does it have feet to step down into a pit. It is only due to the effect of its company that it rises in the sky or falls into the pit. Whatever bad or good occurs to you is due only to the influence of good or bad company. That is why Adi Sankara said,

Satsangatwe Nissangatwam, Nissangatwe Nirmohatwam, Nirmohatwe Nischalatattwam, Nischalatattwe Jivanmukti. (Sanskrit Sloka) Good company

leads to detachment; Detachment makes one free from delusion; Freedom from delusion leads to steadiness of mind; Steadiness of mind confers liberation.

When you join good company, you attain sacredness and Divinity. On the other hand, when you associate yourself with bad company, you develop bad thoughts, bad intentions, and bad behavior, which impel you to undertake bad actions. Therefore, it is very necessary for one to develop humanness by joining good company. One can even rise to the level of Divine if one associates with good company.

On the other hand, one can degenerate to the level of an animal by joining bad company. Divinity is superior to humanness, and animality is inferior to it. Humanness is in between these two. Therefore, you should make efforts to take humanness to higher level of Divinity rather than degenerate to lower level of animality. It is difficult to rise to a higher level but very easy to go down to a lower level. In fact, no special efforts are needed for downfall.

Nothing can be attained without hard work. Whatever hard work you may have to put in, you must try to rise to higher level. Kashte phali (Hard work yields rich rewards). People today are in a miserable condition because of association with bad company. Their evil thoughts are responsible for all their misery. Therefore, right from tender age, one should try to develop pure and sacred thoughts. But, unfortunately, students are wasting their precious years of youth by entertaining bad thoughts and bad intentions and by indulging in evil actions.

Choose your friends wisely

As has already been said, iron gets rusted in the company of dust, and, as a result, it loses its strength. But its strength is restored when it is put in fire.

First of all, you have to remove the dust from your mind. What is the dust? The dust is nothing but bad feelings that arise in one from bad company. It is

only because of bad company that you get bad thoughts. Therefore, it is said, Tell me your company and I shall tell you what you are. Take time and enquire, but seek only the company of good people.

When you are in a good position, everybody will come to you, calling you a good boy. But when you suffer downfall, everybody will run away from you without even saying goodbye. This is not true friendship. What is true friendship? A true friend is one who follows you like a shadow even in times of difficulties and sufferings. When the tank is full of water, you will find thousands of frogs in it. But when the tank gets dried up, you will not find even a single frog there. Similarly, when you have a good position and high status, all will follow you. But that is not real friendship. He is a true friend who is your constant companion in the dualities of life like profit and loss, pleasure and pain.

Always take time and enquire to decide who your true friend is. It is a mistake to make friendship with every Tom, Dick, and Harry who greets you saying, hello, hello. You should look into their habits, behaviour, discipline, and the company they associate with before making friendship with anyone.

If you find that one is associating with bad company, do not even look at their face. If such a one says, hello, hello to you, you should say, goodbye, goodbye to them. Friendship with such people can put even your life into danger.

Due to the influence of modern education, students today make friendship with all sorts of people. This cannot be called true friendship. They will desert you any moment. Such friendship should be limited to exchange of greetings like hello, hello, how are you, how are you, goodbye, goodbye.

Not merely this, character is most important for a student. One bereft of character is verily a living corpse. Do not make friendship with characterless persons. One who lacks individual character will not have social character. Then, how can such a person have national character? Therefore, first of all, one should develop individual character. It means students should develop

steady vision and unwavering mind.

Do not even look at the face of those whose mind is unsteady like the pendulum of a clock. They are very bad boys. Never make friendship with them. Otherwise, you will also become a bad boy. Make friendship with only good people.

True education brings about refinement

How can you make your heart sacred? When you join good company, your heart becomes pure and sacred, just as iron becomes bright and soft in the company of fire. When the iron is put in fire, it gets rid of its dust and rust and becomes very soft, so that you can mould it to the shape you want. Similarly, when you join good company, you can mould your personality to face any ordeals in life. This is called the process of samskara (refinement), which everyone must undergo. What is samskara? To get rid of bad qualities and develop virtues is samskara.

Many things in this world are found in their natural state. We eat rice, pulses, and many other food items. However, we don't eat them in their raw form. Rice is harvested in the form of paddy. To get rice, we have to separate paddy from grass and remove its husk. The rice is to be put on fire and cooked. Only then it becomes fit for our consumption.

Similarly, whether it is gold or silver or diamond, we cannot use them in their natural state because they are mixed with dust and other metals. They have to be subjected to various processes of purification before they become pure metals. Only then can we make ornaments out of them.

Take, for example, this cloth. It was cotton in its natural state, which had seeds and various other impurities. Seeds have to be separated from cotton. Cotton has to be made into threads, which in turn are to be woven into cloth. In this manner, cotton has to undergo various types of refinement to ultimately take the form of cloth. In this way, everything has to undergo the

process of refinement.

Today all your education is limited to bookish knowledge. Along with this education, samskara (refinement)is also essential. This type of education without refinement is no education at all.

In spite of their education and intelligence, a mean-minded person will not give up their evil qualities.

Modern Education Leads Only To Argumentation, Not To Total Wisdoms (Telugu Poem)

Modern education merely endows students with the power of vain argumentation. This is not the aim of education. Many students think education is meant only to earn a livelihood.

Education is not something that you acquire merely to fill your belly. Agriculture is for filling the belly, and education is for acquiring wisdom. But modern education is leading man on the evil path.

One's life has two determinants: one is Jjvanopadhi (means of livelihood) and the other is jivitaparamavadhi (ultimate goal). Along with the means of livelihood, one should think of the goal of life also. We may live a number of years, but ultimately we have to die. This is not the purpose of human birth.

The purpose of human birth is to lead an ideal life and set an example for others to lead their life in an ideal way. Every human being should try to lead an ideal life. Ideals do not die with the death of a person. Ideals never perish; they are eternal. Every generation will emulate these ideals. It is therefore necessary that one lead an ideal life. But people today do not know what an ideal life is. Students should set high ideals to society.

Once you get a degree, you become egoistic, thinking that you have become highly educated. One who acquires the evil qualities of ego, ostentation, and

jealousy is of no use to the world. Such a person will not have respect in society also.

A foolish person may be respected in their own house, a village head may be respected in their village, and a king in his kingdom. But the cultured person will be respected in the entire world. One should therefore acquire refinement and culture.

Students should make efforts to safeguard Indian culture. Similarly, people of other nations should protect the culture of their nation. This is the real purpose of education.

First of all, you should maintain proper relationship with everyone and should not hate anyone. Choose proper persons as your friends. It is better not to have friends at all rather than having a foolish person as your friend. Choose a good person as your friend.

Who is a good person? Manasyekam vachasyekam, karmanyekam mahatmanam (those whose thoughts, words, and deeds are in perfect harmony are noble ones). Choose as your friend only a person who has trikarana suddhi (unity of thought, word, and deed).

Manasyanyath vachasyanyath, karmanyanyath duratmanam (those who lack harmony of these are wicked). If a person thinks something, says something else, and acts in a totally different way, do not allow them to come near you. The proper study of mankind is man. A true human being is one whose thoughts, words, and deeds are in harmony with each other. You should become such an ideal human being.

Your mind is the repository of many thoughts, but you are not able to know the thoughts of others. Even a dog can know the thoughts of humans, but humans does not know the thoughts of their fellow humans.

Here is a small example. Suppose a dog is lying in a pit five metres from you. If you go that side without bothering about it, it will also not take any notice

of you. It will not even get up. However, when you take a small stone in your hand with the intention of hitting it, it will run away the moment it sees you. It means it can read your thoughts. A dog is able to know the thoughts of a person but a person is not able to know the thoughts of person.

The word dog has three letters - DOG. If you reverse the order of letters, it becomes GOD. The letters are the same but their order is different. One should become God and not dog. This is the foremost quality that one should cultivate by sadhana (spiritual practice). What is meant by sadhana? It is not limited to japa, tapa (chanting, penance), etc.

Neither By Penance Nor By Pilgrimage Nor By Study Of Scriptures Nor By Japa Can One Cross The Ocean Of Life. One Can Achieve It Only By Serving The Pious.
(Sanskrit Verse)

You should serve the pious. Respect and serve your parents, teachers, and elders. Attend to their needs whenever it is necessary.

On the other hand, if you disobey elders and do not pay heed to your parents, whatever may be the sadhana you do, it is of no use. It is not sadhana at all. God does not accept such sadhana. God is not pleased if you worship Him and at the same time harm other living beings.

First of all, love all. It amounts to loving God. Easwara Sarva Bhutanam (God is the indweller of all beings). You should recognise this truth and give respect to all.

Students should not develop unnecessary connections

No doubt, all are equal in society, but you should observe certain rules for your own good. Na sreyo niyamam vina (without discipline, there can be no well-being). If you come across a person of bad character, do not have

anything to do with them. However, offer your salutations to all, because Sarva jiva namaskaram Kesavam pratigachchhati (whoever you salute, it reaches God). Similarly, you should also recognise that Sarva jiva tiraskaram Kesavam pratigachchhati (whoever you criticise, it reaches God).

Students should not develop unnecessary contacts with all sorts of people. Since you are a student, behave like a student. Boys should not develop unnecessary connections with girls. Those who develop such evil connections are worse than dogs. Such students even deceive their parents. In fact, the life of such a person is useless.

If One Does Not Worship The Lord Wholeheartedly,
If One Does Not Sing His Glory Till The Mouth Aches,
If One Lacks Truth And Compassion In The Heart,
One Is A Curse On The Womb Of One's Mother.
(Telugu Poem)

Why should such a person be born at all? Is birth meant only to cause pain to the womb of one's mother?

Your education should foster virtues in you. That is the real meaning of education. There is enough knowledge in books, but what is the use if the head is full of dust and dirt? What is the use of all your education when there is no purity in your head? Can you call this education at all? No. no. First of all, get rid of the dirt from your head. That means, you should get rid of bad thoughts.

One Can Fill An Empty Head With Anything,
But Is It Possible To Put Something In The Head That Is Already Full?
How Can It Be Filled With Sacred Feelings Unless It Is Emptied In The First Instance?
(Telugu Poem)

This tumbler is full of water. How can you put milk in it when it is already full? The only way is to throw away the water from the tumbler and fill it with milk. However, if you pour milk into the tumbler full of water, both water and milk will be wasted.

Fill your heart with sacred feelings and feelings of gratitude toward your parents. On the other hand, if you deceive your parents and betray them by taking to evil path, there can be no sinner worse than you. If you do so, all your education is meaningless. If your education does not foster virtues in you, it is better to go begging from street to street instead of acquiring such useless education. First of all, you have to cultivate virtues.

A person without character, education without a goal, and human race without morality are worthless.

The Life Of An Individual Bereft Of Peace Is No Better Than A Night Without Moon.
Listen! Oh Valiant Sons Of Bharat!
(Telugu Poem)

Therefore, students should become paragons of virtues. Their education should foster virtues in them.

Build the mansion of life on a strong foundation

Students are the future leaders and emancipators of a nation. The nation will come to grief if its youth are not on the right path. If there is a curve in the sapling, the tree also will be curved.

Brahmacharya, grihastha, vanaprastha, and sanyasa (celibate stage, householder stage, recluse stage, renunciant stage) are the four stages of human life. Student life is the stage of brahmacharya. Brahmacharya is the foundation of the mansion of life, on which the three stories of householder,

recluse, and renunciant are built. Therefore, it is necessary to make the foundation of brahmacharya strong, on which the other three stories stand. If the foundation is not strong, all the stories built on it will collapse.

The period of youth is most important and sacred. It is, in fact, the golden age. Don't turn this golden age into dust. Therefore, students should imbibe virtues. Their vision, hearing, speech, and actions - all should be sacred.

First of all, fill your heart with love for God. Your heart is like a tank, and the senses are like taps. When you fill the tank of your heart with love, the sweet water of love will flow through the taps of senses. As are the feelings in your heart, so are the actions. When your heart is full of love, all your actions will be suffused with love.

If you throw a stone into a well, it will create ripples in the entire well. Likewise, when you throw a stone of a good or bad thought in the lake of your mind, its effect will spread to all the limbs of your body. When a bad thought enters your mind, your eyes will see evil, your hands will do evil, your speech will become evil, your ears will hear evil, and your feet will walk to only evil places. The effect of thoughts will spread in the entire body right from top to toe.

Do not waste precious human birth

Heart is most important. When the heart is not pure, life becomes meaningless. But today students are interested only in art, not in heart.

Art is outside, heart is inside. Art is mundane, heart is divine. Art is related to pravritti (outward path), heart is related to nivritti (inward path).

The principle of nivritti is most sacred and pure. This is described in Vedanta as nirgunam, niranjanam, sanathana niketanam, nitya, suddha, buddha, mukta, nirmala swarupinam (It is attributeless, unsullied, final abode, eternal, pure, enlightened, free, and embodiment of sacredness).

Purity of heart is essential. Chittasya suddhaye karmah (good deeds give mental purity). All your actions are meant for the purification of heart.

Thiruthonda Alwar of Tamil Nadu also said, "Oh Lord, I worship You with the purity of my heart. It is not easy to obtain human birth. I have acquired this human life as a result of merits earned by me in many past lives. Let this opportunity not slip away from my hand." The same was said by Mira also, "Oh Giridhari, I have dived deep into the ocean and acquired this pearl of human life with great difficulty. Let this pearl of human life not slip away from my hand and fall back into the ocean. If I lose this pearl, I will be nowhere." You have earned this human life with the merits of many past lives. Therefore, take care that you do not go on the evil path.

One should live and die like a human being and not like an animal. This is what you are supposed to do. If you cannot rise to the level of divine, at least live like a human being. This is what the students should learn today.

There are many types of people in the world. Do not bother about them, whether they are good or bad. Just preserve your goodness. If there is a small defect in you, you should think it as very big. Moreover, do not magnify the small defects of others. First of all, get rid of all defects in you and develop virtues. Only then will humanness blossom in you.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Madhura Madhura Murali Ghanashyama ...")

75. Sathya and Dharma are Natural Attributes of Man

Date: 24 July 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, October 2012.

A man bereft of the qualities of charity, righteousness, truth, compassion, and morality; a man without good thoughts and good character will ruin himself completely here and hereafter.

(Telugu Poem)
Attain God's Love By Practicing Sathya And Dharma

Students are the inheritors of the legacy of sathya and dharma (truth and righteousness), and it is the responsibility of students to uphold them. They should undertake to establish peace and prosperity in society by promoting sathya and dharma. For this, students should have broad-mindedness. The value of education does not lie in acquiring merely bookish knowledge. Education, in fact, is the divine lamp that destroys the darkness of ignorance.

Practise sathya and dharma

Truth is verily God. God is the embodiment of sathya and dharma. God is none other than sathya and dharma.

Many people think that they are making efforts to spread sathya and dharma. You can spread something at a place where it does not already exist, but how can you spread sathya and dharma when they are present everywhere? Hence, there is no need to promote and publicise sathya and dharma. What is needed is to practise them.

How is the word dharma derived? It comes from the root 'dhrit', which means to uphold or sustain. Dharayati iti dharma (that which sustains is dharma). Dharma is therefore that which supports everything. The entire world is sustained by dharma. Dharma binds the entire universe into a unified whole and rules it.

Sathya and dharma are not related to merely one person, one period of time, or one country; they are related to all people, all periods of time, and all countries.

Lord Krishna Declares In The Bhagavad Gita:
Oh Arjuna! Whenever There Is A Decline In Dharma And Rise In Adharma,
I Incarnate On Earth.
Yada Yada Hi Dharmasya Glanir Bhavati Bharata,
Abhyutthanamadharmasya Tadatmanam Srujamyaham.
(Sanskrit Verse)

Dharma can never be destroyed. If it is subject to destruction, then it cannot be called dharma at all. At certain periods of time, it may seem to have disappeared due to the decline of its practice by man. When thick clouds cover the shining sun, people may not be able to see it for some time. But nothing can ever stop the sun from shining or stop its light forever. In the same way, the sun of sathya and sunlight of dharma can never be destroyed.

Sathya and dharma are interrelated and interdependent, like God and Nature, matter and energy. Therefore, it is not possible to separate sathya and dharma. Sathya, in fact, is the foundation on which the mansion of dharma stands. There can be no danger or hazard to the mansion of dharma, which is built on the foundation of sathya.

Sathya and dharma are the natural attributes of human beings. By nourishing and practising sathya and dharma, one should oneself derive bliss and share it with the world. Some people say that vocation is the attribute of a purusha (man). But in modern times, many women are also employed in various

vocations. Then, can they be called men? Hence, it is not the vocation that is the real attribute of man. The real attributes are sathya and dharma. By merely wearing a safari suit or pants and a shirt can one become a purusha? No, no. The term 'purusha signifies divine consciousness, which permeates the entire 'pura' (body) from top to toe.

Sathya and dharma are verily God

Dharma is the attribute of all human beings. However, from the worldly point of view, there are many divisions of dharma, such as dharma of brahmacharya (celibate stage), grihastha (householder stage), vanaprastha (recluse stage), and sanyasa (renunciant stage). In this way, one divides dharma according to various stages of one's life. But all these are only worldly and empirical divisions of dharma. These divisions relate to external forms of dharma.

Those Whose Thoughts, Words And Deeds Are In Perfect Harmony Are Noble Ones; Those Who Lack Harmony Of These Are Wicked
Manasyekam Vachasyekam, Karmanyekam Mahatmanam; Manasyanyath Vachasyanyath, Karmanyanyath Duratmanam.

What is the nature of the internal form of one's dharma?

This means that one should attain unity of thoughts, words, and deeds. This is the true dharma of every human being. This does not relate to various empirical divisions of dharma; it relates to the life of all human beings.

However, the dharma of birds and beasts is different. Similarly, the elements and objects have their own dharma. For example, the dharma of fire is to burn; that of water is to flow; and of sugar, sweetness. All objects have been endowed with their specific dharma in this way from the time of creation itself. But this relates only to worldly and external dharma. The internal

dharma is true and eternal and comes from the heart of man.

However, human beings have to perform certain other dharmas of a worldly nature also with regard to their heart, speech, hands, etc. What is it that endows beauty to your hands, throat, ears, etc.?

Charity Is The True Ornament Of The Hand, Truth Is The True Necklace,
And Listening To Sacred Texts Is The True Ornament Of The Ears.
Hastasya Bhushanam Danam Sathyam Kanthasya Bhushanam Srotrasya Bhushanam Sastram
(Sanskrit Verse)

What better ornaments do you require than these? These are your permanent ornaments, which give you real beauty. Nothing can be more beautiful than these.

One should work hard to develop and practise sathya and dharma and derive happiness therefrom. Since ancient times, the Bharatiyas (Indians) have been protecting sathya and dharma, considering them like their two eyes.

How should you revere sathya and dharma? Revere sathya and dharma as your mother and father. Matru Devo bhava, pitru Devo bhava (revere your mother and father as God), says the Upanishad. Hence, sathya and dharma are verily God.

Since ancient times, our elders have been instructing us to give importance to dharma in every field of human endeavour. Dharma should be the guiding spirit in your vision, hearing, speech, and conduct. It has been said, dharma moolam idam jagat (righteousness is the basis of the entire world). The entire jagat (world) is sustained by dharma.

What does the word jagat signify? Jagat has no separate form. It is the assembly of human beings. The word 'society' has a name but no form. When many people come together and form a group, it is called society. Though it

has no form, it does have attributes.

What are the main attributes of society? Sathya and dharma are the main attributes of society. Society condemns that which is not accepted by it. We throw away the fruit that does not taste good. Similarly, society disapproves of actions that do not bring happiness to it.

As has already been said, true dharma comes from the heart. If you put a seed in a pot and pour water over it, will it grow into a plant? No, no. It cannot grow into a plant. It has to be sown into soil. Only then can it become a plant. Similarly, dharma does not develop merely by teaching and propagating. The plant of dharma has to be grown in the soil of the heart. Then only can you derive the fruits of peace and prosperity from it.

People of different faiths propagate their faiths. What is it that holds value for you? How can you decide about it? You value something if it satisfies your conscience and your heart approves it. That only is truth that receives the approbation of your conscience. Your conscience is your master. Your teacher is not your master, and your guru who whispers a mantra into your ears is also not your master. Your conscience is your master. Follow the master. The real mantra comes from your heart.

The mantra of cooperation

Your heart is the tantra (esoteric doctrine), your body is the yantra (instrument), and the feelings of your heart are your mantra (incantation). The mantra of Soham (That I am) emerges from the yantra of your body, utilising the tantra of your heart. Hence, you yourselves are yantra, tantra, and mantra. What greater mantra is there than this? How useful and valuable is this yantra of the body!

Here is a small example. A fruit is seen on a tree. What is it that sees the fruit? Your eyes see the fruit. You desire to possess the fruit as soon as your eyes see it, but the fruit does not come into your belly as soon as you desire

it. First your feet take you near the tree. Can you possess the fruit merely by going near it? No, no. You bend down your back, pick up a stone, and hit the fruit using your arm. Then only does the fruit fall down on the ground. After this, your fingers pick up the fruit from the ground and put it into your mouth. When it reaches your stomach, your digestive fire helps it to assimilate in the body.

Which limb of your body performs the task of bringing the fruit from the tree to your stomach? All your limbs work equally to perform this task. If even one of these limbs does not perform its task, the fruit from the tree cannot reach your stomach.

What does the stomach do after receiving the fruit with the cooperation of various limbs of the body? It does not keep to itself all that it receives. It supplies the essence of the fruit to all the limbs to nourish them.

The stomach symbolises God. God is called Angirasa (Divinity that is present in each part of the body as essence). He is propitiated by reciting the mantra "Angirasaya Namah (salutations to Angirasa)" because God is the quintessence of everything in this world.

Dharma in this way teaches cooperation. Unfortunately, cooperation is not visible anywhere today. Wherever you look, you find division and non-cooperation. This noncooperation is the cause of lack of unity in the family, country, and world. This has led to increase in dissensions in society.

All should be one and all should be united. Great tasks can be achieved by unity. But people today lack sathya and dharma. Many people just pretend to perform deeds of sathya and dharma. They make a show of sathya and dharma, while actually it is a mere pretension.

Unity of thoughts, words, and deeds is real dharma

Who can awaken a person who just pretends to sleep by closing his eyes? A

person who is really asleep can be awakened by tapping them once or twice, but no one can awaken a person who just pretends to sleep. It is mere pretence. In the same way, people today seem to make a pretence of teaching and promoting sathya and dharma.

What is important is practice. All the sacred books are not meant merely for ceremonial reading or for publicising their teachings. They are meant to be practised. The devotees and spiritual aspirants who do not understand this truth perform ceremonial reading of sacred texts both in the morning and evening in a routine way.

Everyone should try to put sathya and dharma into practice in their life. The Vedas declare, Sathyam vada, dharmam chara (speak truth, practise righteousness). You just say "Sathyam vada" but do not speak truth. You just repeat "Dharmam chara" but do not adhere to dharma in your day-to-day life. What you say, you do not do; what you do is different from what you say.

What the tongue speaks, the hands should perform. The mind should also be in harmony with speech. Unity of thinking, saying, and doing is real dharma. There should be unity of thoughts, words, and deeds. Where there is unity, there is purity. Where there is purity, there is divinity.

Unfortunately, unity and purity are nowhere to be seen today. Wherever you look, you find enmity. Due to prevalence of enmity, the whole world today is in turmoil. If you cultivate sathya and dharma in your heart, there will be no scope for enmity in it.

Students!

If you firmly establish sathya and dharma in your heart, no evil tendencies will be able to find entry into it. On the other hand, if one moment you have sathya and dharma in your heart and the next moment, adharma and asathya (unrighteousness and untruth), then how can you call yourself a human being? What is the meaning of human quality? Human quality means unity of thoughts, words, and deeds. This is the real dharma of the human being.

At the time of the marriage of Sita with Rama, King Janaka asked Rama to take an oath that He would share dharma, artha, and kama (righteousness, wealth, and desire) with Sita. Rama thought: "What does dharma mean? Does it connote worldly dharma or inner dharma? According to worldly dharma, My happiness is her happiness, My wealth is her wealth, and My liking is her liking." Rama promised to Janaka and said, "I accept all the principles of worldly dharma. But I do not accept to share with her My inner dharma. That means, if she becomes an obstacle in the performance of My inner dharma, I will prefer to adhere to My inner dharma to her." Hence, when a washerman of the kingdom expressed doubts about Sita, who spent ten months in the captivity of Ravana in Lanka, Rama immediately exiled Sita from the kingdom. That means, Rama left Sita when He felt that she was an obstacle in the performance of His inner dharma.

Rama strictly adhered to the Vedic injunction "Sathyam vada" all His life. He not only adhered to the word given by Him but He also fulfilled the promise given by His father, Dasaratha, to Kaikeyi. Rama thought to Himself: "The promise given by My father is not different from My promise." Hence, He followed the truth that the promise given by His father was His own promise. This is true dharma. Ramo vigrahavan dharma (Rama is dharma personified).

Rama rajya (rule of Rama) is actually Thyaga rajya (rule of detachment). It establishes the principle of detachment. Help everybody and contemplate on the Name of God constantly. That is what is meant by contemplation on Rama forever at all times. Rama is everywhere. It is a mistake to think that Rama is at one place and not at another.

Practise purity, patience, and perseverance

In Bharat (India), there is hardly any village that does not have a Rama temple. There is no one who is not aware of the Name of Rama. Since ancient times, people of Bharat have been practising charity, adhering to sathya and dharma in their life and feeling closeness with Rama. It is a common saying about Rama, Ramayati Iti Rama (One who pleases is Rama). The Name of

Rama delights everyone.

Never consider Rama merely the son of Dasaratha. Rama is present in every heart. People commonly say, "My Atmarama knows this," referring to Rama as their Atma. Atma is the Name of Rama. The same principle of Atma is present in each heart. It is very necessary for you to know this truth and conduct yourself accordingly.

Never break your promise. As far as possible, perform only those actions that satisfy your conscience. This is the true way of living.

Sage V yasa wrote 18 Puranas (mythological texts). When each one of them is so big and voluminous, how can anybody study all the 18 Puranas even if one spends one's whole lifetime? The lifespan of man in the Kali Yuga (the age we are in) is very short. In the Dwapara Yuga, it was much longer. At the time of the Mahabharata war, Krishna was 76 years old, Arjuna was 74 years old, and Bhishma, the commander-in-chief of the Kaurava army, was 112 years old.

See! In the Dwapara Yuga, a man of 70 years was considered a young boy. But today even a 17 year old boy is weak like an old man. What is the reason? In those days, the heart of the people was very sacred because they practised three P's: Purity, Patience, and Perseverance. By practising these three P's, they remained ever young. Therefore, instead of just teaching and propagating sathya and dharma, you should put them into practice in your life.

Many changes have occurred in Kali Yuga. Many people enter into clashes with others in the name of constructing a temple for God. Why should there be any clash of opinions for constructing a temple of God? Instead of fighting with those who want to construct a temple of God, one should encourage them. Life becomes meaningful if one acts with patience and perseverance.

Therefore, students, treasure sacred thoughts in your heart. Besides contemplating on God, make efforts to put sathya and dharma into practice in your life. When you earn the love of God, you will have everything in life. How

can you attain God's love? You can attain it only by practising sathya and dharma.

God is not anybody else. Truth is God. The word God is not different from dharma. Dharma is a Sanskrit word. People interpret it in many ways. The Vedas, Sastras (philosophical texts), Itihasas (epics), and Puranas (mythological texts) use the word dharma in its real sense. Some people call it righteousness or right action. But these are not its real meanings; they are only reflections of its real meaning. The real meaning of dharma is that which suffuses your heart with bliss. It is said: Dharmam purushasya lakshanam (Dharma is the attribute of man).

Here, the word Purusha does not refer only to men. It includes women also. Man and woman are only adjuncts to differentiate one form from the other; they do not differentiate one Atma from the other. These days, even women wear pants and a shirt. Can we call them men only because they wear a male dress? No, no. That is not correct. Why? Dress is an outer covering. Life and death are also like that only. Death is the dress of life, said Jesus.

The body is like a dress. You do not die when the body dies. Do not give importance to deha (body); it is Dehi (Atma) that signifies your reality. Recognise this truth and attain total satisfaction in life.

Remove the restlessness prevalent in society and establish peace and goodness by practising trikarana suddhi (unity of thought, word, and deed). Wherever you look in this world, law and order is conspicuous by its absence. To revive and establish law and order in the world, practise sathya and dharma. Considering sathya and dharma as their two eyes, students should undertake to promote the welfare of society and nation. This is the main responsibility of students today.

(Bhagavan brought His Discourse to a close with the bhajan, "Govinda Krishna Jai Gopala Krishna Jai...")

76. Experiencing Unity of Man and God

Date: 25 July 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, November 2012.

Neither by penance nor by pilgrimage nor by study of scriptures nor by japa (repetition of the name) can one cross the ocean of life. One can achieve it only by serving the pious.

One cannot attain the goal of life merely by going to the forest and performing penance, leaving family, friends, and property. Even if one attains mastery over six sastras (scriptures) and performs japa (repetition of the Name) from morning till night, one cannot find fulfillment in life. One should serve noble ones, serve society, and recognise the principle of oneness in order to cross the ocean of worldliness, which is the root cause of man's endless cycle of birth and death.

In this wide world, there are many intellectuals and scientists, but do they have peace even for a moment in their life? Do they understand what peace and happiness mean? When one is not able to experience peace and happiness in life, what is the use of anything else?

Peace is the main goal of one's life. Without peace, life is worthless. That is why Thyagaraja sang, "There is no happiness without peace." One can be happy only when one has peace. On the other hand, if one has no peace, the entire life will become a nightmare. Everything appears dark to a blind man. Similarly, howsoever great you may be, the world is nothing for you when you are asleep.

Do not be under the delusion that eyes are meant to see anything and everything in this world. Even birds, animals, and insects have eyes. What is the use if one cannot see the divine effulgence with one's eyes? Ears are given to listen to the divine sound of Pranava (Om), and the mind is meant to

experience peace.

What is the reason that one is unable to experience peace? There are five types of roots of sorrow (kleshas) that cause suffering to humans. These are: ignorance, ego sense, desire, hatred, and fear of death (avidya, asmita, raga, dwesha, and abhinivesha).

What is meant by avidya? 'Vid' means knowledge. Therefore, avidya signifies lack of knowledge. What is that lack of knowledge? It is not the lack of worldly knowledge. It is the lack of knowledge of one's divine nature. One considers oneself to be an ignorant mortal due to avidya. It is impossible for such a person to achieve peace. One who is in the grip of avidya leads a worldly life, identifying with the body and mind and lacking the wisdom to know that one is divine. Body attachment and attachment to the world cause immense suffering. All this is the result of avidya, which causes untold suffering to humans.

The second root of sorrow is ego sense (asmita). One is unable to recognise the root cause of this worldly life and all the suffering associated with it. One forgets that the mind is the root cause of all the suffering. As a result of this, one becomes a victim of ignorance and delusion. One is subjected to various types of sufferings because one is unable to control the mind, which causes all sufferings, sorrows, and difficulties. Asmita signifies the inability of man to understand the true nature of mind, which is the root cause of all suffering.

Desire (raga) is another root of sorrow that causes suffering. What is meant by raga? Here raga does not mean the tune of a song. To desire this, that, and everything signifies raga. When these desires become unlimited, raga becomes roga (disease). People undergo suffering because they are unable to control their desires.

Therefore, one should try to control desires. That is why it is said, "Less luggage more comfort." It is because of limitless desires that one loses stability of mind, gets deluded, forgets the true and eternal principle of Divinity, and consequently undergoes enormous suffering. Therefore, first of

all, put a check on your desires. As long as you have limitless desires, you cannot have peace. You may have desires, but they should be under a certain limit.

Develop equal-mindedness

Then comes the root of suffering called hatred (dwesha klesha). In times of difficulties, sufferings, and losses, one expects help from someone close. But if that person declines to help, one's expectation turns into hatred.

In this world, both good and bad cause suffering to people. All that is good does not necessarily give us happiness. and similarly, all that is bad does not always cause misery.

How does something good give us sorrow? Tulsidas gives an example of this. He said, "I offer my salutations to both good people and wicked ones." You may say, there is some meaning in offering salutations to a good person, but what is the purpose in offering salutations to a wicked one? A wicked person causes suffering to you when you meet them. Similarly, a good person makes you sad when the good person leaves you. Therefore, Tulsidas offered his salutations to wicked people so that they would not come near him. Likewise, he offered his salutations to noble ones so that they would not go away from him.

Association with an evil person and separation from a noble one both cause suffering to man. Human life consists of union (samyoga) and separation (viyoga). It is described as an ocean with turbulent waves of samyoga and viyoga.

Who can judge what is good and what is bad? Therefore, as the Gita teaches, "One should remain equal-minded in happiness and sorrow, gain and loss, victory and defeat (Sukhadukhe samekruthwa labhalabhau jayajayau)." Treat both happiness and sorrow with equanimity.

In order to attain peace, you should exercise equal-mindedness. Do not consider someone as good and another as bad. See God in both. The same Atma is present in both. That is the feeling of oneness and Divinity (ekatma bhava and Divyatma bhava). Bodies are different, tendencies of mind are different, but Divinity is one and the same in all.

Identify yourself with the Self

Names and forms may vary, but Divinity does not change. As long as one observes differences, one cannot attain peace. That is why Tulsidas propagated the principle of oneness. He considered God as the indweller of all beings and experienced oneness.

I often tell you that you are not one person but three: the one you think you are, the one others think you are, and the one you really are, which signify identification with the body, with the individual soul, and with God (dehatma bhava, jivatma bhava, and Ekatma bhava).

All religions, be it Christianity, Islam, Jainism, or Sikhism, proclaim the same truth. Jesus first said, "I am the messenger of God." Then he said, "I am the son of God." In the third stage, he said, "I and my Father are one." The same truth is reflected in the statements, "I am in the light, the light is in me, and I am the light." The essence and goal of all religions is the same. God is one and the same for all.

Then why should there be differences, conflicts, arguments, and counter arguments? All these are the signs of ignorance. Only foolish people who do not understand the real meaning of Divinity create such disturbances and conflicts. Therefore, do not observe any differences whatsoever. Do not criticise any religion or any spiritual practice.

Everyone has a right to follow the path of their choice and experience happiness. When everyone is given the freedom to follow the religion of their choice in their own way, one can experience Divinity.

Do not think of others' faults

How can you give peace to others when you yourself do not have it? Therefore, first of all, you yourself should attain peace. Thereafter, spread it in your own house and your village. In this manner, gradually spread peace everywhere.

Have peace within and without. This is the real spiritual practice. Moreover, do not become narrow-minded. Do not try to evaluate the good and bad of others. Develop your own goodness, and preserve your own purity. This should be your goal. On the other hand, if you look at the wickedness of others, their wickedness will enter you also.

In this regard, here is a small example. You have a camera, and you want to take a photo of someone in front of you. When you focus your lens on the person and press the button, you will capture their photo in your camera.

Similarly, when you focus the lens of your vision on the wickedness of others and press the button of intellect (buddhi), their wickedness will enter you.

Usually, people take the photo of those whom they like. Since you like good people, focus your mind on them only. Then your feelings will become one with theirs. Do not think of the evil of others, because if you keep on thinking about it, you yourself will become evil. As are the feelings, so is the result (Yad bhavam tad bhavati).

Develop unity and experience Divinity

Once, cowherd maidens (gopikas) came to Radha and asked, "You are always thinking of Krishna. As a result of this incessant contemplation on Krishna, you may become Krishna yourself. When Radha becomes Krishna and there is no duality, what happiness will you derive?" Radha replied, "Oh gopikas, by

thinking of Krishna constantly, I may become Krishna. In the same way, as Krishna thinks of Radha continuously, He may become Radha. Then also there will be both Radha and Krishna." Therefore, when you think of God, God also thinks of you. In this manner, you create God.

Who creates God? The devotee creates God and God creates the devotee. Then what is common between God and a devotee? It is the power to create. As God has the power to create, so also has the human. The power of creation is the same in both.

Try to experience Divinity by understanding this principle of unity. Forget all differences and have faith in unity. The knower of Brahman becomes verily Brahman (Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati).

Everyone knows that they have to die one day or the other. Yet, everyone wants to cling to life, and nobody wants to die. This is due to sorrow of fear of death (abhinivesha klesha), which afflicts people.

What is the main cause of sorrow? Worldly desires are the main cause. You become a victim of various roots of sorrow (kleshas) when you forget your real nature and focus your mind on the world.

Be happy with what you have. Why do you worry about something you do not have? Do not crave things that you do not have. This is your real spiritual discipline (sadhana). When you are not satisfied with what you have and constantly worry about what you do not have, how can you experience happiness? Therefore, be content with what you have and share it with others.

Develop such broad-mindedness. In this vast world, one should have a broad mind. One bereft of broad-mindedness is not a human being at all. So, broaden your heart. How can you do it? Fill it with love. When you fill your heart with love, you will not be troubled by any of the roots of sorrow. You will have the power to face all challenges and move forward.

Fill your heart with love

Many people pray to Me to give them a broad heart. Here, what does heart mean? It does not mean the physical heart. When your physical heart is enlarged, you become a patient and have to undergo an operation. So, there is a big difference between the physical heart and the spiritual heart.

The physical heart is like the main switch for the mansion of human body. It is only the main switch, but not the 'current'. Then where is the current? "Brilliant like a streak of lightning set in the midst of the blue rainbearing clouds (Neelatoyadamadhyasthad vidyullekheva bhasvara)". Where is this vidyullekheva? This effulgent power is present in the spinal column. This is also called the central nerve current (sushumna). It is from this sushumna that the current enters the main switch of the heart. If you do not know this, you may enquire about it yourself.

Doctors perform heart surgery. If you think, the life principle is present in the physical heart, then where does it go when heart surgery is performed? Since life is not present in the heart, a heart-lung machine is used during the course of a heart surgery. Hridaya (spiritual heart) is not confined to the body; it is present everywhere. This spiritual heart is present in the body right from top to toe. When an ant crawls on your foot, you immediately become aware of it. So where is your Hridaya? It is present in your foot also. Otherwise, how could you become aware of an ant crawling on your foot? The physical heart is located at one particular place in the body, whereas the spiritual heart pervades the entire body. The physical heart helps in blood circulation, but it has no control over the life principle.

God's Name is the panacea for all your ills

Students!

Whatever difficulties you may have to face, constantly think of God and

remain unperturbed. Always be happy. All difficulties are like passing clouds; they come and go. There are no permanent clouds in this world. Understand this truth and spend your time in the contemplation of God without giving room to worries. In fact, you should think of God more and more in times of difficulties.

Many people criticise and abuse God when they are faced with difficulties, saying, "Does He have no eyes? Can't He see my difficulties? Does He have no ears? Can't He hear my cries?" In fact, you should pray to God more earnestly when you are enmeshed in difficulties.

Spiritual aspirants should always remain steadfast in their spiritual practices, wherever they are. A patient has to necessarily take medicine whether the patient is in the hospital or at home. The patient cannot say, "I am already admitted to the hospital, why should I take medicine?" Similarly, you should always contemplate on God in times of both happiness and sorrow. Only then will the divine Name become the panacea for all your ills.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Sivaya Parames-waraya...")

77. Virtues are the Foundation of Peace

Date: 26 July 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, December 2012.

It Is Not Good For You If Your Words Are Sweet But There Is Bitterness In Your Mind.
In Fact, It Is A Blot On Your Character.
You Will Be Appreciated In This World Only When You Lead Your Life Devoid Of Such A Blemish.
Listen, Oh Valiant Sons Of Bharat!
(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of divine Atma!

People today are leading a life beset with fear and unrest because there is no harmony between their thoughts and words. Everyone wants peace and spends time and energy to attain it. But nobody is making any enquiry as to what peace really means, where it is available, and what is the way to attain it.

One loses peace due to attachment and hatred

First of all, one has to question oneself whether one wants worldly peace or inner peace. Worldly peace is temporary and comes and goes. But one is deluded into thinkiing that it is real peace. One is unable to understand what is the nature of peace, what is its power, and how sublime it is.

The state of freedom from attachment (raga) and hatred (dwesha) is real peace. Where there is attachment and hatred, there can be no peace. What is

Prasanthi (supreme peace)? 'Pra' means to blossom. Therefore, the blossoming of inner peace in a state devoid of hatred and attachment is Prasanthi. It is, in fact, the manifestation of inner peace.

But is there anyone in this world who has experienced this Prasanthi? When you enquire this, you will realise that it is very difficult for ordinary mortals to experience supreme peace devoid of hatred and attachment. Peace cannot be acquired from outside, it has to be manifested from within.

How can you attain this supreme peace? You use another thorn to take out a thorn from your foot. Diamond can be cut only by diamond. Similarly, peace can be attained only through peace.

There are so many people in this world who have all the comforts and conveniences, yet they lack peace and have some fear or the other every moment. What is the reason? Can the external comforts and conveniences give peace to a person? Can one attain peace by wealth, gold, and other worldly possessions? If wealth and worldly possessions could give peace, then how is it that even rich men are in the grip of unrest?

In spite of all comforts and conveniences, people today are unable to experience peace because they are filled with evil thoughts. One will be filled with fear and anxiety when a snake enters one's house. Such being the case, how can one attain peace when the venomous snakes of attachment and hatred have entered the heart? It is impossible to attain permanent peace as long as one does not give up attachment and hatred.

Many people have power, authority, and wealth. In spite of all this, they are unable to enjoy peace. They are subjected to unrest because they lack the will power and capacity to control their evil qualities. Therefore, first of all, one should see to it that evil qualities and evil thoughts do not enter one's heart.

There is a permanent spring of peace in the inner recesses of the heart. Water is flowing everywhere under the surface of earth. What should you do

to bring this water out? You have to remove the soil that covers the water by digging the earth. The soil of attachment and hatred has covered the peace within you. You can attain that peace only when you remove this 'soil.' Purify your mind to experience peace Some people are under the mistaken notion that they can attain peace by performing some worship (puja) and rituals. They also think that the welfare of the world can be achieved by the performance of rituals and sacrifices (yajnas and yagas). Many perform rituals and sacrifices for world peace. I don't say it is wrong. It is good to perform them. However, world peace cannot be achieved by these external practices.

World peace can be achieved when you develop inner peace. Everything is the reflection of your inner being. You can have peace in your house when you yourself have peace.

How can you impart peace to others when you yourself lack it? It is foolishness to think that you can get peace or unrest from another individual. Your hunger is satiated only when you eat food. Your disease is cured only when you take the medicine. In the same way, every individual can attain peace by getting rid of their evil qualities.

Peace is not something that you can inherit from your parents. Peace is one entity that cannot be fragmented and distributed. Peace is everywhere, but one has to make efforts to experience it.

Your mental pollution caused by evil qualities and wicked thoughts is responsible for your disturbance and agitation. A person who is agitated cannot even have sound sleep. Then how can that person experience peace?

Peace is divine. To experience this divine quality, you have to purify your heart. It means that you should take care not to allow evil qualities to enter your heart. Develop the power to keep evil qualities under check under all circumstances. Whatever may be the difficulties, problems, and predicaments that you face, you should develop the power to block the evil qualities from entering your heart.

What is this power? That is love. When you develop this power of love, there will be no scope for bad thoughts to enter your mind.

There is every possibility of poisonous snakes entering a dark room full of luggage. Only such rooms that are full of luggage and darkness will become dwelling places for poisonous snakes. When the room is clean and illuminated, there is no possibility for snakes to enter it. Similarly, you should illuminate your heart with the light of love. Do not stuff it with the luggage of desires. That is why, it is said: Less luggage more comfort.

Peace is within you

Dear Students!

The word santhi (peace) in Telugu consists of only two letters, but it has great significance. You utter santhi three times after bhajan and prayer. Why should you utter it only three times, why not four times or two times? You utter santhi three times because you want peace at all the three levels: physical, mental, and spiritual.

If you have peace only at the physical level, you may have unrest at the mental level. Similarly, if you have peace at the mental level and lack it at the physical level, you cannot experience total peace. The inner significance of uttering santhi three times is to pray for peace at all three levels.

You can attain peace only through peace. If you do not have peace, sit at a quiet place and keep repeating santhi, santhi, santhi ... like a mantra. You will certainly attain peace after some time. Similarly, as I have told you many times, when wicked thoughts enter your mind, remind yourself, "I am not an animal, I am human," repeatedly. Then your animal thoughts will vanish and noble thoughts will develop.

When you are in a fit of anger, remind yourself, "I am not a dog, I am human." Anger is the quality of a dog, not of humans. When you repeatedly remind

yourself that you are not a dog, the quality of dog will run away from you.

Because of the fickle nature of the mind, sometimes you get unwanted thoughts. At that time, remind yourself, "I am not a monkey, I am a human" repeatedly. When you do so, the quality of a monkey will vanish from you. Anger, waywardness, etc. are animal qualities. Peace, compassion, love, forbearance, etc. are human qualities. When you develop human qualities, your animal qualities will automatically disappear.

All qualities are there in the human; they do not come from anywhere outside. Some people think bad company will give rise to bad thoughts. You will be influenced by bad company only if there are evil tendencies already in you.

Are there no good feelings and good thoughts outside? Why do they not enter your heart? They do not enter your heart because primarily there are no good thoughts and good feelings in you. That is why, since ancient times, company of the good (satsang) has been given great importance. The good thoughts and feelings in you will develop when you associate yourself with good company.

Always cultivate sacred feelings. What is meant by sacred feelings and thoughts? Thoughts of God are sacred thoughts. It does not matter what name of God you contemplate upon. God is one. "The one God has many names (Ek prabhu ke anek nam)." Fill your heart with any divine name. Then there will be no scope for other thoughts to enter it. Your heart is like a single chair. Once you enshrine divine love in it, no evil thought can enter it.

At a young age, students are obsessed with many types of thoughts. Bad company is not alone responsible for these evil thoughts. Your food and habits are also responsible for this. Your foolishness is also a cause for this. What is this foolishness? You yourself do not know what is good, but at the same time you do not listen if someone tells you what is good. This is the greatest foolishness of humanity.

Either try to know yourself or listen to the good counsel of others. If you lack both these, there can be no greater foolish person than you. If you do not know what is good, try to know it, or else go to the noble souls who can teach you what is good.

You will get peace only through such sacred practices. Peace is not something you acquire from outside; it is what you experience from within. There is water everywhere under the surface of earth. Have you poured it there? No. It is already there, naturally. You will get water from earth once you remove the soil that covers it. Similarly, peace is already present in your heart. You will experience it when you remove the soil of attachment and hatred that is covering it.

Peace is humanity's inner wealth

Attachment (raga) and hatred (dwesha) are responsible for the unrest and fear prevalent in the world today. No one is able to enjoy peace.

Where is the defect? The defect lies within you, not outside. You yourself are the cause of your unrest. Your evil thoughts are responsible for your lack of peace. Enquire within and get rid of bad thoughts and feelings. Then you are sure to experience peace.

Peace is the crown of noble souls. Where there is selfishness, peace runs away from there. If it sees a person full of attachment and hatred, it does not come near him at all. Just as you run away when you see a snake, likewise peace runs away when it finds a person filled with attachment and hatred.

Where there is sacredness, there peace manifests. Peace is the inner wealth of every man. When you have such great wealth in you, why should you run after any wealth outside? When you already have a lighted lamp in your house, why should you go to others' houses to light your lamp? When you already have a fire in your house, why should you go to your neighbour to borrow it? Your peace is within you; you need not go to anybody else in

search of peace.

When you undertake activities that purify your mind, peace will become your property. All spiritual practices are meant to purify your mind. You will have peace only when your mind is pure. You may undertake any spiritual practice like repetition of the name, meditation, devotional singing, or contemplation on God. You may also associate with good company. All these spiritual practices are meant to drive away your evil qualities to some extent. What you get out of these temporary practices is only temporary peace, not permanent peace.

If you want permanent peace, you should rise to the level of the Divine by telling yourself,

"I am a human being, I should reach the level of the Divine. From animality, I have risen to the state of humanness. From humanness, I should reach the state of divinity." Always look up; low aim is a crime.

Develop human qualities

If you lead all your life in duality (dvaita), then when will you reach the state of qualified non-dualism (visishtadvaita)? If you have not reached visishtadvaita, how will you reach the state of non-dualism (advaita)?

You are all students. Suppose you enter first standard this year, will you be happy to remain in first standard forever? No. Next year, you have to go to second standard, then to third standard, so on and so forth. In this manner, every year you have to go to a higher class. That is the proper system and true progress.

The same thing applies in spirituality also. Now you are at the level of duality, where you say, I am different from you. From this state of duality, you should reach the state of qualified non-dualism, where you realise that, though bodies are different, everyone is an aspect of the Divine. When you get rid of

body attachment, you will become one with the Divine. That is non-dualism (advaita).

Bodies are like bulbs. But all the bulbs shine with the same current. This current is the principle of the Atma. You should realise this principle of oneness. That is non-dualism. Do not waste all your life by remaining in the state of non-dualism.

Acquire the degree of love

You may have desires, but they should be under a certain limit. What are desires meant for? They are meant for performing your duties. If you are a householder, you should fulfill your family responsibilities. If you are a student, your duty is to go to school, attend your classes, listen to your teachers, and study well. When you follow this proper procedure, you will get good marks and get promoted to a higher class. Similarly, you should follow a proper procedure on the path of spirituality also.

"Spiritual education is true education (Adhyatma vidya vidyanam)." V arious types of secular education are like small rivers. But ultimately all the rivers merge in the ocean. The ocean is the ultimate destination of all rivers. "The ocean is the goal of the rivers (Nadinam sagaro gathi)." You may have mastered music, literature, painting, and art. But the ultimate aim of all your learning is to attain the love of God, the ocean of divine grace.

You study many subjects, like physics, chemistry, mathematics, botany, English language, etc. The subjects may be different, but it is the same brain that grasps them. When I ask you what are you studying and what are your subjects, you say PCM (physics, chemistry, mathematics). You study various subjects to get a degree like B.A. or B.Sc. Similarly, you may undertake any spiritual practice, but what you have to ultimately get is the degree of love.

The nine paths of devotion are the sacred means of attaining peace. These are: listening (sravanam), singing (kirtanam), contemplating on Vishnu

(Vishnusmaranam), serving His Lotus Feet (Padasevanam), salutation (vandanam), worship (archanam), servitude (dasyam), friendship (sneham), and selfsurrender (Atmanivedanam).

You may follow any one of these paths. If possible, you can follow all of them. Only then will you attain peace.

Develop divine love. As you develop love, you will become free from worldly and physical unrest. Worldly feelings come and go like passing clouds. But the peace that comes from within is permanent. In fact, permanent peace is real peace. Peace that comes and goes is not real. Therefore, try to attain permanent peace.

Truth is permanent. Therefore, in order to attain God, you have to follow this permanent principle of truth. If you follow that which is not permanent, you will reach nowhere. You should aim at that which is true and eternal. Only then will you attain true and eternal divinity.

Spirituality knows no fear

Dear Students!

Do not merely talk about truth, righteousness, peace, love, and nonviolence (sathya, dharma, santhi, prema, and ahimsa). Instead. awaken these values in your heart. "Arise, awake, go to noble men and learn from them the secret of attaining Divinity (Uttishtha, Jagratha, Prapya Varannibodhata).

You should awaken the values of truth, righteousness, and peace that are lying dormant in your heart. Why are they lying dormant? They are lying dormant because you are not putting them to any use. On the other hand, you are putting all your worldly feelings and tendencies into action. Since you are not putting these values to use, they are lying dormant. Put them to use. Then all your worldly tendencies will be subdued and the values will be awakened.

A lion has no fear and walks majestically without looking back. That is why it is called the king of animals. A spiritual giant is fearless, like a lion. One with worldly desires is like a sheep that is all the time fear-stricken. As you know, sheep follow one another blindly. If one sheep falls into a well, the rest will follow suit. You should be like a lion and not like a sheep.

Give no scope to fear. Develop courage and valour without giving scope to fear. Fearlessness (dheeratvam) is the hallmark of Divinity (Daivatvam). You should make efforts to rise to the level of Divinity. You don't need to fear anything. Fear comes only when there is some defect in you.

Where there is righteousness, there is virtue, Where there is virtue, there is discipline, Where there is discipline, there is peace.

On the other hand, where there is fear and lack of virtues, there is unrest (asanthi).

Virtues are the foundation of peace. You should develop virtues. That is why Hanuman is extolled as one of peace, virtues, and valour (Santudu, Gunavantudu, Balavantudu, Hanumantudu). What is the basis of all the virtues that he possessed? Here is a small example.

Once upon a time, the mothers of Sage Agastya, Hanuman, and Lord Rama started talking about the greatness of their sons. First, the mother of Agastya said, "Do you know who my son is? He drank the entire ocean in one gulp. Such is his greatness." Hanuman's mother replied, "Your son might have drunk the entire ocean, but my son crossed the ocean in one leap and reached Lanka." Then Mother Kausalya intervened and said to the mother of Hanuman, "Your son could cross the ocean only with the power of the Name of my son." From the conversations of these three mothers, it is clear that God is the greatest of all. Sage Agastya could drink the entire ocean due to the power of God. Similarly, it is the power of Rama's Name that enabled Hanuman to cross the ocean and reach Lanka. Therefore, first and foremost, chant the Name of God. There is nothing more powerful than the Divine Name.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Hari Hari Hari Hari Smarana Karo...")

78. Develop Love for God

Date: 18 August 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: A condensed version of this discourse appears in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. This more complete version was published in Sanathana Sarathi, September 2013.

Forbearance Is The Real Beauty In This Sacred Land Of Bharat.
Of All The Rituals, Adherence To Truth Is The Greatest Penance.
The Nectarine Feeling In This Country Is The Feeling Of Love Toward One's Mother.
Character Is Valued Far Higher Than The Very Life Itself.
People Have Forgotten The Basic Principles Of This Great Culture And
Are Imitating Western Culture.
Alas! The Indians (Bharatiyas) Are Not Aware Of
The Greatness Of Their Cultural Heritage, Just As A Mighty Elephant
Is Not Aware Of Its Own Strength.
(Telugu Poem)
The Honour Of A Nation Depends Upon The Morality Of Its People.
Lack Of Morality Will Certainly Put A Nation To Disrepute.
True Human Race Is That Which Upholds Morality.
Listen To This Truth, Oh Valorous Sons Of Bharat!
(Telugu Poem)

The power of intelligence is growing in humanity at tremendous pace. In fact, there are no limits to intelligence. But, unfortunately, there is not even an iota of development in virtues. Due to the advancement of science and technology, and with the power of intelligence, people have learnt to fly in the sky like a bird and dive in water like a fish. But they have not learnt to live like human beings on earth.

See unity in diversity

What is the big achievement if people fly in the sky like a bird? More important is to learn to live like a human being on earth, because earth is the base. It is a mistaken notion to think that one has made great progress just because one has learnt to fly in the sky. It is only an illusion.

In fact, the intelligence of humanity is so perverted today that people are creating diversity where there is unity. Moreover, the number of such so-called intelligent people is on the rise.

People today have forgotten the virtues that can help them to visualise unity in diversity. The primary duty is to see unity in diversity. To see diversity in unity is a sign of meanmindedness.

It is very easy to cut a cloth into a number of pieces, but it is difficult to stitch all the pieces into a single piece of cloth. Real fulfillment, happiness, and comfort of life lies only in unity. People should understand the relationship between unity and diversity.

In order to get a shirt stitched, you take a twometre cloth to a tailor. The tailor will cut the cloth into a number of pieces - otherwise, the shirt cannot be made. He has to cut the cuffs, pockets, collar, etc., separately and join them together.

What does the tailor use to cut the cloth into pieces? A pair of scissors. What helps the tail or to join all the pieces and make a shirt? A needle.

People today are conducting themselves like the scissors that divide and not like the needle that unites. People think they are very intelligent because they can divide. But this is not real intelligence. People have forgotten what real intelligence is and are indulging in cunningness and wasting their lives.

Human birth is meant to attain freedom from birth and death

Life is a mixture of happiness and sorrow. Happiness and sorrow, profit and loss, good and bad, light and darkness are, in fact, the reflection of each other. As the Gita says, One should remain equal-minded in happiness and sorrow, gain and loss, victory and defeat (Sukhadukhe samekruthwa labhalabhau jayajayau).

What is the purpose of life? What is this life all about? It begins with birth and ends with death. One is caught in this endless cycle of birth and death. Therefore, one should pray to God to grant freedom from this cycle of birth and death.

Oh Lord! I Am Caught Up In This Cycle Of Birth And Death
Time And Again, I Experience 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.
Punarapi Jananam Punarapi Maranam, Punarapi Janani Jathare Sayanam,
Iha Samsare Bahu Dustare, Kripayapare Pahi Murare.
(Sanskrit Verse)

Every human being who is born is bound to die one day or the other. How should one lead life? What is the goal of life? What is the purpose of life?

Human birth is considered very sacred. Of all living beings, human birth is the rarest (Jantunam nara janma durlabham).

Why is it considered so rare? It is rare because people can demonstrate great ideals in human birth. Therefore, people should not waste their lives in pursuit of worldly pleasures.

Our Vice Chancellor mentioned in his speech that children perform the death ritual (sraddha) for their deceased parents on a particular day every year and offer their gratitude to them. This annual ceremony in Telugu is called Tat Dinamu (That Day). One should think of one's parents at least on the day of their death and offer them a few tears of gratitude. That is real tarpanam

(offering of water to the deceased ancestors).

It is your foremost duty to offer your gratitude to your parents. Why? Your blood, food, head, and money are the gifts of your parents. Therefore, it is your duty to offer them gratitude, remembering the love they showered on you and the sacrifices they made for your growth.

If you perform such sacred ceremonies in memory of your parents, your children will also respect and remember you in the future. You will receive the reaction, resound, and reflection of whatever you do in life.

If you love your parents, your children will love you. If you betray your parents, your children will also betray you. None can escape from the consequences of their actions in this world. Therefore, preserve the sense of gratitude in your heart and set a noble ideal.

Put your intelligence to proper use

Students today are trying to develop their intelligence, but not good qualities. They are heroes in academic achievements but zeros in virtues. They secure 100 percent marks in their studies, but when you evaluate their virtues, they don't score even one mark out of hundred.

Three-fourth character is life. Education without character is useless. Therefore, make all efforts to develop your character. You may be endowed with power, wealth, intelligence, and physical strength, but all these powers will prove futile if you lack the power of divine grace.

All of you know what happened to Karna in the Mahabharata war.

One May Have Physical Prowess And Power Of Intelligence,
But One Will Come To Grief If One Lacks Divine Grace.
Karna Was A Great Warrior, But What Was His Fate?
Never Forget This Truth.

(Telugu Poem)

Once, a ruler was impressed with the story of the Mahabharata and the way the virtuous Pandavas vanquished the wicked Kauravas. He wanted his story also to be written resembling the epic Mahabharata, portraying himself as the hero of the story.

He convened a meeting of his court scholars and poets and said to them, "Oh great scholars, I will give you a sumptuous reward if you write my story on the lines of the Mahabharata. You may compare me with the eldest of the Pandavas, who was virtuous and the embodiment of truth." One of the scholars asked, "Oh king! Whom are we supposed to portray as your four younger brothers?" The king thought for a while and said, "Four four ministers are dear to me. You may treat them as my brothers." "Oh king! Then who are the Kauravas." "All my enemies are like Kauravas, there are hundreds of them," said the king.

An intelligent poet who was listening to the conversation got up and asked, "Oh king! The Pandavas were five brothers. You will choose your four brothers from your ministers. We will take the one who is endowed with physical strength as Bhima. One who has a sharp intellect will be treated as Arjuna. Accordingly, we will choose Nakula and Sahadeva also.

"But there is one more aspect you have to look into. When you are portrayed as Yudhishthira and your wife as Draupadi, she has to be portrayed as the wife of your four ministers also, since Draupadi was the wife of five Pandavas. Now you have to decide the name of the person who will be portrayed as Draupadi. She will be not only your wife but also the wife of the four ministers!" On hearing this, the king immediately gave up the idea of getting his story written like the Mahabharata.

The moral of the story is that you should understand the life source behind those stories when you read epics like the Mahabharata. Every character and every aspect of this great epic has a particular life source. Only when you

recognise them will you be able to understand their significance and message.

One who does not understand the life source will suffer the same predicament as this king.

People today have perverted intelligence. What is the use of intelligence if it is not put to proper use? If intelligence is associated with good qualities, you can achieve anything in life.

One May Acquire A High Academic Qualification Such As M.a. Or B.a. And Attain An Exalted Position,
One May Amass Wealth, Perform Acts Of Charity, And Attain Name And Fame,
One May Have Physical Strength And Enjoy A Long And Healthy Life,
One May Be A Great Scholar Studying And Preaching The Vedas,
But None Can Equal A True Devotee Of The Lord.
(Telugu Poem)

Students!

Having been born in this sacred land, you should strive to develop virtues along with intelligence. While intelligence will help you to accomplish certain tasks, your virtues will bring you a good name. There are only two things that are true and eternal in life. What are they? Righteousness and a good name.

Life In The World Is Impermanent.
So Are Youth And Wealth.
Wife And Children Are Also Not Permanent.
Only Righteousness And Good Name Are Permanent.
Asthiram Jivanam Loke, Asthiram Yauvanam Dhanam,
Asthiram Dara Putradi, Dharmam Kirti Dwayam Sthiram.
(Sanskrit Verse)
Do Not Misuse Time

This world is impermanent, and everything in it is temporary, like passing clouds. When a boy is born, you call him a child. After ten years, he is called a boy; at the age of thirty, he is called a man, and at 75, he is called a grandfather. Though he is called child, boy, man, and grandfather at different stages of life, the person is the same.

Time is the most important and precious power that God has given man. Time is very, very important. Don't waste time. Time waste is life waste. Time is God.

We offer salutations to time by reciting: "Salutations to time, to the one who is beyond time, to the one who has conquered time, to the one who transcends time, to the one who is the embodiment of time, and to the one who ordains time (Kalaya namah, kala kalaya Namah, kaladarpa damanaya namah, kalateetaya namah, nalaswarupaya namah, kalaniyamitaya namah)." Everything is regulated by time. Time is responsible for even birth and death. When somebody dies, people say their time is up.

Even for unripe fruit to become ripe, time is responsible. Time is most important and is the basis of everything.

Students!

People Indulge In Vain Gossip, Talk Ill Of Others, And Waste Their Time.
To Ridicule Others Is A Great Sin. You Can Never Escape From Its Consequences.
In Fact, Others Are Not Others; They Are Verily Embodiments Of God.
Listen To This, Oh Valiant Sons Of Bharat!
(Telugu Poem)

When you ridicule others, you verily ridicule God Himself. So, never ridicule or criticise anyone. You waste a lot of time in criticising others. Don't you have anything else to do? If you have nothing else to do, it is better to spread your

mattress and sleep. Why do you misuse your time in evil talk? One who misuses time is a great sinner.

Bharat is the land of plenty

There is no dearth of anything in this sacred land of Bharat (India). Bharat is considered the Land of Bounty (Annapurna). There is no dearth of fertile land or perennial rivers in this land. All types of crops can be grown here. The resources that are available in Bharat are not available anywhere else. If the Indians (Bharatiyas) work hard, Bharat can really become a land of bounty.

Bharat is forced to take loans from other countries because people are not prepared to work hard. Why should we take loans at all? We have everything in plenty. The only thing we need is to make proper use of our resources.

Sanctify your time by working hard. Any individual can have their fill if they work hard. Isn't it possible to fill your belly if you work with both hands? Though God has given you two hands, you are not able to fill your belly because of your laziness.

Work hard. Do your duty sincerely. Then you will have both health and happiness. Today, people are ready to eat but not to work. On top of that, they indulge in vain argumentation.

Those who indulge in vain argumentation have their head filled with mud. There is any amount of knowledge in the pustaka (book), but what is the use if the mastaka (head) is filled with mud? You may fill your mastaka with knowledge from the pustaka, but do not make your mastaka another pustaka.

Only those who lack total knowledge indulge in argumentation. They are really great fools. Never indulge in vain argumentation. How can you argue about something that you do not know?

You start imagining what is beyond the moon, but you have not seen it. Then

how can you argue about it? How can you decide what is there?

If someone asks you what is under your feet, you will say that earth is there because you have direct knowledge of it. But what do you gain by arguing about something that you do not know? You will only be wasting time, energy, and memory power. Not only that, you will age prematurely.

There is perfect harmony between My thoughts, words, and deeds. My memory power is perfect; I have no weakness whatsoever.

How do modern young boys of 17, 18, or 20 years look? They wear a castor oil face with sunken cheeks. Students should always be happy, cheerful, and active. They should be careful also. Whatever work you do, do it with proper care. Only then can you have peace and happiness, and even the nation will be safe and secure.

Students!

Since there is a dearth of hard-working people today, we are compelled to depend on other nations for help. If you look back and enquire, you will understand how the British overpowered this country. How could a small country like England vanquish a vast country like Bharat with a huge population? The reason is that Indians betrayed their own country due to their selfishness and greed for money. They were lazy and not prepared to do hard work. That is why the British could swallow the entire India like an idli.

Indians are like the mighty elephant that does not know its own strength. With a swish of its tail, the elephant can throw the mahout far away. The mahout controls such a powerful elephant with the help of a small iron hook because the elephant does not know its own strength.

Every individual and student is endowed with immense power and great energy. They can accomplish any mighty task. There is nothing they cannot achieve in this world if they do it with firm resolve. But they are not making efforts to manifest their innate power.

A tiny ant can walk miles together if it puts in effort. On the other hand, even an eagle cannot move an inch if it does not put in effort.

Thyagaraja sang,

Oh Rama! In Your Pure And Unsullied Form Of Love, You Dwell In All Beings From An Ant To Brahma As Also In Siva And Kesava. Please Be My Protector Too
Cheemalo Brahmalo Siva Kesavadulalo Prema Meera Velasi Unde Birudhu Vahinchina Rama Nannu Brovara.

One with life principle is Siva (life), one without life principle is Sava (corpse). Therefore, man is verily the embodiment of Siva. Whatever one does - walking, talking, reading, writing, etc. - it is only with the help of the innate divine power.

Once, Thyagaraja was dismayed when he had to face a great ordeal. His elder brother had thown into the river Kaveri the idol of Lord Rama that Thyagaraja used during worship.

Thyagaraja complained, "Oh Rama! Why do You put me to this great ordeal? Don't I have devotion? Or don't You have the power to protect me? If You really have the power to protect me, why do have I to undergo all this suffering? I do have devotion, because not a moment passes when I do not think of You or pray to You. Therefore, there is devotion in me, but there is no power in You." In this way, Thyagaraja became proud of his devotion. It is like a dancer blaming the percussionist to hide his own inefficiency.

Later on, Thyagaraja repented for his mistake. He said to himself, "Fie on me. My devotion is not true. Lord Rama is certainly omnipotent." He then sang:

But For The Power Of Rama, Could A Mere Monkey Cross The Mighty Ocean?
Would Lakshmi Devi, The Goddess Of Wealth, Become His Consort?
Would Lakshmana Worship Him?

Would The Intelligent Bharata Offer His Salutations To Him?
But For The Mighty Power Of Rama, Would All This Happen?
Indeed, Rama's Power Is Beyond All Description.
(Telugu Song)

Thyagaraja said, "Oh Rama! It is impossible to describe Your power. But for the power of Your Name, could a monkey cross the ocean? Everybody worships the goddess of wealth, Lakshmi. There is none who does not worship Lakshmi. Even a mad person stretches his hand for money.

"Would the powerful Lakshmi worship You if there were no power in You? How great is Your power, Swami, we are not able to know.

"The vessel of my heart is very small. Therefore, I could receive only a little of Your grace. So it is not Your fault; the fault lies with me because my vessel is small. If I can expand my vessel, I can fill it with Your love and grace as much as I want." God is the embodiment of love. Live in love. You have to expand the vessel of your heart so that you can fill it with the love and grace of God. When your heart is narrow, it is a great mistake to blame God for not being able to receive His unbounded grace.

Students should develop moral values

Our system of education is so defective that it does not foster moral, ethical, and spiritual values in students. Once, there lived a pundit (scholar) who meticulously performed the ceremonial worship of God (Sandhya Vandanam), chanted the Gayatri Mantra, and led his life in this sacred manner. His only son fell into bad company. Tell me your company I shall tell you what you are.

One day, the son came to his father and said, "I want to go to America - all my friends are going there." The father advised him, "My dear, it is not possible to follow our sacred traditions in America. There, it will not be possible for you to chant the Gayatri Mantra or perform Sandhya Vandanam.

Even if you try to perform them, people will make fun of you saying, here is a mad Indian. Therefore, I advise you not to go to America." But the son was very adamant. He insisted on going. He was his parents' only son. Humanity is caught up in the three-fold trap of desire for money, wife, and progeny (dhaneshana, dareshana, and putreshana). Since he did not want to displease his son, the father agreed.

The boy went to Delhi and got his passport and visa. The next day, he was to board the flight to America. At the time of departure, the father advised him, "Son, wherever you go, never forget our family deity, Mother Kali, in any situation. Always contemplate on her, perform Sandhya Vandanam morning and evening every day. and chant the Gayatri Mantra regularly." The son readily agreed to whatever his father told him. He readily gave his word to his father.

Even though he promised his father that he would follow his instructions, he was really not serious about it, and his main concern was to reach America somehow. He was desperate to reach America by any means because he considered America a heaven on earth.

But in reality it is not so. Life in America is artificial. On the other hand, how sacred and blessed land India is! It is the land of merit, sacrifice, and action (punya bhumi, thyaga bhumi, and karma bhumi).

Five years after reaching America, the son forgot even his mother tongue. While speaking to his mother over the phone, he was unable to converse in Telugu. The poor mother was not able to understand what her son was saying.

Being a traditional woman, she did not know modern ways. Therefore, she handed the phone to her husband. The son spoke to his father in English. "Father, I have to be here for another five years to pursue higher studies." What was he studying? In fact, he did not complete the course for which he had gone. All the money his father sent was wasted on eating and roaming. As the Telugu proverb goes: A jobless barber tries to shave the head of the

cat. That is how the boy spent his time. doing nothing worthwhile.

His father thought, this mad fellow would not return to India if he left him like this. Therefore, he devised a plan. He sent an urgent telegram to him, saying, "Mother's condition is serious, come immediately." Out of fear that his father may not send money to him again, the son decided to return to India. His parents were very happy that their son was returning to India. In his letters from America, he had been writing lies that he had not forgotten the Divine Mother and that he was chanting the Gayatri Mantra regularly.

The father went to receive him at the airport and took him to the temple of Mother Kali directly in a car. Since he had sought Divine Mother's blessings while sending him to America, he wanted to receive her blessings before taking his son home. After reaching the temple, the father told him to offer his salutations to the Divine Mother.

The son looked at the idol of Mother Kali and said, "How are you, Madam?" The father was aghast at his behaviour. He scolded him severely, saying, "Fie on you! Is this what you have learnt in America? You are not fit to be my son. Get out of here!" What an arrogance it was on the part of the son to address the Divine Mother, "How are you, Madam?"! Is this the quality of an educated person? Does this type of behaviour befit a human being? No, this is a demonic quality.

Howsoever such highly educated people may be, they are not fit to be called human beings. Today many students are becoming like this.

First of all, students should develop moral values. Bereft of human values, life has no meaning. Lack of moral character of the people is the cause of so much chaos in the country today. Morality is most important.

You will become the embodiment of the divine Trinity when you develop the triune principles of love for God, fear of sin, and morality in society (Daiva preeti, papa bheeti, and sangha neeti).

However high an education you may acquire, never lose your faith in God. One without faith in God is verily a living corpse. Even the dead animal has some value, because its skin can be put to some use. But the dead body of a human being has no value at all.

Therefore, strive to earn a good name while you are alive. That is the ideal life. It is possible when you develop love for God. You will have everything in life if you have love for God.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Prema Mudita Manase Kaho ...")

78. Develop Love for God and Sanctify Your Life

Date: 28 July 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, Feburary 2013.

One May Be The Master Of All Forms Of Knowledge,
One May Vanquish One's Adversaries In Debate,
One May Fight With Valour And Courage In The Battlefield,
One May Be An Emperor Reigning Over Vast Kingdoms,
One May Offer Cows And Gold As An Act Of Charity,
One May Count The Countless Stars In The Sky,
One May Tell The Names Of Different Living Creatures On The Earth,
One May Be An Expert In Eight Forms Of Yoga,
One May Reach Even The Moon,
But Can Anyone Control The Body, Mind, And Senses,
Turn The Vision Inward, And
Achieve The Supreme State Of Equanimity Of The Mind?
(Telugu Poem)
Students!

There is no knowledge in this world that Humanity has not acquired. Humanity today has mastered all types of knowledge, enjoys all types of comforts and conveniences, has the means to travel to any part of the world, and can understand the secrets of all the natural phenomena. But no one knows who they are.

What is the use of knowing anything when one does not know oneself? Having attained human birth and having acquired varioustypes of knowledge, one should first of all make efforts to know oneself. When one knows oneself, one will know everything else in the world in a moment. This is the main principle of non-dualism (advaita).

Aspects of the principle of nondualism

There are three aspects of the principle of non-dualism (advaita) in this world: padartha advaita, bhava advaita, and kriya advaita.

This is a handkerchief. What principle of nondualism is associated with it? The handkerchief is made up of threads, but the basis of the threads is cotton. In fact, cotton, threads, and cloth are one and the same. They are three different names and forms of the same thing. When you understand this, you will understand the underlying oneness of everything in this world, which is changeless in three periods of time. This is called padartha advaita.

What is bhava advaita? Thousands of people are sitting here. They have different names and forms. Though they appear to be different, I can prove that all of them are one. Their joys and sorrows may be different, their desires and attachments may be different, their names and forms may be different, their situation and circumstances may also be different, but the same five elements are present in all of them. This is the underlying principle of oneness of all human beings.

Even if one of the five elements is missing in a person, that person cannot exist. The five elements are common not only in human beings but also in all the living beings in the world.

What is kriya advaita? Every person in this world has some desires and aspirations, depending on their situation and circumstances. When desires are not fulfilled, it leads to disappointment. With limitless desires and meaningless anxiety, one craves all that is not possible and ultimately becomes a victim of disappointment and frustration.

Whatever work one may do, one should do it without any desire for the fruits thereof and offer it to God with the feeling: All actions are to please God (Sarva karma Bhagavad preetyartham). This is kriya advaita.

Only when one entertains a desire for the fruits of their actions may that desire turn into despair and that satisfaction turn into dissatisfaction. But when you do everything as an offering to God, there will be no scope for sorrow and misery.

Four tendencies of man

There are four types of tendencies in a human being: divine, human, demonic, and animal. Depending on the time, action, and reason and owing to the influence of place and circumstances, one of the four tendencies becomes predominant. Humans are classified as divine, human, demonic, and bestial on the basis of the predominance of one of these tendencies in them.

Who is divine among human beings? One who is always focused on Brahman is a divine person (Brahma nishta paro Deva). Devoid of ego and desires, that one is always in a state of bliss, entertains sacred feelings, and performs deeds that are beneficial to others. Since that one performs all actions to please God, all their good works become God's works. That one has no thoughts other than those of God and no desire except to do everything to please God.

Such sacred qualities are the hallmark of a divine being. One thinks neither about themself nor about the world; one is always immersed in contemplation of God, who is true and eternal. One is human in form, but all one's actions are divine.

Where do these sacred feelings come from? They come from the heart. Where does Divinity manifest from? It manifests from the pure heart of a human being.

A true human is one who follows the path of truth (sathya) and righteousness (dharma) (Sathya dharma rato martya), say the Vedas. With total faith in the principles of truth and dharma, that one performs righteous actions and acts of charity without ignoring any worldly or family duties. That one's heart is

filled with compassion and love. That one has total faith in God and has no fear.

Fear is an animal quality. One who causes fear is a beast. One who is fear-stricken is an animal. Having been born as humans, you should neither cause fear in others nor be fear-stricken yourself. In this way, lead your life in a sacred manner, always engaged in the service of society, earning a good name. Derive happiness from the practice of human values and share it with others.

The human values of truth, right conduct, peace, love, and nonviolence (sathya, dharma, santhi, prema, ahimsa) are interrelated and interdependent. Truth depends on righteousness, righteousness on peace, peace on love, and love on nonviolence. Even if you have one of the four values truth, righteousness, peace, and love, you will not indulge in acts of violence.

One who is addicted to intoxicating drinks is a demon (Madyapana rato rakshasa). Due to the influence of intoxicating drinks, one loses humanness and performs evil and demonic acts. Consumption of intoxicating drinks is one of the main causes for the rise of demonic tendencies in man.

A drunk person does not know what they say or do and whether they are doing good or bad. They lose discrimination and fail to recognise even their mother, spouse, or children. They also lose the discrimination to recognise what is merit and what is sin. In this manner, they forget their humanness and indulge in wicked acts, unmindful of their consequences. Such demonic tendency is present in every person.

One who is devoid of wisdom is verily an animal (Jnanena sunyaha pasubhir samana). Such a person has no sense of discrimination and no knowledge whatsoever. That person is interested only in enjoying worldly pleasures and spends all their time in food, fear, sleep, and procreation.

These are the qualities of an animal. Not only that, such a person is prepared to harm those who come in the way of their so-called enjoyment. Abusing and

ridiculing others are also animal qualities.

Education is meant to develop righteousness

Every human being has animal, demonic, human, and divine tendencies in them. You acquire various types of knowledge, but you are unable to get rid of your animal and demonic tendencies. Many in this world are highly educated, but has anyone understood the significance of human birth?

Everyone is interested in power, position, and wealth, but no one enquires whether they are conducting themself like a human being. In fact, nobody questions how they should lead life as a human being.

People have human form, dress themselves like human beings, and exercise their authority, but they do not really know what humanness is.

Who is a true human being? A true human being is one who does not give room to the six evil qualities of desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride, and jealousy (kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada, and matsarya). What is the use of acquiring high education and accumulating wealth if one's heart is filled with desire and hatred (raga and dwesha)? In fact, all that education is useless. An educated person should always follow the path of righteousness.

Students Should Pursue Education That Confers On Them Sacred Qualities Like
Good Character, Adherence To Truth, Devotion, Discipline, And Duty.
(Telugu Poem)

What are students learning today? Do they have discipline? If they have no discipline and devotion, what is the use? They should practise human values in all their endeavours. But they spend all their time pointing out the defects of others, criticising and ridiculing them.

What will be the fate of a person who always thinks of the defects of others? All the defects of others will enter that person's heart and will be reflected in them. Therefore, do not look at the defects of others. If you find anyone on the wrong path, try to correct them. Why should you think of the defects of others if you think you are a good person?

People today have developed fault-finding natures; they always think of the defects of others and criticise, ridicule, and abuse them. These are not the qualities of an educated person; in fact, they are contrary to human nature. One who practises human values will never criticise or insult others. Criticising others is the quality of a selfish person.

Sanctify your human birth by serving others

As selfishness is on the rise today, people have become victims of attachment and hatred. Selfishness has no limits. One does not give up one's selfishness and self-interest till the last breath.

How can such a person attain anything good in life? What have they attained as a human being? That person is a burden on earth and does not deserve the food they eat. Having been born as a human being, you should help your fellow beings.

Sage Vyasa gave the essence of eighteen Puranas in two sentences: "One attains merit by serving others. One commits sin by hurting others." Therefore, Help Ever, Hurt Never.

But we hardly ever find someone helping their fellow human beings. Wherever we look, people are hurting others. From an illiterate to an educated person, from a pauper to a millionaire, everyone indulges in hurting others.

If a pauper hurts in a small way, a millionaire hurts in a big way. They have no inclination to help others. They are not prepared to perform righteous actions

and acts of charity.

Then what is the purpose of being born as a human being? What is the point in amassing wealth? Education has no meaning if it is not utilised to help others.

People waste a lot of time and energy in accumulating wealth, but are they able to carry anything with them when they ultimately leave this world? They are not able to take even a naya paisa with them, not even a fistful of sand. This is the lesson to be learnt from the life of Emperor Alexander.

You all know the story of Alexander, who set out from his country to conquer the entire world. He came to India, after crossing the Indus river. On his return from India, he became very sick. He had many doctors, but none could cure him. They told him that he was about to leave his mortal coil in a short while.

But Alexander had no fear. In fact, he also told others not to worry. He was prepared for his end.

The body, which is made up of five elements, is weak and is bound to disintegrate.

Though Hundred Years Of Life-Span Is Prescribed, One Cannot Take It For Granted.
One May Leave One's Mortal Coil At Any Time, Be It In Childhood, Youth, Or Old Age.
Death Is Certain.
Hence, Before The Body Perishes, Make Efforts To Know Your True Nature.
(Telugu Poem)

Thousands of soldiers were under his command, but none could save him from death. Alexander told his ministers and army commanders to wrap his body in a white cloth after his death, keeping both his hands out, and take his

funeral procession in the streets of his native town. When the people in the street enquired why the hands of the emperor had been kept out of the hearse, they should tell them that though the emperor had carved out a huge empire, had a big army, and had a number of doctors, nothing could save him from death, and he was departing from the world empty-handed.

Cultivate noble thoughts

Everybody has to go empty-handed from this world. You will not be able to carry your bank balance or even a small piece of paper with you. Can you leave behind the address of your destination when you leave this world? You do not bring with you even a small piece of cloth at the time of your birth, nor can you give your address at the time of death. Why were you born? Where are you going?

Your conscience is the witness of all your good or bad deeds and reveals to you whether you are going to heaven or hell. Both heaven and hell are the results of your actions, and your actions depend upon your thoughts. Therefore, first of all, cultivate noble thoughts. Develop the spirit of sacrifice and human qualities and earn a good reputation in society. Do not get a bad name as a sinner. Do only good. That is the only thing that will go with you.

All your friends and relatives can follow you only up to the place of cremation. When a millionaire dies, hundreds of cars will follow him up to the cremation ground. But what will all the people do after going there? They will all return home empty-handed.

Only the Name of God will save you from bondage and be with you always. God will always be with you, in you, around you, above you and below you, always looking after you. Ignoring the Divine Name, one makes one's life miserable by craving ephemeral and transient worldly objects.

Howsoever highly educated one may be, one is unable to realise the truth of one's Self. What is the reason? The reason is attachment. Man should develop

detachment to realise their true nature.

What does attachment mean? When you insert the key into a lock and turn it to the right, it opens. If you turn the key to the left, it closes. It is the same lock and the same key; the difference lies only in the direction of turning.

Your heart is the lock and your mind is the key. When you turn your mind toward God, you get detachment, which leads to liberation. When you turn it toward the world, you develop attachment, which results in bondage and misery.

You may have money and all comforts, yet you will be always restless. You will be drowned in misery day and night. What is the way to attain peace of mind? The only way is to develop the spirit of sacrifice as propounded in the Vedas: Immortality is not attained through action, progeny, or wealth; it is attained only by sacrifice (Na karmana na prajaya dhanena thyagenaike amrutatthwamanasu).

Perform good actions and spend your money on noble causes. Help the villagers who are leading a hard life. Provide education, health care, and water to the needy people in villages.

Education is for the head, healthcare is for the heart, and water is for the sustenance of the body. Health is very important for the body; it is not meant to lead a life of ease and enjoyment. Health is need in order to perform selfless service. In fact, it is very necessary to keep your body healthy so that you can serve society. What is the use of their good health if people do not perform any selfless service? They are like living corpses.

Why has God provided a head for a human being? Is it to think ill of others, abuse them, and criticise them? No, it has been provided to think of God.

You should understand the intimate relationship between food, head, and God. What is food required for? It is not merely for your physical health; it is for developing virtues. Why is it necessary to develop virtues? It is necessary

to develop virtues to take part in service of society, help others, and earn a good name.

Therefore, look after the welfare of society and strengthen its unity. This is the purpose of your birth. You are born and brought up in society. There can be no greater betrayal and ingratitude than not thinking of the welfare of society.

Having been born in society, you should serve society. Your well-being is linked to the wellbeing of society. Otherwise, how can you be happy? Thus, it is essential for everybody to work for the welfare of society and look after its well-being. Only then is your own wellbeing assured.

Develop love for God

Embodiments of Love!

What does a person require to serve society? Only love. There is nothing greater than love. When you have love, you can have everything.

What is the use of reading a number of books if you do not have love? Mere acquisition of bookish knowledge will change your head (mastaka) into a book (pustaka). What is the use of bookish knowledge that is not translated into practical knowledge? A man without practical knowledge is totally useless to society. Therefore, do not go on reading books endlessly. You will only spoil your head in the process.

Put into practice at least one principle of truth that you have learnt. What you require today is practical, not bookish knowledge. Put your knowledge into practice, experience happiness, and share it with others.

Do not be worried about your own life. Be prepared to sacrifice even your life for a noble cause. Having attained this human birth, it is enough if you earn a good name.

Charity Is The True Ornament Of The Hand, Truth Is The True Necklace, And Listening To The Sacred Texts Is The True Ornament Of The Ears.)
Hastasya Bhushanam Danam Sathyam Kanthasya Bhushanam Srotrasya Bhushanam Sastram.
(Sanskrit Verse)

Why do you require any other ornaments? If you wear diamond necklaces and diamond earrings, you will be afraid of thieves. These are not your real ornaments. The real ornament is love for God. Therefore, develop love for God and sanctify your life.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Prema Mudita Manase Kaho...".)

79. Love is the True Form of God

Date: 29 July 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, March 2013.

Life In The World Is Impermanent. So Are Youth And Wealth.
Wife And Children Are Also Not Permanent. Only Truth And Good Name Are Permanent.
Asthiram Jivanam Loke, Asthiram Yauvanam Dhanam,
Asthiram Dara Putradi, Sathyam Kirti Dwayam Sthiram?
(Sanskrit Verse)

Human life is momentary, like a water bubble. Youth and wealth are also temporary, like passing clouds. Even worldly relations are not permanent. The only things that are permanent in this world are truth, righteousness, and a good reputation.

Nobody Brings Any Wealth With Them When They Are Born From The Womb Of Mother,
Nor Does The Wealth Go With Them When They Depart From The World.
Even A Millionaire Has To Eat Normal Food And Cannot Eat Gold.
You May Amass Wealth And Feel Proud About It,
But The Amassed Wealth Will Not Go With You At The Time Of Death.
If You Go On Hiding Your Wealth And Putting It In Banks Without Performing Acts Of Charity, Who Knows What Will Happen To It When You Leave This World?
(Telugu Poem)

Virtues are your best decorations

Right from birth to death, people undertake many endeavours in order to derive happiness out of them, but ultimately they depart from this world empty-handed.

Since unrighteousness, injustice, and improper conduct are on the rise, the world is facing many troubles. In fact, the world is on the verge of a catastrophe due to the rise of demonic tendencies. At this juncture, only the students have the capacity to restore peace and order in the world. Only they are capable of ensuring peace and security not only in India but also in the entire world.

Due to the influence of Kali Yuga (the age we are in), dharma (righteousness) is declining in Bharat (India). I hope that young men and women will resolve to drive away the evil forces of Kali, uphold truth and righteousness, and revive the ancient traditions of Bharat, which at one time was the repository of great spiritual wealth.

Students!

When you lag behind in studies, your parents feel sad. But your Mother India will feel a thousand times sadder when you do not progress on the path of morality, ethics, and spirituality. Remember this always.

All the people whom you consider as elders and leaders were also students like you once upon a time. Today's students are tomorrow's citizens, elders, and leaders. Just as you expect your elders and leaders to be ideal, you should conduct yourself in an ideal manner and realise your dreams and aspirations.

But modern young men and women are imitating foreign culture. When you observe their speech, behavior, and dress, it looks as though they are trying to decorate themselves with borrowed jewelry. How long can you experience happiness by decorating yourself with borrowed jewelry? Instead, you should strive to acquire the jewels of virtues and derive happiness by decorating yourself with them.

Students!

In the name of fashion, you are behaving in a perverted manner. You are blindly following the whims and fancies of your fickle mind. This is not the culture of Bharat (India). How long can you follow the traditions and manners borrowed from other countries? Do not rely on imported culture. Follow the sacred culture of Bharat, which is the land of merit, spirituality, and righteous action (punya bhumi, yoga bhumi, and karma bhumi).

It is your good fortune that many noble souls and Avatars took birth in this sacred land to safeguard and foster its pristine culture. Since ancient times, Bharat has been known as the birthplace of charity and sacrifice. It is reputed for the virtues of love, compassion, and sacrifice. Forbearance and empathy have been the main objectives of the people of Bharat.

But where have all these noble qualities gone from this land of Bharat today?

Selfishness causes conflicts and dissent

During the 14-year exile of the Pandavas in the forest, one day Krishna visited their hermitage. Not finding the other four brothers in the hermitage, he asked Dharmaraja, "Where are your brothers?" Dharmaraja's heart was always filled with feelings of righteousness. At all times and in all situations, his mind was focused on God. In fact, all the Pandavas were embodiments of peace and righteousness.

These noble-hearted Pandavas were insulted by the wicked Kauravas in many ways. But unmindful of all the wickedness of the Kauravas, the Pandavas continued to follow the path of truth and righteousness.

Replying to Krishna's question, Dharmaraja said, "Krishna! My one hundred brothers are in Hastinapur and four others have gone into the forest for some work." Pretending to be surprised at this reply, Krishna said, "Are you out of

your senses? Aren't you only five brothers? Your saying that your one hundred brothers are in Hastinapur is absolutely meaningless." Dharmaraja said, "Aren't the Kauravas my brothers? As long as there is unity, love, forbearance, and empathy among us, we are 105 brothers. All of us stand united when we have to face an outside enemy. But, when some differences crop up amongst us, we five are separate and they are separate." You should understand the inner meaning of this statement in relation to the situation prevailing in society today. Due to lack of unity and the rise of conflicts and dissensions in today's world, every party and community stands fragmented. Each follows their own selfish interest. As a result, there are many factions within a single party and many divisions within a single community.

Individuals are different, but the divine Atmic principle is the same in all.

Due to the lack of unity in society, this Kali Yuga has become the Kalaha Yuga (Age of Conflicts). Conflicts are on the rise day by day. There is utter lack of empathy and forbearance among individuals. There is hatred between man and man, village and village, district and district, and State and State.

In such a situation, how can there be peace and security in the world? There are so many differences even in a family today. How much strength is there in unity! But, unfortunately, people are destroying unity. As a result, there is total lack of humanness in humanity.

Tulsidas propounded the principle of unity

While composing the Ramayana, Tulsidas was totally lost in contemplation of Rama and wrote the sentence, "The sacred Name Rama represents the fire, sun, and moon (Hetu krisanu bhanu himakar ko)." In fact, he did not write it. When he opened his eyes, he found that it was already written.

Krisanu mean fire, bhanu means sun, and himakar means moon. The meaning of this statement is, "Oh Rama! You are the embodiment of the fire, the sun, and the moon." Without the sun, moon, and fire, the world cannot exist. Be

one a theist, an atheist, a theistic-atheist, an atheistic-theist, a mendicant, a pleasure seeker, or a renunciant, none can deny this. In fact, the fire, sun, and moon are direct manifestations of Divinity. What do they do?

There are three main reasons for the birth of a person. One is ignorance, the second is sin, and the third is afflictions. The fire of knowledge is necessary to dispel the darkness of ignorance. Not only that, the fire of knowledge reduces all your sins to ashes. The sun destroys the darkness of delusion and sorrow. When the sun shines, darkness disappears. The moon cools down the agony caused by afflictions. It even destroys your sins.

Apparently, there is a lot of difference between the sun and the moon, but there is also an intimate relationship between them. The moon does not shine with its own light; it shines with the light of the sun. While the sunlight is bright and hot, moonlight is cool and not so bright. The light is the same; while at one place it is hot and at another place it is cool.

Our intellect symbolises the sun, and the mind symbolises the moon. That is why the Vedas proclaim, "The moon was born out of the mind and the sun out of the eyes of the Supreme Being (Chandrama manaso jata chaksho suryo ajayata)." The mind is the reflection of the moon, and the moon is the reflection of the mind. The sun is the source of power of light in our eyes, and it symbolises the power of our intellect.

Where is the fire? It is present in our stomach in the form of digestive fire (jatharagni). It is also present as the fire of affliction and sin (tapagni and papagni).

Students know this very well. They chant the verse "Brahmarpanam Brahma Havir" before partaking of food. Most of them do not know where Brahman resides. They mechanically chant the verse because they consider it a routine practice in the hostel.

But God gives a reply from within: "I am present in all beings in the form of digestive fire (Aham vaishvanaro bhutva praninam dehamasrita). You don't

need to doubt where I actually reside. I am present in your stomach in the form of digestive power, and I digest the food that you eat and give the necessary nourishment." There is another example to explain the meaning of this statement of Tulsidas, "The sacred Name Rama represents the fire, sun, and moon (Hetu krisanu bhanu himakar ko)." In the divine Name Rama, Ra stands for Thath, A for asi and Ma for twam. When Thath, twam, and asi come together, we get the Vedic aphorism, Thath twam asi (That thou Art). It means: you and I are one. This is the principle of oneness that Tulsidas taught to the world.

Many noble souls were born in this land of Bharat (India) to teach this principle of oneness and install divinity in the heart of everyone. In order to understand this exalted principle, you have to imbibe nonviolence in your heart. When you develop the spirit of nonviolence, you will visualise the entire world as the manifestation of Rama.

Get rid of your evil qualities and realise the Atmic principle

Do not waste your life ignoring God for the sake of momentary pleasures. Why are you unable to realise this truth? Every student and every person is endowed with knowledge. But they are not using their power of discrimination to put their knowledge to proper use. That is why people today are in a miserable state. They waste their sacred, long, and noble lives in pursuit of momentary pleasures.

Adi Sankara Cautioned One And All:
Do Not Be Proud Of Your Wealth, Progeny And Youth;
The Tide Of Time May Destroy Them In A Moment.
Ma Kuru Dhana Jana Yauvana Garvam Harathi Nimeshath Kalah Sarvam.

The body undergoes change constantly, and the life principle may ebb away from the body at any moment. Why do you develop attachment to such a momentary body and waste your life? Get rid of your evil qualities, wicked

thoughts and bad intentions. Practise nonviolence (ahimsa).

What is the meaning of nonviolence? Ahimsa means not to hurt others by thoughts, words, and deeds. Never leave unity of thought, word, and deed, even for a moment. Only when you observe unity of thought, word, and deed in all your endeavours will divine feelings manifest in you.

The principle of nonviolence is very subtle. Most people do not understand its correct meaning. Even eating food more than necessary constitutes violence. Why? You hurt yourself by excessive eating.

Even unnecessary talking amounts to indulging in violence. Talk only to the extent necessary. That is nonviolence.

When you misuse the faculties given by God, all your wealth, power, and position will become meaningless. Since you are caught up in the mire of trivial worldly pursuits, you are unable to realise the infinite Atmic principle.

None can escape the consequences of their actions

Ravana had no dearth of wealth. In fact, the entire Lanka was made of gold. He did not lack anything in the world. He was endowed with physical strength, the power of wealth, and a big army. He also acquired great power by performing penance. In spite of all this, he lost everything due to his carnal cravings.

Hanuman got himself bound by demons to enter the court of Ravana to teach him a lesson. The demons questioned him, "Who are you?" He replied in the most humble and pleasant manner, "I am the servant of Rama (Dasoham Kosalendrasya)." Prior to this, the demons had not seen any monkey in Lanka. In fact, no monkey had ever entered Lanka till then. That is why, out of curiosity, the demons started coming out of their houses to see Hanuman.

Hanuman was highly virtuous and valorous. Yet he got himself bound by the

demons in order to show the path of goodness to Ravana. He thought to himself, "It is not possible for me to enter Ravana's court unless the demons capture me and take me to him. When I come face to face with Ravana, I will be able to directly talk to him and show him the right path." The demons tied Hanuman's hands and legs with ropes and took him to Ravana's court. Hanuman saw Ravana seated on a high platform, while he was standing down. He thought it was an insult to Lord Rama that His servant should at be a lower place and His opponent at a higher place. Therefore, he made a seat for himself higher than Ravana's by lengthening his tail and coiling it up.

Ravana asked him, "Oh monkey! You destroyed our garden. Why did you come here?" Hanuman replied, "I allowed your son Indrajit to capture me with a purpose, and that purpose is to teach you a lesson. Oh wicked one! Having been blinded by lust, you are causing untold suffering to Sita, who is the mother of the universe. You are ruining your life due to your evil thoughts. What happened to all your power of penance? What is the use of your life if you cannot control your mind and senses?

"How should a king be? One who has no control over his senses cannot be called a king. A true king should be ideal and earn a good name. You have committed the worst of sins." Unable to bear the insult, Ravana flew into a rage. He commanded his soldiers to set fire to Hanuman tail, since the tail is so dear to a monkey. Demons are usually foolish and ignoramuses. They cannot foresee the consequences of their actions.

Then, Hanuman said to Ravana:

Oh Wicked Ravana! I Want To Teach You A Lesson.
This Lanka Does Not Belong To You Any More.
Listen To My Words With Full Attention.
You Did Not Use Your Power Of Discrimination And Thus Committed A Sin.
Therefore, You Are Going To Die Soon.
Oh Wicked Ravana! I Want To Teach You A Lesson...
Sita Is The Mother Of The Universe, And She Is Your Mother, Too.
You Abducted The Mother Of The Universe And Committed A Great Sin.

Lord Rama Will Cut Off All Your Heads With One Arrow.
Oh Wicked Ravana! I Want To Teach You A Lesson...
Didn't You Know This Was A Sinful Deed, Which You Should Have Desisted From.
Your Soldiers Set Fire To My Tail, With Which I Will Set All The Palatial Buildings
Of Lanka Ablaze And Quietly Go My Way.
Oh Wicked Ravana! I Want To Teach You A Lesson...
I Allowed Indrajit To Capture Me Because I Wanted To See Your Court And Your Ten Heads.
Why Should I Tell You Again And Again? You Have Lost Your Right To Live.
Oh Wicked Ravana! I Want To Teach You A Lesson...
(Telugu Song)
Nobody Can Escape The Consequences Of Their Actions.
Everyone Has To Face The Consequences Of Their Actions, Whoever They May Be.
No One Can Know What Lies Ahead For Them In Future.
But This Much Is Sure: Everyone Has To Reap The Consequences Of Their Actions.
Even The Mighty Rama Suffered The Pain Of Separation From His Consort Sita And
Cried Like An Ordinary Person.
Even The Mighty Pandavas Had To Go Into Exile And Live In Forest.
(Telugu Song)

Good actions bear good fruits, and bad actions result in bad fruits. Therefore, always perform good actions. As the action, so is the result; as the food, so is the belch; as the flour, so is the bread.

Some actions yield immediate results, whereas others will take a few days or a few months or a few years or even a few ages to give results. For example, when your finger is cut with a knife, immediately blood oozes out. Here, action and its result are simultaneous. Similarly, if you slip and fall while climbing a staircase, you suffer a fracture immediately. The fall and fracture

occur at the same time.

However, the food you eat takes at least two to three hours to get digested. Here, there is a gap of two to three hours between the action and the result.

When you sow a seed in the soil, it will not grow into a sapling immediately; it will take two to three days. Then it will take the sapling a few years to grow into a tree and yield fruit. You cannot get the fruit immediately after sowing the seed; it will take a few years.

Likewise, every action of person is bound to yield a result either in a few moments or a few hours or a few days or a few years or even a few ages.

God resides in the hearts of all

But there is a way to escape from the consequences of actions. When you develop true love for God, you can escape from any type of suffering. In order to earn the love of God, you should understand that God is the indweller of all beings and act accordingly.

Man should realise the truth that God is the indweller of all hearts (the sarva hridayavasi). There might be differences in names and forms of individuals, but the five elements are common in all. Firmly imprint this truth on your heart.

To understand this principle of oneness, you should conduct proper enquiry. Do not think that there are many gods. In the same way, do not observe differences between individuals. All are one, God is one.

One God has many names (Ek prabhu ke anek nam). The same God manifests in different names and forms.

God is the light. In order to experience this light of knowledge of Brahman (Brahma jnana), you have to undertake various practices.

Here is a bulb. What is required for a bulb to give light? You should connect it to an electric wire. But merely connecting it to the wire is not enough; you should let electricity pass through it and make the bulb shine.

Truth and love are true divine powers. Truth is God, love is God, live in love. God is one without a second (Ekameva adviteeyam Brahma). When the electric current of truth flows through the wire of righteousness and enters the bulb of peace, you get the light of love (loud applause).

The unity of truth, righteousness, and peace results in the light of love. Love is the true form of God. Mere physical relationship cannot be called love. True love manifests from the heart.

Embodiments of Love!

Whatever you do, always remember two things. God is truth and death is certain. Nobody can escape death.

Then, what should you always keep in your mind? Never look at the faults of others. Treat the big defects of others as small and consider your own small defects as big. Then you will not commit big mistakes.

Students!

It is necessary for you to follow a noble path in life. Try to experience Divinity even in matters of daily life. There are two things that you should forget: First, forget the harm done to you by others. If you don't forget it and take it to heart, you will develop a revengeful attitude. Second, forget the good you have done to others. Otherwise, you will develop the expectation of a favour from those whom you have helped.

Therefore, it is necessary to forget the harm that others have done to you and the good you have done to others. Only then will you develop the purity to experience the Atma and attain God's grace.

Guideposts on the spiritual path

You think you are performing some great spiritual practices by doing meditation, penance, and yoga. But all these are related only to the body and the mind, which are not permanent. Then how can the result of these practices be permanent? It is also impermanent.

You may ask, "Why have these spiritual practices been prescribed?" These practices are guideposts on your spiritual journey, which show you the right path.

When you proceed on a journey, you find guideposts on the way to indicate that this is the way to Dharmavaram, this path leads to Penukonda, Bengaluru is in this direction, and so on and so forth. Similarly, repetition of the Name, mediation, penance, yoga, etc. only show you the way, but they are not the destination.

When you see a sign, you are not to sit there; you have to walk in the direction shown to you on the sign. With the help of these 'guideposts,' you should perform your journey toward God.

Where is God? His hands and feet are everywhere... (Sarvatah panipadam...) Wherever you look, He is there. When you go on performing these spiritual practices, you will ultimately realise this truth.

Your body attachment is a big hurdle coming in the way of realising this truth. Body attachment leads to many other attachments. Therefore, gradually reduce your body attachment and desires.

This is how Hanuman became a dear servant of Lord Rama. Ultimately, he realised his oneness with Rama. Every pore of his body was filled with the divine Name of Rama. He realised that he was not different from Rama and Rama was not different from him.

Once, Rama questioned Hanuman, "In what way do you relate to Me?" Hanuman replied, "Swami, I am Your servant at the physical level and Your reflection at the mental level, but at the Atmic level, You and I are one. It is only my body and mind that come in the way of realising my oneness with You." You can very well understand this. Consider a mansion with a bedroom, a bathroom, a kitchen, a drawing room, a dining hall, and a storeroom. All the rooms look separate from each other. Why? Because there are walls between them. When you remove the walls, you will have one spacious hall.

Similarly, due to the walls of body attachment, you find diversity all around. When you give up body attachment, everything becomes one.

The Human Body Is Like A Fort Surrounded By Seven Walls.
In The Centre Of It Is A Garden.
One Who Has Outer Vision Does Not Know
How To Enter This Garden, Which Symbolises The Atmic Principle.
The Only Way To Enter The Garden Is Through
Namasmarana, Which Dispels The Darkness Of Ignorance And Shows The Right Path.
The Light Of Atma Shines With The Wick Of Truth And The Oil Of Righteousness.
When This Light Ebbs Away, Your Wealth, Your Relations And Worldly Possessions Will Not Follow You.
Worldly Life Is Like A Tree, And Cravings For Sensual Pleasures Are The Ropes That Bind One To The Tree.
One Will Be Released From This Bondage When One Develops A Sense Of Detachment And Starts Leading A Spiritual Life.
(Telugu Song)

Develop the desire to love God

When your desires go on increasing, your happiness goes on decreasing. Therefore, reduce your desires and develop love for God. As your love for God

increases, your happiness also increases. As much you have love for God, so much will be your happiness. In the same way, if your love for God decreases, your happiness also declines.

True happiness does not lie in the pursuit of worldly desires. Here is a small example. You can start practising this either from tonight or tomorrow morning. If you drink six cups of tea and smoke twenty cigarettes in a day, your intelligence (prajna sakthi) will go on decreasing. Your will power depends on the actions you perform.

From tomorrow onward, drink only two cups of tea and smoke five cigarettes. After ten days, satisfy yourself with only one cup of tea and one cigarette. Thereafter, stop them all together. You yourself will see how the power of your intellect blossoms. Your memory power will also increase.

As you increase your desires, your memory power declines and you even lose power of concentration. As you reduce your desires, your power of concentration also grows. Therefore, Less luggage more comfort makes travel a pleasure. Reduce the luggage of desires. Only then can you attain true happiness.

There is one desire that you should develop, and that is the desire for God, which alone can confer peace on you.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, Prema Mudita Manase Kaho...)

80. Bliss Is Your Real Form

Date: 01 August 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: A condensed version of this discourse appears in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. This more complete version was published in Sanathana Sarathi, June 2013.

The Brahmins Who Propagate The Truths Propounded In The Vedas And Sastras (Scriptures),
The Kings Who Are Prepared To Sacrifice Their Body For The Safety And Security Of The Nation,
The Businessmen Who Do Business With Ethics And Morality,
The Noble Farmers Who Lead A Happy Life Working In The Fields To Raise Crops,
- All Should Contemplate The Divine Name Without Wasting Time And Thus Sanctify Their Life.
(Telugu Poem)

Students!

Just as tarakam, sankhyam, and amanaskam form the three main types of yoga as propounded by Vedanta, three main concepts relate to what constitutes truth, namely absolutely real, empirical, and illusory (paramarthika, vyavaharika, and pratibhasika).

The absolutely real can be compared to an ocean, the empirical is like ocean waves, and the illusory is the foam that is generated by the waves. Without the ocean, there can be no waves, and without waves there can no foam.

In the final analysis, water forms the basis of all three: ocean, waves, and foam. Therefore, do not consider the three as separate from each other. They are as closely linked to each other as the divine trinity, the three attributes serenity, passion, and sloth (sathwa, rajas, and thamas), and the three

periods of time.

One Bilva Leaf With Three Petals Offered To Three-Eyed Lord Siva,
Who Is The Embodiment Of The Three Attributes (Gunas) And
Who Holds The Trident In His Hand,
Destroys The Sins Accumulated Over Three Births.
Tridalam Trigunakaram Trinetram Cha Triyayudham;
Trijanma Papa Samharam Eka Bilvam Sivarpanam.

Brahman is immanent in the entire creation

Brahman signifies the unity of these three principles. Absolute reality denotes Atma and the empirical denotes the "I" (aham). Some people, out of ignorance, think that Atma and Aham are separate from each other. In fact, Atma is like the ocean and Aham is like the waves.

When you turn your vision inward and enquire, you will realise that both are one and the same. Waves are not different from the ocean.

Just as there is fire in wood, oil in sesame seeds, and sugar in sugar cane, similarly, the empirical (vyavaharika) is inherent in the absolutely real (paramarthika). There can be no waves without the ocean, and there can be no son without a father. In the same manner, there can be no empirical without the absolutely real.

God is extolled as Bhavaya Namah. What is the meaning of Bhava in Vedantic parlance? Bhava signifies the Supreme Being, who has this visible world as His very form. Lord Vishnu is the cause, and the world is the effect. The entire creation is the play of cause and effect.

God incarnates in various forms in this world to demonstrate the unity of all names and forms. Just as the peacock looks beautiful with its colourful plumage, the divine principle of Vishnu appears most wonderful with its

myriad forms in the entire creation.

This is stated in the Vedic dictum: The Cosmic Being has thousands of heads, eyes, and feet (sahasra seersha purusha sahasraksha sahasra pad). The cosmic form of the Lord consists of thousands of heads and thousands of eyes. It means that everyone is the embodiment of Vishnu.

God has another name, Kutastha, which signifies that He permeates every being in creation. Just as the waves, foam, and ocean are one and the same, creation, sustenance, and dissolution are three inseparable aspects of Divinity.

Everything emerged from the ocean of TruthKnowledge-Bliss (Satchidananda). When you realise this truth, the fountain of bliss will emerge from the lake of your mind (manasarovar). Bliss (Ananda) results when truth (sat) and knowledge (chit) come together. Sat means truth, chit means knowledge. When they combine, they give the experience of bliss.

Sat is like sugar, which imparts sweetness to whatever it is mixed with. Put it in coffee, it becomes sweet; put it in tea, it becomes sweet; put it in water, it becomes syrup. Therefore, sweetness is permanent.

That is why it is described as Sat or Being, which means changeless and eternal. Chit signifies Constant Integrated Awareness (prajnana), which is described in Vedanta as:

Brahman is Supreme Consciousness (Prajnanam Brahma). Prajnana is the life of every being, and water is the basis of life. Therefore, chit is compared to water.

When sugar and water are separate, sugar is sugar and water is water. When they combine, you get syrup. Similarly, when sat and chit come together, bliss is the result. Bliss is your real form. Sat is nothing but the principle of Atma, which is eternal. Without the principle of Atma, the world has no existence.

Faith has great significance in Vedanta

You write a charming poem in beautiful lettering on a super special paper, put it in a glittering cover, and post it. The paper is most valuable, the letters are beautiful, the poetry is sublime, the cover is attractive, and the address is also written correctly. But the letter does not reach the addressee. Why not? The reason is that you did not affix the required stamp on the cover.

You sing bhajans with tune and rhythm (raga and tala). The tune and music may be attractive, but it does not reach or please God if you lack self-confidence. Confidence in you, confidence in God; this is the secret of greatness. This is what you have to know today.

What is the use of sending a cover with beautiful poetry written in beautiful letters unless you affix the stamp of confidence on the cover? That is why Vedanta has given utmost importance to confidence/trust (viswas) and steadfast faith (sraddha). Love is the basis of both.

When you have love, you have sraddha; when you have sraddha, you have viswas.

Just as foam, waves, and ocean are not different from each other, sraddha, viswas, and love (prema) are inseparable and interdependent. These three form the fundamental basis of Vedanta.

Vedanta also talks about three principles: swechchha, parechchha, and daivechchha.

What does swechchha mean? Students today think swechchha means to talk, move, and behave in an arbitrary manner. This is not the inner meaning of swechchha. Swa + ichchha is swechchha. Swa means Self (Atma) and ichchha means desire. True swechchha means to follow the dictates of the Self.

The Bhagavad Gita also explains two types of dharma: swadharma, and paradharma.

What is swadharma? People think swadharma relates to their caste and religion, just like warrior (kshatriya) dharma, brahmin dharma, businessmen (vaisya) dharma, etc. But this is not the real meaning of swadharma.

Swa means Atma. Therefore, Atmadharma (divine duty) is swadharma. dehadharma (duties related to the body) is paradharma.

Similarly, there is the single letter 'I' and the three-lettered 'eye'. The single letter 'I' represents Atma and the three-lettered 'eye', the body. Without the body, one cannot realise the Atma, and without the Atma, the body cannot exist.

Therefore, the unity of Atma, the individual soul, and the body is called Triputi or Trikuta (coming together of three aspects). In this manner, Vedanta explains most profound truths in simple and subtle terms.

Swechchha means to think, decide, and perform an action with full confidence, on one's own, and to be prepared to face its consequences wholeheartedly, be it pleasure or pain, happiness or sorrow.

Parechchha means to perform an action with encouragement or under pressure of others. This is not something you do of your own accord. You do it under the influence of others. But when you have to face its consequences, you should not regret, saying, "This is not something I have done willingly. I have done it because I was forced to do it." Others cannot force you to do something unless you have an inclination to do it. How can others influence you or encourage you or force you to do it? Their encouragement only reinforces your own inclination. Therefore, be prepared to face the consequences without any regret and without blaming others.

The third one is Daivechchha, which means to surrender to the Will of God and perform good actions without any expectation of the fruits of actions.

This is not the result of the actions performed by you of your own accord or due to the encouragement or under the influence of others. You should accept whatever comes as the divine Will.

In fact, whatever happens in accordance with divine Will will do only good to you. Whatever actions you perform by surrendering to the Will of God will give you peace, happiness, fulfillment, and victory. But people today do not understand the significance of surrendering to the Will of God.

People Do Not Undertake Meritorious Deeds But Want To Derive Their Fruits;
They Indulge In Sinful Activities,
Yet Want To Escape Their Consequences.
Punyasya Phalamichchanthi, Punyam Nechchanthi Manava,
Na Papa Phalamichchanthi, Papam Kurvanthu Yathnatha.
(Sanskrit Verse)

Man is the embodiment of Satchidananda

People are not prepared to face the consequences of their sinful deeds, but they are always in the forefront to perform such evil actions. Why do you perform sinful deeds when you do not want to face their consequences? There is no doubt that if you perform bad actions, their results are also bound to be bad.

People want to enjoy the fruits of meritorious deeds but are not prepared to perform such sacred actions. They aspire for one thing and perform actions just contrary to it. All your actions should be according to what you desire.

Having performed a sinful deed, be prepared to face its consequences. Whether you touch the fire knowingly or unknowingly, it will burn you. Sometimes, you may touch the fire unknowingly, but it is not going to take pity on you and spare you.

Similarly, whether you like it or not, you have to reap the consequences of your actions. This is empirical (vyavaharika) truth. But absolutely real (paramarthika) truth is different from this. When you reach the absolutely-real level, you will not get burnt even if you touch the fire.

How does it happen? It happens due to the grace of God. Sometimes, God Himself will caution you and prevent you from touching the fire. Fire, which is one of the five elements, is also an aspect of Divinity.

Everyone uses the word "I" (Aham) while referring to themself. You should enquire where this "I" originates from. "I" is born from the Atma. Thought (sankalpa) is born from "I" and speech (vak), from thought. Therefore, "I" is the son of Atma, thought is its grandson, and speech is its great grandson.

So, Atma, "I", thought. and speech belong to the same family. Thus, "I", thought, and speech have equal right to the property of Atma.

What is this property? This property is Satchit-ananda, which is equally accessible to the 'son', 'grandson', and 'great grandson'. In fact, it fully permeates all three.

One can never say that one is devoid of bliss; it is verily the right of humanity. A person desires to be permanent and eternal. That is the nature of consciousness (chit, prajnana), which is present in everyone. Therefore, one need not go in search of Sat-chit-ananda elsewhere. All are the embodiment of Satchit-ananda. One suffers through ignorance of this truth.

Acquire practical knowledge and dispel illusion

Students!

Here is a small story to illustrate this. Suppose a marriage celebration is going on. The bridegroom's party and the bride's party are staying in two different houses. Some intruder starts acting as an intermediary between the two

parties.

He goes to the bride's party and threatens them, "What is this? You aren't supplying even coffee and tiffin from time to time. We thought that you would celebrate this wedding in a grand manner, but you aren't coming up to our expectations. You aren't showing due respect to the bridegroom's party." After some time, he goes to the bridegroom's party and questions them, "What is this? You aren't coming for food in spite of our repeated requests. The food is getting cold. Come quickly." The bridegroom's party thought he was an elderly person from the bride's party. Similarly, the bride's party thought he was a close relative of the bridegroom. Both parties put up with his misdemeanour for some time.

But when he started crossing limits, they began asking each other who that person was. When someone from bridegroom's party went to the bride's party and asked about his identity, they said they didn't know him. The bride's party got a similar reply from the bridegroom's party. As both started consulting each other, the intruder realised that he was exposed and quietly disappeared from the scene.

Similarly, Maya (illusion) takes sides sometimes with the Atma and sometimes with nature and confuses humanity. When you start enquiring about the relationship between Self (Atma) and non-Self), using your power of discrimination, the delusion caused by Maya disappears. People today do not ask what Atma is, what an-atma is, what is worldly, and what is other-worldly. That is why people have become victims of delusion. One should have the right type of knowledge to conduct such enquiry.

Knowledge is of four types. All the learned people know that what they acquire from study of books is only bookish knowledge, which becomes superficial knowledge with the passage of time. Along with bookish knowledge, you should acquire general knowledge and discrimination knowledge. Moreover, do not limit yourself to individual discrimination; you should exercise fundamental discrimination. Only when you have discrimination knowledge will you have practical knowledge.

Practical knowledge is the true knowledge. Try to acquire such true knowledge. When you go on enquiring like this, you will ultimately realise the truth.

Vedanta talks about two types of liberation: jivan mukthi and videha mukthi. A jivan muktha is one who considers everything as the manifestation of God and experiences the unity of past, present, and future. Past is the tree, from which we get the seed of present, which in turn grows into the tree of future. Therefore, past is the tree, future is the tree, present is the seed. These three are, in fact, one and the same.

Without the tree of past, you cannot get the seed of present, and without the seed of present, you cannot get the tree of future.

One who realises the unity of three periods of time is a jivan muktha. That one is equalminded in both happiness and sorrow, praise and censure, prosperity and adversity. That one knows that everything is temporary, like passing clouds, and nothing is permanent. That one has absolutely no worry because their mind is focused on the principle of unity. That one alone is considered a jivan muktha.

Then, who is a videha muktha? All the qualities present in a jivan muktha are present in a videha muktha. What is the difference between them? A jivan muktha has body consciousness whereas a videha muktha does not. A videha muktha does not feel even the pangs of thirst or hunger.

Since King Janaka had no body consciousness, he was also called Videha. As long as one has body consciousness, one is bound to experience happiness and sorrow. One who has no body attachment is free from all types of attachment. That is the state of amanaska, a state devoid of mind. When there is no mind, how can there be thoughts?

Here is a piece of cloth. It is made up of threads, which come from cotton. Without cotton, there can be no threads; without threads, there can be no cloth. So, thought is cotton, desires are threads, and mind is the cloth. The

mind is nothing but a bundle of desires. When there are no desires, there can be no mind. That is the state of amanaska.

Humanity Has Become A Victim Of Maya, Which Consists Of 25 Aspects.
When You Unravel The Mystery Of These 25 Aspects,
Maya Will Disappear. What Are These 25 Aspects?
(Telugu Song)

Five organs of cognition (jnanendriyas) Five organs of action (karmendriyas), Five life principles (pranas), and Five sheaths (kosas) sum up to 20. Add to these the mind, intellect, subconscious mind, ego, and individual soul (manas, buddhi, chitta, ahamkara, and jivi) and the total becomes 25.

That which is constituted by these 25 aspects is called pinda. What does pinda mean? This body itself is pinda. Vedanta talks about anda, pinda, and Brahmanda. Those that are born out of the egg are called andaja, and those that are born from the womb of the mother are called pindaja. The cosmos, which pervades everywhere, is called Brahmanda.

But there is an underlying unity between the anda, pinda, and Brahmanda just as there is unity between individual soul, God, and nature (jiva, Iswara, and prakriti).

Immerse the mind in the Atma

The principle of Rama also signifies this unity. 'Ra' signifies Atma and 'Ma' denotes Maya. When Maya and Atma combine, they form the principle of Rama.

People chant the name of Rama, saying Ram, Ram, Ram. But one should not do it mechanically. The mind should be absorbed in the contemplation of Rama. It means the mind should be immersed in the principle of the Atma. That is the real Rama chanting. That is the real principle of tarakam.

Without Coming Under The Veil Of Forgetfulness,
In Waking, Dream, And Deep Sleep States,
One Should Constantly Be Aware Of The Soham Mantra,
That Will Enable One To Realise The Atma Principle.
(Telugu Poem)

Tarakam signifies the unity of the three states, namely waking, dream, and deep sleep (jagrat, swapna, and sushupti. It is not enough if you merely chant Ram, Ram, Ram without understanding the principle of tarakam. You should immerse the mind in the Atma.

There is water in the tumbler, and you have brought some sugar in your hand. Put the sugar in water and mix it thoroughly. The sugar disappears. The sugar that you brought with your own hand is not there now. The sugar that you have seen with your own eyes has become invisible. Where has it gone?

When you put a drop of water on your tongue, you will know that sugar is present in every drop of it.

Students know this.

Here is a cup, and you have poured some fruit juice in it. The cup holds the juice to the brim but does not know its taste. You put a straw in the cup and drink the juice. The juice goes into the mouth through the straw, but the straw does not know its taste. Only when the juice reaches the tongue can we know its taste.

Our body is the cup, and Divinity is the juice present in it. God is in the form of essence (Raso vai sah). God permeates the body in the form of essence. But the body is not aware of it.

Our senses are like the straw, which also cannot experience Divinity. The intellect (buddhi) is like the tongue, which experiences the taste of Divinity. The tongue enjoys the taste of the juice but does not keep it to itself. It sends

it to the digestive system (jathara). The digestive system also does not experience the sweetness of juice. It separates waste from juice and supplies its sacred essence to all limbs of the body.

Before partaking of food, you offer it to God, chanting Brahmarpanam ... He replies from within:

I Am Present In All Beings In The Form Of Digestive Fire.
United With Exhalation And Inhalation (Prana And Apana),
It Is I Who Consumes The Four Kinds Of Food.
Aham Vaishvanaro Bhutva Praninam Dehamasrita
Pranapana Samayukta Pachamyannam Chaturvidham.

God is one, goal is one

God says, "Oh simpleton! I am present in your stomach in the form of vaishvanara, digesting the food you eat and supplying its essence to the entire body." When you enquire the teachings of Vedanta, you will understand that there is only unity in the entire creation. God is one without a second (Ekameva adviteeyam Brahma). Vedanta emphatically declares that Divinity is one, not two. It does not say that Divinity is one in a mild tone, it says it in an emphatic manner. It preaches and propagates this truth to the entire world in unequivocal terms.

God, Allah, Jesus, Rama, Iswara, Vishnu - all are one. The Persians say Zarathustra is supreme, the Sikhs accord the highest place to Guru Nanak, devotees of Rama and Krishna extol them as the greatest. In this manner, devotees attribute various names and forms to God according to their tastes and feelings. But God is one.

Depending on their taste, people desire burfi, jilebi or mysore pak. In all these forms of sweets, sugar is the same. Truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names (Ekam sath viprah bahudha vadanti).

You may attribute any name and form to God, but God is one, goal is one. Therefore, do not criticise people of any faith. There is no difference between one faith and the other. All are one. Only when you realise this unity in diversity can you experience bliss.

Beings are many, breath is one. Stars are many, sky is one. Nations are many, earth is one. Jewels are many, gold is one.

You should understand this truth clearly.

Do not cause divisions based on your likes and dislikes for a particular religion. When you recognise unity and practise it, you will certainly experience unity. When you do every work with the feeling, 'I am God, I am God,' ultimately, you will become God. You become what you think.

Therefore, do not entertain unnecessary thoughts and do not indulge in unwanted talk. Do not hurt others' feelings. Do not cause trouble to anyone.

Students!

You have exams from 5th onward. I want to discontinue these daily Discourses for some time in order to give you freedom to prepare for exams. Your actual purpose of coming here is to study. You have not come here to learn Vedanta.

Therefore, concentrate on your studies. Only then will you be able to fulfil the task for which you have come.

Your parents have sent you here with high hopes, and it is your duty to satisfy them. They are the very forms of God. Revere your mother and father as God (Matru Devo bhava, pitru Devo bhava).

Focus your mind on the purpose of your stay here. Swami will also be happy when you study well. Do not go to the rooms of others and indulge in unnecessary talk. Concentrate on your studies and get an 'O' grade. Bring a

good name to the Institute, and make your parents happy. Fulfil the task for which you have come and go back happily.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahi ...")

81. Earn the Wealth of Divine Grace

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Is It Possible For Anyone To Say This Is Good And This Is Bad In This World?
Everything Is Created By God Himself.
Who Can Understand The Mystery Of God's Creation?
(Telugu Poem)

Students!

Life itself has become an insurmountable problem. Why? Because people today want to follow an easy path in life. They fail to understand the problems they encounter on this easy path. The path may seem easy, but the problems that it presents are very difficult to overcome.

Everyone wants to take a shortcut. If someone has a headache, they want to take a pill that will immediately cure it. They want all their problems to be solved in this easy way. They even want to attain liberation in this easy way.

What exactly is an easy path? What is the meaning of solution of problems? What does shortcut mean? People do not understand the problems to be faced by adopting such means.

In this physical and mundane world, in this path of worldly activity (pravritti), people are unable to understand the meaning of even small words. Words may be small, but their meaning may be profound. Here is a small example.

We use the word nityam to mean every day. Though this small word is used in day-to-day conversation, it has got a profound meaning. Nityam means that which is true, eternal, and changeless in all three periods of time. Likewise,

every word is endowed with a deep inner meaning.

Thoughts and counter thoughts are also responsible for one's problems. The human mind is very peculiar. It is also very significant and mighty. Its functioning itself is a great wonder. It has no form of its own. It does mono acting and plays a dual role. At one moment, it gives happiness; at another, sorrow.

There is no place in this world where the mind cannot go. You find its impact wherever you look. With the power of its thoughts, it is present everywhere. The world is the creation of the mind (Manomoolam idam jagat).

The mind is responsible for all one's happiness and sorrow, merit, and sin. That is why Vedanta declared, "The mind is the cause of bondage and liberation (Manah eva manushyanam karanam bandhamokshayo)." Once you understand the mystery of the mind, you will be free from all troubles. You think you get happiness or sorrow because of others. No. You yourself are responsible for your happiness as well as sorrow. Your thoughts are responsible for this. It is the duty of people to understand that their own minds are responsible for all their joys and sorrows.

Divinity is the hallmark of the human race

There are 84 lakh species in this world. These are of four types: andaja, pindaja, swedaja, and udbijja.

Those born from eggs are called andaja. Birds, ants, insects, and reptiles belong to this category. There are 21 lakh such species.

Those born from the mother's womb, such as human beings and animals, are called pindaja. These also constitute 21 lakh species.

Those born out of sweat are called swedaja and those born out of earth are called udbijja. They also constitute 21 lakh species each.

Out of these 84 lakh species, the human being has the supreme position. That is why it is said: "Of all living beings, human birth is the rarest (Jantunam nara janma durlabham)." Why is this human birth so difficult to attain? Why is the human birth accorded such a high position among all the living beings? Is it due to its form, intelligence, beauty, wealth, or education?

No, none of these. These things are not difficult to attain. They can be acquired through practice. Even a monkey can be trained to ride on a bicycle, as you can see in circus. Even a wild beast like a tiger can be trained to sit on a chair with humility and obey the command of the ringmaster. Many such skills can be acquired through practice. People are no exception to this.

Then what quality makes the human so supreme? It is because only the human has the capacity to realise their true Self, follow their true nature, and experience bliss. Birds and animals can never realise their inherent divinity.

Food, Sleep, Fear, And Procreation Are Common To Mankind And Animals.
Only Humanity Is Endowed With Wisdom. One Bereft Of Wisdom Is Equivalent To An Animal.
Ahara Nidra Bhaya Maithunani Samanyametat Pasubir Naranam.
Jnanam Naranam Adhikam Visesham Jnanena Sunya Pasubhissamana.

One who lacks wisdom and knowledge is no better than an animal. This is what distinguishes a human from birds and animals.

What is true knowledge? Is it physical, worldly, bookish, or scriptural knowledge? No, no. True knowledge is that which gives the experience of oneness. "Experience of non-dualism is wisdom (Advaita darshanam jnanam)." Today, one can acquire many types of knowledge in the fields of music, literature, dance, painting, sculpture, physics, chemistry, botany, etc. But all these correspond only to worldly and secular knowledge. This knowledge cannot lead you to self-realisation. It corresponds to the outward path (pravritti). Instead, you have to follow the inward path (nivritti).

On seeing your body, you identify yourself with the form. But you are not the body; you live in the body. You think you belong to the human race on the basis of your form.

What is the race of the skin? What is the race of blood? What is the race of bones and hair? What is the race of the five elements - earth, water, fire, air and ether - which constitute your body? They don't belong to any particular race.

Then what is the hallmark of the human race? Divinity is its hallmark. Using the body as an instrument, you should realise the indweller and propagate this truth to the world. The body is the field (kshetra) and the indweller is the knower of field (kshetrajna).

You cannot identify yourself with the car just because you drive it. The car is different from the driver. The body is the car, and the Indweller is the driver. The Indweller is verily God Himself. You should make efforts to realise this divine principle.

The Body Is Made Up Of Five Elements And Is Bound To Perish Sooner Or Later, But The Indweller Has Neither Birth Nor Death.
The Indweller Has No Attachment Whatsoever And Is The Eternal Witness.
Truly Speaking, The Indweller, Who Is In The Form Of Atma, Is Verily God Himself.
(Telugu Poem)

Nobody can hide their sins from God

In this modern age, people give utmost importance to the body, ignoring the indweller. That is the reason for their sins, sufferings, troubles, and turmoil. If you want to lead a peaceful and truthful life, make efforts to realise the principle of indweller.

There is no other way to realise this except the path of love for God. This is a Upanishadic statement: "Listen, oh children of immortality! (Srunvantu viswe amrutasya putrah!)" You are the child of immortality. But you consider yourself a mere mortal, feeble and helpless. This is your weakness. You are far superior to even gods of heaven. The spring of divinity that emerges from your heart is superior to even ambrosia. Such is the sweetness, greatness, and power of your heart. But you are unable to realise this sacred divine power that is present in you.

You commit sins and mistakes, thinking that nobody knows what you are doing. What a great fool you are! Others may not be able to know, but can you conceal your sins and mistakes from God? Even if you hide yourself in a bathroom or cover yourself with a rug, you cannot hide anything from God. You may hide it from anyone, but not from God.

All your mistakes come back to you in the form of reaction, reflection, and resound. But you forget the mistakes you commit and blame others for your troubles and sufferings. Nobody can escape from the consequences of their actions.

Oh Man, Is It Possible To Escape The Consequences Of Actions?
You May Study The Scriptures And Worship Your Family Deities,
You May Go To A Forest And Perform Intense Penance,
But It Is Impossible To Escape The Consequences Of Your Actions.
You Will Get Only As Much Water As Your Vessel Can Hold,
No Matter Whether You Dip It In A Small Lake Or In A Mighty Ocean.
(Telugu Song)

However, it is possible to escape from the consequences of your actions by God's grace. God's grace can reduce mountains of sin to ashes in a moment. Make efforts to deserve such love and grace of God.

When you develop this divine relationship with God, you can get rid of any type of sins. This is the Kali Yuga (the age we are in). In this age, what you do

with one hand will come back to you in the other hand. You don't need to wait for another birth to get the result of what you do. The result is certain, but none can say how, in what form, and in what situation it will come.

You Are Bound To Face The Consequences Of Your Actions 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)

Use your present birth to enhance your merits

Nothing can help you escape from the consequences of your actions except divine grace and love. Therefore, make efforts to attain that love and grace of God. This is what you have to acquire. Otherwise, you will be caught up in this endless cycle of birth and death.

Money may come and go. Once the knowledge of Divinity comes, it will never go. You have to understand three things: That which once comes does not go, that which does not come back once it goes, and that which neither comes nor goes.

What doesn't go once it comes? Wisdom (jnana). On the other hand, that which comes and goes is not wisdom. Similarly, that which never comes back once it goes is ignorance (a-jnana).

That which neither comes nor goes is Divinity. It is in your heart and stays there forever. Students must understand these three principles.

It is not proper to have devotion to God for some time and indifference later. That is not devotion (bhakti) at all. It is only ignorance arising out of ego. Ego is that which comes and goes.

Sinners Do Not Care Even For The Lord Of Kailasa When They Have Plenty Of Wealth.
They Look Toward God Only When They Lose All Their Wealth.
(Telugu Poem)

Not money but virtue is the real wealth. Money keeps changing hands. Suppose your father sends you 500 rupees through money order. You are elated, thinking that this 500 rupee note is yours. Then this note laughs at you and says, "Oh madcap! I'm not going to stay with you permanently. In the evening when you go to a shop, I will go to some other person. I've seen many such faces like yours, and I'm going to see many more." Can money remain in one place forever? No. It slips away like water under your feet. What is the real wealth? The real wealth is love, grace, and blessings of God. Once you acquire this wealth, it will never leave you. Therefore, strive to acquire this wealth.

You attained this noble opportunity of human birth as a result of merits earned in many previous lives. Make proper use of this wealth, which you earned from many past lives. Not only that, try to increase this wealth more and more.

You may say that you have a right to spend the 500 rupees your father gave you. But how long will it last? You will be left with nothing if you go on spending. Therefore, try to add to the money given to you by your father.

V edanta declares: "Once you exhaust your merits, you have to come back to the mortal world from heaven (Ksheene punye marthyalokam vishanti). Once your merit is exhausted, you lose your deservedness also.

Here is a small example. A man becomes an M.L.A. (Member of Legislative Assembly) and sits in the Assembly Hall when he wins the election. But for how long? For only five years. Once the term is over, he has to come out of it; he cannot remain a Member of the Assembly. Therefore, before his five-year term is over, he should make efforts to win the favour of people so that he

gets re-elected.

Similarly, you have this sacred opportunity as a result of your past merits. In your present life also, develop sacred feelings so that you become more and more deserving of God's grace. Then, the merits accrued in your present birth will get added to the merits of your past births and ensure the safety and security of your future.

Hence, it is necessary for you to lead the present life in a sacred manner. Strengthen and enhance the love and grace that you have already received. Only then can you maintain your deservedness forever.

Students!

You may acquire any number of degrees, undertake any type of jobs, and amass any amount of wealth, but none of them is permanent. Having been blessed with a human birth, your life will become worthwhile only when you earn a good name. If you go on committing and repeating mistakes, when will you correct yourself?

Once, a thief stole a lot of money. He was awarded three years imprisonment. After his term was over, the superintendent of jail said to him, "Tomorrow, your jail term will come to an end and we will release you. Pack up all your belongings and get ready." The thief folded his hands and said, "Sir, let them stay, because I am coming back soon." What does that mean? It means that he would commit a theft again and come back to jail. How can such a person be redeemed? Once a person commits a mistake and goes to jail, he should see to it that he does not go back to jail again.

When you ask a man why he takes medicine, he will say, "I take medicine to cure my disease." But this is not the proper answer. You take medicine so that you don't need to take it again. That is the correct answer.

People say they take medicine to cure their disease. The medicine may cure a particular disease, but later they may be afflicted with a new disease. Then

they will have to take another type of medicine. You should ensure that you will not fall sick again.

What is this human birth for? Human birth is meant to ensure that you will not have rebirth. That is the correct answer.

Why do you write an examination? What is the point in writing the exam if you fail it again and again? You write the exam so that you don't need to write it again. You should understand the real purpose of this life and act accordingly. But students do not enquire about these matters deeply.

Drink the nectar of divine love

Students!

Your life is, in fact, absolutely real (paramarthika). But you are leading an empirical (vyavaharika) life. The result is illusory (pratibhasika).

This can be illustrated with the example of ocean, waves, and foam. Waves keep arising in the ocean, one after the other. The saline taste that you find in the ocean is also present in the waves. The colour of the waves is also the same as that of the ocean. Similarly, foam is formed by waves. All the attributes of the ocean are also present in the waves and foam.

In the same way, the waves of the empirical (vyavaharika) arise from the ocean of absolute reality (paramarthika), and the foam of illusion (pratibhasika) arises from the waves of the empirical. Therefore, you should lead this empirical life with the feelings of absolute reality.

Human beings are the waves arising from the ocean of sat-chit-ananda. Therefore, you are the embodiment of sat, chit, and ananda. Sat means being and chit means awareness. The unity of these two results in bliss (ananda).

You desire happiness. In fact, Being and Awareness are present in you. This is

very well illustrated by the name Baba. Baba has a double degree BA, BA. The first B and A stands for Being and Awareness, the second B and A stands for Bliss and Atma. Therefore, Baba is the embodiment of sat-chit-ananda.

In fact, every human being is endowed with these three principles of Being-AwarenessBliss.

You see some people dying before your eyes. You think that you may also meet the same fate one day or other. However, the fact is that your body may perish but you have no death. The Atma is true and eternal. It has no birth and death. Being the embodiment of Atma, you should strive to become eternal.

What does that mean? Does it mean that your body should remain forever? Your body may perish, but it should not be born again.

One who drinks the nectar of divine love will have no rebirth. You will have no birth again (Punar janma navidyate). This is what you should aspire for.

When you sow a grain of paddy in the soil, it will grow into a sapling. But if you remove the husk and sow it in the soil, it will not germinate. Body attachment is the husk. As long as you have the husk of body attachment,

you will be born again and again. "To be born again and again (Punarapi jananam punarapi maranam." This is what Adi Sankara said:

Oh Foolish Man, Chant The Name Govinda; The Rules Of Grammar Will Not Come To Your
Rescue When The End Approaches.
Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam, Govindam Bhaja Moodha Mathe, Samprapthe Sannihithe Kale,
Nahi Nahi Rakshati Dukrun Karane.

Oh dim-witted one! Oh doubting Thomas! You are unable to understand the

reality. Chant the Name of the Lord. Drink the ambrosia of love, experience bliss, and share it with others. This is the main goal of human life.

What is the point in amassing wealth, building mansions, doing this and that? Ultimately, you have to leave this world empty-handed. You cannot take with you even a fistful of dust. There would have been a ration even on dust if it were possible to take it with you. After your death, your body will not be kept in the house built by you. Such is the fate of this body.

However, with the help of this body, you have to achieve the goal of this life. The body is mortal, Atma is immortal. Therefore, lead an immortal life.

What is immortal life? Immortal life is that which is the recipient of God's love. You can achieve anything if you have God's love.

Along with secular education and worldly knowledge, students should develop discrimination and try to understand the principle of the Atma. "Spiritual education is true education (Adhyatma vidya vidyanam)." All types of worldly education are like small rivers, which ultimately have to merge in the ocean of spiritual knowledge. "The ocean is the goal of the rivers (Nadinam sagaro gathi)." A river cannot have any other destination.

However, the river has to flow within the two banks. If there are no banks for the river, none can say how many houses and villages will be destroyed by it.

Human life is like a deep and fast flowing river. What is to be done for this river to merge in the ocean without causing harm to anyone? Make it flow within the two banks of faith.

"One with doubts will perish (Samsayatma vinasyati)." "One with steadfast faith attains wisdom (Sraddhavan labhate jnanam)." Be free from doubts. Do not give scope to doubts and become doubting Thomases. When you have steadfast faith and are devoid of doubts, the river of your life will directly flow toward the ocean of divine grace and merge in it.

Be cautious every moment of your life

Today, people are doing a number of spiritual practices like repetition of the Name, meditation, and listening to spiritual talks. But the river of their life is not flowing toward the ocean of divine grace. Why?

The reason is that they do all spiritual practices with worldly feelings. All their chanting is mechanical, like that of a tape recorder or a gramophone record. You may hear a sad song from the gramophone record. But does the gramophone cry when it is played? Likewise, all the spiritual exercises done today have become artificial and mechanical.

None can predict what is going to happen the next moment. Therefore, one has to be cautious every moment of one's is life. "Beware, beware! (Thasmath jagrata jagrataha)." The Vice Chancellor in his speech spoke about Adi Sankara. Sankara was born in a small village by name Kaladi. Even when he became the head of the Mutt (Peethathipathi), Sankara never had any trace of ego, attachment, or jealousy. But such evil qualities can overpower any person any moment.

Therefore, he introduced a system in the Mutt. He appointed two watchmen and instructed them to keep moving from one end to the other in front of the Mutt with a stick in their hand. He told them to criss-cross each other once every two minutes, saying, "Be cautious, be cautious Thasmath jagrata agrataha)." When the third Sankaracharya became the head of the Mutt, one day he thought to himself, "Aha, I have so much land, and so many people are worshipping me." He was overcome with a sense of pride and ego, but at that very moment, he heard the guards saying, "Be cautious, be cautious!" At once, he cautioned himself, "Don't give room to ego, beware." You should also be cautious every moment of your life against the evils of ego and pride. firmly tie the divine Form with the rope of His Name to the pole of your tongue. Then, God will be with you always.

Divine Names of Govinda, Damodara, and Madhava are sweet and nectarine.

Who is Madhava? Ma stands for Maya, goddess Lakshmi, and mother earth. Dhava means master. Therefore, Madhava means the husband of goddess Lakshmi and master of Maya and mother earth. Such is the profound inner meaning of the word Madhava. When you hold on to Him firmly, you can achieve victory over the entire world.

Oh Tongue, The Knower Of Taste! You Are Very Sacred.
Speak The Truth In The Most Pleasing Manner.
Chant The Divine Names Of Govinda, Madhava, And Damodara Incessantly.
This Is Your Foremost Duty.
(Sanskrit Verse)

The tongue is so selfless that when you place something very sweet and delicious on it, it at once sends it to the stomach with a view to give its essence to all the limbs of the body.

On the other hand, when you place something bitter on the tongue, it spits it out at once. Not only that, the tongue is endowed with a great sense of forbearance.

Forbearance Is Truth, Forbearance Is Righteousness, Forbearance Is The Teaching Of The Vedas, Forbearance Is Nonviolence, Forbearance Is Sacrifice, Forbearance Confers Happiness And Heavenly Bliss.
In Fact, It Is Everything In All The Worlds (Telugu Poem)

Develop an intimate and inseparable relationship with God

The tongue is endowed with great forbearance. How? The soft tongue is enclosed between thirty-two sharp teeth, which can cut it if it does not move with care.

You should also conduct yourself like the tongue when you are surrounded by

wicked people. This was the example set by Vibhishana, when he led his life amidst wicked demons (rakshasas).

Since the tongue is endowed with the quality of forbearance, it is never put to danger. The teeth will fall out in due course, but the tongue will be there always. Not only that, the tongue always maintains its dignity and honour. It does not move from one room to the other room like cats and rats. In times of happiness and danger, and under all circumstances, it always remains in its place and does not come out of it.

You yourself can observe that, whatever the words uttered, the tongue does not come out of the mouth. It always remains in its house and maintains its honour. That is why it is extolled as Jihve rasagne mhadhurapriyatvam ... "Oh tongue! Listen carefully, you are the knower of taste. You can talk so sweetly and softly. You are so very great. The virtues that you possess are not found in anyone else." You should also win the Nobel Prize of divine love and grace by emulating the example of the tongue. Develop intimate and inseparable relationship with God In fact, become one with Him without giving scope to duality. When you experience unity in diversity, your life will become meaningful. This is the principle of non-duality (advaita) propounded by Adi Sankara. Do not give scope to dualism.

A man with a dual mind is half blind. Better to be totally blind than half blind. If you are half blind, you become like a crow. It has a very long beak, which obstructs its vision. Because of this, its right eye cannot see what is on the left and its left eye cannot see what is on the right. Hence, it cannot look straight and keeps moving its neck this side and that side. Fickleness is the quality of a crow. Do not give scope to such qualities of birds and animals.

Keep reminding yourself, "I am human, not an animal, not a bird." Develop firm faith in your divine nature. Then you will be free from fickleness and all other animal qualities.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Madhura Madhura Murali Ghanashyama...".)

82. Knowing the Self is Real Freedom

Date: 23 August 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It was published in Sanathana Sarathi, January 2014.

People Strive To Acquire Education That Will Provide Them A Livelihood,
But They Do Not Come Forward To Acquire Education That Will Grant Them Liberation.
How Can Such People Realise Divinity? Listen, Oh Valiant Sons Of Bharat!
(Telugu Poem)

Even as they start acquiring education, many students today are filled from top to toe with evil qualities like ego, pomp, and attachment. Not merely that, evil thoughts, evil intentions, and evil notions develop in them fast, like anthills.

Evil qualities cover up Divinity

Sixteen evil qualities make people forget their humanness. Eight of these evil traits are pride of wealth, physical strength, intelligence, youth, high education, position, clan, and physical beauty. Besides, people are beset with six internal enemies, viz. desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride, and jealousy (kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada, and matsarya).

With the addition of passion (rajoguna) and sloth (thamoguna), the number of evil qualities from which people suffer today becomes sixteen. As a result, the sixteen divine attributes present in people become invisible.

God is the embodiment of sixteen splendours (kalas). Only when people get rid of the sixteen evil traits will they shine forth with sixteen divine splendours.

Desire, anger, greed, etc., are not human qualities; they are the qualities of animals and beasts. Truth, righteousness, forbearance, empathy, and sacrifice are the true human qualities and values. But these human values have become invisible today because people give room to animal qualities. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce human values in the present system of education.

Youth is temporary, like passing clouds. How is it that young boys and girls forget the eternal Divinity being enamoured of the ephemeral youth? Every young boy and girl should develop divine feelings.

Money comes and goes. One may be proud of one's enormous wealth, but it cannot give one even an iota of peace. One may be proud of one's education, but that also cannot give peace. What is the point in acquiring money and education when they cannot grant you peace?

What is real property? It is knowledge. What is real wealth? Health is real wealth. What is real freedom? Knowing the Self is real freedom. The end of wisdom is freedom.

The educated today think freedom means to speak, act, move about, and behave in an arbitrary manner. But that is not real freedom. Self-control is real freedom, Atmic bliss is real freedom, knowledge of the Self is real freedom, and blossoming of the Self is real freedom.

How can you define swechchha (freedom)? Swa + ichchha = swechchha. Swa means Atma, ichchha means desire. Therefore, desire for the Self is the real freedom. But the youth today want to enjoy freedom only at the physical level and not at the Atmic level.

Earn God's grace by total surrender

Lord Krishna taught the principles of swadharma and paradharma in the Bhagavad Gita. People misinterpret swadharma as if it is related to race,

religion, or caste. They say brahmins, warriors, business people, and laborers should follow the dharma of their respective caste. But this is not swadharma.

Swadharma means Atma dharma and paradharma means body (deha) dharma. The body is inert. It is the mind that makes the body perform various tasks.

Body dharma does not constitute true freedom. Control of the mind and knowledge of the Self is real freedom. Sage Patanjali said, "Control of the modifications of the mind is yoga (Yoga chitta vritti nirodha)." Yoga confers real blessedness on those who practise it. God Himself will come and shower His love on such blessed souls.

You don't need to go to God. God Himself will come to you. You don't need to pray to God to come to you.

Thyagaraja sang:

Come To Our House, Oh Valorous One Of The Raghu Clan, And
Oh Tender One, I Offer My Salutations To You.
Oh Son Of Dasaratha, Come To My Rescue.
I Cannot Bear Separation From You Any Longer.
Rara Ma Intidaka, Raghuveera Sukumara, Neeku Mrokkeda,
Rara Dasaratha Kumara Nannelukora, Ne Talalera.
(Telugu Song)

But a devotee need not call God to come. He Himself will come to the devotee, saying, "Come on, my dear." But when will God call you? He will call you only when you totally surrender to Him and obey His command, just like Arjuna did, saying, "I will obey Thy command (Karishye vachanam thava)." Pleased with his sense of surrender, Lord Krishna said to Arjuna:

Fix your mind on Me, be devoted to Me, offer obeisance to Me, and worship Me. Truly, I promise that you will come to Me, for you are dear to Me.

Manmana Bhava Madbhakto Madyaji Mam Namaskuru,
Mam Evaishyasi Satyam Te Pratijane Priyo Asi Mey.

"Now you are Mine," said Lord Krishna. When you surrender to God completely, He will take you closer to Him the very next moment. God will then become closest to you.

Though many sacred qualities are present in them, people are not aware of them. Therefore, people should have awareness of their sacred qualities and develop them.

If any evil thoughts arise, discard them at once, saying, "These are not mine; these relate to animal qualities. I am a human being. I have come from God." Why do such animal qualities arise in people when people are of divine origin? Bad company is responsible for this. Therefore, run away from bad company. Don't wait even for a moment; run away immediately. Only then can you develop sacred, pure and selfless feelings.

Here is an example. You should understand this clearly.

Make proper use of the gifts of God

God created everything, right from the smallest atom to infinite cosmos. It is not possible to comprehend God. You should have faith that what is present in the smallest atom pervades the entire cosmos and vice-versa. God is present in every atom.

Why did He creat this world? He says, "Oh human beings! Oh divine beings! I created everything in this universe. I created all the objects that you require to lead your life on earth. I gave you water to drink, air to breathe, sun to give you warmth, and ether to enable you to hear. I created five elements only for your sake. Enjoy them as much as you like.

I have given you all the freedom. I don't have any objection. You don't need to pay any tax for this. But I have laid down one condition. You will have to bear the consequences for way in which you use these five elements. If you do good, you will have good results. If you do bad, the result is bound to be bad. Be prepared to accept both. I don't interfere in this. You reap the consequences of your actions." The Bhagavad Gita teaches the same principle.

God gave you light to drive away darkness. To protect you from the intensity of heat, God gave you cool breeze. People have freedom to use these gifts of God for their benefit.

But the same wind has the power to extinguish the flame of the lamp. When the wind blows and extinguishes the lamp, people blame God. They think God has done this injustice.

God replies, "My dear, you have to make some effort to protect the flame. I gave you air to breathe and sustain your life. I gave you light to save yourself from darkness and its resulting dangers.

"I gave to the wind the power to blow and to the lamp the power to give light. If the wind does not extinguish the lamp, it means there is something lacking in divine power. Wind has the power to extinguish the lamp. That is the law of nature. Wind has to blow, and at the same time the lamp has to give light.

"It is your duty to cover the lamp with a glass shield to protect it from the wind. That is the self-effort expected of you." Without making such effort, if you leave the lamp in the open and pray to the wind not to extinguish the lamp, isn't it a mistake on your part? That is against the law of nature and the laws that govern God's creation. God does not accept any blame for this.

However, at times, when the suffering of devotees becomes unbearable and devotees pray to God with a pure mind from the depths of their heart, God Himself will manifest and remove their suffering.

Do not get deluded by the physical form of the divine Incarnation

You might have read this in the Bhagavata. Once upon a time, Indra, the king of heaven, caused heavy rain in Gokul. The cow maidens and cowherders (gopikas and gopalas) surrounded Krishna and prayed, "Oh Krishna, please save us, protect our cows. We are unable to bear this torrential downpour." Krishna replied, "Rain is a natural phenomenon. It isn't possible to stop the rain because it is also My creation. If it has to rain, it has to rain. However, through prayer you can save yourself from suffering.

"I should not stop the rain just because I have the power to do so. In that case, I would be transgressing the laws I Myself made. Therefore, come, I will lift this Govardhana mountain." Saying so, Krishna went to lift the Govardhana mountain.

The human mind is highly fickle. The herders who prayed to Krishna to protect them from the rain started entertaining all sorts of doubts. They thought, "How can this small boy Krishna lift the mighty mountain?" When the doubting cow herders were thinking like this, Krishna lifted the Govardhana mountain on His little finger. Everybody took shelter under the mountain. They also brought their cows under it.

Krishna's parents, Yashoda and Nanda, were fear-stricken as they thought, "He has somehow lifted the mountain. But how is He going to put it down?" They feared that Krishna might get crushed underneath the mountain in the process of putting it down.

Then Krishna told the cow herders and maidens, "All of you obey My command. Those who obey will be protected; those who disobey will be destroyed. All of you, close your eyes when I chant Omkara." Accordingly, all of them closed their eyes as Krishna chanted Om. When they opened their eyes, the Govardhana mountain was at its original position and Krishna was in their midst.

This is the divine sport of Krishna. How did He put the mountain down? He can do anything in a moment.

Not Even A Blade Of Grass Will Move Without Divine Will,
Why To Say This Or That?
God Pervades Everything From An Ant To Brahma.
People Who Do Not Realise This Truth Get Carried Away
By Their Pride Of Intelligence And Knowledge.
But No One, However Great They May Be,
Knows What Lies Ahead In The Future. (Telugu Poem)

This is the mystery of God. People get deluded when they look at the physical form of the divine incarnation with external vision and start comparing Him with themselves. They think that He is also a human being like us. This is how they get deluded. They make a fool of themselves by such delusion. He may have a physical form like you, eat like you, and move about like you, but God is God. One who understands this truth is truly educated.

Education Confers Humility, Humility Confers Deservedness, Which In Turn Gives You Wealth.
Wealth Will Bring You Material And Spiritual Satisfaction When You Utilise It To Perform Charity And Righteous Deeds.
(Telugu Poem)

Shirdi Sai Baba manifests his Divinity

First of all, understand that education is not meant only to earn money. Education confers humility (Vidya dadati vinayam). A student who acquires education to earn money is not a student in the real sense of the term. He is not a student (vidyarthi) but a seeker of worldly pleasures (vishayarthi).

It is difficult to understand Divinity. Only those who obey the divine command

implicitly can experience Divinity in its fullness.

Mhalsapathi used to sleep in Shirdi Sai Baba's room every night. A small wooden plank hung from the ceiling, and Sai Baba slept on it. Since there was not enough place in the room, Mhalsapathi used to sleep directly underneath the wooden plank.

Initially, Mhalsapathi was very afraid, wondering what his fate would be if the old dhoti that was used to hold the wooden plank gave way and the plank fell on him. Due to this fear, he would not sleep properly at night.

One day Sai Baba decided to dispel his fear and demonstrate his Divinity to Mhalsapathi. He called Mhalsapathi and asked him to get up. When Mhalsapathi got up, he saw Shirdi Baba lying on the plank, which was floating in the air without even the support of the old dhoti.

Baba told him, "Oh simpleton, do you think those old dhotis are bearing my weight? No, no. It is my power that is bearing my weight." Then he revealed a divine secret to Mhalsapathi. He said, "Don't tell this to anyone. Some people think I am a Brahmin, some others think I am a Patel, while a few others think I am a Muslim. In fact, I was born to the Brahmin couple Devagiriamma and Gangabhavadia in the village of Pathri." Mhalsapathi's doubt was removed, and he offered his salutations to Baba thus:

I Offer My Salutations To Lord Sainatha, Who Is Born In The Village Pathri, Resides In Dwarakamayi, And
Grants The Prayer Of His Devotees.
Pathri Gram Samudbhutam, Dwarakamayivasinam, Bhaktabhishtapradam Devam, Sai Natham Namamyaham.
(Sanskrit Verse)

Baba commanded Mhalsapathi not to reveal this secret to anyone.

In those days, there was infighting between different sects of Hindus and

Muslims, resulting in great violence. With a desire to bring about unity between Hindus and Muslims, Baba told Mhalsapathi, "I am a Mohammaden among Mohammedans and a Hindu among Hindus. Therefore, do not call me either a Hindu or a Muslim." He told Mhalsapathi to keep this as a secret.

Develop constant integrated awareness

Similarly, all incarnations of God share divine secrets with one or two individuals who are very close to them. Lord Rama shared many secrets only with Lakshmana and with no one else because Lakshmana followed Him like a shadow.

None can describe the greatness of Lakshmana's sacrifice. He could have enjoyed all the comforts of the palace, but he gave up the kingdom and also his wife and followed Rama. He told his mother, Sumitra, "I want only Rama, and I am prepared to sacrifice anything to go with Him to forest." True to her name Sumitra, she was a good friend of everyone. When Lakshmana came to take leave of her and offered his salutations to her, she said to him, "My dear son, the forest (aranya) is verily Ayodhya when Rama is with you, whereas Ayodhya is verily the aranya for us in the absence of Rama. Conduct yourself in such a manner that Rama is not put to any inconvenience whatsoever. Make sure that you don't hurt Rama in any way. Rama is God and pervades the entire world, so if you cause even a little suffering to Rama, the whole world will suffer." What a wonderful teaching she imparted to her son!

During Krishna Avatar, Balarama (Krishna's brother) was always with Krishna. But it was Uddhava who was Krishna's closest friend. Sometimes, even Balarama was not by Krishna's side, but Uddhava followed Krishna like His shadow wherever He went.

Krishna revealed only to Uddhava that the Yadava clan would be destroyed and that He had decided to leave His body. Uddhava was very sad to know that. He held Krishna's feet and prayed, "I will be with You till You are there and will come with You when You go. I cannot bear separation from You."

Subtle, divine mysteries are not revealed to all. Divine incarnations reveal them only to their most intimate friends. It isn't possible to tell everyone. How is it possible for everyone to understand Divinity?

When devotees see a divine miracle, they say, "Ah! Swami is God!" However, they forget it after two days and think Swami is like any other ordinary person.

Devotees should not have such fickleness. They should have Constant Integrated Awareness. Mere awareness is not enough; there should be Constant Integrated Awareness.

Become equal-minded and experience bliss

A true devotee is equal-minded (sthitaprajna). The devotee has a steady mind without any wavering.

Commentators of the Bhagavad Gita have interpreted the word sthitaprajna in various ways. Some of them say, "When it is day for ordinary people, it is night for sthitaprajna and vice-versa." Oh simpleton! Is this the attribute of a sthitaprajna? The railway station masters and night watchmen keep awake the whole night and sleep during the day. Can we call them sthitaprajna? No, no.

A sthitaprajna is one who is always awake in matters relating to God and asleep regarding worldly affairs. Normally, people are very alert in worldly matters. But a sthitaprajna is always immersed in bliss, completely oblivious to all that is worldly. This is the attribute of a sthitaprajna.

One who is devoid of worldly tendencies and totally immersed in the contemplation of the Supreme Being (Visweswara) is a sthitaprajna. The Bhagavad Gita exhorts man to become a sthitaprajna.

Many things keep happening in this world. However, all that is related to God

is full of bliss. There is nothing bad in the world. How can there be anything bad in God's creation? If you say something is bad, it is the defect of your vision. Can there be anything bad in God's creation?

You may judge something as good and something else as bad in accordance with your position and intelligence. But when you transcend your senses and mind, everything will appear to be good to you. You should treasure this feeling in your heart. However, till you reach such a high state, strive to follow the sacred path befitting your humanness.

I want to tell you one more thing. Some people practise meditation. While practising, your body should not touch any other body. When bodies touch each other, good or bad currents from one body will pass on to the other body.

If people sit close to each other and meditate, it cannot be called meditation at all. Instead, sit separately as far as it is possible. That is why sages of yore used to go to the forest to do meditation. It is necessary that you live in solitude without having contact with the world as far as possible. Treasure this divine knowledge in your heart.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajans, "Madhava Murahara Madhura Manohara..." and "Subrahmanyam Subrahmanyam ...".)

83. God is the Embodiment of All Names and Forms

Date: 24 August 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It was published in Sanathana Sarathi, February 2014.

How Can One Realise The Principle Of Atma If One Lacks Purity Of Heart?
Only Those With Purity Of Heart Can Experience The Atmic Principle.
Listen, Oh Valiant Sons Of Bharat! (Telugu Poem)

Man today is not able to understand what is human, what is animal, what is demonic, and what is divine. In fact, it is easy to understand the difference between these four qualities.

Humanness is the combination of the body, mind, and Atma. Then what is animality? Going only by physical needs, forgetting the mind and Atma is animality. Those who crave the desires of the body and mind, forgetting the Atma are demonic. Those who experience the bliss of the Atma, forgetting the body and mind, are divine.

If people cannot become divine, at least they should live like human beings, without degenerating to the animal or demon level.

All spiritual practices that you do with body attachment give only temporary satisfaction because the body is temporary. In fact, all actions that you perform with the body are temporary in nature. Only spiritual practices that you do with purity of mind, considering the body as an instrument, yield lasting results.

The mind is the basis of the entire world (Mano Moolam Idam Jagat). The mind pervades the entire universe. It is endless. There is no place beyond the reach of the mind.

One should understand the nature of the mind with the help of the body. A pure mind is nothing but Brahman.

Sage Uddalaka tried to impart the knowledge of Atma to his only son, Swetaketu, in a number of ways. There was no scholar greater than Uddalaka in those days, yet he sent his son to another preceptor for education. A son will always treat his father as father only and not as guru. As long as he treats him as his father, he cannot learn from him as he would from a guru. Uddalaka sent his son to another preceptor so that he would develop the feelings of reverence for his guru and learn from him.

When Swetaketu returned after completing his education, Uddalaka asked him what he had learnt from his guru. Swetaketu said, "I have learnt the principle of Brahman." His father asked him, "What did you learn about Brahman?" Swetaketu replied, "I learned that Brahman is all-pervasive." Uddalaka replied, "Oh simpleton! Just saying that Brahman is all-pervasive is not enough. You should acquire practical knowledge instead of merely repeating what your guru taught you."

Can One Become Valorous Merely By Wielding A Sword?
Can One Become A Musician By Merely Holding A Veena In The Hand?
(Telugu Poem)

Students learn a little and boast about it endlessly. This is their weakness. It is unbecoming of a student to be boastful.

In order to impart practical knowledge to his son, Uddalaka said to him, "Son, go inside and bring some water in a tumbler and a little sugar." Swetaketu did accordingly.

"Put the sugar in the water and dissolve it," said Uddalaka. Swetaketu put the sugar in the water and stirred it well till it was completely dissolved.

Then Uddalaka said, "Now tell me where the sugar is." Swetaketu looked, but the sugar was not visible.

"Put your hand in the water and try to bring out sugar from it." But when Swetaketu put his hand in water, he could not take the sugar out. He said, "Father, the sugar is not visible, and I am unable to take it in my hand." Uddalaka said, "You brought the sugar in your hand, saw it with your eyes, and put it in water. But now you can neither see it with your eyes nor get it in your hand. Where is it?" Swetaketu has no answer to this question.

Then Uddalaka asked his son to put two drops of water on his tongue. After putting water on his tongue, Swetaketu said, "Father, sugar is there, in the water." Uddalaka again asked, "Is the sugar on the top of the water or at the bottom or all over?" Swetaketu said that the sugar was present in the entire volume of water.

Experience the sweetness of Divinity

This is the principle of unity. How is it possible to experience the sweetness of Divinity, which is present everywhere in this giant cosmic vessel? You can neither see it with your eyes nor catch it in your hand. It can only be experienced. This sweetness of divinity is present at the bottom, at the top, and all over this cosmic vessel. It means the entire cosmos is suffused with the sweetness of Divinity.

Students!

You should understand this truth and propagate it to the world. Similarly, Divinity is immanent in humanity. Therefore, all your thoughts, words, and actions should be suffused with the sweetness of Divinity. Whatever your senses perceive should be sweet.

"His lips, face, eyes, smile, and entire being is suffused with sweetness. In fact, the Lord of Madhura is sweetness personified (Adharam Madhuram vadanam Madhuram vayanam Madhuram vasitam Madhuram ... Madhuradhipathe akhilam Madhuram)." This sweetness is the essence of oneness.

If you speak harshly, it means there is no sweetness in the vessel of your body; there is only water.

There is Divinity in you but you are not able to visualise it. Why? Because you are afflicted with the disease of ego and attachment. When you suffer from malaria, even a sweet tastes bitter to you. The defect lies in your tongue, not in the sweet.

Likewise, Divinity pervades your entire being. You can't realise it because your mind is polluted with ego and attachment.

Whatever you do, do it earnestly. It is not enough if you do it mechanically; you must put your mind to whatever you do.

Swami is teaching not to the person but to the mind. Only when the teachings are imparted directly to the mind will they be retained in it. What is the use if you listen with one ear and let it out from the other?

Whatever work you do, do it with purity of heart. "Good deeds give mental purity (Chittasya suddhaye karmah)." Engage yourself in sacred activities that are beneficial to others. Consider service to society as service to God.

Truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names (Ekam sath viprah bahudha vadanti).

You may call Him by any name like Allah, Jesus, Zoroastra, Rama, and Krishna, but God is one.

Put your senses to proper use

Here is a small example. The life principle is in your body. The same life principle pervades the entire blood stream. Blood is one, heart is one, and the life principle is also one.

But if you keep a laddu (a sweet) in your hand, can you know its taste? No. You can know its taste only when you put it on your tongue. The same blood is present in the hand as well as in the tongue. But only the tongue can experience the sweetness.

Ears have the ability to hear but they cannot see. Eyes can see but they cannot hear. Nose can only smell and cannot do anything else. In this way, every limb has been assigned a specific task to perform, and one should make proper use of all his limbs. But today, people are putting their senses to misuse.

Why has God given you a tongue? Food is meant to sustain the body (Bhikshannam deha rakshanartham). God cautions people, "My dears! Use your tongue only to eat pure and sacred food. You will spoil your stomach if you go on eating anything and everything just because you have a tongue, teeth, and stomach." God gave you a stomach so that you can eat healthy food and lead a healthy life. Therefore, eat only that which will maintain your health.

Why did God give you nose? He says, "My dear! I gave you a nose to help you in the process of inhalation and exhalation for the sustenance of your life." But people do not allow the nose to do its work properly. Some get addicted to snuff. Why did God give a person nose and what is he doing with it? People become victims of many diseases when they misuse their senses.

Human birth will be sanctified only when people use their senses in an appropriate manner at all times. But, unfortunately, today people lack sense control. You can win God's grace (anugraha) only by sense control (indriya nigraha). Therefore, if you want God's grace, control your senses.

Do you know why God gave you hands? Is it only to feed your stomach? No. Do you know why God gave you feet? Do you think God gave you feet to roam in lanes and bylanes? Do you know why God gave you ears? Are they meant to listen to idle gossip? No, no.

Every limb and every sense organ that God gave you is meant for a sacred purpose. You should put them to proper use and experience oneness. Only then can you taste the sweetness of divinity.

Students will have noticed this in their hostel. The cook brings chillies, salt, tamarind, and coconut. If he just mixes them together, it will not have any taste. On the other hand, if he grinds them all together in a mortar, it will assume the form of chutney, which is very tasty.

Betel leaf is green in colour, betel nut is brown, and lime is white. When you mix and chew them, your tongue becomes red. Similarly, when good thoughts, good qualities, and good actions combine, they give the experience of Divinity.

Though Siva and Vishnu are attributed with different names and forms, they represent the same divine principle.

Thyagaraja sang, "O mind! He achieved his objective (Sadhinchene O manasa)." What did he achieve? He realised the Divinity that is inherent in humanity.

Thyagaraja said, "I have realised the divine principle of Rama." He prayed, "Oh Rama! Life becomes true and meaningful only when one sees You, plays with You, and moves in close proximity to You." Oh my mind!

Can't You Meditate On Sri Rama, Raghurama, Srungara Rama?
Who Knows What Penance Kausalya Performed Earlier To Kiss The Lord On His Gleaming Cheeks!
Who Knows What Penance Kausalya Performed!
Who Knows What Penance Dasaratha Performed Earlier In Order To Call The Lord,
"oh Sri Rama, Come Here!"
Who Knows What Penance Dasaratha Performed!
(Telugu Song)

In the end, he said, "Oh Rama! What great penance this Thyagaraja has performed that he is able to lead his life peacefully taking refuge at Your Lotus Feet? This sweetness of Your divine proximity is enough for me in this life." In this manner, Thyagaraja composed many songs, explaining the intimate and inseparable relationship that a devotee should develop with God.

Divinity is present not only in all human beings but also in all living beings.

Do not observe any differences between the various names and forms of God like Rama, Krishna, Vishnu, Easwara, etc. It is a common belief that Brahma creates, Vishnu sustains and Siva dissolves, but all are one.

Here, there, and everywhere - wherever you look - there is only one divine Atmic principle. Though ears, nose, mouth, hands and feet are different from each other, they constitute the same body. Similarly, God is the embodiment of all names and forms.

Make your heart the temple of God

Students may know this story. A teacher took four blind boys to an elephant and asked each one to say what the elephant looked like.

One boy put his hand on the elephant's stomach and said, "Sir, elephant is like a big wall." Another student touched its leg and said, "Sir, elephant is like a pillar.

The third boy touched its ear and said, "Sir, elephant is like a hand fan." The fourth boy held its tail and concluded, "Sir, elephant is like a rope." What each one perceived was correct from his viewpoint. It is true that an elephant's stomach is like a big wall, its legs are like pillars, and its ears are like hand fans.

But each limb separately cannot be called elephant. The elephant is the combination of all these.

Similarly, do not think that Rama, Krishna, Jesus, and Zoroastra are different from each other. They represent various forms of the same Divinity. Everyone should try to realise this principle of unity without giving scope to differences of any kind.

God is one. He is the Supreme Being. He is great. There is none greater than God. He is present in one and all. You may consider yourself a human being on the basis of your physical body, but have firm faith that God is present in you.

The same truth was taught by Mira. She said, "Krishna, my heart is Your temple. You cannot go away from it." God dwells in the heart of each and every one. Therefore, gradually develop the faith, "I am God, I am God." Engage yourself in divine activities, because your body is the temple of God. "The body is a temple, and the indweller is God (Deho devalaya proktho jivo Deva sanathana)." Your heart is the sanctum sanctorum. Here, heart does not refer to the physical heart. The physical heart is only like the main switch board. It is on the left side of your body. But the spiritual heart (hridaya) is on the right side.

Students chant the V edic mantra: "Brilliant like a streak of lightning set in the midst of the blue rain-bearing clouds (Neelatoyadamadhyasthad vidyullekheva bhasvara)." Just as you find white and bright lightning amidst dark clouds, the life principle shines forth between the ninth and twelfth vertebrae of your spinal column. This is referred to as Vidyullekha.

It is due to the presence of this life principle in the spinal column that all limbs are able to function. Therefore, realise the truth that God is present everywhere. He is not in any distant land.

However, in order to experience His all-pervasiveness, listen to Swami's teachings, put them into practice, and enjoy the bliss.

Your hunger is satiated only when you eat food, and not by merely looking at it. What do you do to send the food that is served in your plate into your stomach? You put your hand and mouth to work. Only then will the food reach your stomach.

Similarly, Swami is serving you food in the form of His teachings in the vessel of your heart. Try to eat the 'food' served with the spoon of your intellect. Only then will this food provide you strength and fulfillment.

Do not become the slave of your senses

Students!

Senses are meant to be your servants. You should remain their master. But, unfortunately, people today are becoming slaves of their senses. A great devotee sang, "I should become the servant of servants; I should serve the servants of the Lord." In fact, senses should be subservient to you. You will subject yourself to great danger if you become the servant of your senses. Never follow the advice of your servants. That will put you to great risk.

Kaikeyi was the dear wife of King Dasaratha and the daughter of the king of Kekeya. Such a great lady like Kaikeyi lost her honour and respect because she paid heed to the words of her servant Manthara.

Do you find anyone with the names Kaikeyi and Manthara among women today? Manthara was the one who spoke bad words, and Kaikeyi listened to them. Therefore, nobody likes to have their names.

Likewise, the senses are your slaves. If they lure you to follow the objects of their desires, you should at once silence them saying, "Shut up and sit down." You should discipline your senses in this manner. Only such a person can become courageous (a dheera), valiant (veera), and noble (gambhira). Such a person is the real master.

You should become the master, not the slave of your senses. Whose slave should you become? The slave of God.

In fact, you yourself are God. Gradually develop this faith. When everyone develops this faith, the entire world will be filled with peace and security. Then you won't need to pray, "May all the beings of all the worlds be happy! (Samasta lokah sukhino bhavantu)." There will be naturally peace and happiness in the world when you develop such faith.

Moreover, don't pray that only people of India should be happy. The whole world is like a big mansion in which Bharat, America, Russia, China, etc., are like different rooms. Each country is like a room of this great mansion. If you go to a five star hotel, you will see a number of rooms. Likewise, there are so many rooms in this mansion of the world.

What separates one room from another? It is the wall. If you remove the wall, there will be only one single hall. Oneness can be experienced only when differences are removed.

You Become I And I Become You,
When We Become One, That Is The Real Knowledge.
When Duality Is Transcended And Oneness Realised,
Ego And Attachment Cease To Exist.
God Is Imperishable (Akshara), And He Is
Also Present In The Perishable (Kshara). When The Eternal Truth Of Perishable And
Imperishable Is Realised,
The Mind Is Transcended And Oneness Is Experienced.
God Is Beyond Illusion (Maya) And Is Also The Cause Of Illusion.
When The Veil Of Illusion Is Removed, Divinity Is Revealed.
(Telugu Song)

Everyone should understand this truth. Even simple words convey profound truths.

The nation is put to a great loss when people observe differences. Consider this example. The body has various limbs. If the hand is cut off from the body, how much blood will be lost, which is the common property of the entire body, and how weak the body will become! In the same way, there should not be even small differences between people in the country. All should remain united.

There is great strength in unity. Can you perform any task with one finger? No. But you can do anything when five fingers join together. Unity is great strength.

I bring My Discourse to a close, blessing you to develop the spirit of unity and make the world happy and prosperous.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Manasa Bhajare Guru Charanam ...")

84. Divinity is the Basis of the Entire Creation

Date: 25 August 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It was published in Sanathana Sarathi, March 2014.

All Gramophone Records Look Alike, But When You Connect Them To The Sound Box, Each One Plays A Different Song.
External Appearance Does Not Necessarily Convey Reality.
I Am Neither Merit Nor Sin, Neither Happiness Nor Sorrow.
I Am Also None Of These: Places Of Pilgrimage, Scriptures, Or Sacrifices.
I Am Not The Food, The Consumer Of Food, Or The Process Of Eating.
I Am The Atman, The Very Embodiment Of Divinity.
I Am Siva Himself.

Embodiments of Love!

You are the embodiment of neither sin nor merit, neither happiness nor sorrow. Nor are you the embodiment of incantation, mystic device, or esoteric doctrine (mantra, yantra, or tantra). You are the embodiment of Existence, Knowledge, Bliss Absolute (satchidananda).

Always think that you are Siva and constantly recite, "I am Siva, I am Siva, I am Siva (Sivoham, Sivoham, Sivoham). Only one who treasures the truth of unity with the Divine in the heart can win God's grace.

The 'I' principle denotes your reality

Everyone uses the letter 'I' while introducing themselves, whether a pauper or millionaire, ignoramus or realised soul, child or old person, man or woman. The 'I' principle is allpervasive.

Ask someone, "Where did you come from?" They may say, "I came from Bengaluru." Here, they first use the word 'I' while indicating that they come from Bengaluru.

If you ask them, "Who are you?" They may say, "I am Suraiah, son of Ramaiah." Whatever answer they give, they use the word 'I'. Nobody can give any answer without using the word 'I'.

If you ask them, "What is your name?" They may say, "I am Gopal, my father is Bhupal, my grandfather is Nepal." Instead of giving such a long answer like Hanuman's tail, how easy it would be if they just said, "I am I!" The statement "I am I" denotes your reality.

You associate yourself with 'I' right from birth. You use words like 'he,' 'they,' etc., only after you start using the letter 'I'.

V edanta declares "I am Brahman (Aham Brahmasmi)." Aham means 'I'. Therefore, 'I' precedes even Brahman. Such a powerful 'I' principle is used today in a belittling way.

The Vedas refer to this 'I' principle as hridaya. What does hridaya mean? Hrid + daya = hridaya. That which is full of daya (compassion) is hridaya. This means that the 'I' principle is full of compassion. Therefore, it does not refer to physical body.

Compassion, hridaya, Atma, Brahman - all these are synonymous with the 'I' principle. So, the 'I' principle is most important.

People associate the 'I' principle with the body, forgetting the reality that it denotes Atma, Brahman, hridaya, or Divinity.

If someone asks you, when did you come? you say, I came in the morning. But actually, what came in the morning? It is the body. It means you identify yourself with the body and say, I came in the morning.

In the very next moment, you say, my stomach is upset. You utter the words, my stomach. Just a few moments ago, you said, I came in the morning, identifying yourself with the body. Now you indicate that you are different from the body and say, "my stomach".

Then who are you? You say, this is my hand, this is my head, this is my stomach, etc. But you don't question yourself, who am I?

When I say, "this is My towel," I am different from the towel. Similarly, when I say "My hand, My head, and My stomach," I am different from all these. Then who am I?

You should conduct such self-enquiry in accordance with the teachings of Vedanta. At one moment, you say you are the body; at the very next moment, you say you are different from the body. Is this true or that?

Only the Atma is the seer

The body is temporary. But the 'I' principle remains the same life after life. One forgets this eternal 'I' principle and identifies oneself with the ephemeral body.

This body is a mere dress. I have put on this robe. This robe is different from Me. Similarly, this body is like a robe for the individual soul. That is why Jesus declared, "Death is the dress of life." No one knows when you will give up this dress and wear a new one. Vedanta reveals many such subtle secrets.

One should focus attention on two entities, 'I' and 'this'. You say, "This is a tumbler." How are you able to see this tumbler? The tumbler is the seen (drishya) and I is the seer (drashta). All this visible world is mere drishya. Without the seer, there can be no seen.

Some people may think that it is the eyes that see the seen. But the eyes don't see; the divine power that is present within sees through the eyes.

You see many bulbs shining. But can the bulbs shine on their own? It is the electric current that makes the bulbs shine.

Similarly, can the eyes see on their own? No, the eyes are also a part of seen. Only the Atma is the seer. The eyes, ears, and even the mind constitute the seen. The Atma is the witness, which is the Seer. Thus, the 'I' principle corresponds to the Seer.

All that is seen, heard, and experienced constitutes the seen. Sage Dakshinamurthy said, "The entire world is like a city seen in a mirror (Viswam darpana drishyamana nagari tulyam)." The entire universe is like a reflection in the mirror.

As I said earlier, there are two entities, 'I' and 'this'. 'This' refers to the world, the effect, and 'I' denotes Divinity, the cause. The visible world is the effect, and God is the cause.

God is everything. He is the seer and also the seen. He pervades everything but is not visible to the naked eye. He is invisible (adrishya).

What is meant by a-drishya? A-drishya is that which is not seen by the naked eye.

The entire world forms the seen. It is the 'I' principle that sees, experiences, and enjoys the world through the senses. Therefore, it is not the eyes that see. It is the 'I' principle that sees through the eyes.

Here is a small example. A person's eyes are there even after death. If eyes could see on their own, why can't they see after death? They can't see because the 'I' principle has left the body. The eyes cannot see when the Seer is not there. So, you see and experience the seen only through the Seer.

This Seer is nothing but the divine principle of 'I'. Where did this divine principle of 'I' originate? What did it emerge from? This 'I' principle did not emerge or originate from anything. It has neither a beginning nor an end. It is

present everywhere, in all beings at all times. That is the principle of the Seer. It neither comes nor goes. That which comes and goes is only the seen.

You should understand the difference between 'I' (aham) and ego (ahamkara). Aham refers to the divine principle 'I', and ahamkara refers to ego, which is like passing clouds. Ego comes and goes, whereas Aham is the eternal divine principle, which neither comes nor goes. Because of your delusion, you mistake the seen for reality.

Divinity pervades everything

Many people say that they believe only in direct evidence. How foolish they are! They speak without common sense.

Suppose a man has height 1.7 m and weight 80 kg; his complexion is brown, and he has a bald head. You can describe all his physical features. Does that mean that you know everything about this person, just because you are able to describe his physical features? Can you describe his inherent qualities?

In fact, his unseen qualities constitute his real personality. You don't know what type of nature he has and how intelligent he is. You can't see these qualities.

You don't need to go that far. You say, my mind, but are you able to see your mind? No. Then how can you believe in the existence of your mind, which is not visible to you? You can't even see your eyes without a mirror.

You are able to see the objects in the sky, which are millions of miles away. But you are not able to see your own eyes.

All that you see around you is the seen (drishya). The Seer (Drashta) is the eternal witness.

Those who argue that they believe only in direct evidence are foolish. There is

no common sense in such arguments. Such people also lack general knowledge.

You say, I have love. Does love have a form? Is there any form of sorrow? If not, how can you prove the existence of love and sorrow?

Love has no form, but the mother who showers love has a form. Fragrance has no form, but the flower has a form. A flower that has a form gives out fragrance, which has no form.

Similarly, one with a particular form proves the existence of the formless Divinity. Divinity is immanent in everything.

Scientists took thousands of years to understand this truth. What do they say today? They say, everything is made of atoms. Why did they need thousands of years to understand such a simple truth? Even before the Tretha Yuga, the child Prahlada understood this and declared thus:

> Never Doubt That God Is Here And There. Wherever You Search For Him, He Is There.
> (Telugu Poem)

About thirty years ago, I happened to visit the house of Suri Bhagavantam, who was the Director of the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru. An international conference of scientists was being held in the Institute.

In order to introduce some of the prominent scientists to Swami, Bhagavantam invited them to his house for lunch. During lunch, they discussed the creation of the sun, moon, and earth.

One of the scientists said, "Now the sun is in the prime of its youth." I asked him, "What is its age?" He stated that it was a few million years. Write 1 and go on putting zeros next to it, it becomes millions and millions of years.

The same has been described by the Indians (Bharatiyas) as Without beginning (A-nadi).

How simple it is to say this! But scientists consider it an insult to science to describe something as "without beginning".

When they give the age of the sun in some million years, they think they have become great scientists. Instead of calling the sun "without beginning", they give some numbers as its age, even though it is beyond human comprehension. Scientists derive satisfaction by quoting numbers.

The Indian scriptures, on the other hand, studied these natural phenomena and explained them in such a manner that is easy to understand and appreciate.

Usually, scientists don't believe in God. The more intelligent they are, the less is their faith in God. You can yourself see that those who consider themselves as high intellectuals have no faith even in themselves. They spend all their time in labs doing experiments, but they have no experience of divinity. What is the use of these experiments without experience?

Scientists talk of matter and energy. But in My view, they are not different from each other. Matter is energy and energy is matter. Both are one and the same. Without matter, you cannot find energy, and without energy, there can be no matter.

For a tree to grow, you need to have a seed. That seed has two halves. Only when both halves are joined together can it germinate. If there is only one half, it cannot germinate.

One half is positive and the other is negative. One half is matter and the other is energy. Matter and energy combine to give a new life.

It is foolish to say that you don't believe what you cannot see. It is the unseen power that makes you reap the consequences of your actions.

Oh Man, Don't Take Pride In Your Beauty, Youth, And Physical Strength.
Very Soon, You Will Become Old. Your Hair Will Turn Grey,
Your Skin Will Develop Wrinkles, And Your Vision Will Be Blurred.
Children Will Make Fun Of You, Calling You An Old Monkey.
You Are No Better Than A Leather Puppet.
Try To Understand The Mystery Behind This Puppet Show.
(Telugu Song)

After all, all this is a mere puppet show. Do not be enamoured of it. The body undergoes change through various stages of life. Now you are boys. Ten years ago, you were children. After twenty years, you will become men, and after fifty years, you will become grandfathers. Who is it that was a child then, is a boy now, and will become a man and a grandfather afterward? It is you only. There is only time difference between the four stages.

Prayer should come from the heart

In order to understand your reality, do not insist on direct evidence. Suppose a huge tree has many branches and sub-branches. Its cool shade is very pleasant. You see the tree and exclaim, "How nice is its shade!" You see the tree but not its roots. You should realise that it stands on its invisible roots. You water the unseen roots for the tree to grow.

You see a big building and say, "How majestic are its pillars and how beautiful are its slabs!" In fact, it is the foundation that is most important for the building to stand. Without a foundation, how can there be pillars? Without roots, how can there be a tree? Similarly, Divinity is the basis of the entire creation. Only when the invisible roots are watered will the tree grow and yield flowers and fruits. On the other hand, if you water the flowers and fruits, the tree will wither away, with all its flowers and fruits.

Unmanifest Divinity is present in everyone as a witness. You have to develop your devotion and sense of surrender for the unmanifest Divinity to manifest

before you.

When Thyagaraja lost the idol of Rama, he sang, "Oh Rama! Where am I to search for You when You are everywhere?" He went to the river Kaveri to perform his ceremonial worship of God (sandhya vandanam). When he took water in his cupped hands, lo! The idol of Rama appeared in his hands!

He was ecstatic and sang, "How long should I plead with You, oh Rama! Kindly come to my rescue." He prayed to Rama wholeheartedly in a number of ways.

Prayer should be offered with devout feelings. It should come from the heart; it should not be recited mechanically. When you fill your heart with love, God will immediately manifest before you.

Understand the greatness of Indian culture

Some speakers use words like 'Sai devotees' and 'Sai family' in their speeches. All people in this world belong to the same family, so why should you specifically use such a term as 'Sai family'?

Among the devotees you address, some may be devotees of Rama, some others may be devotees of Krishna, and so on. Therefore, do not use such terms.

Some people utter words like 'hello' when they meet. Instead, how nice it would be if you said, "Namaste!", with respect.

Many such pleasing words reflect the sacredness of Bharatiya (Indian) culture. Every word in this eternal Vedic culture is endowed with great value. Never forget the principles of this great culture, which has remained changeless throughout the ages.

Install God in your heart and contemplate on Him constantly with love. From today onward, go on reciting the auspicious mantra, Sivoham, Sivoham,

Sivoham. Treasure this truth in your heart: I am God, I am God. When you firmly adhere to this truth, all your worldly problems will vanish.

All conflicts arise when you observe differences between one person and the other. I and you are not different. All are one, my dear son! Be alike to everyone, said Jesus. You should love all. This is the main teaching of Indian culture.

The Vedas teach the principle of unity and equality as stated in this Vedic prayer:

May The Lord Protect And Nourish Us!
May We Grow In Intelligence And Valour Working Together!
May We Live In Friendship Without Any Conflict!
Saha Navavatu, Saha Nau Bhunaktu, Saha Veeryam Karavavahai,
Tejaswinavadheetamastu, Ma Vidvishavahai.
(Sanskrit Verse)
Let Us All Move Together, Let Us All Grow Together,
Let Us All Stay United And Grow In Intelligence Together,
Let Us Live Together With Friendship And Harmony.
(Telugu Song)

Students!

Do not waste your life by harbouring narrow feelings. Develop broad feelings and resolve to spread the message of unity and divinity to the entire world.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin....")

85. Spirituality is the Basis of All Types of Knowledge

Date: 28 August 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, May 2014.

Do Not Get Deluded By Thinking What Appears To The Naked Eye As Truth.
If You Follow Me With Steadfast Faith, I Will Be Happy To Show You What Is Truth
(Telugu Poem)
Annihilation Of Ignorance Least To Liberation

All the scriptures of Bharat (India) such as the Vedas, Sastras, and Puranas are written in Sanskrit. Therefore, if one wants to learn the culture of Bharat, one should develop understanding of Sanskrit. In ancient times, even in villages, people used to converse with each other in Sanskrit. Sanskrit was the language of even street plays in those days. Sanskrit is so sweet that one can enjoy listening to it even without knowing its meaning.

Never leave Truth and Righteousness

In a street play, when the actor playing the role of Dharmaraja (Yudhishthira, Arjuna's eldest brother) comes on the stage, the stage manager as per the tradition asks him, "Who are you? What brings you here?" Dharmaraja replies, "My name is Yudhishthira; I am the one who adheres to truth at all times, under all circumstances, and in the face of all trials and tribulations. That is why I am called Dharmaraja." Dharmaraja was the embodiment of dharma. He had the power to destroy a-dharma (ignorance, unrighteousness) and make people follow the path of dharma.

The main teaching of the Vedas is: "Speak the truth, practise righteousness

(Sathyam vada, dharmam chara). The Vedas exhort people that they might leave anything in this world but never to leave Truth (Sathya) and Right conduct (Dharma). Hence, always speak truth and follow righteousness.

But how many follow the teachings of the Vedas, and how many put them into practice in their lives? Truth (Sathya) and Dharma are not the products of the mind. They emerge from a heart that is filled with compassion. But, unfortunately, people today follow the mind, forgetting the heart and ignoring the intellect, which is endowed with the power of discrimination.

One Who Follows The Mind Degenerates To The Level Of An Animal And Ruins His Life.
One Who Follows The Intellect Will Rise To The Level Of The Divine,
Says The Lord Of Parthi. (Telugu Poem)

Today, the moment a thought enters a person's mind, they act upon it. In this way, they follow their mind. This is an attribute of the mind - but in fact it is not an attribute but an evil tendency of the mind. When a thought arises in one's mind, one should not translate it into action immediately. Instead, examine the nature of the thought with the power of the intellect (buddhi). Only when one investigates with the power of one's intellect can one know whether a particular thought is good or bad, right or wrong. The intellect has the ability to distinguish between the ephemeral and the eternal. Only when one enquires using the power of their intellect can one take to the right path.

All the elements are immanent in the ether (akasha). Sound is the attribute of ether. From where does the sound originate? Sound is Brahman (God), and everything originated from sound. Atma is another name of Brahman. The Atma, the mind, and speech all belong to the same Atmic family. People describe the mind in many ways. But, in fact, it should reflect the nature of the Atma.

Therefore, never put the mind to misuse. Do not allow the mind to act in an arbitrary manner. Though the mind has no specific form, it sees everything, it

hears everything. In fact, it is responsible for all actions.

You may be under the wrong impression that when everything in this world is meant for our use, why should we give up anything? That is a great mistake.

All is a play of the mind

Everyone experiences three states of the soul, namely, the individual soul in the waking state, in the dream state, and in the deep sleep state (viswa, taijasa, and prajna). In your dream, you go to Mumbai, see your parents, meet your friends, and go through many experiences. What created all these? It is your mind. It created you, your journey to Mumbai, your parents, your friends, and all the shops of Mumbai. It created everything, but it is not real.

As the proverb goes, "All the mansions and buildings that you see in your dream become non-existent when you open your eyes." You see Marine Drive, Shivaji Park, Dharmakshetra, etc. in your dream, but when you wake up in the morning, you find yourself in Prasanthi Nilayam.

Who has seen and experienced all this, and who is responsible for this experience? It is only your mind. All this is a play of the mind. Similarly, whatever you see and do is only illusory. All that is not related to the heart (hridaya).

There are many students here. They study their textbooks, listen to their teachers, acquire degrees, and take up jobs. But how much of what they have studied do they put to use in their profession? Not much. What is all this study for? You should acquire the capability to use your education for the benefit of society. It is not enough that you secure a job, maintain a family, and lead a comfortable life in this world.

No one seems to enquire, "what have I studied, and what is the benefit of my education?" You should think how you can use your education to benefit society. You have prepared many delicious dishes in your kitchen, but what is

the use if you do not bring them to the dining room and serve them to the guests? What a waste it is! All the good things that you have learnt should be imprinted in your heart and should be used to serve others.

Intensity of the cowherd maidens love for Krishna

Uddhava was a great scholar of yoga, the Upanishads, and other scriptures. He was Krishna's dear friend. Once he told Krishna, "Swami, the cowherd maidens (gopikas) are illiterate and ignorant. They have not understood Your power. Therefore, I would like to go there and teach them yoga, by which they can have Your direct vision." However, he knew that the cowherd maidens would not pay any heed to him unless he carried a message from Krishna. All the cow herders and maidens had treasured Krishna's love in their heart. They knew no God other than Krishna.

Therefore, Uddhava asked Krishna, "Kindly write a letter to the cowherd maidens and give it to me. Unless I carry a message from You, they will not listen to me." Accordingly, Krishna wrote a letter and gave it to Uddhava. He wrote, "I am sending this letter through My dear friend Uddhava. Listen to his advice." Uddhava took the letter to Brindavan, in Krishna's own chariot. This made the cowherd maidens think that Krishna Himself had arrived without any prior information. All of them ran toward the chariot looking for Krishna. All along they waited for Krishna day and night, foregoing even their food and sleep so much so that their eyes were swollen. They had not seen Krishna even for a moment after He went to Mathura.

Therefore, they were dejected and depressed. All their energy had drained out.

But once they saw Krishna's chariot, they were overjoyed and ran toward it. Uddhava showed them Krishna's letter and said, "This is the letter Krishna has sent you." One of the maidens said, "We are illiterate, since our parents never sent us to any school. We don't know even the alphabet. How can we read your letter?" Uddhava replied, "If there is anyone who knows how to read,

please take this letter and read it." One cowherd maiden knew how to read, but she didn't want to touch the letter. She said, "I offer my salutations to you. I know Krishna's handwriting very well, but I cannot touch this letter." Uddhava asked, "Why can't you touch it? You are all great devotees of Krishna. You worship Him with total faith. Then why don't you even touch this letter?" The maiden said, "You do not understand our devotion and sense of surrender to Krishna. Our body is burning from top to toe in the fire of our separation from Krishna. If we touch the letter, it may also get burnt. Whatever we touch is sure to get burnt. We do not want to reduce this sacred and golden letter of Krishna to ashes by our touch." See the intensity of devotion of the cowherd maidens! Someone else in their place would have felt, "I'm educated, and I can read this letter." But the maidens did not do like that.

Uddhava then tried to give the letter to another cowherd maiden. She also said, "My salutations to you. I also know Krishna's handwriting well. But I cannot control my tears if I try to read it. My tears are bound to fall on the letter and smudge His handwriting completely. How can one read a letter that is totally smudged? Therefore, I don't want to take this letter and read." Ultimately, Uddhava himself had to read out the letter.

The moment he completed reading those two lines written by Krishna, the maidens started leaving the place. They didn't even look at the face of Uddhava. They were not prepared to look at anyone else, having feasted their eyes on the divine form of Krishna. Such was their sense of devotion and surrender towards Krishna.

Oh Lord! In Spite Of Having Eyes, People Are Verily
Blind, Since They Do Not Yearn To See Your Auspicious Form.
Though They Are Endowed With Ears, They Are Deaf To Your Teachings.
Though God Is Immanent In Them, They Have Drowned Themselves In Worldly Life.
How Can One Describe Their Misfortune?
(Telugu Poem)

When Uddhava noticed cowherd maidens leaving one by one, he pleaded with them, "At least, listen to my teaching of yoga." They replied, "We have not seen Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswara. How can we focus our mind on some God whom we have not seen? We have seen Krishna and experienced His divine power. Therefore, we do not want anyone other than Krishna. You may have a number of minds, but we have only one mind, which has gone to Mathura along with Krishna. We do not have a second mind to listen to your teaching on yoga." This statement of the maidens was an eyeopener for Uddhava.

Acquire the education that liberates

What is all this learning for? Students are stuffing their head with all sorts of worldly information to such an extent that it is ready to burst any moment. They are filling their head with all sorts of useless information from various countries of the world. Is this the purpose for which God has endowed you with head?

One Can Fill An Empty Head With Anything, But Is It Possible To Put Something Into A Head That Is Already Full?
How Can It Be Filled With Sacred Feelings Unless It Is Emptied In The First Instance?
(Telugu Poem)

This is not what you are supposed to fill your head with. Study what you are supposed to study. Retain in your head only that which is necessary and discard all that is unnecessary and useless.

Once, a teacher was taking a class for village children under a thatched roof. He asked a student, "3+3+3-2 is equal to what?" But the absent-minded student was looking at something else. The teacher was angry. He asked, "Hey, what are you doing? Has everything I taught entered your head? Has it

gone inside completely?" As the proverb goes, "the body is in the temple but the mind is thinking about the sandals left outside." The boy's attention was totally diverted onto something else. He absentmindedly replied, "Yes, sir, it has gone inside completely except the tail." He was referring to a rat that had just entered a hole in a corner of the hut. The rat had entered the hole, but its tail was still outside.

The teacher was teaching something, and this boy was concentrating on something else. Is this the way to learn? No, no.

What is the purpose of all your studies? Students should become role models and serve society. What is meant by vidya? That which gives true knowledge is vidya. But modern education does not impart real knowledge to students.

Give first priority to dharma in life

Chanda and Amarka were the teachers appointed by Hiranyakasipu to teach his son, Prahlada. Once, when both of them went to a river to take a bath, Prahlada gathered all the students around him and started teaching the bhajan, "Narayan Bhaja Narayan..." Teachers should not think it otherwise.

Prahlada told his fellow students, "Look here, our teachers are really misguiding us. My father Hiranyakasipu has instructed them to teach us only about wealth and desire (artha and kama) and nothing about righteousness and liberation (dharma and moksha). What is this education for?

"They are teaching us that education is meant for earning money. Should one go to school and study just to earn money? Even beggars and thieves earn money. What is the necessity of education if we have to only earn money? Our teachers are stressing only wealth and desire, so we should not pay heed to them." Prahlada pointed to a monkey and a dog and said, "They are also enjoying all the worldly and sensual pleasures. What is the use of this education if it promotes only wealth and desire? We need teachers who give us knowledge of the Self. Why do we require a teacher who gives us only

worldly knowledge? We should oppose this education, which is centred only on earning wealth and fulfilling our worldly desires." All the students were inspired by what Prahlada taught them.

As the teachers returned from the river, the students started singing "Narayan Bhaja Narayan..." They were uttering the name of Narayana, which Hiranyakasipu had forbidden them from chanting. Not only did Prahlada chant the name of Narayana but he also taught the other children to chant the same, much against the wishes of his father.

Seeing this, the teachers started slapping their own heads in desperation. They understood that it was none other than Prahlada who had made the children chant the name of Narayana. They threatened to punish Prahlada, but he wasn't the least perturbed and said to them, "What you are teaching is wrong. Dharma should be the foundation of education. This is the main step in achieving the objective of human life. No doubt, money is required, and there is nothing wrong in having desires, but all this should be done on the principles of dharma. Only then can one attain liberation." Liberation does not drop down from the sky; Nor does it emerge from the nether world.

It Is Not Available On Earth Either.
Only When The Veil Of Ignorance Is Removed
From Your Heart Can You Attain The Sacred State Of Liberation.
This Is The Truth Propounded In The Smritis
(Texts Composed By The Sages).
(Sanskrit Verse)

Removal of attachment is liberation (Moha kshaya is moksha.) Annihilation of ignorance leads to liberation. When the ash that covers the fire is blown away, the fire becomes visible. Similarly, when the clouds that cover the sun move away, the sun becomes visible.

There is no need to make any special effort to drive the clouds away. In fact, the clouds are born out of the sun and cover the sun. Does the sun get angry

when the clouds cover it? No. The clouds will anyway move away in a short period. Similarly, when the clouds of ignorance move away, one will have the vision of the Self.

What are teachers supposed to teach their students? They should teach them to give top priority to dharma in their life. They should pursue wealth and desire on the basis of dharma. Then they will reach the top level, liberation (moksha).

To reach the top of a building, you use a ladder. Unless you start from the lowest step of the ladder, you cannot reach the top. The lowest step is dharma and the top is liberation. Wealth and desire are in between.

Prahlada exhorted his fellow students to make their teachers understand the importance of dharma and asked them to become the teachers of teachers.

Scientists today have understood and declared that the atom is all-pervasive after doing research for thousands of years. But the same truth was proclaimed by Prahlada thousands of years ago when he told his father:

> Never Doubt That God Is Here And Not There. Wherever You Search For Him, He Is There.
> (Telugu Poem)

Wherever you look, God is present in every atom and every particle. This all-pervasive Divinity is referred to as the atom by scientists. The same is described as energy by philosophers. They say this energy is God.

Scientists go in a round-about manner to understand this simple truth, whereas the same truth can be experienced directly by following the spiritual path. Unless you put your hand and mouth to work, how can the food served in the plate reach your stomach? But what are the scientists doing today to make the food reach the stomach? They don't put it in the mouth directly; they do it in a round-about manner by taking the hand round the head.

Whatever the method they adopt, ultimately they will reach the same truth.

Prahlada understood this truth by his intuitive intelligence. This is the type of intelligence that students should develop.

You may not be able to put everything into practice in daily life that you study in the classroom. Say, for example, when you go to a laboratory, you mix two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen to make water. You can do this only in a laboratory. But when you sit for eat, do you mix hydrogen and oxygen to get water?

Modern education leads only to agitation, whereas education in those days led to elevation. What we need today is elevation and not agitation. Elevation confers happiness on all. The system of education should be moulded in such a way that everyone in society is benefited by it.

Focus your Mind on Spirituality

Develop faith in God. Then He will take care of 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)

God knows you wherever you are.

Your head is on the top and the feet are at the bottom, but when an ant crawls on the feet, your hand automatically hits the ant without even the eyes seeing it. Just as the power of consciousness is present in your entire body, so God pervades the entire universe.

Body and universe (deha and desha) are mirror images of each other. Light

and darkness do not exist separately - the absence of one implies the presence of the other. For instance, when you switch on the light in a dark room, the darkness at once disappears. Where does it go? When you switch off the light, the darkness reappears immediately. Where does the darkness come from and where does the light go? They neither come nor go. The existence of one leads to the non-existence of the other.

There is only one aspect: truth. Truth remains unchanged in the three periods of time - past, present. and future (Trikalabadhyam sathyam). Wherever you go, whatever you do, never forget this transcendental truth.

Students!

You may acquire any type of knowledge, but always focus your mind on spirituality. What is the basis of all types of knowledge? It is spirituality. Lord Krishna declared in the Bhagavad Gita: Spiritual education is true education (Adhyatma vidya vidyanam).

Krishna said: "Out of all types of knowledge, I am spiritual knowledge." Spiritual knowledge should be the basis of all types of knowledge.

Suppose you have a magnet and an iron piece. The magnet at once attracts the iron piece when it is brought close to it. However, a rusted iron piece is not attracted by the magnet. The rusted iron piece says, "Oh magnet! You do not have the power to attract." Hearing the words of the iron piece, the magnet laughs and says, "Oh mad iron! You have covered yourself with a great amount of rust and dust. How can I take you closer? First of all, clean your rust and dust. Then automatically you will be attracted by me." Human life is like an iron piece. It is not enough to clean yourself with soap and water by having a bath. You should be pure and clean inwardly as well as outwardly. When you make yourself pure in this way, the divine magnet will immediately attract you.

The magnet not only has the power to attract an iron piece, it can also

transform the iron into a magnet. Students can perform this experiment. Take a pin and keep it in contact with a magnet for two days. On the third day, the pin itself will become a magnet. Due to its continuous contact and association with the magnet, the iron will turn into a magnet.

The knower of Brahman becomes verily Brahman Himself (Brahmavid Brahmaiva bhavathi).

Just as a magnet imparts its power to an iron piece, noble souls impart their sacredness to all those who come in contact with them. Suppose you go to a forest and try to cut a sandalwood tree with an axe. Does the sandalwood tree curse the axe that cuts it? No. Instead, it imparts its fragrance to the axe also.

Similarly, good people will impart their goodness even to those who try to harm them.

When you do good to others, you will certainly receive good in return. Therefore, be prepared for any sacrifice to do good to others. Not only that, do good to even those who harm you. You will be richly rewarded.

The good you do to others will never go to waste. You may not get the result immediately, but in due course of time, you will certainly get the reward.

Students!

It is not enough to acquire knowledge; you should use it for the welfare of society in a proper way. You should take a vow to do good to others in every possible way according to your capacity. Your knowledge becomes useless if it is not put to proper use.

A book (pustaka) may contain a lot of knowledge, but what is the use if the head (mastaka) is filled with mud? Don't make your mastaka another pustaka by merely stuffing it with information. Rather, use the knowledge acquired

from pustaka for a good purpose. Make efforts to understand the essence of education.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Prema Mudita Manase Kaho...")

86. Faith In God Removes All Fears

Date: 29 July 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

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Man's Life Is Like A Bed Infested With Bugs.
His Body Is A Den Of Diseases.
Truly Speaking, He Has No Real Happiness In Life.
Do Not Forget These Words Of Wisdom! (Telugu Poem)
Forbearance Is A Divine Quality

Man's life has come to this sorry state because he has forgotten his true nature, true form, and the place of his origin. Unable to realise the value of human life, which is like a precious diamond, man barters it away like coal. The Vice Chancellor raised this question in his speech, "What is the purpose of life?" To know your true form and to reach the place of your origin is the purpose of life.

The goal of human life

It is natural for all living beings to go back to the source of their origin, not to any other place. This is the purpose and goal of human life. Forgetting this truth, man strives hard right from dawn to dusk to acquire wealth, look after his wife and children, earn name and fame, and enjoy peace and happiness. But what he needs to do is to go back to the source and attain the goal of his life. The main purpose of his life is to retrace his path.

If a question arises as to where you have to go, put a question to yourself: where did you come from? You have to go back to the place from where you came. It is not proper to deviate from this path. Try to know who you are.

"The entire world is permeated by God (Isavasyam idam jagat)." God is expansive by nature. That is why He is called Brahma. Wherever you see, you find the principle of Brahman. There is no place in this world where He is not. There is no object in this world that is not His form. He is present in you, in them, and in everyone. However, everybody cannot have firm faith in this principle of unity.

The Upanishads declare, "the One willed to become many (Ekoham bahusyam)." There is only One. That is the reality. That One assumes many forms. You can experience happiness when you realise this truth.

Lord Krishna declared in the Bhagavad Gita, "Perform all your actions as an offering to Me and take refuge in Me alone (Sarvadharman parityaja mamekam saranam vraja)." Krishna said, "Offer everything to Me, I will look after you." What does this really convey?

Man Is Bogged Down By All Sorts Of Worries In This World.
To Be Born Is A Worry, To Be On The Earth Is A Worry;
The World Is A Cause Of Worry And Death, Too;
Entire Childhood Is A Worry, And So Is The Old Age;
Life Is A Worry, Failure Is A Worry;
All Actions And Difficulties Cause Worry;
Even Happiness Is A Mysterious Worry.
(Telugu Poem)

Pass on your worries to God

Life itself is a big burden of worries. How can you lead your life carrying this burden of so many worries on your head? What can you achieve when you are enmeshed in so many worries? How can you tread the right path in your life?

However, these worries are not permanent. One worry will go away, giving

place to another worry in a moment. Therefore, do not bother much about these worries.

What is the shape of worry? It is mentally created fear only. By nature, the mind is fickle. How can worries, which are the creation of this fickle mind, be permanent? Each worry is like a naya paisa. One rupee is equal to 100 naya paise, and 100 rupees are equal to 10,000 naya paise. When you make a bundle of 10,000 naya paise, it is quite heavy and not easy to carry. Therefore, the Lord says, give me those 10,000 naya paise and I will give you a 100 rupee note, which is very light, is easy to carry, and can safely be preserved.

It is rather difficult to safeguard the big bundle of 10,000 naya paise. It is all the more difficult to carry it and protect it from others. Hence, the Lord exhorts one, "My dear, surrender to me the bundle of your worries." Therefore, pass on this burden to the Lord.

God teaches this truth in a subtle way. You may ask, if you leave everything to the Lord, what about your duties? Each has their own duties. Each has to earn money, look after their spouse and children, etc.

You don't need to give up any of your duties. Just discharge your duties. How?

Suppose you are performing the role of a father in a drama. In the drama, you have a son who is afflicted with some disease. You are worried that your son is sick. But, truly speaking, you are not his father and he is not your son; he is not suffering from a disease, and you don't actually cry. All this is only acting in a drama. Even while crying in the drama, you are very well aware that your name is so and so and you are studying in such and such class. Even while expressing your anxiety about your son's illness, you are very well aware that he is not your son but a boy from another class. On the stage, you must do correct acting. Even while playing your role to perfection, you don't forget your actual name.

For instance, Nagaiah plays the role of Thyagiah. He sings, "Oh Rama! Where am I to search for You?" just like Thyagiah. But in reality he is aware that he is only Nagaiah, and not Thyagiah. Once the drama is over and he gets down from the stage, everybody will complement him, saying, "Nagaiah, you have played the role of Thyagiah very well." It is only Nagaiah who is singing and acting. But while on the stage, he acts like Thyagiah. Likewise, everyone is playing a role in this drama of life. On the stage, their name and form are different. But their actual name is Atma. You should never forget this truth. Remembering this truth always, you may play any role in this drama of life. That is the way of leading an ideal life and deriving bliss therefrom.

Some people complain, "I have offered everything to God; I have surrendered to Him. Then why am I put to so many difficulties? Why is God making me undergo so much suffering?" Students should clearly understand this: When your surrender is total, how can you have difficulties? How can you have the feeling that you are suffering? You will not have such thoughts at all. You will not consider anything as a difficulty and worry about it. If you are worried, it means only that you have not surrendered to God completely. One who has totally surrendered to the Lord will not care for any worries.

God is in you. But when you lack the faith that "God is in me," you will be surrounded by worries.

Try to understand who you are

Names and forms may vary, but God is one. Christians, Muslims, Zoroastrians, Buddhists, and Hindus - all worship the same God. But you attribute various names and forms and worship Him based on the doctrines of the religion that you follow.

There is a brahmin, and he is cooking in the kitchen. On the basis of the work he does, we call him Vanta Brahmin (brahmin cook). The same brahmin is called Pujari Brahmin (brahmin priest) when he does worship in the temple. When he reads the almanac, he is called Panchanga Brahmin (almanac

brahmin). The same brahmin, when he goes to the office and discharges his official responsibilities, is called Adhikara Brahmin (officer brahmin). Different names are attributed to the same person.

Similarly, on the stage of the world, each one is given a name on the basis of the role they play and the accrued merits and demerits of their previous lives.

Truly speaking, all this is a mere illusion. There is no truth in this whatsoever. It is the impact of the mind that is responsible for all this delusion.

When you realise that all this is a mere bhrama (delusion), you will have the vision of Brahma (God, the Creator). On the other hand, when you realise that you are Brahma, delusion (bhrama) will at once disappear. In this manner, when you make an effort to understand who you are, you will certainly realise the truth.

It is natural for all living beings to go back to the source of their origin. Water of the ocean changes into water vapour due to the heat of the sun. The water vapour turns into clouds. When the clouds reach a cool region, the water vapour get converted into water drops and falls on earth as rain. The water drops that fall on earth join together and form a stream. These small streams again join together and form a river. Ultimately, where does the river reach? It reaches the ocean again.

In the same way, all living beings have to go back to the source of their origin. This is the purpose of life.

Here is another example. A potter goes to a pond, digs out clay from it, and brings it home. He dumps the clay in front of his house. There is a pit in the pond as a result of his digging out clay from it. There is a mound of clay in front of his house. When the clay is dug out, a pit is formed, and when the same clay is deposited in one place, a mound is formed. The clay of the pit is the same as the clay of the mound. You have dug a pit to make a mound.

The mound becomes smaller and smaller as the potter uses the clay to make

pots and plates. The pots and plates thus prepared cannot hold water unless they are baked in fire. If you put water in unbaked pots, they will break. Therefore, the potter puts them in the fire and subjects them to the process of refinement. After they are baked in fire, the pots can hold water. The unbaked pots cannot hold water, while the baked pots can hold water. We utilise the pot water for various purposes.

One day, as you are fetching water from a well, the pot slips from your hand and falls down; it breaks into pieces. Do you take those broken pieces with you? No. You leave them where they are. Those pieces get crushed under the wheels of vehicles, and the feet of human beings and again turn into clay. The pot, which has come from clay, goes back to the clay again. It assumes the form of pots and plates in between, but these forms are only temporary.

Therefore, you don't need to ask anyone where they have to go. They have naturally to go back to the source of their origin.

Saint Purandaradasa sang, "Oh Lord! I am born in this world because I had forgotten You. If I had not forgotten You, I would not have been born in this world." He said, "Oh Lord! As long as You are by my side, how can I become an orphan or a destitude? You are the one who grants me wisdom and knowledge. In fact, You are my redeemer. You are my supreme Savior. You are the bestower of all eight types of wealth.

"Even if the sky falls on my head, I will not be afraid. I have Your support in all situations. When You are in me, with me, above me, and below me, why should I be afraid? I don't need to go elsewhere in search of You; You are always with me. Lord, You are the only doer. I am a puppet in Your hand." Someone has such strong faith will be free from all fears. They will not lack anything. Misery and poverty will not touch them. When the master of wealth is with you, how can you lack anything? With such firm conviction, you should discharge your duty. God alone gives you everything.

Never give scope to ego and attachment. How foolish it is to blame the sun for not spreading light in your house! When the sun is illuminating the entire

world, how is it that you are not getting sunlight in your house?

The sun god laughs at your ignorance and says, "Oh madcap! You have built the walls of ego and attachment around you. How can I enter your house? Destroy the walls of ego and attachment, and I will enter your house on my own. You don't need to call me, invite me, or pray to me. It is my duty, I will certainly come." In the same way, God is present in your heart, but you are unable to visualise Him. What is the reason? You have built the walls of ego and body attachment, which hide God from your view. Then how can you have the vision of God? He is very much there in you, but you cannot see Him.

Saint Ramdas held the feet of Lord Rama tightly and said, "Oh Lord! I will not allow You to go even one step away from me unless You shower Your grace on me. How can You leave me and go?" The Lord replied, "The question of My leaving you and going away arises if I am outside. But I am always in you. In fact, I am you and you are Me. It is a mere illusion to think that I will leave you and go." God does not forsake anyone and does not go anywhere. He is always there in you. In fact, He is present everywhere.

Seek dependence on divine Grace

I spoke about this in one of the recent discourses also. Once, a Gopika, thinking that she was alone in the house, wanted to close the door. At that very moment, Lord Krishna knocked at the door from outside. She was in a dilemma whether to open the door or leave it closed. Watching all this, Radha was amused. Then she sang,

The Whole Universe Is The Lord's Abode, Where Then Is The Front Door For That Mansion?
Play On The Life Strings Of Your Body, Offer Yourself At His Feet And Shed Tears Of Joy,
See Heaven In That Experience, Oh Jiva! That Is The Main Entrance To The Lord's Abode.

(Telugu Song)

There is an element of doubt between closing the door of the heart and opening it after hearing the call of the Lord. The individual wants to close the door, and the Lord wants it to be opened. God is changeless; the individual soul with ego (jiva) is fickle and subject to change.

When a little sparrow perches on a tender branch of a tree, it is not afraid by the swaying of the branch because it depends on the strength of its wings, not on the branch. A sparrow has confidence in the strength of its wings, but people lack faith in the Self. Even the slightest difficulty causes fear in them and makes them unsteady.

A human being should not be that timid. The human should become courageous and valorous by contemplating on the Name of God. What you need today is not physical strength and intelligence but you need divine grace and the strength of righteousness.

I told you this earlier also.

One May Have Physical Prowess And The Power Of Intelligence,
But One Will Come To Grief If One Lacks Divine Grace,
Karna Was A Great Warrior But What Was His Fate?
Never Forget This Truth.
(Telugu Poem)

Truly speaking, Karna was a greater warrior than Arjuna. He was born by the grace of the sun god. But, unfortunately, he depended more on his physical strength and intelligence. Instead of taking refuge in Lord Krishna, he took the side of Duryodhana and Dussasana. Why? His ego was the root cause.

Once, he was prevented from participating in the competition of archery because he was neither a prince nor a warrior (kshatriya). Everyone in the

assembly made fun of him, saying that the son of a charioteer did not have the deservedness to compete with warriors. Feeling deeply humiliated, when Karna was leaving the arena, Duryodhana called him back and made him the king of Anga. Knowing very well that Duryodhana was a wicked person, Karna became his close friend out of his gratitude and attachment for him.

You should get rid of such misplaced attachment in all situations. A wicked person is always a wicked person. Karna should have rejected Duryodhana's offer rather than accepting it and befriending him. Why did he require Duryodhana's help?

He should have sought refuge in God, who helps everyone. But Karna lacked such faith and spirit of sacrifice. He degraded himself by accepting the offer of kingdom from a wicked person like Duryodhana and became one of the Dushtachatushtaya (wicked foursome, namely, Duryodhana, Dussasana, Sakuni, and Karna). In fact, Karna was the son of Kunti and the brother of Yudhishthira.

Draupadi was the embodiment of great virtues

When Draupadi was being humiliated in theKaurava court, Karna also passed derogatory remarks against her. Draupadi was the embodiment of righteousness and a great, chaste woman (pativrata). People may question, how a woman having five husbands can be chaste. But the five Pandavas were not separate individuals as the world considers them. They represented the five elements. Once, there was a debate in Krishna's presence as to who was the greatest among Pativratas. Krishna declared in unequivocal terms:

Draupadi Dutifully Obeyed The Command Of Her Husbands.
She Would Never Say To Any One Of Them That She Had No Time To Serve Him.
She Was Satisfied With Whatever She Got In Life.
She Was The Supreme Example Of Chastity, And None Could Match Her In This Respect.

(Telugu Poem)

She was the embodiment of many virtues. The quality of forbearance (kshama) that she had was unparalleled.

It was a heart-breaking sight for Draupadi when Aswatthama massacred the young Pandava children while they were asleep. Arjuna tracked down the perpetrator of the atrocity, and dragged him before Draupadi. The supreme virtue of forbearance that Draupadi exhibited in this situation is noteworthy. Instead of cursing Aswatthama, she fell at his feet and said:

It is at the feet of your father, Dronacharya, that my husbands have learnt all that they know.

Being the son of Dronacharya, was it proper for you to kill my children? How could you have the heart to kill them, who were unarmed, young, quietly asleep, were not having any grudge against you, and were not contemplating any harm to you?

(Telugu Poem)

When Draupadi was praying like this, Bhima could not bear to see this. Exploding in anger, he roared:

"having Lost Her Sons, This Draupadi Has Lost Her Balance Of Mind. Otherwise, Why Would She Fall At The Feet Of This Wicked Fellow?"
This Draupadi Is A Stupid Woman, For She Pleads For This Wretch's Freedom.
She Feels No Anger Against This Murderer Of Her Sons.
This Assassin, Aswatthama, Is Not A Brahmin. Do Not Release Him But Kill Him.
If You Do Not Do That, I Myself Will Hammer His Head With My Powerful Fist, For You To See!
(Telugu Poem)

Then Draupadi pacified Bhima and said to Arjuna:

Oh Partha!
It Is Not Righteous To Kill A Person Who Is
Afraid Or Has Lost Courage, Who Is Asleep Or Intoxicated, Who Seeks Refuge Or Is A Female.
You Should Not Kill Aswatthama, For He Is Your Preceptor's Son.
(Telugu Poem)

But Arjuna said, "I have taken a vow to kill this evil-doer. I cannot forgive him and break my vow." Then Draupadi contemplated on Krishna and suggested to Arjuna to shave Aswatthama's head as a token punishment and set him free. Arjuna paid heed to her advice, and did accordingly.

This is how Draupadi reacted to the situation; she did not have the slightest hatred for one who mercilessly wiped out all the Pandava offspring. She said, "It is against warror (kshatriya) dharma to kill a person like Aswatthama. I am grieving over the loss of my sons. I don't want to inflict such grief on the mother of Aswatthama. My sons cannot be brought back to life, whatever we may do. Why should I cause grief to another mother?" With such words of wisdom, she prevented Arjuna from killing Aswatthama. It was her forbearance that protected the Pandavas till the end and helped them to earn great name and fame.

The honour of a family depends on the virtues of the housewife. Therefore, every woman should develop forbearance. Not only women, but men also need to cultivate forbearance. But it is very important for women.

One who has forbearance can achieve anything. In fact, forbearance is a divine quality; it is the gift of God.

Everyone Has To Face The Consequences Of His Actions, Whoever They May

Be.
No One Can Know What Lies Ahead For Them In Future.
But This Much Is Sure: Everybody Has To Reap The Consequences Of Their Actions
Even The Mighty Rama Suffered The Pain Of Separation From His Consort Sita And Cried Like An Ordinary Person.
Even The Pandavas Had To Go Into Exile And Live In Forest.
(Telugu Song)

It is impossible to say what lies in store for a person - where, when, and under what circumstances. Whatever has to happen will happen. Everything happens according to God's Will. If something good happens, think it is good for you. If something bad happens, accept that also as good for you. Acceptance of both good and bad with equal-mindedness is a supreme virtue that will lead you to the realisation of Brahman.

When you have such sacred, nectarine, and broad feelings in your heart, you will be victorious everywhere and in all your endeavours. You will be highly successful in your life.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Govinda Krishna Jai Gopala Krishna Jai ...")

87. Do Not Allow Politics To Enter Villages

Date: 30 August 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, July 2014.

Due To The Absence Of Fear Of Sin And Love For God,
Humanness Has Declined In Human Beings. This Is Detrimental To Universal Peace
(Telugu Poem)
True Education Is That Which Dispels Narrow-Mindedness And Promotes Unity.
It Teaches Man To Live Peacefully With His Fellow Human Beings And Establish Peace In The World (Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

Wherever you look today, the world is in a state of turmoil, fear, unrest and sorrow. At a time when the demons of unrest, impropriety and unrighteousness are indulging in fearful death dance, only students are capable of restoring peace and security in the country.

Dear Students!

Only when you develop the spirit of oneness can you drive away differences, sorrow, and unrest and thus establish peace and security. One Atma dwells in all beings (Ekatma Sarva Bhutantaratma).

Students should identify with society

It is the foremost duty of students today to recognise the truth that Divinity is present in all and conduct themselves accordingly. But, unfortunately,

students today have their own ways and strive for their own self-interest. There is none who serves society, keeping in view the welfare of all. Just as water becomes one with milk, students should identify themselves with society, join hands with everyone with the spirit of unity, forbearance, and empathy, and strive for the progress of society. Only then can there be peace in the country.

Students!

The citizens you see and the men of authority whom you follow today were also once students like you. Today's students are tomorrow's citizens and leaders. Therefore, it is your responsibility to set right the deficiencies and disturbances that you find in society.

Embodiments of Love!

As are the roots for a tree, so are the students for a nation. When the roots become weak, the tree falls to the ground. Similarly, when the students become weak-minded, the nation will suffer. Therefore, students should become strong-minded, lead an ideal life, and give happiness to society. They should never give room to narrow feelings like I and my family. The happiness of an individual depends on their family, and the happiness of the family depends on society. In the same way, the happiness of society depends on the nation. The happiness of a nation, society, and family depend on the character and virtues of the individuals.

Students!

People come here from various places and countries, but the same divinity is present in all.

Religions Are Many But Goal Is One.
Clothes Are Many But Yarn Is One.
Jewels Are Many But Gold Is One.
Cows Are Many But Milk Is One.

Beings Are Many But Breath Is One.
Castes Are Many But Humanity Is One.
Beings Are Many But Atma Is One.
Flowers Are Many But Worship Is One.
Listen, Oh, Valorous Sons Of Bharat!
(Telugu Poem)

Since ancient times, the sacred land of Bharat has been bestowing happiness on one and all by propagating the principles of unity and divinity. The Upanishads teach the principle of unity and exhort humanity to recognise this unity as the goal of life. Due to the defective system of education and the prevalence of selfishness and self-interest in society, this principle of unity has been destroyed. The educated today are causing unrest in society by observing diversity in unity instead of visualising unity in diversity.

Maintain unity and purity of villages

In ancient times, there was great unity and purity in villages. Whenever there was a marriage function in some house, all the people of the village would join in a spirit of unity and help the concerned family. They believed in the principle of unity. If there is a marriage in their house today, tomorrow there may be a marriage in your house. If you help others now, tomorrow others will also come to your help. Such broad feelings promoted sacredness in villages.

There was a system of joint families in those days. If there were four brothers, all of them with their spouses and children lived together in the same house like one family. But with the passage of time and change in circumstances, human mind has become perverted, with the result that there are differences even in villages.

If there are four members in a family, they have four different opinions. What is the reason? Selfishness and greed are mainly responsible for this situation.

The desire for money and power has crossed all limits in today's world. Money comes and goes. How long will it stay with you? What will you do with excess of money? Keep as much as you require; excess of money will spoil your mind.

People today do not want to leave their position of authority till their last breath. Politics promotes wicked qualities and evil intentions in villages. It is politics that is responsible for the degeneration of values in villages.

Dear people of villages!

Never allow politics to enter your villages. Do not hate anyone. Bear no hatred against anyone (Adveshta sarva bhutanam). Love all. If you allow politics in your villages, your samaj (society) will turn into samadhi (tomb). People in villages today are allowing such things to happen.

Happiness would reign supreme were there is unity between the members of a family. There would be no scope for unrest. All would be free from worries. When differences develop between members of a family, it will become worse than hell.

The body is a temple and the indweller is God (Deho devalaya proktho jivo Deva sanathana). There are three persons living in the house of human body, namely, thought, word and deed. One can enjoy peace and happiness only when there is unity among these three. But the mind today goes in one direction and the speech goes in another direction. One's actions take a different route altogether. If these three 'persons' go in three different directions, how can there be peace in such a 'house'? There will be neither santhi (peace) nor kanthi (light). There will be total darkness and ignorance. In such a situation, what can be the fate of a person except misery?

All are children of God

Many people appear very calm and quiet outwardly, as if they are free from worries. They put up such appearance due to their ego. But the fact is different. A fig may appear to be very nice from outside, but when you open it, it may be full of insects. Similarly, some people appear to be shining outwardly, but when you observe closely, there will be nothing in them except evil qualities and evil thoughts. There will be no scope for divine feelings in them.

Students!

Understanding the present-day situation, you should follow the right path in your life. Do not observe differences of caste and creed. There is human skin. What is the caste of the skin? Blood circulates in the body from top to toe. What is the caste of blood? Similarly, there are muscles and bones in human body. What is their caste? Atma pervades every cell of human body. What is the caste of the Atma? What is the caste of the five elements, namely, earth, water, fire, air, and ether?

But, unfortunately, humanity has developed differences based on caste and creed. This is the greatest ignorance and foolishness of humanity. In fact, this is a demonic quality. It is these differences of caste and creed that have created so much unrest and misery and plunged society in turmoil today.

All are one, and all are the children of God. Therefore, develop the spirit of brotherhood of humanity and fatherhood of God. There is none who is not the child of God. All are the embodiments of Divinity. The eternal Atma in all beings is a part of My Being (Mamaivamsho jivaloke jivabhuta sanathana). Lord Krishna declared emphatically in the Bhagavad Gita, "All of you are an aspect of My being, not of five elements or nature." You have been coming to Prasanthi Nilayam for many years and have been participating in many functions. You have been noting down all the teachings of Swami and have been saying, "How nicely Swami has taught these truths!" But how many of you are following My teachings? What for do you come here? What is the purpose of your coming? If you do not put even one of Swami's teachings into practice, your life will be a waste. In fact, animals are better than you.

We have our elephant Sai Gita. Whatever instructions are given to her, she follows earnestly. How intelligent she is! You call yourselves devotees. What a shame it is if you do not practise even one instruction of Swami in your daily life! Is there anyone of you who has peace, who is devoid of ego and hatred? On the contrary, your ego is increasing day by day. As ego increases, your Atmic power decreases. Whatever you touch turns into ashes. That is the cause of your suffering. That is why mother Nature complains to the Lord.

Why Is There So Much Hostility Among Men, Oh Lord!
Love Has Turned Into Poison,
Mind Is Totally Polluted And People Have
Become Victims Of Vices. What Is The Use?
(Telugu Song)

Prakriti (Nature) and Paramatma (God) have an intimate connection and are inseparable. The philosophy based on the Upanishads of the sacred land of Bharat (India) is unparalleled. In 1926, a British philosopher visited India. since India was under British rule at that time, he could move around in the country as per his will. He was deeply impressed by the unity of the Bharatiyas (Indians).

When he went back to England, he declared, "What a great spirit of unity the Bharatiyas have! How sacred are the teachings of the Upanishads! All the Bharatiyas are united by the single thread of divinity." He further said, "If I am born again, I would like to be born in the sacred land of Bharat and would also like to die in India. There is no country which can match the sacredness of Bharat." The sacredness of Bharat was acknowledged by many British philosophers. But, today, the people of other countries have better understanding of Indian culture and philosophy. Many of them are coming to India in search of truth, renouncing all their material comforts. All physical pleasures are momentary.

Everybody has to leave the world empty-handed

One should not be proud of youthful state of one's body. What are the physical pleasures and comforts! Truly speaking, there is no happiness in them. That is why Adi Sankara declared in those days itself.

Do Not Be Proud Of Your Wealth, Progeny And Youth;
The Tide Of Time May Destroy Them In A Moment.
Ma Kuru Dhana Jana Yauvana Garvam, Harathi Nimeshath Kalah Sarvam.

All physical pleasures are momentary. You cannot enjoy true happiness even for a minute. Just as total darkness follows bright lightning, sorrow follows physical happiness. You see only the bright light of the lightning and feel happy, without realising that what follows it is total darkness. You feel elated seeing the light of your momentary youth and don't realise that the darkness of old age is about to follow. At that stage, your own children will make fun of you.

Oh Man, Do Not Take Pride In Your Beauty, Youth And Physical Strength.
Very Soon, You Will Become Old.
Your Hair Will Turn Grey, Your Skin Will Develop Wrinkles And Your Vision Will Be Blurred.
Children Will Make Fun Of You, Calling You An Old Monkey.
You Are No Better Than A Leather Puppet. Try To Understand The Mystery Behind This Puppet Show.
Nothing Belongs To You
(Telugu Song)

What you need to achieve today is unity. But, unfortunately, there is no unity even between the members of the same family. Similarly, unity is lacking between neighbours, between people of one village and another and one nation and another. What a misfortune it is! This is a sign of wickedness.

One who aspires for the progress of the nation will not give room to conflicts.

There is no dearth of water in Bharat. Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Krishna, and Kaveri are big perennial rivers. Why don't people make proper use of water of these rivers? Instead they are fighting with each other, saying, this is mine and that is yours.

Why do you fight with each other when your body itself is not yours? When you depart from this world, who will take your body? Nobody will even touch it. All your relatives will follow you only up to the cremation ground. Nothing belongs to you, not even your body, so where is the question of mine and thine? You keep on amassing wealth all your life but at the time of death, you have to leave everything behind and go emptyhanded. What did you bring with you at the time of birth? What can you take with you when you leave this world? Once you properly understand this truth, there will be no scope for greed at all.

Is there anyone who has brought even a small piece of cloth with him at the time of birth? There is none. All your life, you develop attachment, saying, "My family, my children and my relations." Who is actually yours? At the time of death, can you give them your address where you are going? If they truly belong to you, why don't you give your address to them at the time of departing from the world? Nobody belongs to you. Who belongs to whom? However, you have to discharge your duty as long as you are alive. But in matters relating to God, each one has to follow a separate path of their own.

Every mother loves her child very dearly. When the child is sick and suffering, the mother undergoes ten times more suffering. Just because the mother loves her child so dearly, will she be able to take upon herself their suffering? It is totally impossible. In the same manner, will the hunger of the child be satiated when the mother eats? Everyone earns their own merits and sins. It is not possible for a mother to share the merits and sins of her child and vice-versa. You can share your property with others, but you cannot share divine grace with them. What you do is yours and what they do is theirs.

But you should always pray for the welfare of all. That is a noble task. That is why at the end of every bhajan session, we pray: "May all the beings of all the

worlds be happy (Samasta Lokah Sukhino Bhavantu)!" Adorn yourself with the ornaments of virtues Embodiments of Love!

Do not turn your small differences into big fights in villages. Who is the ultimate loser in this? If you enquire deeply, you will realise that the entire village has to suffer because of your momentary anger. Therefore, do not give room to differences and conflicts. Be united. At times, you may be angry, but allow your anger to cool down. Keep in view the welfare of your family and your village. Strive to earn a good name. Be prepared to sacrifice even your life to uphold your good name.

What provides beauty to your hands? A bracelet or a golden bangle? No, no. The real ornament for the hand is charity. Charity is the true ornament of the hand (Hastasya bhushanam danam). Truth is the true necklace (Sathyam kanthasya bhushanam). It is not the necklace that provides beauty to your neck. Truth is your real ornament. Listening to sacred texts is the true ornament of the ears (Srotrasya bhushanam sastram). What is the use of ornaments other than these? These are the ornaments that everyone should adorn themself with and earn a good reputation.

Speak truth, develop the spirit of sacrifice, and listen to sacred teachings. If you possess these three virtues, no god is greater than you. In fact, you are God. God is not separate from you.

Constantly remind yourself, "I am Brahman (Aham Brahmasmi)." When you imbibe such sacred feelings, you will develop divine thoughts. When you think 'I am God', your conscience will guide you to conduct yourself like God. In order to cultivate such sacred feelings, develop the conviction, "I am God."

God Does Not Exist In A Foreign Land. He Is In You.
Sin Is Not Elsewhere
It Is There Where A Wrong Action Is Committed.
(Telugu Poem)

Neither sin nor merit is present in a foreign land. They are all within you. Likewise, God also is in you. Therefore, put your body to sacred use.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajans, "Hare Rama, Hare Rama ..." and "Subrahmanyam Subrahmanyam ...")

88. Pursue the Path of Truth and Wisdom

Date: 31 August 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, August 2014.

Study Of The Vedas And Scriptures Cannot Pierce The Veil Of Ignorance That Covers The Human Mind. God Is On One Side Of The Veil While The Individual Soul (Jiva) Is On The Other Side. The Cause Is On One Side, The Effect On The Other.
(Telugu Poem)

God created mountains, rivers, forests, hills and hillocks. Similarly, He created all living beings right from a tiny ant to a huge elephant. He also created all the objects that are necessary for the functioning of the creation. However, He was not satisfied.

God created humanity in His own image

Having created all this, He wondered who there was in this creation who would derive happiness by seeing the majestic mountains, beautiful rivers and enchanting forests. What is the worth of the entire creation if there is no one to derive happiness from it? It was then that He decided to create people, who could use their power of intellect and discrimination to distinguish between the eternal and ephemeral and experience happiness from the objects of His creation. Only humans have the capacity to derive happiness from the creation and share happiness with others. Without human beings, the entire creation has no value.

Therefore, the One willed to become many (Ekoham bahusyam) and created humanity in His own image, investing them with secular knowledge (vijnana), spiritual knowledge (sujnana), constant integrated awareness (prajnana), and

the power of discrimination to enjoy His creation.

When people had the vision of the Creator, they declared to the world, I have visualised the Supreme Being, who shines with the effulgence of a billion suns and who is beyond the darkness of ignorance (thamas) (Vedahametam Purusham Mahantam adityavarnam tamasa parastat).

Initially, people thought they could have vision of God by the study of the Vedas and scriptures. They undertook various spiritual practices like chanting, penance, meditation, and worship to have the vision of God. But they were neither able to have the vision of God nor able to hear or experience Him.

People were disappointed when all this spiritual practice did not yield any result. Why could one not experience bliss by performing all these spiritual practices? In spite of doing penance and studying the Vedas and scriptures, one was unable to get rid of body attachment, which haunted like an evil spirit.

Then people started enquiring about the nature of the body and the reason for body attachment. They investigated into the truth in many ways. Ultimately, they came to the conclusion that the body was just a conglomeration of inert matter and was merely an instrument, and there was some divine Power that made it function. It is that divine Power that makes man move, perform various tasks, and experience happiness. People further enquired where that divine Power was and wherefrom it came. Some became continuously engaged in this thought, wherever they went and whatever they did.

Divine power gives value to the human body

Once, the Greek philosopher Socrates was walking on a footpath, lost in his enquiry of truth. At the same time, a retired officer was coming from the opposite direction. Socrates didn't see him, and he did not see Socrates. Both of them were lost in their own thoughts. Since neither saw the other coming,

they collided with each other.

The retired officer angrily asked Socrates, "Who are you?" Socrates at once folded his hands in reverence and said, "Sir, that is precisely what I have been thinking about. Kindly tell me who I am." When a person is sincere in his enquiry, God will provide him with the opportunity to know the truth. Socrates was happy that without going to any master or guru, the spiritual urge in him was awakened by the retired officer with the question, "Who are you?" He thought it was a very important question and started repeating, "Who am I?" The retired officer thought Socrates to be a madcap and went his way without giving any reply to him.

Thinking in this manner, when Socrates was going in the bazar, he saw a hunter carrying a dead rabbit in his hand, which he had killed. A meat eater asked him the price of the dead rabbit. The hunter quoted its price. The person paid the amount quoted by the hunter and took the dead rabbit with him. Seeing this, Socrates thought, "A dead rabbit has a price, but nobody would pay anything to buy a dead body of a human being. Nobody will even ask what the price of this body is." An animal like rabbit has some value after its death, but not a human being. A man may be an emperor or a head of a religious establishment, but after his death, nobody will be prepared to keep his body even for a little time.

At that time, there was a heavy rain while a dead body was being carried to a cremation ground. Some people asked a shopkeeper on the way, "Sir, kindly permit us to keep the dead body in the verandah of your shop for some time." But the shopkeeper vehemently denied permission, saying, "No, no. Take it away." He did not even bother to ask whether it was the body of an emperor, a wealthy person, or head of a religious establishment.

Along the same road, a devotee was going to a temple and asked the same shopkeeper, "Sir, if I leave my sandals near the temple, they may be stolen away or taken away by dogs. Kindly allow me to keep my sandals in the verandah of your shop." The shopkeeper readily agreed to the request and said, "Come inside and leave them here. If you leave them in the verandah,

someone may take them away." Socrates witnessed all this. Here was the dead body of a wealthy person who had many servants to attend to him when he was alive. There were so many restrictions to be observed to get an audience with him. But now his body was not permitted to be kept even in the verandah of a shop. The skin of dead animals can be used to make chappals, whereas the human body is absolutely useless once life ebbs away from it.

Socrates thought this body is inert and is made up of flesh, blood, and bones. It produces foul smelling urine and fecal matter. What is so special in this body that one gets attracted and attached to it? Every moment it gives only foul smell and not fragrance. Then why does one develop attachment to this body? There is some hidden power in it that is the cause of man getting attracted to an otherwise worthless body, which is nothing but a bag of leather. Ultimately, Socrates realised, there was some Divine Power in the body, which governed it. He resolved to enquire and know this truth.

Know Truth through Self-enquiry

In a similar way, Bhrigu, the son of Varuna, also wanted to enquire into the truth of human life. What is the most important aspect of human life? What makes the body function? What is the principle of oneness that is the undercurrent of everything? He started thinking: "What a beautiful creation! Who is this Brahman who has created it? What is His form?" Soon his thinking grew so intense that it became verily impossible for him to bear it.

So, he went to his father Varuna. After prostrating at his feet, he asked, "Father, who is Brahman? What is His form?" Varuna could tell his son all about Brahman. But he thought everyone should make efforts to understand the principle of Brahman through selfexperience. Not only that, when a father assumes the role of a guru, he should not remove the doubts of his disciple himself. This would dampen the spirit of self-effort in the disciple.

Therefore, Varuna told his son, "It is not possible to say that Brahman is this or that. It cannot be explained in words. You yourself have to enquire and

know the truth. There is some unseen power that governs the body. The body has value as long as that unseen power is present in it. The presence of the divine power makes it auspicious (sivam) and its absence makes it a corpse (savam). What is the difference between sivam and savam? You have to perform penance to realise this truth." Saying this, he blessed his son and sent him away.

As per his father's command, Bhrigu went to a forest and started doing penance after selecting a suitable place in it. He became engrossed in self-enquiry. One day, he thought in this manner: "All sentients in this world depend only on food. Food is necessary for every being. This body is nurtured by food. Therefore, food is Brahman." Concluding thus, he went to his father and said, "Father, I have come to know what is Brahman. Food is Brahman." Varuna said calmly, "No, no, dear son! Do some more contemplation. Perform some more penance." After doing penance for some more time, one day Bhrigu resolved thus: "Nourished by food, this body attains growth. For this growth, energy is required to digest food. What is that? That is the energy of the lifebreath (prana). Therefore, the life-breath is Brahman." Coming to this conclusion, he went again to his father and said, "Father! I know that life-breath (prana) is Brahman." Varuna said, "Of course, people are endowed with the life-breath. But what is the use? If the mind has no will to eat food, can one eat it if it is served on a plate? Therefore, lifebreath alone cannot sustain man. No, no, son! Do penance and contemplation for some more time." A doctor makes a person unconscious by administering anesthesia before performing an operation on the belly. Though the person has life-breath, they does not know what the doctor is doing to their belly during the course of the operation. In this way, the life-breath can be made blind or defunct.

After performing penance for some more time, one day Bhrigu thought in this manner: "No doubt, food is necessary and life-breath energy is important. However, it is thought that impels one to eat food. But thought is born in the mind. Hence, the mind is Brahman." Bhrigu went to his father and said, "Father! Now I understand that the mind is Brahman." His father called him near and said, "People are endowed with mind. But what is the use if it lacks

the power of thinking? Such a person may eat charcoal, cow dung, and dust. One needs the power of discrimination. A mad man has also mind, but he does not know what to say to whom or where to go. Hence, the mind is not really Brahman. No, no. Contemplate more and do penance more." Without any demur whatsoever, Bhrigu started performing penance once again. After some time, he thought: "What purpose can the mere thoughts of the mind serve? It is the power of discrimination that imparts purpose to the thoughts." Resolving thus, he went again to his father and said, "Father, I know secular knowledge (vijnana) is Brahman." Varuna said to his son, "So many scholars are endowed with secular knowledge, spiritual knowledge (sujnana), and constant integrated awareness (prajnana). But what benefit does society get from them? In fact, there is ignorance (ajnana), which overshadows their awareness." Bhrigu once again told his son to do more contemplation and penance (thapas) and sent him back with his blessings.

After contemplating and performing penance for some more time, one day Bhrigu thought in this way: "Food is the source of nourishment, and the life-breath gives energy. The mind generates desires. The intellect (buddhi) gives wisdom (viveka). There must be some result of all this. What is that? This must be found." Thinking thus, he started performing penance once again. One day, he had a unique experience. He felt that he was immersed in an ocean of bliss and continuously remained in that blissful state.

Varuna came in search of his son and found him in a certain part of the forest in the state of samadhi (superconscious state). He knew that he was experiencing pure and eternal bliss. Bliss is Brahman (Anandam Brahma). Thinking that his son needed nothing else, he went his way.

Transcend the gross sheaths to experience bliss

Once Bhrigu experienced the ultimate bliss, he had no desire for anything else. In fact, all spiritual practices are meant to attain this state of bliss. What people experience today is only momentary happiness but not eternal bliss, which is described as eternal bliss, spiritual bliss, supreme bliss, being-

awareness-bliss, and the bliss of Self-realisation (nithyananda, yogananda, paramanada, satchidananda, and Atmananda. It is available only with God and none else.

God created people so that they would enquire into the nature of five sheaths and ultimately reach the bliss sheath (anandamaya kosa). Man has to transcend the food sheath (annamaya kosa),

life sheath (pranamaya kosa), mind sheath (manomaya kosa), and wisdom sheath (vijnanamaya kosa) step by step and ultimately reach the bliss sheath (anandamaya kosa).

The life sheath is subtler than the food sheath, the mind sheath is subtler than the life sheath, the wisdom sheath is subtler than the mind sheath, and the bliss sheath is the subtlest of all and is all-pervasive.

But, unfortunately, humanity today has forgotten its innate blissful nature and is going in the reverse direction, which means from the state of bliss, one has come to wisdom, from wisdom to mind, from mind to life, and ultimately from life one has reached the food sheath and has remained there. People give utmost importance to their bodies.

God created humans so that they could attain the highest state of Brahman. Contrary to the Will of God, people today have degenerated to the lowest state of existence.

Where is the need for education to know the nature of the body? Do you need a mirror to see the bracelet on your arm? You need to perform spiritual practices to have the vision of God, but not to know the nature of body.

This body is like an instrument. But you focus all your attention on this instrument, forgetting the indweller.

How long do physical pleasures last? Here is a small example. You go to the canteen when you are hungry. You pay six rupees and eat three chapatis. You

are happy and satisfied that your hunger is satiated. But how long will this happiness last? You will again feel hungry after two hours. How much 'oil' and 'petrol' does this machine of the human body consume! When you are using this body as merely a machine, why should you develop so much attachment to it? You should transcend body attachment.

Practise the teachings propounded in sacred texts

The human mind is very powerful and at the same time highly fickle. The great warrior Arjuna himself was unable to withstand the vagaries of the mind. He said to Lord Krishna, "This mind is very unsteady, turbulent, and powerful (Chanchalam hi manah Krishna pramathi balavadrudham). Oh Krishna! How can I describe the power and fickleness of the mind! It does not keep quiet even for a moment. Even a monkey may have steadiness, but not the mind." The mind is most powerful, dangerous, and difficult to control. Such is the nature of the mind. It is due to the influence of the mind that man is undergoing difficulties, sorrow, trials, and tribulations. The fickleness of mind causes restlessness and makes the life of a person chaotic and ultimately lands them in a mental asylum.

Students keep on studying any number of books, but they should also know the purpose of their studies. If someone presents you the Bhagavad Gita, you reverentially receive it, keep it on your head ,and touch it to your heart. Every day you start doing ceremonial reading (parayana) of the Gita starting with the first verse:

Gathered On The Holy Plain Of Kurukshetra,
O Sanjaya, What Did My Sons And The Sons Of Pandu Do
Dharmakshetre Kurukshetre Samaveta Yuyutsava,
Mamaka Pandavaschaiva Kimakurvata Sanjaya.

After doing the ceremonial reading, you keep the book on your altar with all respect and place two flowers on it.

But what is the use of all this ritualistic worship unless you put into practice the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita? This is the sign of great ignorance of devotees, theists and educated people today. People offer worship to the paper and the words of the Bhagavad Gita, but they do not drink the nectar of bliss that results from the practice of its teachings.

Everyone must realise the truth that all the sacred texts like the Bible, the Quran, the Vedas, and the Upanishads are meant for practice and not merely for doing ceremonial reading.

These days, you find Sai Satcharitra in the hands of most of the devotees. They say they are doing ceremonial reading (parayana) every day. There is no greater foolishness than this. Is this book meant for only doing that? It is meant for practice. Put into practice what Shirdi Sai Baba taught in this book.

Here is a small example. A man was suffering from a severe cold and cough. When he approached a village doctor, he suggested to him to make a concoction of dry ginger, pepper, and ginger and drink it. Then the patient started repeating to himself, "I should drink the concoction of dry ginger, pepper, and ginger." But he did not get any relief.

How can he get any relief unless he prepares the concoction and drinks it? In the same manner, you are merely repeating what is contained in the sacred texts without putting them into practice. You will derive benefit only when you practice.

The elements are under God's control

All five elements are under the control of God. They obey the command of the Creator. But no one realises this truth.

When you realise this truth, you can get rid of all your troubles in a moment. You say that everything is in God's hands and pray to Him to come to your rescue. But you doubt whether God really has any control over everything.

There was only one doubting Thomas and betrayer of his preceptor in the Bible, but today everyone has become a doubting Thomas.

Once there was a severe hailstorm in Shirdi and hailstones started hitting people like stones. All the workers and villagers ran helter-skelter out of fear. They took shelter in temples, inns, and wherever they could find place. Dwarakamai was a very small place. There, too, people gathered and occupied every inch of space - wherever they could find place to stand.

Everybody started praying, "Baba, kindly save us." Just as the cowherd maids and men (gopikas and gopalas) of the Dwapara Era (Yuga) prayed to Krishna to protect them from severe rain, the people of Shirdi prayed to Baba to come to their rescue.

Baba said to them, "Okay, okay, I will see, I will see (Achchha, achchha, dekhega, dekhega)." Baba then hit a pillar and said, "Look here, enough of your terror, cool down. Already you have exhibited too much anger, and all are fear-stricken and have come to know about your power. Once people have recognised your power, where is the need for you to continue this further? You are crossing your limits, cool down." That very moment, the storm came to a halt.

It is not for boasting that I am telling you this. You might have forgotten, but try to remember what happened here two days ago. When I was about to give My Discourse, there was a very heavy downpour with powerful wind. The rain and wind were so fierce that they started coming inside the hall. I started giving My Discourse and at once the rain stopped. There was not a drop of rain after that.

While Baba was in Shirdi, fire was always kept burning in the dhuni in Dwarakamai. (A dhuni is cleft in the ground where a fire is kept lit, for worshipping.) Devotees used to buy firewood from outside and offer it in the fire to keep it burning continuously. They wanted to have some satisfaction of offering wood in the sacred fire. They did not think of the pros and cons of their act.

Once, a foolish devotees came and offered a lot of wood in the fire without thinking to what height the flame would rise when they put so much of wood in it. Huge flames started rising after some time. Seeing this, Shyama came running and called out, "Baba, Baba." Baba asked, "What, Shyama? What has happened?" "See Baba, the god of fire has manifested before us," said Shyama.

Baba replied, "The fire god has manifested, but who is interested in seeing him here?" Then he addressed the fire god and said, "To whom are you trying to show your prowess here? You are behaving like this because there is no one to teach you a lesson. You should show your prowess when and where it is required. Why do you unnecessarily exhibit your power now?" Saying this, he hit the pillar with a stick. The raging flames subsided in a moment.

What is the meaning of this? Nothing should happen without a cause. Is there any such foolish person who will go to the banks of the Ganga river and call out to everyone, saying, "Come, come, I will give you water." Who is he to give water when the river Ganga is flowing? Due to the influence of the Kali Age (the age we are in), people sometimes act in a foolish manner without any proper reason. This type of behaviour is seen even in scholars.

Some people take Ganga water in their hands and offer it back to the Ganga while chanting, Keshavaya Namah, Madhavaya Namah, Govindaya Namah, and so on. Here in this practice, whose water are you offering to whom? Are you offering the property of your father or grandfather or uncle to someone? No, you offer Ganga water to Ganga itself.

Today atheism is on the rise because such ritualistic practices are performed without understanding the reason behind them. You should understand the reason behind every act and be able to convince others and win their appreciation. In this modern age, even a small child wants a reason for everything.

Today people are overpowered by ignorance. What is the reason? Body attachment is the main cause. That one is blessed who can transform body

attachment into love for God. Only then will humanness have value. As long as you don't develop love for God, your life will not have the value even of a dead rabbit.

Develop attachment to the Self

Here is a small story. Students should not take it otherwise. Great truths can be explained through such small stories.

Narada roams in all the three worlds chanting the Name of the Lord, Govinda Damodara, Narayana. Once he went to Vaikuntha and offered his salutations to Lord Narayana. Lord Narayana told him to take a seat and asked him, "You roam the three worlds all the time. Have you come across anything bad in My creation?" Narada said, "Forgive me, oh Lord! There is so much bad in Your creation." Lord Narayana said, "What are you saying, Narada? In spite of being the son of Brahma, you are talking without any sense of discrimination. There is nothing bad in My creation." Narada said, "Oh Lord! Every morning people excrete fecal matter. How bad it is!" Lord Narayana was surprised to hear this. He said, "Oh Narada, you are mistaken to think that it is something bad. Maybe you are talking out of your mind. It is not bad, it is very good." Narada said, "If Lord Narayana himself says like this, what am I to say? But how can you say it is not something bad but good?" Lord Narayana replied, "Do not ask me about this. Go ask the human excreta itself directly." What could poor Narada do when Lord Narayana said this? Obeying the command of the Lord, Narada approached human excreta.

When he was ten feet away from it, it said, "Oh Narada! Don't come near me, stay away." Narada was astonished to hear this. He said, "In fact, it is I who should say this to you to keep away from me. Why are you saying this to me?" The fecal matter replied, "Narada, last night I was in the form of sacred curd, milk, rice, and sweet pudding. I was good enough to be given as a food offering to God. But today I have come to this state because of my association with a human being once. Then what would be my fate if I come in contact with a human being again?" Lord Narayana then explained to

Narada, "What you perceive as bad in this creation is only the reaction, reflection, and resound of what humanity does. In fact, God has not created anything bad." Everything depends on your association. Tell me your company, and I shall tell you what you are. You become the type of person with whom you associate.

"If you keep mango or gongura pickle in a jar, it will remain good for more than a year. But if you put the same pickle in this 'jar' of the human body, it will get spoilt by evening.

"Not only that. You would have seen the flour mill. If you put wheat in it, wheat flour will come out of it. If you put rice, rice flour will come out of it. If you put pulses, pulses flour will come out of it. But if you put a sweet laddu in a human body, what comes out of it is foul-smelling excreta. Therefore, treat this human body with a sense of detachment. The human body is inferior to even a flour mill and a jar.

Such being the case, why should you give importance to the human body? It is because the Atma pervades this body from top to toe. The body is a temple, and the indweller is God (Deho Devalaya proktho jivo Deva sanathana). You should consider this body as the temple of God.

But why should you want a temple without God in it? Always think that God is present in this temple of body and that whatever you do is an offering to Him. Only when you develop such sacred feelings will your body, mind, intellect, consciousness (chitta), senses, and inner psyche (antahkarana) be sanctified. Therefore, transform your body attachment (dehabhimana) into attachment to the Self (Daivabhimana). This is the real spiritual discipline.

Without developing attachment to the Atma, there is no point in doing any other spiritual practice. People say, we are doing bhajans. Until you attain the state of attachment to the Atma, all such spiritual practices are essential.

You plant a sapling of good quality mango tree. After some time, it gives unripe mangoes. As long as the mangoes are not ripe, they taste sour. Only

when they become ripe do they become sweet and tasty. Likewise, when you attain the ripe stage in your spiritual practices (sadhana), you will develop Atmic feeling (Atmabhava).

Until you attain such state of blessedness, continue to discharge your duties without forgetting your goal. Always remind yourself that you have to reach this goal. Gradually, detach yourself from the body and develop attachment to the Self. Only then can you experience eternal bliss. Pursue this path of truth and wisdom and immerse yourself in divine bliss.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Sathyam Jnanam Anantam Brahma...")

89. Supreme Bliss Comes From Absolute Wisdom

Date: 01 September 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, September 2014.

Does Onion Give Up Its Smell Even If You Sow It In The Seed Bed Of Camphor, Add Fragrant Musk As Manure, And Nourish It With Scented Water.
(Telugu Poem)

Students!

One should first of all develop physical, mental, and spiritual powers in order to sustain humanness and illumine one's divinity. Human birth is not meant to enjoy physical, materialistic, and worldly life. Birds, beasts, and animals also enjoy the same type of physical happiness that you aspire for.

People should realise their Divinity

What is the speciality of human birth? Of all living beings, human birth is the rest (Jantunam nara janma durlabham). What makes human birth rare and unique? Animals also eat food like you and develop relations with their kith and kin like you. They also have desires like you. If you also lead a life of animals and beasts, what is all your education for? What isecular knowledge (vijnana), spiritual knowledge (sujnana), and constant integrated awareness (prajnana) have you acquired in your studies? Is all your education only meant to fill your belly?

This is not the sign of humanness; this is not the goal of human life. One should realise one's true Self and the source from which one has come.

People in the world are bound by action (Karmanubandheeni manushya loke).

Even birds and animals perform actions. So, one should perform actions that are associated with righteousness. All the action (karma) that one performs should be associated with dharma.

One should use their intelligence and power of discrimination and enter the field of action wholeheartedly. Before performing any task, enquire whether that particular action is befitting for a human being or an animal. Infinite and immeasurable Divinity is immanent in humanity. Having such sacred and divine human birth, it is a shame to lead a life of birds and animals.

Brahman is all-pervasive. From this principle of Brahman, ether (akasa), with sound as its attribute, has emerged. Wind comes from ether, fire comes from wind, water comes from fire, and earth comes from water. Crops grow on earth, food comes from crops, and from food, humans have originated.

Human life is a journey from food (anna) to bliss (ananda). It begins with food, and its ultimate goal is to attain bliss. There is an intimate relationship between food, Brahman, and Bliss. In fact, Bliss is the principle of Brahman. That is why Divinity is described as: God is the embodiment of divine bliss, supreme happiness, wisdom absolute (Brahmanandam, parama sukhadam, kevalam jnanamurtim).

What is the source of Bliss of Brahma (Brahmanandam? What is Brahmanandam like? It is the state of supreme happiness. Where does this supreme happiness come from? It comes from wisdom absolute. The Bliss that originates from wisdom is the basis of human life in this world.

But people today are unable to realise what true Bliss (Ananda) is. They do not know what true happiness is. They consider material and worldly happiness as true happiness. How long does the worldly happiness last? It is like passing clouds. Is this the happiness that you should aspire for? I have said this many times. Adi Sankara also taught the same truth.

Some of you may think Swami is repeating the same things again and again. I want to ask you a question. Why do you fill the same belly again and again? Is

it not to fill the same belly that you eat three times a day? How many bags of rice you have consumed so far, and how many more you will consume? You yourself do not know.

You Struggle Hard In Life Merely For The Sake Of Filling Your Belly.
You Acquire Many Forms Of Knowledge From Various Fields.
But You Are Not Able To Enjoy Total Bliss.
So, Take Refuge In God And Contemplate On Him.
He Will Certainly Show You The Right Path.
(Telugu Poem)

You have consumed innumerable bags of rice. Still, your belly is not full. Therefore, listen to the same teachings again and again, ingest their essence, put them into practice, and experience bliss.

Adi Sankara said: Do not be proud of your wealth, progeny, and youth; the tide of time may destroy them in a moment (Ma kuru dhana jana yauvana garvam, Harathi nimeshath kalah sarvam).

You spend your entire life in worldly pursuits. You study so many subjects, read so many books, and acquire many degrees, but what is the use? How far have you put into practice the knowledge that you have acquired? Nothing at all.

If the food served in the plate has to reach your stomach, you have to put your hands and mouth to work. In the same manner, you have to put into practice at least a little of what you have studied and learnt to experience happiness. What is the use of education that is not put into practice? Such people are a burden on earth. This is not how you should lead your life.

You should serve society and put a check on the chaotic situation prevailing in society today. People can acquire the capacity to do so only through education. Only students are capable of solving the problems of society. But they are becoming incapable because of their selfishness and self-interest. In

fact, they are leading the life like animals. This is not the purpose of education.

Having attained human birth, set an ideal to society. What sort of ideal? It is an ideal befitting for a human being.

What is the purpose of life? I mentioned this yesterday. Even a dead rabbit has some value but not the dead body of a human being. Even sandals are permitted in a house but not a dead body. Is this the value of a person? No, no.

Try to enquire where you came from. Realise your true Self ,and reach the source of your origin. This is what you are supposed to know. To know this truth, Divinity should manifest in you. Not only should you realise your Divinity; you should see Divinity everywhere.

In fact, the entire world is divine and full of bliss. There is no existence of sorrow at all. Such being the case, how is it that you experience sorrow and misery? How is it that you are obsessed by petty worldly desires? Your body attachment is responsible for this. A person who is supposed to be a lover of Self (Atmabhimani) has become a lover of physical body (dehabhimani) today.

The body is made up of five elements and is bound to perish sooner or later, but the indweller has neither birth nor death.

The Indweller Has No Attachment Whatsoever And Is The Eternal Witness.
Truly Speaking, The Indweller, Who Is In The Form Of Atma, Is Verily God Himself.
(Telugu Poem)

Why is the body given to people? The sacred human body has been given to put it on the path of righteousness, entertain noble thoughts, and join good company. This is what Gargi told Sage Yajnavalkya during a debate in the

court of King Janaka.

Realisation of Oneness is true knowledge

Once, Janaka held a big congregation of scholars and sages in his court and conducted a debate as to what is eternal and what is ephemeral, what is a field (kshetra) and who is the knower of the field (kshetrajna). This debate went on for 21 days.

At the end, Yajnavalkya got up and said that he was prepared to answer any question that one might pose in the assembly. Gargi got up and asked him, "What is meant by wisdom (jnana)?" Yajnavalkya said, "Experience of non-dualism is wisdom (Advaita darshanam jnanam).

Gargi said, "Yes, I accept what you said. A person who observes differences cannot be a person of wisdom (jnani). A true person of wisdom is one with a feeling of oneness (ekatma bhava). Only such a person is a true scholar. A pandit is one who is equal-minded (Pandita samadarshina)." Gargi was a great scholar, and nobody could match her in knowledge. In fact, knowledge is the true ornament for a person.

Waves Are The Ornaments For An Ocean, Houses Are The Ornaments For A Village,
Lotus Is The Ornament For A Lake, Moon Is The Ornament For The Sky,
Knowledge Is The Ornament For Man.
(Telugu Poem)

On the 21st day, when the debate concluded, someone from the assembly of scholars and sages had to be chosen to honour King Janaka. Janaka was known as Videha, since he was totally devoid of body attachment. In view of her deep knowledge and supreme wisdom, Gargi was considered the most deserving person to honour King Janaka. In such a great assembly of eminent scholars and sages, King Janaka decided to receive the honour from the

hands of Gargi.

Men and women are different only in form, but knowledge is common to all. God is one and the same for everyone, and so is the goal. There is no difference between men, women, children, youth and aged persons with respect to knowledge, nor is there any difference on the basis of clan and various stages of life. Knowledge is one. Truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names (Ekam sath viprah bahudha vadanti).

Realisation of oneness is true knowledge. However, it is not easy to attain this realisation. Yet, you should make efforts to experience it. You will reach the goal when you proceed on the prescribed path. You can become a good singer by continuous practice. Even neem fruit tastes sweet when you keep chewing it. Sandalwood makes a groove on the sandstone when you keep on rubbing on it. The more you cut a diamond, the more will be its value.

Anything can be achieved by constant practice. Walking, reading, talking, eating, writing - all require practice. How much do you need to practise to ride a motorcycle? You may fall any number of times, but do you give up practising?

Unfortunately, on the path of spirituality, you give up your resolve at your first failure. In all other endeavours, in spite of all obstacles, you do not leave your effort. In fact, you should show the same resolve - and much more - on the path of spirituality. Why? Because spirituality leads you to the goal of your life. That is the purpose of human birth.

Divine name sanctifies the atmosphere

Human birth becomes worthwhile only when you attain the goal of life. Having attained human birth, you should strive for its fulfilment and win the appreciation of all. You feel dejected when you face failures and feel elated when you meet with success. Where is the need to become dejected in times of difficulties and elated in times of happiness? Happiness has no value if

there are no difficulties.

People Sow Bitter Seeds And Expect Sweet Fruits Later.
As A Result, When They Have To Eat Bitter Fruits,
They Argue And Blame Me For Their Suffering.
(Telugu Poem)

Is this humanness? This is against the laws of Nature. As the seed, so is the fruit. If you want to enjoy sweet fruits, sow good seeds.

People seek happiness in worldly life. Initially, it may look very pleasant, but the happiness diminishes with the passage of time.

I have told the students many times. When a newly-married couple goes for a stroll in a public park and the husband notices a thorn in front of them, he at once pulls his wife aside saying, "Come back, there is a thorn!" At that time, he considers wife is life. After six months, if the same situation arises, the husband merely cautions his wife, "Be careful, there is a thorn." After another six months, if the same situation were to arise, he would shout at her, "Can't you see, there is a thorn?" Worldly love goes on decreasing in this manner day by day. Only divine love goes on increasing continuously.

One Who Is Building A Wall Will Go Higher And Higher As The Wall Rises,
But One Who Is Digging A Well Will Go Down Lower And Lower.
(Telugu Poem)

Going up and sliding down depends on one's actions. Some boys say, "What to do when all the elders put pressure on me to get married"? This is a big stunt. If one is really not interested, what can the people in the house do? If someone forces you to drink poison, will you drink it? Your desires are responsible for your suffering. Your own thoughts are responsible for your happiness as well as sorrow. Your happiness is verily the heaven and your misery is the hell.

Therefore, try to put a check on your thoughts. Develop only noble thoughts. Only then will humanness blossom and shine forth in you.

Today, the world is in a state of utter chaos. Wherever you look, unrest and agitation are on the rise in all countries. Propagate the glory of the Divine Name to drive away unrest (asanthi) and bring in supreme peace (prasanthi).

Every street and every inch of space should reverberate with the chanting of the divine Name. Only then can there be peace and serenity in the world.

When you do devotional singing (bhajans), the sacred vibrations are carried to all corners of the world by the sound waves. There is no room for doubt in this regard. When someone gives a talk on Delhi Radio Station, how are you able to listen to it in Prasanthi Nilayam? The sound is brought to us by the electromagnetic waves in the atmosphere. When the divine Name is chanted, the sacred vibrations thus generated spread everywhere and drive away the evil and negative vibrations in the atmosphere. When you breathe in such sacred vibrations, you develop sacred feelings.

If you pollute the atmosphere with evil vibrations, you will have to breathe in only evil vibrations in turn. Whatever type of vibrations you breathe in, you develop similar thoughts.

I have said this earlier: As is the fire, so is the smoke; as is the smoke, so is the cloud; as is the cloud, so is the rain; as is the rain, so is the crop; as is the crop, so is the food; as is the food, so is the head.

Eat only pure food

You should understand the relationship that exists between food, head, and God. In order to enjoy good health, eat only good food.

Observe proper care with regard to your food habits. Do not eat anything and everything. People talk of pure (sathwic) food. They say milk, fruits,

vegetables constitute sathwic food. But even these become stale/dull/ depressing (thamasic) if you consume them in excess.

First of all, if you want to develop pure (sathwic) feelings, have your bath between five and six in the morning. This is called a divine bath (daiva snana), that between six and seven is a human bath (manava snanam) and that beyond seven is called a demonic bath (rakshasa snanam). Your entire life will be sanctified if you purify your heart in "God's hour" (Brahma Muhurtha, the time generally about 1.5 hours before sunrise for 48 minutes) by developing sacred feelings.

Eat only fresh food. Do not eat stale food that has been prepared on the previous day. Oil is necessary for preparing food. Doctors say that excess oil in the food will give rise to cholesterol. However, cholesterol is also required in the body to some extent. Therefore, do not eat food that is totally devoid of oil. Eat balanced food.

What is meant by pure (sathwic) food? If the food is tasty, people overeat. This type of overeating is very common when people attend feasts on occasions like marriages. This is not a sathwic tendency.

After eating food, you should be able to get up as light as you sat for eating. This is the sathwic way of eating. When you sit for food, you are very active and agile, but after eating food, you find it difficult even to get up because of overloading of the stomach. That is a slothful (thamasic) tendency. Stop eating when you feel you can still eat a little more.

Vegetables constitute pure (sathwic) food. Green leaves are very good for health. Many new varieties of vegetables are coming in the market these days. Vegetables that are grown using harmful chemicals and pesticides are responsible for many of the diseases that afflict humanity today. If I explain to you all this in detail, you may even develop aversion to vegetables.

In olden days, chillies used to be quite small, yet one chilly was sufficient for five-six members of the family because it was very spicy. But today, big size

chillies are grown using chemical manures. Even if you eat the whole chilly, you do not find it spicy at all.

Also enquire where these vegetables are grown. In Bengaluru city, you find a variety of vegetables. Cauliflower is so big, and so is cabbage. But how are they grown? They are grown using city drainage water. Many diseases are caused by eating such vegetables. The government should check these bad practices.

Also, many types of insecticides are sprayed on the vegetables. People from towns and cities are aware of this and wash the vegetables before cutting and cooking them, but village people become victim of diseases because they don't wash the vegetables, being unaware of the harmful chemicals sprayed on them. As a result, the insecticides meant to kill insects are actually killing people by causing deadly diseases like cancer and heart atack. Not only that, even the mind of man is getting polluted due to such polluted food.

People who are supposed to be leading a very pure life are leading an unsacred life because of the wrong food they eat. They are developing negative feelings in their heart instead of good feelings. Milk is considered a pure (sathwic) food. However, one should not drink thick milk because it gives rise to slothful/dull (thamasic) feelings. Anyway, nowadays thick milk is not available anywhere. Milk vendors themselves dilute it by mixing a lot of water in it. In that sense, they are doing something good to us. Thick milk gives you more fat and strength, but it develops mental dullness also.

You need to develop physical strength, for which balanced food is necessary. You can eat rice and chapati. You should develop mental strength to drive away negative thoughts. When you have mental strength, you can remain unperturbed in the face of difficulties and sorrows.

Reach exalted heights in spirituality

Students!

Do not take it otherwise when I say meat eating is very bad. When you eat animal flesh, you develop animal qualities and also develop many diseases.

Not only this, smoking is a very harmful habit. It causes great harm to your lungs. With the help of oxygen, lungs purify the blood, which heart supplies to all parts of the body. Both heart and lungs are very important parts of the human body. That is why, when doctors perform heart surgery, they take the help of aheart-lung machine.

The veins that carry blood become hard due to smoking. As a result, the heart is subjected to more pressure. You would have seen advertisements in papers about cigarettes. They put a big advertisement, but at the bottom they write in small letters, "Smoking is injurious to health". Unfortunately, the government does not put a ban on smoking because it earns a lot of revenue by way of tax on cigarettes. They are seeing only the income but not the loss of many lives that is caused by smoking.

How can you understand the bad effects of smoking? Here is a small example. Put a white cloth near the mouth of a man who smokes. When he exhales, it creates a yellow patch on the white cloth. If a white cloth becomes dirty by the smoke, you can imagine how much damage smoking will cause to all parts of the body. Tobacco contains nicotine which is very dangerous to health.

Students should consume only pure (sathwic) food and develop physical and mental strength. When you develop physical and mental strength, your spiritual strength will also improve. When you follow the path of spirituality, you will be free from all doubts and delusions.

It is the wrong food that gives rise to evil tendencies like anger, lust, and tension and causes all problems. Therefore, it is necessary that you should always eat only pure (sathwic) food.

In My view, you should attain the state of health wherein you require no medicines. This body is about to enter the 71st year in another two months.

Believe it or not, so far I have not taken a single pill. Yet I have no health problem at all. I can face any situation. I am not using any divine powers to maintain My body. From the physical point of view, My body is the same as yours. Then how am I able to maintain good health? It is only due to moderation in food and habits.

Some students have some undesirable habits, which ruin their health. They should totally get rid of them. If any bad feeling arises in you, remind yourself ten times, "I am not an animal, I am a human." Say that you are a human being with full conviction. Then your animal thoughts will immediately vanish. This is an easy way of controlling your evil thoughts.

You should reach exalted heights in spirituality and propagate the path of spirituality in the world. Only then will the unrest, fear, and wickedness prevailing in the world be subdued.

Students!

Do not consider yourself a mere human being. You are God, you are God. If someone asks you, where is Brahman, you should declare, "I am Brahman (Aham Brahmasmi)." You should say, "I am Brahman," with courage and conviction. This is what the Vedas teach. When you constantly remind yourself, "I am Brahman," you will certainly be rid of Bhrama (delusion).

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Govinda Gopala Prabhu Giridhari ...").

90. Develop Purity of Heart

Date: 02 September 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, October 2014.

How Can A Mean-Minded Person Lacking Purity Of Heart Realise The Principle Of The Self?
Only Those With Purity Of Heart Can Realise It.
Do Not Forget These Words Of Wisdom.
(Telugu Poem)

Embodiments of Love!

One who aspires to realise the principle of the Self and teach the same to others should first of all develop purity of heart. One who lacks purity of heart is not eligible to realise the Self and teach the same to others.

Poisonous snakes and scorpions find their way into a room devoid of light. They do not enter a room that is well lit. Likewise, evil qualities like desire, anger, delusion, greed, pride, and jealousy cannot enter a heart that shines with pure love. They enter only the heart that is devoid of sacred love. It is therefore necessary to develop a pure and sacred heart that is full of love and compassion.

Fill your heart with love for God

The heart of a human being should be full of the noble qualities of tolerance, perseverance, sympathy and contentment. Only then can the human easily understand the principle of the Self and propagate the same. The principle of the Self cannot be attained merely by education, scholarship, and intelligence. Purity of heart is of utmost importance for this.

What education did noble souls like Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Kabir. and Surdas have? Ramakrishna was not highly educated, yet he earned worldwide name and fame as Paramahamsa (realised person). His purity of heart was responsible for this.

In order to attain purity of heart, there is no need to perform chanting, penance, and meditation, nor is there any need to study the Vedas, the scriptures, and the Puranas and Itihasas (epics and mythological texts). Love for God is the only requirement to attain purity of heart. There is nothing greater than this. The heart that is full of love for God is truly the heart of a human being.

As is the food, so is the mind

Those who wish to develop purity of heart should be careful with regard to their food and habits. The human body digests food; the subtle part of it becomes bones, muscles, and blood, and the subtlest part of food becomes the mind. Therefore, food is responsible for the good and bad nature of the mind. As is the food, so is the mind. Hence, it is necessary to eat pure and sacred (sathwic) and wholesome food in moderation. In days of yore, sages and saints lived in forests eating only fruits and tubers to sustain themselves. Because of such pure (sathwic) food, they could lead their lives peacefully.

You may not be aware how beneficial sathwic food is. How blissful Sita, Rama, and Lakshmana were, living in the forest and eating fruits and tubers during their exile!

Happiness lies in proper food and habits. Happiness cannot be found in worldly comforts and sumptuous food. It can be found only in natural food created by God. Not only food but also drinking water should be pure. The gross part of water that we drink is excreted as urine, and the subtle part of it becomes the life principle (prana).

For a human being, mind and life principle are most important. Moreover,

they are interdependent. When you attain the state of amanaska (beyond the mind), there is no existence of mind. To lead a noble life, it is necessary to have pure food and good habits. People are deluded to think that the power of mind can be developed by following the worldly path. They cannot achieve it unless they follow the inward path. Your heart is the Himachala (Kailasa mountain) on which Lord Siva and Parvathi reside and perform their cosmic dance, which bestows bliss not only on devotees but the entire world. The divine form of Lord Siva is blissful and enchanting.

The Lord of Kailasa has manifested his divine form, with the crescent moon adorning his head, with the cool water of the Ganga flowing between the matted locks, with his radiant eye in the middle of the forehead and the purple neck gleaming like the sheen of a blackberry.

He Wears Serpent Bracelets And A Snake Belt, His Entire Body Is Smeared With Vibhuthi,
His Forehead Is Adorned With A Kumkum Dot, His Ruddy Lips Glow With The Juice Of The Betel,
Diamond-Studded Gold Earrings Dangle From His Ears, And His Whole Body Glows With Divine Effulgence.
(Telugu Poem)

World cannot exist without love

In order to experience the blissful form of the Lord, you need to have purity at the levels of body, mind, and spirit, for which proper food and habits are essential. Therefore, students should give due importance to their food and habits. In fact, their entire future depends on their food and habits.

In order to experience their innate divinity, they should have purity not only in food but in all their endeavours. This purity generates sacred love in your heart. Love has no form, but one can experience the bliss it gives. Fragrance has no form but the flower that gives fragrance has a form.

When there is love in your heart, it is reflected on your face. That is the reflection of the inner being. When one shares one's love with others, one experiences more and more bliss. This bliss is eternal and everlasting. This cannot be experienced in worldly objects and worldly pursuits. It can be derived by following the path of spirituality (nivritti).

In the waking state, the mind influences you. As long as you have a mind, you see the world around you. And as long as you see the world, you cannot escape from the experience of happiness and sorrow. What really is responsible for happiness and sorrow? It is the mind. In the deep sleep state, there is no mind, and consequently, there is neither the world nor the experience of happiness and sorrow. As far as there is the mind, there is the world; as far as there is the world, there is happiness and sorrow. There is neither happiness nor sorrow when you transcend the mind.

How can you transcend the mind? You can transcend the mind by developing love for God. God is in the form of essence (Raso vai sah). Just as sugar permeates every drop of the syrup, love permeates the entire world. World devoid of love and bliss cannot exist. Love is all-pervasive, bliss is all-pervasive. Human being, nay, any living being. has no existence without love.

Realise the Atmic principle

I have told you this story earlier also. It was the time of the Mahabharata war. Sage Vyasa was on his way to the battlefield. On the way, he was surprised to see an insect crawling very fast. He conferred the power of speech on the insect and asked, "Oh tiny creature, why are you running so fast? What great danger has befallen you?" The insect replied, "Oh venerable sage, the Mahabharata war has become very fierce. In a few minutes, Arjuna's chariot will be coming in this direction. One cannot describe the speed with which his chariot runs. I am running away from this place so that I don't get crushed under the wheels of the chariot." Not only human beings, even insects want to protect themselves. Every living being wants to be safe and secure and has a desire to lead a life of happiness and contentment. Love is present in all

beings, but it is expressed in different ways.

You see the world around you and call it world (jagat). But a wise man will tell you, "Oh foolish one! What you see is not the world but God Himself." He is a fool who sees yet does not recognise the reality (Pashyannapi cha napashyati moodho).

God is the cause and world is the effect. This creation is nothing but the manifestation of cause and effect. World has no existence without God. Therefore, what you see around you is God Himself in the form of the world. Each one perceives God in their own way based on their feelings and faith.

There is lack of peace and security in the world, because the modern system of education does not develop faith in God in students. Once, a person took his son to a school for admission. He met the headmaster and said, "Sir, my son is very intelligent, but he has two weaknesses." When the headmaster asked him to tell the weaknesses, the father replied, "He does not know what is good for him, nor does he listen to others." Similar is the state of an educated person today. Educated people are filled with ego, thinking they know everything. But what do they know? They are fools who do not know themselves. Then what can a fool know about the world?

One May Acquire A High Academic Qualification Such As M.a. Or B.a. And Attain Exalted Position,
One May Amass Wealth, Perform Acts Of Charity, And Attain Name And Fame,
One May Have Physical Strength And Enjoy A Long And Healthy Life,
One May Be A Great Scholar, Studying And Preaching The Vedas,
But None Can Equal A True Devotee Of The Lord. One Cannot Attain Liberation (Mukthi) Without
Devotion To The Lord (Daiva Bhakthi).
What Else Is To Be Conveyed To This Assembly Of Noble Students!
(Telugu Poem)

One thinks that one is very intelligent and has learnt many things. But one

who is truly intelligent does not think in this manner. One who lacks intelligence thinks that he is an intellectual!

Your life will blossom and shine as an ideal for others only when you develop love for God. You should become an ideal in all respects. What is important is that you realise the principle of the Atma (Self). In fact, every human being is the embodiment of the Atma. But, because of body attachment, one forgets the principle of the Atma. When you give up body attachment and develop attachment to the Self (Atmabhimana), you will experience bliss.

Divine love is sweeter than ambrosia

There are three types of beings in this world. Some beings can live only in water, some can live only on earth, and some can live both on earth as well as in water.

Similarly, some noble souls spend all their time in constant contemplation of God. Some lead a worldly life but once in a while think about spiritual matters. Their life is like a two-horse race. They have one leg in the world and the other in spirituality. There is a third category of people who lead a totally worldly life and have no spiritual inclination whatsoever. Because they are afflicted by the cold of ignorance, they cannot even smell the fragrance of spirituality. People in the world can therefore be classified as theists, atheists, theistic-atheists and atheistic-theists.

It is your great good fortune that you are blessed with human birth. It is not possible for everyone to attain human life birth after birth. Of all living beings, human birth is the rarest (Jantunam nara janma durlabham). Human birth is very noble, exalted, and virtuous. It is like a precious diamond.

But people are ready to barter it away for petty things, which are like pieces of charcoal. Will one who knows the value of the diamond use it like a paper weight on the table? No. One who knows its value will keep it safely in a steel cabinet under lock and key. Therefore, first of all it is necessary to know the

value of the principle of the Self (Atma Thathwa).

Equally precious is the name of the Lord.

Mira sang, "I have found the jewel of divine Name (Payoji maine nam ratan dhana payo)." She considered the divine Name as the most precious diamond.

Who can give this precious diamond? How can it be attained? It can be attained only by the grace of God. It is not available in a market or a shop; it is available only with God. God is the master of this diamond. Therefore, when you take refuge in Him, it becomes yours. You know how it looks. It shines with the brilliance of a thousand suns. Even the effulgence of a thousand suns pales in comparison with the brilliance of this 'sun'.

How does divine love taste? Do you know? Even the divine ambrosia appears tasteless in comparison to the sweetness of divine love. Its sweetness is unparalleled and incomparable. God is the embodiment of sweetness. "His speech, His eyes, and His looks are sweet. He is the Lord of sweetness and sweetness itself too (V achanam madhuram, nayanam madhuram, vadanam madhuram, madhuradhipathe akhilam madhuram).

How can one who has experienced this sweetness desire worldly pleasures, which are fleeting, momentary, and ephemeral? Only those who do not know the taste of Divinity crave for worldly pleasures. What is the reason? The reason is their ignorance, which is the result of sins accrued over many past lives. Today we find people craving for money, position, and power but not God.

One May Boast Of Immense Wealth, But It Cannot Give You Even An Iota Of Peace In This World.
One May Boast Of Worldly Education, But It Also Cannot Bring Even An Iota Of Peace In This World.
Peace Can Be Found Only In One Place And That Is The Temple Of Your Heart. (Telugu Poem)

Never forget your innate Divinity

People are in search of peace, but it is not available outside. It is present within. Those who strive for real peace will attain everything - wealth, worldly pleasures, power, name, and fame. They need not go in search of them. They will come to them on their own. They need not strain a nerve; liberation will virtually fall into their lap. They will experience the bliss of heaven.

What is heaven? People think having a good sleep on a soft bed in an air-conditioned room is verily heaven. This is not the happiness one should strive for. Real happiness cannot be derived from physical pleasures.

The Body, Which Is Made Up Of The Five Elements, Is Weak And Is Bound To Disintegrate.
Though Hundred Years Of Life Span Is Prescribed, One Cannot Take It For Granted.
One May Leave One's Mortal Coil At Any Time, Be It In Childhood, Youth, Or Old Age.
Death Is Certain. Hence, Before The Body Perishes, Make Efforts To Know Your True Nature.
(Telugu Poem)

Human birth is a gift of God. You have to understand its significance. If you spend all your time in reading books, what is the use if you don't practise anything? Time is fleeting and does not stop even for a moment. No one knows when, where, and how the end will come. Understanding the truth that death is certain, you should perform your duty.

Why beg for anything from others? In fact, all are beggars, God is the only giver; He is the only master. When the king of Thanjavur sent material gifts to Thyagaraja, he refused to accept them, saying, "I am not anatha (without a

master) as I have Lord Sri Rama as my Natha (master). In fact, Rama is anatha, as He has no master above Him. Therefore, offer these gifts to Him." Lord Rama is the master of the poor and needy. Sing the glory of Rama. Nothing will give you more benefit than this. Discharge your worldly responsibilities keeping the Lord's Name in your heart. You don't need to give up anything.

What you have to give up is the feeling that you are a mortal. You are not a mere mortal. The body is just a vesture you have put on. You do not know how many vestures you have changed. Death is the dress of life. You have too much attachment to the body, but you are not the body.

Always remind yourself, "I am God, I am God." "I am Brahman (Aham Brahmasmi)." Never forget this truth even in your dream.

All are the embodiments of Brahman. Other than Brahman, there is no other entity. "God is one without a second (Ekameva adviteeyam Brahma)." Though you are essentially divine, you consider yourself low and mean. It is really a great misfortune.

In Spite Of His Education And Intelligence,
A Foolish Man Will Not Know His True Self And
A Mean-Minded Person Will Not Give Up Their Evil Qualities.
Modern Education Leads Only To Argumentation, Not To Total Wisdom.
(Telugu Poem)
What Is The Use Of Acquiring Worldly And Secular Education, Which Cannot Lead You To Immortality?
Acquire The Knowledge That Will Make You Immortal. (Telugu Poem)

Realise the glory of God's love

In the story of the Mahabharata, when Yaksha questioned, "who is really blind in this world?", Y udhishthira replied, "One who does not give up evil qualities

in spite of all one's education is really a blind person." When you have studied so much, you should put it to proper use and get rid of your bad qualities. That is true renunciation.

Renunciation does not mean leaving your home, family, and property and going to the forest. To give up evil thoughts is true renunciation and true yoga. You should know what yoga really means. It means giving up evil qualities, evil habits, and evil thoughts. Then God will come running to you on His own and shower His immense love on you.

Once, Lord Easwara said to Parvathi that he was under debt to devotees. Parvathi asked him what type of debt it was and what he had borrowed from them. Easwara replied, "Devotees love me. They are giving me their most valuable love. Therefore, I have to repay their debt of love with interest by granting them liberation." What rate of interest does God give? It is not the 14% or 18% that banks give. God gives 100% interest. Such is God's love for His devotees that He is ever ready to shower His grace on them. But you do not know this truth and this mystery. Who can describe the glory of God's love?

God is present here, there, and everywhere, said Annie Besant. People in India go on pilgrimages in search of God. Truly speaking, do devotees search for God or is God in search of a devotee? Where is the need to search for God, who is everywhere? In fact, wherever you look, you do not find a true devotee. Therefore, God is in search of a true devotee, said Annie Besant.

Many people act like devotees when they are in Swami's presence. "Twinkle, twinkle little star, how I wonder what you are." When they are in front of Me, they pretend as though they are great devotees. But they lack real devotion.

They Indulge In Sinful Deeds And Later Blame Me For Their Suffering When They Have To Face The Consequences Of Their Actions.
(Telugu Poem)

Is there any meaning in this? Can you call them devotees? Devotion (bhakthi) means total surrender to God. Everything belongs to God. Other than God, there is no second entity. When everything is God, where is the place for a second entity? The same truth was proclaimed by Radha.

What is meant by constant contemplation of God? You should constantly remind yourself of your reality, "I am Brahman, I am Brahman, I am Brahman." Instead, you are moving about calling yourself so and so, identifying yourself with the name given to your body. It is a big mistake. You say, I am Ramaiah, but Ramaiah is the name given to your body; it is not your name.

The body is like a water bubble. Who knows when this bubble will burst? Always identify yourself with Brahman. Say, "I am Brahman (Aham Brahmasmi)." Then, wherever you go, you will be successful in all your endeavours. When you have complete faith in this statement, you become God.

True happiness comes from God

Embodiments of Love!

You may not relish it when I tell you again and again not to have attachment with the body. But that is the truth. I have not come here to earn your appreciation. I have come to teach you the truth. That is My duty, and your duty is to follow the truth.

A spiritual aspirant (sadhaka) should keep in mind four types of purity: purity of place, feelings, body, and the inner being (bhu shubhrata, bhava shubhrata, deha shubhrata, and Atma Shubhrata).

What is meant by purity of place? You should keep all places and surroundings pure and clean with the faith that God is everywhere. More so, when you see God right in front of you in physical form, keep the place all the

more clean. For example, keep the place wherever Swami is present absolutely clean and maintain perfect silence. Be free from ego and attachment. This is what is meant by purity of place.

Next is purity of feelings. How should you observe this? God is all-pervasive, eternal, and immeasurable. He is the embodiment of love, compassion, and bliss. Always focus on this truth and contemplate on Him. In whatever form you worship Him, He will manifest before you in that very form.

What is the meaning of purity of body? You should serve everyone with the feeling that God is present in them. Help them in every possible way, understanding their needs with regard to food and shelter. This is purity of body.

Then, what is purity of inner being? "With hands, feet, eyes, head, mouth, and ears pervading everything, He permeates the entire universe (Sarvatah panipadam tat sarvathokshi siromukham, sarvatah srutimalloke sarvamavruthya tishthati). Atma is everywhere. When you realise this truth, you experience real happiness. Whoever you serve and make happy, it amounts to serving God and making Him happy.

You can derive true happiness only from God, not from anyone else. Father, mother, wife, children, and all other worldly relations can give only momentary happiness. Only God can give you eternal bliss. You should take to the path of service to experience this bliss.

There is no God greater than you when you follow this path in your daily life. In fact, all of you are embodiments of God. Believe that you are God, manifest only divine qualities, and conduct yourself with divine feelings.

(Bhagavan concluded His Discourse with the bhajan, "Hari Bhajan Bina Sukha Santhi Nahin...")

91. It Is Love That Unites The World

Date: 03 September 1996 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi, November 2014.

Though Man Is Born As The Son Of Immortality,
He Is Beset With Immorality Due To His Worldly Desires And Evil Tendencies.
Sai's Word Is The Essence Of All The Vedas.
(Telugu Poem)

Nothing is greater than knowledge in this world. But the question arises, "What type of knowledge?" Is it worldly knowledge, spiritual knowledge, or knowledge related to ethics and morality?

There may be many types of knowledge, but knowledge of Brahman (Brahma Jnana) is the sum total of all types of knowledge.

What is knowledge of Brahman? The realisation of oneness of the entire universe. The world consisting of living and non-living entities is the very form of Brahman. They all denote the cosmic form of Brahman. There is no place where Brahman is not present and there is no name that does not belong to Brahman. All that you see, hear, think, and experience is nothing but the manifestation of the principle of Brahman.

Uphold human values

Every human being born in this world is endowed with certain values, but, unfortunately, most people do not recognise these values. Even those who recognise them do not put them to proper use and instead take to evil paths and thereby waste their lives.

Just as a dish of cooked dhal (pulses) without salt is tasteless, human life without love is useless. In fact, a human being without love is verily an animal. Humanness is synonymous with the principle of love. However, you should know when, where, and how to put this love to proper use. You cannot eat cooked dhal without salt. Similarly, you cannot eat dhal if it is mixed with excess salt.

You are concerned so much about the taste of the dhal, which gets digested in a couple of hours. Then shouldn't you be concerned about the human life, which has a span of sixty, seventy, or eighty years? How is it that people live so long without being concerned about values? Is it truly the life of a human being? No, no. One should uphold sacred values every moment of one's life. Since people have forgotten human values and consider this world to be real, they have lost their humanness and are leading the life of animals.

There are three aspects of spirituality: being, awareness, and bliss (asthi, bhathi, priyam). These three are termed as sat, chit, and ananda in Sanskrit. How can you explain this?

This is a tumbler; it lies here. Because it is present here, you give it the name tumbler. This denotes being or sat. This is changeless.

Then, how are you able to recognise the existence of the tumbler here? It is light that makes you aware of its presence. If the same tumbler were to be in darkness, you would not be able to know its presence. This light is awareness (chit). It is awareness that proves the existence of being (sat). Sat and chit are interdependent and inseparable. When you say that there is tumbler here, it automatically means that light is also here. It is due to the light of awareness that you are able to recognise the shape of an object.

When being (sat) and awareness (chit) come together, you experience satisfaction. This satisfaction itself is bliss (ananda). Being is sat. Awareness of being is chit. Unity of being and awareness results in bliss (ananda). Therefore, this world is the very manifestation of being, awareness, and bliss.

Everything In This World Is God. Nobody Can Say That This Is God And That Is Not.
At All Times, God Is The Only Reality, And The World Is Unreal.
You Can See For Yourself.
(Telugu Poem)

Truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names (Ekam sat viprah bahudha vadanti). That truth or sat is being. How can you know its existence? You can know it because of the light of love present in you. The principle of love makes humanness blossom and manifest in everyone. Therefore, consider the principle of love as God. There is no life without love.

God Is The Embodiment Of Love. Love Is His Divine Form.
How Can You Find Fulfillment In Life If You Do Not Taste Even A Little Of That Love?
(Telugu Poem)

In fact, such a life is not worthwhile. The all-pervasive and cosmic divine principle of Brahman is nothing but love. Love is Brahman and Brahman is love. This is what people should recognise and practise in their daily lives. You have love in you. But you should also know when, where, and how to put it to use. This is called quest for truth (sathyanveshana). Where is the need to search for truth when it is present everywhere?

It is the same eyes that see everyone, but you should know whom to see and with what feelings. For example, you have a mother, a daughter, a wife, and a sister. You should look at your mother as mother, daughter as daughter, wife as wife, and sister as sister. You see all of them with the same eyes. The quest for truth lies in enquiring with what feelings you should look at each of them.

But, unfortunately, people today do not know how to make proper use of their eyes. Just because they have eyes, they look at everyone without proper

discrimination. That is how people resort to sin.

Your eyes have a great value. Similarly, your ears have value. Your ears can hear everything, but you should enquire what you should hear and what you should not. True human value lies in knowing when, where, and how to put each of your senses to proper use.

Observe the rules of society

You build a house. In that house, you have some doors and windows. What are the windows meant for? The windows are meant for proper ventilation and to bring light into the house. The doors are there so that you, your friends, and your relatives can come inside the house and go out. You allow only your friends and relatives into your house and not your enemies or dogs and pigs that move about in the street.

Similarly, our body is like a house and also a temple. The body is a temple and the indweller is God (Deho devalaya proktho jivo Deva sanathana). This house has nine doors, but we can see only five doors with our eyes. You should ask what is good for you, what is sacred and ideal for your life, and use your power of discrimination to entertain only such feelings and such tendencies into the temple of your body. Do not allow anything and everything through the doors of your body.

Similarly, just because you have love in you, do not divert it toward mundane and trivial matters. Use it in a limited manner only when it is necessary.

You are born in society, grow in society, and spend your life in society. Therefore, you must observe the norms and rules of society. If you give respect to society, you will in turn be respected by society. Those who protect dharma will be protected by dharma (Dharmo rakshati rakshitah).

Students should not think it otherwise I give an example of what is happening in society these days. Suppose, a twenty-year-old boy has a sixteen-year-old

sister. When they go out together, what will others think about them? They may mistake them to be husband and wife because they do not know that they are brother and sister. This act of brother and sister going out together is against the norms of society. When they go out, they should go with their parents or go separately.

Acting contrary to the norms of society harms your honour and reputation. Since ancient times, Indian culture has prescribed such norms and controls in society. That which refines your behaviour and conduct is culture. Our culture teaches us how to talk to others, how to conduct ourselves when we go out, and how to lead our life. We should meticulously observe the rules of society.

In the house, brother and sister can talk to each other in an informal manner, but when they go out, their behaviour should be exemplary. Only such behaviour will give value to human life. But, unfortunately, people have forgotten human values, which show the path of truth in daily life.

Consider another example. A sixty-year-old man marries an eighteen-year-old girl to take care of him in his old age. When they go out in the bazar, what will others think about them? They may consider them to be grandfather and granddaughter.

In both these examples, society forms an opinion based on the age factor of the people involved. Therefore, always keep in mind the age factor, your duty and conduct when you are dealing with society. When you act in accordance with its rules, you will get a good name in society. On the contrary, if you think you have nothing to do with society and act in an arbitrary manner, society will not accept you.

Leave aside the norms and rules of society; you can understand this truth from your day-to-day experience. Suppose that you are eating a fruit. If it is sweet, you will eat it with a smiling face. If it is sour, you will at once throw it out. Why do you throw it out? Because it does not taste good. It is not to your liking.

Similarly, if your behaviour in society is not good, society will not accept it; nobody will respect you. If you cannot earn the respect and honour of society, who will respect you? Good reputation is very important for a human being. Therefore, in order to earn the respect of society, you should uphold human values.

Love is God; God is love. If you do not give value to love, it amounts to not giving value to God Himself. When you value love, you value God.

You can learn many lessons from life

Rama was human in form, whereas Sugriva was a monkey (vanara). How could an intimate friendship develop between them? It is natural for a person to befriend another person and for a monkey to befriend another monkey, but how could a person develop friendship with a monkey? It was the effect of circumstances. Rama was exiled from His kingdom and was separated from His wife. Similarly, Sugriva was banished from his kingdom, and he too was suffering from the pangs of separation from his wife. It was this similarity in their respective situations that brought about friendship between them. Since both of them were in the same situation, they could understand the feelings of each other.

In this manner, there are many things to be learnt from life. It is not bookish knowledge that is important; practical knowledge is more important. Mere platform speeches will serve no purpose; put knowledge into practice. Develop humanness by practising human values.

You may be proud of your wealth, education, and position, but how long do they last? They are momentary. Therefore, students, conduct yourselves with utmost care in this young age. Here I would like to repeat what I told you earlier:

Do Not Be Proud Of Your Wealth, Progeny, And Youth;
The Tide Of Time May Destroy Them In A Moment.

Ma Kuru Dhana Jana Yauvana Garvam, Harathi Nimeshath Kalah Sarvam.
(Sanskrit Verse)

God is your only true friend

How long will this pride of youth, wealth, and progeny last? Where do they come from and where do they go? Are they permanent? Are they the property of your grandfather or your great grandfather? You have developed this pride due to your false understanding. Such pride is not good for you. You may think you are highly educated.

You May Boast Of Your High Academic Qualifications,
But They Cannot Give You Even An Iota Of Peace In This World.
You May Feel Proud Of Immense Wealth, But It Also Cannot Give You Peace.
(Telugu Poem)

What are this wealth and physical strength? They are temporary, like passing clouds. When you keep observing clouds, you will notice constant and continuous change in them. Human life is also like that. Light has no value if there is no darkness. It is the clouds that give value to sunlight.

Similarly, happiness has no value if there are no difficulties.

Difficulties are there at every step in life. This is natural. People keep trying to overcome these difficulties and attain a higher position in life. Caught up in endless and meaningless anxieties, they constantly strive to attain things that are beyond reach. They do not make effort to acquire things that they deserve. Rather, they craves those things that they do not deserve.

It is only the lamp of spirituality that can show the right royal path to people who are caught up in this endless struggle. For this, you have to develop faith in spirituality. None of your material possessions will go with you when you

leave this body. Only divinity goes with you. In fact, divinity is in you, with you, around you, above you, and below you. You are God.

When the tank is full of water, you will hear the croaking noise of thousands of frogs in it. When the tank gets dried up, you will not find even one frog in it. Worldly friends are also like that today. When you have money in your pocket and when your father is in a good position, everyone will come to you, saying, hello, hello. When your pocket is empty and your father has retired, not even one person will say hello to you. All your socalled friends will desert you without even saying goodbye to you. These are the types of friends you have in the world today. This is not true friendship. God is your only true friend. He is the only one who will never forsake you.

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 The Middle Of The Deep Sea.
(Telugu Poem)

But, unfortunately, you forget God, who is your real friend. Instead, you are attached to friends who are temporary, like passing clouds. Such friends can be very dangerous also, but you do not recognise this danger in the beginning. However, you will see that these very friends may become your enemies in no time.

God is not like that. God's friendship is eternal. God's friendship is based on a heart-to-heart and love-to-love relationship, whereas worldly friendship is only at the physical level and depends on monetary considerations. How long can such friendship last? Such friendship is only temporary. Do not believe it to be permanent.

God alone is your true and eternal friend. Whether you believe it or not, God is all-pervasive. In fact, you yourself are God. There is no God other than you. This is what is propounded in the Vedas. Have faith in the teachings of the Vedas. If you do not understand the Vedas, have faith in the teachings of

noble souls.

You put your faith in a palmist who sits by the side of a road in the bazar. You pay him five rupees and ask him to read your palm. Whatever he tells you, you believe it as true. But you are not prepared to believe the teachings of the Vedas, which declare such profound truths as, Brahman is Supreme Consciousness (Prajnanam Brahma), That Thou Art (Thath twam asi), and I am Brahman (Aham Brahmasmi). You don't believe the eternal teachings of the Vedas.

On the other hand, you believe and follow whatever a roadside astrologer tells you. What is the reason? The reason is that you are interested only in worldly things. As the saying goes, the load gets the vehicle it deserves. One who is interested in worldly things will have faith only in such people. If you want to attain eternal happiness, have faith in the eternal teachings of the Vedas.

Excessive desires cause misery

Your body is like a water bubble, which can burst any moment. But you are true, you are eternal, you are Brahman, you are the transcendental principle, you are the embodiment of Atma.

What is Atma? The principle of love is verily the principle of Atma. Selfless love, which does not seek any reward, is the principle of Atma.

Where there is selfishness, there you do not find true love. Fish is better than selfish because while moving in water the fish eats away all the impurities in it and makes the water clean. But a selfish person pollutes the very society in which the person moves. Though it is not possible to perform all actions without any self-interest, try to control your selfishness as much as possible.

Understand that your worldly relations are not important and are not permanent. Take care that you do not develop unnecessary intimacy with

anyone, and, at the same time, do not develop hatred toward anyone. Offer all your love only to God.

In today's world, your good and bad depends upon the type of people you associate with. Tell me your company I shall tell you what you are. Whatever the type of persons you associate with, you will acquire the same type of qualities. Those qualities will not leave you even if you don't want them. That is why I keep emphasising the need for good company.

Moreover, you should have relationship with others only to the extent necessary. Not only that, bad qualities like hatred and anger should be under control. There should be a limit even to your desires. Excessive desires will turn into greed and make your life miserable. No doubt, everybody has some desires. But one should have desires only to the extent necessary.

Fire should be in proportion to the food you cook, and the size of the vessel should be in accordance with the amount of food you want to cook. Can you cook 5 kg rice in a vessel that can hold only 1 kg of it? Similarly, give your love to others as much as it is necessary. Observe limits with regard to everything. Understand the value of love.

Everything is good for you

Chatterji mentioned in his speech that Swami says good (manchidi) for everything. If you say, "Swami, I'm going out of town", I say, good. If you say, "Swami, I came yesterday," I say, good. Not only that, he does not know one more thing. If you come and tell Me, "Swami, I am going to die", even then I say, good. Some people come and tell me, "Swami, I am not able to bear this pain." I tell them, good.

In fact, what is not good in this world? Everything is good for us. Pleasure is an interval between two pains.

I say good for everything because there is only goodness in Me. When you

pour sweet pudding in a vessel with ten holes, only sweet pudding will come out of each of those holes, not poison. My entire being is filled with love. Therefore, My heart is full of love; My thoughts, My words, My actions are all suffused with the sweetness of love. I am the embodiment of sweetness.

You should also fill your hearts with love. Then, whatever you do will be surcharged with love. In fact, only a heart full of love can be called hridaya (heart). Hri + daya = hridaya. That which is filled with compassion is hridaya. A heart full of harshness is like a stone. Such a heart is full of poison. You cannot call it hridaya in the true sense of the term. Hridaya is that which is full of love. Only a human being can realise the sacredness of hridaya. Birds and animals cannot do that.

Birds and animals lead their lives eating whatever nature provides them, whereas humans eat food that is cooked and processed. Birds eat raw paddy from the fields. Cattle eat grass. But humans separate husk from paddy, cook rice, mix vegetables with it, and only then eat. They do not eat the raw food that is provided by nature. They refine food according to their taste and derive satisfaction. Only humans refine food before eating it.

Monkey is considered to be an ancestor of humanity. When you offer a banana to a monkey, it eats only after peeling it. See how intelligent monkeys are! Nara (man) has evolved from vanara (monkey). Vanara is one with valamu (tail), whereas nara has no tail. But desires are common to both.

Then in what way is a person different from a monkey? A person can prove themself to be different from a monkey only when they have kindness in their heart. That is why human beings are called mankind. Make efforts to understand the inner meaning of the terms you use and follow the right path.

Students!

Safeguard your goodness

You are endowed with many precious values. They are all within you. Your body is like an iron safe. Just as precious diamonds, rubies, emeralds, pearls are kept in an iron safe, likewise human values of compassion, love, tolerance, empathy, truth, etc. are all within you. In spite of having such precious treasure of values within you, you search for trinkets of trivial pleasures outside.

The ocean teaches us a great lesson in this regard. It keeps most precious pearls in its bosom and throws all worthless shells on the shore. What you get on the seashore are only shells. If you want to get precious pearls, you have to dive deep into the sea.

Mira sang, "Oh Krishna, I have taken great pains to go deep into the ocean to acquire the most valuable pearl of Your divine name. Kindly shower Your grace on me so that this invaluable pearl does not slip away from my hand and drop into the ocean again. I have no refuge other than You." A devotee should pray to the Lord with such intense yearning. Only then can the devotee's life become meaningful. Otherwise, the devotee will be human only in form, not in practice.

Don't mistake a silk cotton tree fruit for a mango. Don't chew the stalk of millet plant, considering it as sugarcane.

Don't mistake white stones for sugar candy. Don't be carried away by the outward appearance of a person.

Only Virtues Denote The Real Form Of A Human Being.
(Telugu Poem)

You cannot be called a human being just because you have a human form consisting of various limbs like hands, feet, nose, mouth, etc. Virtues denote your true form. Love is the real virtue. Love is the true human value. Once you have love, there is no scope for any defect in you. It is love that unites the entire world. Where there is love, there is oneness and bliss. When you

have both love and bliss, you will become the embodiment of peace.

Today you complain that you have no peace. How can you get peace unless you have love in you? Do not get deluded by external appearances. Go by the virtues enshrined in your heart.

Students!

God Is Not Pleased By Your Outward Show.
Can You Kill A Snake Merely By Beating The Anthill?
Can The Craving For Sensual Pleasures Be Subdued By Subjecting Merely The Body To Penance?
Can One Become Knower Of The Self (Atma Jnani) Only By Fasting?
How Can One Realise The Ultimate Truth If One Does Not Know Oneself?
(Telugu Poem)

You should know who you really are. Only then will your human life become worthwhile. Understand that you are the embodiment of love; you are God. Love is God. Live in Love. Develop love more and more.

However, use your discrimination when you give your love to others. Keep it within limits. In fact, offer your love only to God and none else. But, unfortunately, you divert your love to wrong ways.

Oh Man, Is It Possible To Escape The Consequences Of Actions?
You May Study The Scriptures And Worship Your Family Deities,
You May Go To A Forest And Perform Intense Penance,
But It Is Impossible To Escape The Consequences Of Your Actions.
You Will Get Only As Much Water As Your Vessel Can Hold,
No Matter Whether You Dip It In A Small Lake Or In A Mighty Ocean.
(Telugu Poem)

People should perform only righteous actions. People in the world are bound

by action (Karmanubandheeni manushya loke). That is why I tell students to be always cautious. If you lose this opportunity due to your carelessness, you may not get it again. Therefore, always be cautious.

Mould your life in an ideal manner and earn the respect and honour of society. Bring good name to your parents, teachers, and the institution where you have studied.

We do not charge the students even a naya paisa in our Institute. We give free education to lakhs of children and bring happiness in their life. In our Institute, there is no tuition fee, no laboratory fee, no games fee, no library fee, no examination fee, no fee whatsoever. Where else can you find such an institution in this world?

Wherever you go outside, you will have to spend thousands of rupees on your education. Can you call it education in the real sense?, Prasanthi Nilayam, is the only place where education is provided free, heart to heart, love to love (loud applause). But some foolish people are not able to understand this.

If you were to study outside, it would have been a matter of great anxiety and worry to your parents, who have to bear the huge expenditure of your studies. If there is a strike in the college, it would be a cause of great concern for the parents. They would be worried and anxious, thinking about the safety of their children studying in the college. But in our Institute, there is no cause of such fear.

How does one get courage and confidence? Where there is goodness, there is courage and confidence. Therefore, safeguard goodness in your heart. Goodness is godliness. Love God. There is no love superior to God's love. Develop this principle of love.

(Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan, "Prema Mudita Manase Kaho...".)