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Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 30 (1997)

Divine Discourses of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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1. Let Prema and Thyaaga be your ideals

Date: 14 January 1997 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Sankranthi, Sports Meet

Uthsaham, Sahasam, Dhairyam, Buddhi, Shakthi, Parakramam, Shadaithe yathra thishtanthi, Thathra Dheva-sahayakritham. (Where the six qualities of zeal, determination, courage, intelligence, ability and heroism are present, there Divine help is manifest). STUDENTS! Embodiments of love! In any field, at any time, for any man who is endowed with all these six precious qualities, success is assured. These qualities contribute to the all-round prosperity of a man. All success attends on one with these six qualities. However, these qualities confront various difficulties from time to time. Just as a student has to face various tests, these qualities are also subject to trials. Such trials should be regarded as stepping stones to one's high achievements. These trials are in the form of losses, troubles, pains, sufferings and calumny. One has to overcome these troubles with courage and self-confidence and go ahead.

Students in particular have to develop self-confidence. Without self-confidence the six qualities cannot be acquired.

In fact, self-confidence should be the life-breath of every person. Unfortunately, students today lack self-confidence and have become a prey to peacelessness because of their involvement in sensual pleasures.

Students should develop self-confidence and embark on the journey of life with faith in God. Vishvamithra relying on his intelligence, physical strength and the power of his weapons, sought to wage a war with Vashishta, who relied upon the power of the Divine. Ultimately he realized the truth that his powers were of no avail against the power of the spiritual, and giving up his kingdom undertook a severe penance. Physical prowess is no power at all. It is really a sign of weakness. All physical powers are indeed powerless. All worldly wealth is impermanent. Man today pursues these fleeting pleasures, forgetting his inherent divinity.

Cultivate self-confidence

Students should cultivate self-confidence and manifest their divinity in their speech, their songs, their sports and all actions. However, occasionally the weakness in them may come out. For instance, when they succumb to troubles, are overcome by grief and are unable to face losses, they show their inner weakness. Students should confront such situations with fortitude. Be fearless. When you face difficulties with courage, you are bound to succeed. Hence, have confidence in yourself and achieve success in all areas of life.

It may be asked: "What is the benefit one derives from these six good qualities?" The answer is that you will secure both worldly and spiritual benefits from these qualities.

Good qualities enable one to lead a good life

Self-confidence is helpful to secure advancement of the individual, but it is not enough to promote the welfare of the society or the world. A whetstone is used for sharpening the razor and not for making the stone smoother. Similarly good qualities have to be fostered for refining one's nature. These qualities are essential like the different limbs in a body for its well-being as a whole. People should realize that human birth has been given to them to lead ideal lives. Good qualities enable one to lead a good life. But even for the good life a price has to be paid. That price is good conduct. This means that you derive the happiness that results from a good life only when you discharge your duties. Pleasures are of two kinds: temporary and lasting. Permanent happiness can be got only by performing your duties. First do your duty and then enjoy the fruits. Today people do not discharge their duties but wish to enjoy the fruits thereof. This cannot give them happiness.

Everyone should realise that he is born to discharge various obligations and not to enjoy rewards for unrendered services.

Man should realise that he has no claim to rights. His role is to carry out his

duties. When he performs his duties, he will reap the rewards in due course. People today do not discharge their duties but right for their rights. Student's! At the outset, realise your duties and carry them out. Duty is God. Work is worship. It is foolish to expect rewards without performing one's duties. People are wasting their sacred human birth by neglecting their duties. Students Should realize that neither youth, nor wealth, nor wife and children are permanent. Only truth and righteousness are everlasting. You must base your lives on truth and righteousness and should be prepared to face any challenges with courage and confidence.

Five advisers in everyone's life

Everyone has five advisers in life. They are who; when, where, what and how. Before undertaking any action, answers should be got for these five questions. When the correct answers are got, the actions based on them will be the right one. People today act without concern for these factors. In this matter everyone can rely on his own judgement using his powers of observation and discretion. All the instruments for this purpose are available to everyone in his organs of perception and action. In every limb and organ there is a divine power. This divine potency is called Angirasa. The name is derived from the fact that the Divine is present in every Anga (limb) as a Rasa (essence). There is no need to search for the Divine outside yourself. You are Divine. All your powers are Divine potencies. Develop the conviction that whatever happens to you is for good. Education is not solely for a living. Essentially it is a process of Self-realization. Without understanding his own Self, how can one understand the world or achieve anything worthwhile? Without Self-knowledge what is the Vijnana (scientific knowledge) he can acquire? What is the value of scientific knowledge without wisdom? Hence one should acquire, along with scientific knowledge, discriminatory wisdom and Atma-jnana (awareness of Self).

Significance of Bharatheeya festivals

All Bharatheeya festivals have esoteric significance. They have a deep spiritual meaning. Today's holy festival is related to the beginning of the

Uttharayana (apparent northward movement of the sun). The sun moves every month from one house of the zodiac to the next. Today the sun enters the house of Capricorn - Makara - and hence it is known as Makara Sankranthi. This auspicious day heralds the conferment of many worldly and spiritual blessings on man. The Sankranthi day is a witness to the prospective successes of man in many fields. The advent of Sankranthi is glorified in a song which describes how farmers greet the sun and celebrate the gathering of harvest and enjoy the fruits of their labours. Sankranthi day marks the arrival in the farmer's houses of the grains which are the fruits of their labours. Sankranthi is a holy festival for a worldly achievement. It is also a cherished day of rest in the cool atmosphere. Man needs days of rest after a period of hard work. Only then he can enjoy peace of mind.

"Samyak kranthi ithi Sankranthi" Sankranthi confers peace and heralds a welcome change. It brings out the inner joy in people. It effects a change in the life-style. It generates sacred thoughts.

People today do not recognize these sacred changes. They are all immersed in worldly acquisitions and have no regard for higher things. They should instead seek every opportunity to cultivate good qualities.

These good qualities are the six mentioned at the beginning of the discourse. When these qualities are present, there will be no room for any bad tendencies to develop. Today, students suffer from two bad qualities which are undermining their humanness. These are asuuya (envy) and dhvesham (hatred). These two are partners in evil. They are twin pests. A beautiful tree with rich foliage can be destroyed by a pest operating at its roots. Envy is such a pest. It converts even a happy, affluent person into a miserable being consumed by envy. In the Mahabharatha, Krishna described to Arjuna how the Kauravas were consumed by envy towards the Pandavas even though they were enjoying the kingdom. The demon of envy had seized hold of a good royal family and was ruining it. Students feel envious towards a boy scoring good marks. Envy rears its head when a boy is exceptionally intelligent. Some feel envious seeing a person who is well-off and happy. Some tend to be envious of those who appear to be cheerful and confident. Envy has no limits.

Students should see that they give no room for envy. Envy is a self-consuming malady. It is incurable. One who is always blissful will overcome all difficulties. The courageous man can face death without fear.

Fill your hearts with selfless love

Students! You must understand that the Sankranthi festival has come to remind you of your latent potentialities. People look forward to many worldly benefits also from this sacred occasion. It is also celebrated as a day, when a sacred bull is taken from house to house, while the owner recites the Ramayana story. The festival is also a joyous occasion for the young folk. The Sankranthi festival is more important than any other festival because it is the day when the newly married son-in-law visits the home of his bride and is entertained lavishly. From ancient times such festivals have been a source of joy to the people of Bharath. Alas! Such festivals have gone and the people have taken to purely worldly pleasures. Of what avail are these pleasures? They are artificial. People have forgotten the heart and lost their peace in the bargain.

The whole world is ravaged by unrest and fear. Man is haunted by fear wherever he goes or stays. The only way out of this situation is for people to take refuge in God. The protective grace of the Divine will free men from fear. Where devotion and love exist together, there will be no room for fear. It is their absence that is the cause of fear everywhere. Students! In whatever you do, either studies, or games, or singing or in the jobs you may take up, see that you invest them with sacredness and purity. In the songs you sing, if there is no joy for the listener, what is the use of your singing? Why sing if you cannot be melodious? What is the use of education without humility? Without a pure heart, why worship Shiva? A heart without love is a block of stone. (Telugu Poem) Fill your hearts with love. That love should be pure and genuine. Today mutual courtesies have become artificial and insincere. Students should cultivate selfless love as one of the basic human values. Position, wealth and strength may come and go. Only divine love is permanent. Love is God. God is love. That is the truth irrespective of nationality, race or religion.

Develop self-confidence and spirit of oneness

Education should be divorced from jobs. Its purpose should be the acquisition of Vijnana (the highest knowledge). That is the concept upheld by Bharatheeya Culture. Students will be ideal citizens of the nation only when they develop self-confidence and the feeling of spiritual oneness. Develop the spirit of sacrifice and become defenders of the nation's integrity and honour. You must strive to promote the welfare of society. Eschew ideas of "me" and "mine". You will then become one with the Divine. When you identify yourself with all, you can derive infinite joy.

Once upon a time the demons were present in small numbers. But today it is difficult to tell who is a demon and who is a human being. Get rid of any trace of demonic qualities. Become human and then go towards divinity.

Students! You have received today prizes for your success in sports. In the same manner, you should score successes in your lives in the outside world.

Develop forgiveness, forbearance and detachment

Develop the quality of kshama (forgiveness) and refrain from harshness in speech. Sai is the example for you in this regard. All sorts of people indulge in calumny and criticism. Swami remains totally unaffected. Why should I follow their example? I must follow my own way. If I follow another I am a slave. Therefore, I never follow another's ways. I adhere firmly to what I deem as good.

You must realize that if you give up forbearance and forgiveness, you will have no peace. I am always at peace. What is the reason? Because I am always patient. You must also remain likewise. Whatever anyone may do to you, do not bother about it. What is it you lose on account of their behaviour? If you resort to retaliation, you will worsen your condition. You have no idea either of your strength or of your disability. You must face boldly such attacks and not allow yourself to get agitated over them. Students should win by their

forbearance. Forbearance should be your life-breath and your ideal. By your fearlessness set an example to the world. It is an auspicious coincidence that today you have both the prize distribution function and holy festival of Sankranthi. On this doubly blessed day you have to enjoy the sweetness of this combination, like the mixture of sugar and milk, and pledge yourselves to lead a dedicated life. The Upanishaths have described the Lord as verily sweetness itself - "Raso vai sah." You have Karunarasa (the sweet essence of kindness) in you. You are also filled with compassion and peace. Luckily you are free from Shokarasa (grief). You are free from bad qualities. Do not let them in. Foster the spirit of kindness. Treat life as a great game and be victorious in it by leading an ideal life.

Life is a game, play it! Life is a challenge, meet it! Life is a dream, realize it! Life is love, enjoy it! This is what you have to achieve. Therein lies your true human worth. Human life does not consist in getting married, bringing forth children and being caught up in that endless round. They are the routine of worldly existence. There is nothing wrong in it, but it should, not be your ideal. Whatever you may do in your ordinary life, base your life on the ideal. In the army, people are assigned different duties. But two things are common to everyone parade (drill) and use of the gum. Likewise, two things are essential for students: prema (love) and thyaga (sacrifice). Adhere to these two ideals. Love all. Be prepared for any kind of sacrifice. Without the spirit of sacrifice life has no meaning. For the sake of helping others or for promoting the welfare of the society, you must be ready even to give up your lives. To realize God, continually yearn for Him. You must constantly pray for the opportunity to experience God. Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to feel sad if he did not have the vision of the Mother on any day. Pine for God at all times. When you get God's grace, all the planets will be in your favour. You must ceaselessly try to win God's grace. Never give up the search. Do your duty and God's grace will follow. Pray from the depth of your heart for the well-being of all people.

2. Be prepared for a life of sacrifice

Date: 19 January 1997 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

The moon illumines the night, The sun illumines the day, Dharma illumines the three worlds, A good son is the lighter his lineage. IT is the moon that sheds light during the night. During the day the sun gives light and. shows the way. For the three worlds the illumination comes from Dharma (Righteousness). A good son is nor only a beacon for his family, he is the light for his entire Jathi (community). Education is the means of unfolding the moral and spiritual potentialities of man. Education reveals to man what is right and what is wrong. For a good son, who is a student, five things are essential. First is Vidhya (right education). Vidhya means that which expels darkness (the darkness of ignorance). Second is Vijnana (discrimination). This refers to the power to discriminate between the permanent and the transient, the true and the false. Third is Kramashikshana (discipline). Discipline is not got from books. Fourth is Dheshabhimanam (love for one's country and people). Fifth is Sathseelam (good character). Only the person endowed with these five qualities can be regarded as a man of virtue.

Students should recognise these five qualities as their Pancha pranas (five life-breaths). It is only a virtuous, son endowed with these five qualities who lends lustre to his family and his nation.

True learning is character, morality and spirituality

The social scenario and the educational system today are riddled with many defects. Education today is concerned with imparting worldly knowledge, with no place for ethics or spirituality It does not equip the student with competence or capability. It is essential to carry out a total, radical change in the educational system. What is needed is a total revolution. Only then the value of education will become apparent. In this context, a change in the student's attitude is also necessary. There should be a change in the student's approach to the educational process. Only then can he secure true education. All along education has remained an exercise in acquiring bookish

knowledge. What is needed today is practical knowledge. Every student should acquire a good character, moral values, and develop a spiritual bent of mind. These three constitute true learning. These three have been held in high esteem from ancient times. Unfortunately from the beginning of the modern era, morality has disappeared from the scene. Righteousness and spirituality have vanished. Neither the teachers nor the educational authorities have shown any concern for these vital elements. Indian culture is sublime. The Vedas, Upanishaths, Puranas and the great epics are veritable oceans of supreme wisdom. The sun turns every day vast quantities of water from the ocean into vapour and gives it back to the earth in the form of rain to sustain nourishing crops for mankind. Although the amount of water vaporised by the sun is immense, the ocean's depth does not diminish. Nor does the level of the ocean rise even by a little despite the inflow of waters from the rivers. The immensity of Bharatheeya Culture is like the ocean which neither swells nor goes down. From days of yore, the sages of India absorbed this culture and propagated it among people and ennobled their lives. Bharatheeyas today have not attempted to understand the greatness of their cultural heritage. On the other hand, many people in foreign countries have explored the treasures of this vast reservoir of knowledge and benefited from it in many ways. The Russians and the Germans made ample use of the Rig Veda and Atharvana Veda to promote their national interests. The Atharvana Veda is a source of valuable knowledge regarding the arts and weapons of war. In India today no one seems to bother about the Atharvana Veda.

Recognise the greatness of Sanskrith

Bharatheeya culture is entirely based on Sanskrith. All Bharatheeya students should recognise Sanskrith as the mother of all Indian languages. Without a knowledge of Sanskrith, one cannot understand the elements of Bharatheeya culture. Recognising the value of Sanskrith, Russia, Germany, Japan, Malaysia and other countries are introducing the study of Sanskrith in their educational curriculum.

The intimate relations between foreign countries and Bharath from ancient times have not been understood by most Bharatheeyas even today.

Indonesia cherishes Mahabharatha

You may be aware from your study of books or from other sources that Indonesia has named its airlines as Garuda Airways. Garuda is the divine bird which is the vehicle of Vishnu, according to Indian mythology. The banks in Indonesia are named after Kubera, the Hindu deity representing wealth. Whiz Bharatheeya culture is surviving so prominently in overseas countries, it is not so well appreciated in Bharath itself. The first President if Indonesia was Dr. Sukarno His father was a great student of the Mahabharatha. Admiring the great qualities of Karna as a warrior and a magnanimous donor, who never refused anything which a supplicant sought from him, the father named his son Sukarno, though he was a Muslim. In this manner, foreigners cherish what is great in Bharatheeya culture. But, Bharatheeyas, oblivious to the glory of their culture, are imitating occidental practices.

It would be good to remember the supreme sacrificing spirit of Karna. Although because of his association with some evil minded men, his name got tainted, no one can equal the spirit of sacrifice of Karna.

The great Mahabharatha war came to a close on the seventeenth day with the fall of Karna. The Pandavas were celebrating their great victory over Karna. The Kauravas felt utterly hopeless as Karna was their greatest warrior. The Pandavas rejoiced in the fall of their most powerful opponent. But, Krishna was sitting apart and appeared to be immersed in sadness. Arjuna went to him and asked why he was feeling sad on a day when they should be rejoicing over their victory Krishna told him that Bharath had lost its most heroic warrior that day. The hero who had brought glory and good name to Bharath had fallen. "I feel immensely sad because the country is losing such a great hero." On hearing these words, Arjuna looked at Krishna with a feeling of amused surprise. He said: "Krishna! To ensure the victory of the Pandavas you chose the role of charioteer. Because of that, Pandavas won their victory. Instead of rejoicing over this victory, why are you feeling sad over the fall of our enemy?" Karna's greatness as warrior and donor Krishna replied: "Karna is the very embodiment of sacrifice. Sacrifice is a synonym for Karna. In the

entire world you can not find one other man equal in the spirit of sacrifice to Karna. In weal or woe, triumph or defeat he could not forget the quality of sacrifice. Have you got that spirit of sacrifice? No." Krishna then asked Arjuna to follow Him. Darkness had enveloped the battlefield. Krishna was proceeding with Arjuna. In his sweet voice, Krishna was exclaiming: "Karna! Karna!" Karna was gasping for breath in his last moments. He cried: "Who is calling me? I am here." Following the direction from which the words came, Krishna went near Karna.

Before approaching Karna, Krishna assumed the form of an indigent Brahmin. Karna asked him- "Who are you, Sir?" Karna was nearing his last breath. Even at that moment, without any hesitation or faltering in his voice, He put that question to the stranger Krishna, as the Brahmin replied: "For a long time I have been hearing about your reputation as a charitable person. You have acquired fame as Dhana. Karna (Karna the great giver). Today, not knowing about your plight, I came to ask you for a gift. You must give me a donation." "Certainly, I shall give you whatever you want," replied Karna. "I have to perform the marriage of my son. I want a small quantity of gold," said Krishna. "Oh what a pity! Please go to my wife, she will give you as much gold as you need," said Karna. The "Brahmin" broke into laughter He said: "For the sake of a little gold have I to go all the way to Hastinapura? If you say, you are not in a position to give me what I ask I shall leave you." Karna opened his mouth, showed the gold fillings in his teeth and said: "I shall give this to you. You can take them." Assuming a tone of revulsion, Krishna said: "What is it you suggest? Do you expect me to break your teeth and rake the gold from them? How can I do such a wicked deed? I am a Brahmin."

Karna offers his heart itself to Krishna

Immediately, Karna picked up a stone nearby, knocked out his teeth and offered them to the "Brahmin". Krishna in his guise as "Brahmin" wanted to test Karna further: "What? Are you giving me as gift teeth dripping with blood? I cannot accept this. I am leaving," He said. Karna pleaded: "Svami, please wait for a moment." Even while He was unable to move, Karna took out his arrow and aimed it at the sky. Immediately rain dropped from the

clouds. Cleaning the teeth with the rain water, Karna offered the teeth with both his hands. Krishna then revealed his original form. Karna asked: "Who are you, Sir?" Krishna said: "I am Krishna. I admire your spirit of sacrifice. In any circumstance you have never given up your spirit of sacrifice. Ask me what you want." Beholding Krishna's beautiful form, Karna said with folded hands- "Krishna! Apadh-bandhava (reliever of troubles)! Lokarakshaka (protector of the world)! Oh Lord, who holds the universe in your palm, what can I seek from you? At the moment of my passing, I am fortunate to close my eyes gazing at your Divine form. This is my greatest blessing. This is boon enough for me. To have the vision of the Lord before one's passing is the goal of human existence. You came to me and blessed me with your form. This is enough for me. I offer my salutations to you," Arjuna was observing the whole scene. Krishna turned to him and said: "Are you prepared for this kind of sacrifice?" Arjuna bowed his head in silence. The Lord praised the greatness of the quality of sacrifice in man. Of all kinds of sacrifice, the greatest is the sacrifice made for God. "Oh Lord! That heart which you gave unto me, I am offering to you. What else can I bring to offer at your lotus feet? I prostrate before you. Please accept my offering." This was the prayer addressed by Karna to Krishna.

Keep faith in God steady like life-breath

Man forgets his true nature because of attachment and egoism. Man should develop firm faith in God. Faith should be like your life-breath, which goes on inhaling and exhaling at all times without respite. Respiration goes on whatever work you may be doing and whatever be the state of your mind.

Likewise, in all situations and at all times, your faith in God should never leave you. It should not change according to whether your desires are fulfilled or not. Like your lifebreath, your faith should remain steady, through joy and sorrow, loss and gain, pain and pleasure. Treat whatever happens as good for you. Have that sense of fortitude. When you have faith in the Self, even wild animals will be gentle towards you. Every man should recognise that the body has been given to him to render service to others. You must use the body for promoting the welfare of society. Of what use is the endless study of books if

you do not use your knowledge for the good of others? A mind that is not utilized for imparting joy to others or a body that is not used for the service of others is totally useless. The way to love God is to love all and serve all. Students should imbibe this ideal. Man should strive to become good and virtuous. Only when a man is filled with good thoughts and feelings and performs good deeds will his life become meaningful. These good qualities will serve to make a better man of you. That is the purport of the saying: "Suputhro Kuladheepakah" (A good son illumines his lineage). As good sons all of you should pledge yourselves to serve and protect the nation.

Avoid bad company and develop spirit of sacrifice

Students! Your secular studies will help you in worldly life, but will not promote your spiritual progress. Without spirituality, all worldly accomplishments are worthless. With all his prowess, why did Karna come to a bad end? Because of his association with the evilminded Dhuryodhana. If he had not made common cause with Dhuryodhana, Karna would have become an effulgent star in the firmament. All his native good qualities turned into ashes because of bad association. Your company determines your character. Hence from the outset, cultivate the company of godly men. Without it, all other things are useless. Today wherever you turn in Bharath you see only disorder, violence and fear. What is the reason? People have lost their faith in the Self. They are fostering attachments to worldly objects. They are forgetting that true bliss is derived from the Divine. Students! Develop broad mindedness. Cultivate unity. It was because of lack of unity, Bharath came under the rule of a small nation like the British, though it did not lack great warriors, scholars and administrators. Today the nation is afflicted with two bad qualities lack of unity and insatiable greed. Education should be pursued for the sake of wisdom and virtue, and not for securing jobs.

Develop the spirit of sacrifice like Kama. Honour the plighted word. Dedicate all your actions to God.

As alumni of our Institute you should stand out as ideal students and as examples to the world. Realise that there is no greater quality than truth.

Truth is God. Dharma is His ornament. Adhere to these two as the highest attributes of humanness. Students! Your hearts are tender and unsullied. From this age itself you must foster pure thoughts. Plant the seed of love in your pure hearts. From that tree of love you will have the fruits of forbearance, compassion and kindness. Always be smiling. Face every situation in life, including death, with a smile. Earlier, there were speeches by some students. The students spoke very well, sweetly and delightfully. Their speeches would be immensely effective if the words came not merely from the lips but from their hearts. There should be complete harmony in thoughts, words and deeds. I desire that you should all redeem your lives by contemplating on God, cherishing good thoughts and engaging yourselves in the service of your fellow men. I bless you all.

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.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

3. Have firm faith in God

Date: 23 January 1997 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Primary School

Like the moon that illumines the night, The sun that illumines the day, and Dharma that illumines the three worlds, A good son sheds light on his entire lineage. (Sanskrit poem) THIS vast world needs light for its existence. A man of wisdom is more powerful than a physically strong man, just as a puny mahout is able to control an elephant. It is not enough for people to rely on physical strength alone. Man depends on four sources of light for dispelling darkness. The moon dispels darkness at night. No one except thieves loves darkness. Good people, well-intentioned persons have no liking for darkness. Darkness also signifies ignorance. During the day the sun is the natural source of light. Human life will be impossible without the light of the sun. The sun is the cause for rains, which enable crops to grow and sustain human life. Sun is also the source of health and of happiness. Dharma (right conduct) illumines the entire world. The word Dharma means that which "upholds". It is Dharma which teaches the right relationship between man and man, man and society and society and society. Dharma reveals to man through his heart what is right and what is wrong, what is true and what is false. It is Dharma which promotes the welfare of society. Dharma protects its protector. The world cannot exist without Dharma. A good son is one who sets an example by his conduct: One who pursues selfish ends cannot be a good son. A good son is one who reveres and serves his parents, who honours his preceptor, who is humble and respectful towards elders and who earns a good name by his service to society. It is because such sons have become rare that the country is today bedevilled by wickedness and evil practices.

Your foremost duty is to revere your parents

Boys and Girls! Your foremost duty is to revere your parents. The mother gave birth to you. The father protected you. You have to esteem the preceptor as divine because he imparts knowledge to you. Without reverence for these three, all your other achievements in life will be worthless. The mother, the father and the preceptor represent the Divine Trinity - Brahma,

Vishnu and Maheshvara as creator, sustainer and remover of ignorance respectively. But above all of them is the one God who is in all beings. Develop love for God and there by show your reverence for all. Moreover, faith in God will ensure you what no one else can give. Markandeya was allotted only a life-span of sixteen years. The mother looked after him all those sixteen years as the apple of her eye. The father protected him from all dangers from any quarter. The teacher took care of his education. But none of them had any control over his lifespan. The lad realised this truth. Hence he placed his reliance on God regarding his destiny. A few days before he was to complete his sixteenth year, he went to the Shiva temple and prayed: "Oh Lord! My parents have protected my body. The teacher looked after my education. But God alone can protect my life. Hence, make me one with you." Placing his head on the Shivalinga, hugging the linga, with both his arms, he declared: "Eeshvara! You are my sole refuge!" Saying so he closed his eyes.

How Lord Shiva protected Markandeya

When the sixteen years were over, the Lord of Death arrived and cast his noose to take the life of Markandeya. The noose did not cover Markandeya alone. The Shivalinga was also caught in the noose because Markandeya was embracing the linga. When the Lord of Death started drawing the noose, Shiva emerged from the linga. Shiva asked the Lord of Death: "How dare you cast your noose on the one who had become one with Me and also cast Me in the noose?" Shiva chastised the Lord of Death saying that he would be entitled to take the life of Markandeya if he had been alone, but not when he had become one with Him. "No one is entitled to touch a person who has united himself with Me," said Shiva. Shiva chastised Yama and protected Markandeya with immortality. With the grace of the Divine, Markandeya got the blessings of all - his parents and preceptor. Students should not only revere parents and teachers but also strive to earn God's grace. A young student who had spoken earlier had said that truth is the ornament for speech. Students should always speak the truth. There should be harmony between thought, word and deed. Students! Apart from your studies, you should try to earn the grace of God by making your heart pure. You must remember the example of Rama who sacrificed the kingdom for honouring

the words of his father. Dhasharatha yearned for Rama to administer water to him in his last moments. Unfortunately he did not get it. But Rama performed the last rites for the eagle Jatayu, when he cried "Rama! Rama!" in his last moments. Jatayu secured the ministrations which even Dhasharatha could not get. For receiving God's grace there is no distinction such as an animal, a bird or any other creature. Wherever there is devotion, there God's presence can be experienced.

Give up all senses of "I" and "mine"

Students! You must acquit yourselves well and earn a good name even after you leave the Institute. You must bring a good name to the Institute among all the people you meet. Together with your academic knowledge, you must develop good conduct. In this troubled world, deem God as your sole protector and guide. True devotion consists not in merely chanting the name of Rama but in rendering help to the society and offering help to the needy. Only then can you become worthy of God's grace. Hanuman exemplified the ideal of implicit obedience to God's injunctions. The true devotee should give no room for doubt. He must act with full faith in God. He must realize that everything belongs to God. He should give up all senses of "I" and "mine". This was the lesson which Rama taught to Kaikeyi when she sought his forgiveness for all the wrong things she had done to Rama.

There is a basic difference between the attitude of the Gopikas to Krishna and that of Yadhavas in Dvaraka. The Gopikas felt: "Krishna ! We are yours" The Yadhavas felt: "Krishna! You are ours." Their attitude was based on Ahamkara (sense of possession). That was responsible for their ultimate destruction.

You should all realize that God is present equally in all beings. The spiritual oneness of all was taught to Shankara by Shiva in the form of an untouchable, when Shankara bade the "untouchable" not to approach him. Shankara immediately prostrated before the untouchable as a preceptor who had taught him Samathvam (spiritual equality). Bodies and temperaments may differ from individual to individual, but the Divine is one and the same in all. Students! Cherish faith in God as your life-breath. The faith will sustain you at

all times and in all situations.

Once Eeshvar Chanudhra Vidhyasagar happened to travel by train in a compartment with some English men. He sat between two of them. One of them asked: "Who is this donkey?" The other one asked: "Who is this pig?" A third English man asked: "Who are you?" Eeshvar Chandhra coolly replied: "I am a human being sitting between a donkey and a pig." The two English men felt ashamed of themselves. They felt even more ashamed when they saw a large crowd of persons with garlands waiting to receive Eeshvar Chandhra when he got down from the train. The English men then realised that though Indians might appear simple they were inherently noble and gentle.

Students! You should maintain the highest standards of Bharatheeya culture.

4. The gospel of work, love and sacrifice

Date: 13 February 1997 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Chinese New Year

There is no penance equal to a peaceful mind;
There is no greater happiness than contentment;
There is no worse disease than desire;
No righteousness can equal kindness.

EMBODIMENTS of Love!

There is no penance superior to peace of mind. Every individual, every family, every society, every nation seeks peace in all possible ways. Every man should strive in every way to achieve peace as the most desirable objective. There is no greater happiness than *Santhosham* (contentment). Man is perpetually in quest of happiness.

But what is the happiness he seeks? Worldly happiness? Transient pleasures? These cannot confer true happiness. Only spiritual happiness can give true happiness. Why has man lost this happiness? Because man is afflicted with insatiable desires. These desires are the cause of various maladies. It is only by limiting desires and thereby eliminating the diseases arising from them that the man can secure peace.

Next, what is meant by *Dharma*? Charity alone does not constitute Dharma (virtuous action). Charity is quite different from righteousness. A temporary, worldly act is equated with Dharma. Dharma in its true sense refers to something which is lasting. Atma-Dharma (the Dharma of the indwelling Spirit) transcends all worldly actions.

Difference between Dharma and Religion

Many people in the world consider religion as identical with Dharma. But Dharma is quite different from religion. Religion is like a river, Dharma is like the ocean. There is well-known saying:

"The ocean is the final destination of all rivers."

All rivers ultimately merge in the ocean. The essence of all religions, the goal of all scriptures, the objective of all aspirations is Dharma. It is totally wrong to equate the vast ocean of Dharma with the river of religion.

"Religions are many, but the path is one.
Jewels are many, but the gold in them is the same.
Cows are of many colours, but their milk is white.
Living beings are numerous, but the Indwelling Spirit is one and the same.
Flowers may be many, but the worship is one only." (Telugu poem).

Religions have come into existence for the purpose of regulating human life. What is common to all of them is the *Prema-thathva* (principle of Divine love). Man is governed by morality. In all countries morality and integrity should be like the lifebreath. It is only when men adhere to morality that human ideals like fraternity, equality and liberty can become meaningful in daily life. It is because moral values have been given the go-by that you find today society bedevilled by disorder and unrest. The world will have respite from violence only when progress in science and technology is accompanied pari passu by development of ethical and spiritual values. In the economic sphere, when human desires are governed by righteousness, a divine impulse will arise in man. When the quest for wealth and the concern for sensuous pleasures are based on Dharma (righteousness), the mind will spontaneously turn towards God.

Man's misbehaviour and natural disasters

In the vast cosmos, man is like a speck. Essentially, there is no conflict between man and creation, just as a child is entitled to enjoy the milk from its mother and the bee is entitled to enjoy the honey from flowers, there can be no objection to man enjoying the resources of nature. But as a result of uncontrolled desires and reckless exploitation of natural resources, Nature is exhibiting frightening disorders. Natural calamities like earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, droughts and floods are the result of disturbances in the balance of Nature caused by reckless exploitation of natural resources. Mankind today appears like a foolish man who is wielding the axe at the branch of a tree on which he is sitting. Men have to develop a sense of spiritual oneness. Our of that sense of oneness, love will grow.

Love alone can bind the whole of humanity into one unit. What do you see in this hall today? Here are people gathered from Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia and other countries. What is it that has brought them together in this small village? It is only love and the sense of oneness with others. The bliss of life is embedded in this love. Pure bliss is derived from this love. When this love is shared with others you have the bliss of collective joy. When your life dances on the waves of this love it attains the fulfilment of humanness. Man today does not recognise this sense of oneness. Man does not mean the body alone. Man has the mind, the intellect and the Atma (the Spirit). It is the combination of all these that constitutes true humanness. When the balance among these four constituents is upset, man is plunged in troubles. When man maintains the balance among these four, the nation will prosper.

The transformation process of man

The transformation of man is based on transformation of the mind. When men are transformed, the nation is transformed. When nations change, the world is transformed. Hence, if the world has to be changed, there has to be a mental transformation at the individual level. The human mind should be filled with love. The mind is a remarkable entity. When it is filled with wisdom, it makes a man a saint. When it is associated with ignorance, it runs into an

agent of death. Hence it has been declared that the mind is the cause of human bondage or liberation. All change, in education or other spheres, has to begin with transformation of the mind. Indifference, bad company, disrespect, arrogance and jealousy, these five tendencies reduce man to the level of the animal. No one with these vices can be called an educated person. To get rid of these vices, it is necessary to take note of some of the good qualities in animals and birds. Man can learn any number of good qualities from animals, birds, insects and worms. One animal which is viewed with contempt is the donkey. But there are quite a few virtues man can learn from the donkey. The quality of patience to be found in a donkey is not found even in man. Whatever burdens may be heaped on its back, it bears them all with forbearance. It puts up with any amount of beatings. Even when it is starved of food and water, it presents a calm face. Man has thus to learn the quality of forbearance from the donkey. The ant is one of the tiniest among insects. But there are many lessons to be learnt from it. The ant has a capacity for foresight. With foreknowledge of the rainy season ahead, the ant starts storing food from three months in advance. Then, there is the spider, from which lessons can be learnt. Determination is one of its traits. How many times its web may be destroyed or broken, the spider will go on remaking it with relentless determination.

Then, there is the dog. The dog is treated with neglect and indifference. But the fidelity displayed by a dog is not found in any other creature. Getting a few morsels of food from a man, the dog shows its gratitude to him by following him and wagging its tail out of affection. But such gratitude is lacking among students who have been nourished, educated and placed comfortably in life by their parents. Many do not have even a fraction of the gratitude displayed by dogs. Has their education or intelligence any meaning?

The supreme virtue of monogamy among birds

Next, take the example of the parrots. Conjugal fidelity is supreme quality among parrots. The firm attachment to each other in a parrot couple is not to be found even among highly developed human beings.

The story of how Valmeeki was deeply moved when a hunter killed one of two birds who were a loving couple is well known. When one of the birds died, its mate followed suit, unable to bear the pangs of separation. Out of the intense sorrow and compassion of Valmeeki, the first shloka emerged from his lips and that was the beginning of the great epic. When its mate dies, a bird will not seek another partner. It will starve itself to death. How many men care to follow the example of the birds in their devotion to monogamy? Many are ready to remarry after the loss of the first wife. The supreme virtue of monogamy is a quality man can learn from birds.

Thus, there are many useful lessons to be learnt from animals, birds and insects. Book knowledge alone is of little use. In fact, the human heart is the best teacher in the world. Time is a supreme preceptor. This vast Cosmos is the ideal book for all. And there is only one true friend and that is God. There is no need to go in search of a preceptor. Your heart is enough. If you follow the dictates of your heart, every action will be sanctified. It is necessary also to recognise the importance of Time. Time determines many of our actions in life. Time is a great teacher. The universe is a vast text-book. By properly studying what is happening in the cosmos you can learn any number of lessons. God is your best, unfailing friend at all times. All others are mere time-servers. People waste their lives believing in such petty fair-weather friends. Your best friend is residing in your heart as the Indweller.

"Your heart is your country"

Today the Chinese devotees are observing their national New Year Day here. What is the origin of the word "China"? It is derived from the two words "chung" and "kuo". "Chung" means the human heart. "Kuo" refers to the country. The word "China" therefore means that "My heart is my country". This concept is applicable to all countries and all religions.

For instance, Bharatha. It is derived from, the two words - "Bha" meaning "effulgence" and "Ratha" meaning "to rejoice". The heart is the source of effulgence. Bharatheeya is one who rejoices in the effulgence emanating from the heart. Every man is attracted to the heart. God is not confined to any

particular place. His mal abode is the heart.

The Chinese have esteemed the heart as their native land. The heart is subject to troubles and difficulties. From ancient times and to some extent even today, the Chinese have observed one ritual every morning before beginning their day's chores. They declare: "Difficulties are our friends. Let us invite them." The Chinese have looked upon difficulties as their friends. They have recognised that without trouble no good can be realised. They used to start the day's work with this thought before them. The Chinese also realised that true happiness comes from the satisfaction of a task well done.

In Bharath also there is the dictum,

"Uddhareth Atmanaatmanam" (Raise the Self by the Self).

What is it that can raise the Self? It is our own good conduct. Our good conduct is not for elevating the country, but for elevating ourselves. A whetstone is used for sharpening a knife, not for making the whetstone smoother. Likewise, in this world, your good conduct improves you and, as a result the world.

Work hard and follow the dictates of your conscience

There is a proverb current in China: "The most delicious food is that is got by hard labour." What is got by arduous effort is relished with joy. One who enjoys his food without having laboured for it is an idler. In China everyone works hard to earn his living. This cult of work should activate every human being. Unfortunately this is forgotten today.

From very ancient times, there have been close relations between China and Bharath. A short while ago a speaker mentioned how in the Chinese pantheon there are deities corresponding to the deities worshipped in Bharath like

Lakshmi, Bhudhevi, Kubera and others. Similarly a common saying current in China regarding government regulations is applicable also to the situation in Bharath. Comparing Government regulations to a net, the Chinese used to say that the very small fish escape through the holes in the net, while the very big break through it. Only the middle sized fish get caught in it. In Bharath also it is a fact that the lowest among the people are unaffected by Government regulations. The very rich and powerful drive a coach and force through them. It is only the middle class that suffers most from these regulations.

I have often indicated the rule by which people should govern their lives. They have to follow the dictates of their conscience. Make conscience your master. You can then face any difficulties in life and overcome them. Never give way to despair in the face of difficulties.

Enshrine God your heart; Help ever and Hurt Never

Realise the relationship between your body and God.

You are a limb of the society.
The society is a limb of the world.
The world is a limb of nature.
Nature is a limb of God.

Instead, of realising this integral relationship between man, nature and God, people are lost in the pursuit of wealth. This is totally wrong. People should enshrine God in their hearts and contemplate incessantly on the Divine. People today think of God only for money. God is sought only for money. Men resort to all devices to get money. Men go round wealth in adoration like the earth round the sun. This is the travesty of devotion that we witness today. Think of God. Money will come of its own accord. Today money rules every aspect of human life. Money has its place in life. But excessive wealth is a

source of harm to the individual and the nation. You must strive to acquire wealth that will give you real happiness.

Today there are millions of devotees all over the world. The world would be a much better place if all of them practised at least one good principle in their daily life. Jagadeesan from Malaysia who had spoken earlier called upon the devotees participating in the Chinese National Day festival in Prashanthi Nilayam to give up one bad habit and cultivate one good habit as a mark of their visit to Prashanthi Nilayam. In respect of Sai, it is enough if you observe one good precept, namely, "Help ever, hurt never." Indeed, you should cultivate the spirit of sacrifice. When you cultivate love with sacrifice, you will progress spiritually. When you plant a sapling you have to water it and manure it to make it grow. Likewise, for the plant of life, you have to provide the water of love and the manure of sacrifice to enable it to grow well.

Sacrifice! Sacrifice! Sacrifice!

The obsession with money is totally meaningless because you come with nothing in the world and leave it with nothing. Is it not more desirable to utilise the money on acts of charity? Many persons in Bharath deposit their ill-gotten wealth in Switzerland or some other country and leave the world empty-handed. The money you make in Bharath should be spent here for the people's welfare. Help the poor and the needy. Support educational and medical institutions. Money is given to you only for helping others. There is no meaning in hoarding it.

Sacrifice! Sacrifice! Sacrifice! That is the supreme quality you have to cultivate. The Vedas have stridently proclaimed that immortality can be got only through sacrifice and not by any other means. Only through sacrifice can there be real enjoyment of what you acquire. What you earn with one hand, give away with the other. Without sacrifice life is a waste.

I give you three formulae:

One - work, work and work.

Two - enjoy the fruits of your labour. Today there is no gospel of work in the country. Everyone wants to enjoy without doing hard work. Whatever be the troubles, work hard.

Three - use your earnings for public good. When this kind of renunciatory outlook develops among the people, the nation will prosper immensely.

Love all and Serve all

Prema and *Thyaga* (Love and Sacrifice) are the two most important ideals in life. Love all, even those who hate you. That is the index of your devotion. In the name of devotion, people are flocking to Prasanthi Nilayam at great expense. What is it you have accomplished by coming here? What have you learnt? Being a Sai devotee, if you practise even one or two good qualities like morality and integrity the nation will benefit immensely. There is neither truth nor morality among most people. "A people without morality are worse than a monkey," goes the saying. A great monkey served the Divine and became the recipient of His grace. Men today talk about devotion, but have no regard for the Divine injunctions.

Peace, truth and love are inherent in man. Why do you search for them outside? Manifest these qualities which are within you. You must cultivate forbearance and compassion. This is the way to foster the love principle.

Today the demon of selfishness has reared its head everywhere. If selfishness goes, divinity enters.

Today people are steeped in desires (ashalu in Telugu). How many live for the sake of ideals (ashayalu in Telugu)? People develop *dheha-abhimanam* (attachment to the body), but do not care to develop *dhesha-abhimanam* (love for the country). Man's primary spiritual effort today should be in the direction of getting rid of selfishness, narrow-mindedness and attachment to the body, and developing love of God, a broad outlook and devotion to the nation. Develop confidence in the Self.

Today is the Chinese New Year Day: It is a new year for the whole world, because every one's heart is his native land. Every human being is a resident in the kingdom of the Heart. Everyone should recognise his responsibilities in the kingdom of the Heart and not be concerned about his rights. What meaning is there in fighting for rights with a polluted heart? Your rights will be ensured if you discharge your duties prop-crime. There are officials who receive salaries in thousands. Are they doing enough work to justify those salaries? One who does not do enough work to justify his salary is a traitor to the nation. He is cheating the people. When you do enough work to justify your salary, you will be deriving boundless satisfaction. Duties must come first. That is the basis of Indian Culture.

A dog's example of Love and Loyalty

Let me tell you a story from my early years. I was then staying in the old mandhir in Puttaparthi. An English couple were living with Me at that time. They presented Me with a couple of puppies. They said that the presence of the puppies with Swami would give them the feeling that they were with Swami even when they were away. I accepted the puppies. They had been named Jack and Jill. How did they live with Me? At night when I went to bed, one would sleep near My head and the other at My feet. One day, the Maharani of Mysore came to Puttaparthi. She was a very orthodox lady. She would not take her food if she heard the bark of a dog. She sent a message to Swami that if there were any dogs in His premises, they should be kept confined in a room. In those days there was no direct approach road to Puttaparthi. The Maharani kept her car in Karnatapalli (on the other side of the Chithravathi) and came walking to Puttaparthi. There were no hotels at that time. The driver of the car had to come to Swami's place to take his food and get back. The Maharani said she was staying in Puttaparthi that night. The driver took his food and was returning to the car at night. As the driver would not be able to find his way in the darkness I told one of the dogs: "Jack, you better go with the driver and come back in the morning." Jack led the way and the driver was following the dog. They reached Karnatapalli. Then the driver slept in the car. Jack slept underneath the car. The driver got up in the morning. It was chilly outside. He was in a hurry to start the car and keep it

ready for the Maharani. He reversed the car for short distance. One of the wheels ran over the sleeping Jack and its back-bone was broken.

Students and scholars and all others should note how much devotion the poor dog had for Bhagavan. In great pain, the dog came dragging itself all the way to Swami's residence. It had to drag itself over the Chithravathi sands. It was profusely bleeding. At the gate of Swami's residence there was a watchman called Chakali Subbanna. He rushed to Swami and said - "Swami! Our Jack's spine is broken. It is crying as it is dragging itself." Bhagavan came out and called out: "Jack!" The dog came crying, collapsed at my feet and passed away. See, what devotion in an animal! It dragged itself all the way to give up its life at the feet of Swami. Before it passed away, it was gazing at Swami. I got some milk to be brought and gave it to the dog. It placed two of its front paws on my palm and gave up its life. What an amount of devotion in an animal!

After Jack's death, Jill gave up eating food. A few days later Jill died. Today, behind the old Mandhir, there is a samadhi for the dogs. What loyalty and what devotion in a dog! How much better mankind would be if only people had a fraction of the love and loyalty displayed by that dog?

Give up the bad and take the good

Today people have no faith. They remember God in times of difficulty and forget Him when they are all right. How many follow the ideals of Swami? They only multiply their desires. What greater folly can there be than this? There is one thing to be learnt by all people whether they are from China, Japan, India or America.

The God who is in all of them is one and the same.
Your love of God should remain unwavering, whatever may happen.
Love is God. Live in Love.
This one truth will protect you at all times.

Leave all your bad qualities here and take back good thoughts and good habits. That alone will justify your coming here. Become good and improve the society. When you go back to your country with good qualities, people will mark the change in you after your visit to Puttaparthi. Treat Prasanthi Nilayam as a spiritual workshop. No charges are levied here. Everything is free. I am ready. Make the best use of your stay here.

5. Transcendental value of Sathya and Dhama

Date: 13 February 1997 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

WHEN people from every part of the world have gathered here to rejoice in a great celebration, they are being described as "foreigners" and the residents of Prashanthi Nilayam as "natives." Who are the natives and who are the foreigners? When this question is examined, it will be seen that wherever Truth and Righteousness are respected and practised, the people there are to be deemed Bharatheeyas. By merely raking birth in Bharath, people do not become Bharatheeyas.

Bharatheeya culture proclaims the two virtues- Sathyam vada; Dharmam chara (speak the truth; follow righteousness). Whoever practises these two principles is a Bharatheeya. The whole world is one vast mansion. It contains many rooms. Each country constitutes one room in this mansion. Hence, the whole world should be considered as one home. When you regard all the limbs as parts of a body, you should consider the function of the heart in it. It is the heart that supplies blood to every part of the body. Likewise, Sathya and Dharma (truth and righteousness) constitute the blood sustaining all countries.

Cultivate the idea of oneness of humanity

God is considered and adored as the creator. God created the living creatures but these beings are "creating" God. Hence these beings are also creators. God is not created by Himself. It is the devotees who are "creating" God. The supreme devotee, Prahladha, was able, by the intensity and sincerity of his devotion, to make God manifest in a pillar. The child Dhruva could make Narayana manifest Himself in a forest. It follows that every being is a creator. Every human being is Divine. But, because of identification with the body, man considers himself an ordinary being. The difference between creation and the Creator relates only to the external forms - -Upadhi. When the physical form is ignored, what remains is the Spiritual Reality. In different countries, peoples of the world observe their respective festivals. Today is

considered as the beginning of their new year by the Chinese. There is no difference between Bharath and China with regard to the calendar. The Chinese have dates which, represent Uttharayana and Dhakshinayana (the apparent northward and southward movement of the sun). In Bharath we have lunar and solar months. In China also there is such a two-fold division. In Bharath in some parts of the country, the beginning of Uttharayana marks the commencement of the new year. They base their calendar on the lunar cycle - chandramasa. In other parts of the country, they go by the solar time - suuryamasa. In China, they have a lunar and a solar year. In the Bharatheeya view, there is an intimate connection between the moon and the mind and between the sun and the eye. In this perspective, we can see that basically there are no differences between different countries regarding matters like the almanac and the celebration of festivals. For all things, the root cause is the human heart. When the idea of oneness gets entrenched in the human heart, the ideal of human unity will be realised.

Sarva-ruupa-dharam Shantham Sarva-nama-dharam Shivam Sath-chith-anandha Ruupam Adhvaitham Sathyam Shivam Sundaram (The One Absolute, who is Being, Awareness and Bliss, is the embodiment of peace in all His forms. All His names are auspicious and He manifests the triune attributes of Truth, Auspiciousness and Beauty).

Truth, Goodness and Beauty constitute humanness

Sathyam, Shivam, Sundaram - Truth, Goodness and beauty - these three constitute the essential nature of humanness. In ancient times, this was the description given by Plato, the Greek philosopher. The Greeks could see the oneness underlying these three attributes. Plato expatiated on "Truth, Goodness and Beauty." Bharatheeyas expressed the same thing in the terms Sathyam, Shivam, Sundaram. Though there is a difference in the language of the words used, their essential meaning is the same. Such correspondence between concepts in Indian metaphysics and the doctrines of Christianity and other faiths exists in respect of ideas regarding the relationship between man, nature and God. Based on their different regional and ethnic differences, people in different regions of the world developed different faiths

and cultures. But the essence of all their beliefs is one and the same principle. That is the principle of love. There is no human being in the world without love. However, that love expresses itself in many ways. In a mental asylum there are people with many kinds of delusions. In a sense, the entire world may be considered as a mental asylum. There are in the world people crazy about money. There are others who have obsessions regarding their health and sickness. There are others who are crazy about power and position. In this manner every individual is obsessed with some desire or other. There are, again, some who are obsessed with the idea of God. Of all these forms of madness, the madness for God is most commendable.

Pray to the Divine and redeem your life

From birth to death, man is haunted by twelve kinds of worries. By worrying about God all other worries can be got rid of. You must seek to know that, by knowing which all else can be known, by attaining which everything else can be attained. The Upanishaths have declared: "If you knock, the door will open. If you ask, he will answer. If you seek, he will give you what you want." Every one knocks at the door and asks. What does he ask? he does not knock at the right door. You must knock at Moksha-dhvara (the door leading to liberation). Man today knocks at the door leading to hell. Man, who should seek the Bliss of the Spirit craves for earthly pleasures. Instead of seeking the presence of the Lord as the supreme bliss, man is distancing himself from the Divine.

You must pray to the Divine and redeem your life. You must enter the door leading to spiritual liberation. Today people are not seeking the grace of the Divine but are appealing to the devil for favours. How can divinity be experienced by such people? You need not go anywhere in this quest. All that you have to find out is what belongs to you. Your words or your writings do not belong to you. Only your actions are yours. Today there is no harmony between deeds and your words. Your writings have no relation to your real experience. Hence, you are unable to experience real bliss.

It is better to act than to speak. Speech is easy. Practice is difficult. There is real sadhana only when you practise what you profess. There must be

complete harmony between thought, word and deed. The ancients proclaimed the supreme quality of this Thrikarana Suddhi (triple harmony and purity). Where there is divergence between thought, word and deed, Vedhantha declares that it is evil. The triple harmony is the mark of high souled beings. The wicked revel in disharmony.

See Unity in Diversity

People should develop spiritual oneness and the triple purity. Then Divinity will manifest itself. The Divine is within you. Sin and merit are related to your actions. Hence, men should engage themselves entirely in pure and sacred acts. Vyasa defined merit and sin in terms of the good or harm you do to others - Paropakaram and Parapeedanam. Para should be understood as referring to the Divine. Whatever action is conducive to Self-realization is meritorious. Whatever action is unspiritual - antagonistic to the Self - is sinful. The one Self is present in all beings. To differentiate between different beings is sinful. To consider what is one as separate and divided is a sin. Paropakarah-punyaya (To help others is meritorious). The real meaning of this statement is "nearness" (upa) to the Divine (Para) is meritorious. Merit consists in getting closer to the Atma (the Self). This is the inner meaning of Vyasa's statement. Hence, you should not regard countries as different and languages as barriers. The underlying unity has to be understood. Different people use different words to describe the same thing, for example, watch. Whatever be the words used, the substance is the same. It is essential to see the unity that underlies the apparent diversity. When more and more people recognise this unity most of the world's problems will get solved. All social con-flictors will end when people learn to see the one Divine in all beings. It is the hatred born of divisive feelings which is the cause of deadly discord in society. The Athmik Principle is the means of liberation. Self-control is the means to secure divine grace.

Develop self-reliance with faith in God

Embodiments of love! There is no need to celebrate the year. Every second is the beginning of a new year. People celebrate year after year new year days,

but there is no change in their lives. The body grows from year to year but the life span is ebbing away at the same time. People should be concerned about this. Time is most precious. God is the over-lord of Time. Time wasted is life wasted. Never waste time because lost time is beyond recall. Do not waste time in idle gossip. Today you are celebrating the new year instead of thinking about God, who presides over the passage of years.

God is the basis for all that exists. Rely on God rather than on things which are dependent on God. Develop self-reliance on the basis of faith in God. This was the lesson which Jesus taught to a man who was starving. On the first day he gave the man some fish to eat. The next day Jesus met the man and asked him: "You ate the fish I gave you yesterday. How are you going to get the meal today? How long am I to relieve your hunger by giving fish day after day? You must know how to secure fish for appeasing your hunger. Then you will have no need to depend on others." What everyone has to learn today is how to be self-reliant and not depend on others. How is one to be self-reliant? By developing Atma-Vishvasa (Self-confidence). From the moment Bharatheeyas lost Self-confidence, all institutions in the country started to decline. People have to develop Self-confidence. They must adhere to Truth and Righteousness. Whoever has confidence in the Self and follows Truth and Righteousness is a Bharatheeya, no matter who he is. It is not their accident of birth that makes one a Bharatheeya. The three basic verities should be practised. Terms like "natives" and "foreigners" should not be used on territorial considerations. The terms should be applied on the basis of their beliefs and practices.

Realise that the Divine is within you

People should realise, as Shankara said, that only Truth and Righteousness are lasting and all other things, including this body, wealth and kinsfolk are impermanent. Manifest the truth within .you and put into practice that truth. What you need for spiritual progress are three things. A heart free from attachment and hatred, a tongue that is not tainted by untruth, a body not polluted by violence - the one who has these three is of sacred birth. Without these three, all penances and religious practices are of no use. You have to

pray incessantly for Divine grace to confer these qualities. Realise that the Divine is within you. Life is given to you to realise lasting bliss by the right use of the body, the mind, the intellect and the inner motivator - Anthahkarana. You have to acquire the wisdom to lead such a life based in the love of God.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

6. Service, love and sacrifice

Date: 07 March 1997 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Shivarathri

The individual self is always the eternal Self (Shivam); Shivam is ever the indwelling Spirit in the individual; The one who is aware of this oneness is verily the knower of the Self, none other. EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! Only the one who realises that there is no difference between Shiva and the individual is a true Atma-Jnani (knower of the Self). Scientists are seeking to explain the mystery of creation in various ways. The Science of spirituality has also been explaining creation in various ways. Whatever any one may say, what is perceived by us is the atom. Without the atom there can be no universe. Rocky mountains, wooded forests, the waters of the ocean, the mud of the earth and the flesh and bones of the body are all composed of atoms. No object will be perceivable without the presence of atoms. The food you eat, the water you drink, the objects you see and the earth you tread upon are all made up of atoms.

When you enquire into the nature of the atom, you realise that the whole world consists of atoms. The Veda described the Divine as "Anoraneeyan mahatho maheeyan" (subtler than the subtlest atom and vaster than the vastest object). Many regard the atom as something which is not visible to the eye. This is wrong. The atom consists of particles which are not visible. The ancient sages considered that the Divine was immanent in the atom. "Oh Lord! You are extremely subtler than the atom and vaster than the vastest object. You are said to be manifest in the 84 lakhs of species in the universe and declared to be omnipresent throughout the cosmos. How can we hope to recognise you?" (Telugu song).

Science and the Veda

For a thousand years scientists have been trying to explore the nature of the atom. But a long time ago, the young lad, Prahlada, knew that God was immanent in the atom and proclaimed that truth. He stridently told his father: "Do not have any doubts as to the presence or absence of the Divine from

one thing or another. The Lord is all-pervasive. You can find Him wherever you seek Him!" (Telugu poem). Young people should realise the superiority of spiritual power over the power of technology. Om, the Pranava Mantra contains within it the powers of Shiva and Shakthi. These two powers, Shiva and Shakthi, correspond to what scientists call electron and proton (the two constituents of the atom). Proton forms the nucleus of the atom. The electron is moving at great speed round the proton. The Veda has described the phenomenon in different ways. It has declared that Shiva and Shakthi are inextricably associated with each other. This corresponds to the relationship between the electron and the proton. Anterior to the electron and proton is the particle known as neutron. This corresponds to what the Veda has called Sath. In common parlance Sath is regarded as something effulgent. This is not correct. Sath, in fact, means darkness. Out of this darkness is born light. Out of the darkness called Ashanthi, comes the effulgence of Prashanthi. Thus darkness is called Thamah. One meaning of Tha is "nectar." The other meaning is garbha (womb). This womb is called by the scientists as "space". The second syllabic mah means poison or Time. Thus the word Thamas encompasses space and Time, which are the determinants of the human predicament.

Realise the oneness of individual and Divine

What is the origin of man? At the beginning there is garbha (space). In this garbha (womb or space) human life originates and has the form of a bubble. On the seventh day Oil the 15th day it takes the form of the embryo. On the 30th day it becomes foetus. On the 60th day, the head starts taking shape. On the 210th day, the foetus quickens with life. On the 240th day, the full body is formed. On the 270th day the child, comes out into the world. The Veda declared that space and Time are essential factors in human birth. Instead of understanding the miracle of human existence, men are wasting their lives in the pursuit of transient worldly pleasures. Although superficially it may appear as if there are differences between the findings of science and the declarations of the Veda, essentially there are no differences. The Veda has revealed many truths not discovered by science. Science has not yet found many of the truths declared by the Vedas.

People should try to find out how much of the powers of the Divine are present in man. Jeevi (individual) and God are not different from each other. The individual however, by his attachment to the body, is leading a mundane existence. The day man develops love of Spirit, he will realise the oneness of the individual and the Divine.

The external world is a reflection of the inner being

Men should understand the true relationship between the external phenomenal world and the world of the Spirit inside. The external world is a reflection of the inner being. All the happiness that he seeks from external objects is within himself. Take the example of the ocean. The water that turns into vapour from the ocean assumes a different form and quality. It acquires purity and sweetness and returns to the ocean in another form. Look at the changes it goes through in this process. Going up as vapour, becoming a cloud, coming down as rain, flowing as rivulets, it joins the ocean as a river. The change into vapour is Sathya (Truth). The formation of the cloud is Dharma (Right Conduct). Coming down as raindrops corresponds to Prema (drops of love). When the drops join to become a river, there is the flow of Anandha (Bliss). This stream of bliss merges in the ocean of Grace. Sometime or other what has come from the Divine has to merge in the Divine. This is the natural destiny of all living beings. Taking birth as a man, leading a godly life, one ultimately merges in the Divine.

Considering the Divine as formless, some scholars have raised controversies regarding this process. The truth is that there is no object in the world, which is formless. Even the minutest sub-atomic particle has a form. Only the ignorant can think otherwise. It was for this reason that the ancient sages adored the Divine in various forms. Holding that all forms are made up of atoms, they recognised the Divine in all forms.

Holiness of Shivarathri :Dedicate all actions to Divine

Shivarathri has a variety of mournings. Rathri implies the darkness of night. But Shivarathri connotes not darkness but the special sacredness of this

night. There is darkness in this night also. But this darkness is invested with auspiciousness. The reason is on this Chaturdhasi day (14th day after the Full Moon), the moon, who is the presiding deity for the mind, has shed fifteen of his sixteen digits. This is an auspicious time for having proximity to God. (Bhagavan sang a Telugu song to extol the days when good people gather to meditate on God, when kith and kin fraternise in the home, when hospitality is extended to strangers and when the needy are helped. These alone are real days, all other days are indeed days of mourning). The Upanishaths refer to the attributes of the Divine as Sathyam, Shivam, Sundaram. Plato regarded Truth, Goodness and Beauty as the attributes of the Divine. Shivam represents the principle of auspiciousness. It is associated with Truth on the one side and Beauty on the other. Shivarathri was regarded as a sacred day by the ancients. Experiencing bliss on that day they offered it to the world.

People should realise the impermanence of worldly pleasures and the transient nature of youth, wealth and progeny. People should turn their minds towards the eternal Divine. It may be asked: "If the Divine is present in all things, is there no difference between good and bad, truth and falsehood?" For the person who has the conviction that the Divine is present in everything, there is no good or bad. He sees the Divine equally in all things. Good and evil exist for the one who looks at these things in terms of these differences. In the Geetha, Krishna pointed out to Arjuna how he was the active force behind all events and that Arjuna should consider himself as an instrument of the Divine. When anyone acts out of the firm conviction that he is an instrument of the Divine and dedicates all his actions to the Divine, he will see no distinction between right and wrong. It is attachment to the body that produces the illusion of individual doership. When that attachment goes, there is realization of oneness with the Divine.

No doubt the body is necessary for certain purposes. But it should be regarded as an instrument and all actions should be performed as offerings to the Divine.

God is present in all irrespective of beliefs

Divinity is present equally in all, irrespective of their beliefs. The believers should conduct themselves on the basis that the Divine is present in them and redeem their lives by acting up to the injunctions of the Divine. Some scientists may deny God, but they do not realise that the powers of the electron and proton are derived from the Divine. God may be called by any name, but God is one. The atheists may adore something without calling it God, but nonetheless the Divine is present in it. Once some persons approached Buddha and put to him questions about God. Buddha told them: "Why are you wasting your time on these futile controversies? If you were told about God, you will not believe. Why should you waste my time on this matter? The basic requisites for life in this world are Sathya, Dharma and Ahimsa. (Truth, Righteousness and Non-violence). Regard Truth as God. Adhere to Truth. You will realise everything." Some people ask, "How are we to believe in God when we have no notion of his form?" This is sheer folly here is a flower. It has a form, but the fragrance emanating from it has no form. Can you deny the reality of the fragrance because it has no form? Fragrance has a form, but that form is manifested in the flower.

God acquires the form in which the devotee worships

Take, for instance, Prema. (love). What is the form of love? It is your fault if you do not recognise its form. Love has a form derived from the persons who exhibit love. Without someone expressing love, love cannot exist, just as fragrance cannot exist without a flower. So, in these examples we can see the inextricable relationship between what appears to be formless and the source of its form.

To take another example: Here is a person whose form can be described in terms of various physical features. But does this description in terms of height, weight reveal anything about his internal qualities like forbearance, peacefulness, compassion, love and sacrifice? Are not these qualities very real and significant? He is prized mainly for these qualities, not for his physical features. To judge him only in physical terms is meaningless. His formless virtues are more important. When one is judged in respect of his qualities, the

form is irrelevant. The utter ridiculousness of judging a person solely on the basis of his physical form was demonstrated by Sage Ashtavakra to the learned Panditts in Emperor Janaka's court when all of them laughed on seeing the crooked figure of Ashtavakra. The sage laughed even louder at all of them. When they asked him for an explanation, Ashtavakra told them that the scholars who laughed at his uncouth figure were no better than cobblers who judged things by the nature of the skin. Ashtavakra told them that "Pandithah Sama-dharshinah" (the truly wise person sees the Divine in all beings). Those who judge by the external form are no better than the cobblers. "I laughed at all of you because I wondered how the Emperor happened to esteem you all as scholars." This means that those who judge anything on the basis of the external form are utterly foolish. No purpose is served by trying to explain to a blind person the nature of something he cannot see. Likewise, how can anyone speak about God to a person who has no intimacy with the Divine or yearning for God?

Your conscience is the Divine. God dwells in the heart as a witness. This is the truth about the omnipresence of God. To experience the Divine within you, you have to cherish godly feelings. To acquire such feelings you have to perform certain Spiritual exercises. The formless Divine has to be worshipped in the form of Kama, Krishna or other forms according to one's preference. Just as air or water assumes the form of the container in which it is kept, God acquires the form in which the devotee worships Him. All forms are His. To worship God as immanent in every atom or cell in the body is the highest form of worship.

The Divine is both the lover and the loved

Embodiments of Love! Through love you can achieve anything. A man without love is as good as dead. Serve all with love. The Divine is both the lover and the beloved. He is the director of the play and he is also the actor. (Svami sang in Telugu about: the double role of the Divine in human affairs).

He will bring tears to your eyes; He will wipe away your tears. How does He do it? When you are immersed in worldly affairs He brings tears to your eyes.

When you are immersed in spirituality He wipes away your grief. He will drive you crazy. He will drive away your madness. Verily He is the ever blissful Sai. He makes the devotee crazy about Svami and makes him cry: "Svami! Svami! Svami!" he rescues the devotee from the crazy attachment to the world. He will make the hedonist miserable; He will make the miserable happy. An affluent pleasure seeker is rendered miserable. A miserable person is made happy. When a man becomes affluent he gets afflicted with the disease of worldly attachments.

Rid the country of the seven maladies

Today the world is afflicted with seven kinds of diseases. First: Business without morality. This is a major malady afflicting the world. Second: Politics without principles. Third: Education without character Fourth:Sustenance without sacrifice. Fifth: A harvest without labour. Sixth: Humanness without virtue. Seventh: Devotion without faith. What is the use of devotion without faith? What is the use of claiming to be a man without human qualities? How can you expect a crop without cultivation? What is the use of education without character?

Three things are most essential today. Morality in business, politics with principle and education with character.

Today the above mentioned seven diseases are causing all the troubles to the nation. Wherever you turn, there is disorder, misery and lean. Everyone should resolve to rid the country of these seven grievous ills.

Love is Divine: Live in Love

How are these diseases to be got rid of? Love is the only means. Love is God. Live in love. When love is developed, hatred will have no place. Injustice will be out of bounds. People will not indulge in falsehood. They will nor resort to wicked ways. People will follow the right path. Therefore, deem love as God. Buddha declared: "Ahimsa is the foremost virtue." Sathya Sai declares: "Love alone is the form of the Divine." Love all. Love is God's only property. It does

not belong to man. It is not a purchasable commodity It issues from the heart. It alone can be said to be divine. Divine love is different from human attachments. It is timeless. It is omnipresent. Make it your sole ideal. It is inherent in you. Manifest it in the proper way. If there is sugar at the bottom of a tumbler filled with water, you can make the whole water sweet by stirring the sugar and dissolving it in the water Likewise, your' heart is a tumbler. At the bottom, there is Divinity. Take the spoon of Buddhi (intellect), stir the heart by the process of sadhana. Then, the Divinity in the heart will circulate through the entire body. Then, every action of yours will be sweet, your speech will be sweet, your walking will be sweet, your looks will be sweet, your thoughts will be sweet. You will be sweet all over.

Realise that sweetness is within you. Turn your intellect inwards and. discover that sweetness by filling the intellect with love. Saint Ramadas proclaimed the same truth when he sang his song calling upon all devotees to share the sweetness of the Rama-nama. "Here is the Sweet of Rama's name. Eat it and enjoy the bliss. Do not go after any other silly things sold in the bazar. This sweet has been made out of the flour of the Vedas, mixed with the milk of the Mahavakyas, and is offered to you by the ancient sages. They made it with the sugar of inward contemplation and the ghee of pure thoughts, removed the taint of falsehood from it." The chanting of Rama's name costs you nothing. Why do you go after bad things, paying a heavy price for them?

The blissful name of Rama contains the essence of Vedas, is the goal of all spiritual endeavour and is the essence of all spirituality. All things can be accomplished by chaitanyam the Lord's name.

Strive to destroy the ego

Do not look upon Shivarathri as only an annual festival. Deem every night as a Shivarathri (holy night). Whatever and whenever you entertain sacred thoughts and contemplate on God, you have Shivarathri then and there. Shivam means goodness. It calls for the eschewing of egoism. Those who know Telugu can see how the letter Sa becomes Si by the shortening of the mark at the end of the letter Sa. The elimination of the ego makes all the

difference between Shivam and Shavam (a corpse). Every human being should strive to destroy the Ahamkara (ego). Unless the ego is eradicated, Divinity cannot be realised. Consider this example. Here you are, devotees who have come from distant parts of the world at great expense and trouble. Who sent you any invitation? Why have you come here? You have come to experience the love of Svami. Svami is moving amongst each of you with joy and laughter and filling you with happiness. It is because of Svami's abundant love that you are drawn to this place. If ego prevailed here, none of you would come here. It is the total absence of ego that attracts you to Svami. This was the feeling that animated the gopis of Brindhavan. Their only desire was to be near Krishna at all times and in any condition.

This is true relationship between the individual and God. But people are forgetting this and wasting their time. They should be prepared to make any sacrifice to realise God, which is the primary purpose of human birth.

Follow the example of Rama

Students! Whatever may be your parents plan for you or your own plans for your future, never give up meditating on God. Serve your parents. Follow the example of Rama, who became adorable as a God by His exemplary life. He sacrificed everything to uphold the plighted word of his father. Doing your duty is true yoga. Your duty as a student is to respect your teachers, revere your parents and earn a good name in society. After you get married, you must lead a virtuous and purposeful life in society. This is the culture of Bharath. It calls for a life of purity in thought, word and deed.

This is the primary message of Shivarathri. I am giving you three maxims which you have to bear in mind: "Seva, Seva, Seva." Never forget the duty to serve. For this you have to develop love. To develop love, you have to promote the spirit of sacrifice. Service will become meaningful when it manifests love that issues from sacrifice. Consider service as conducive to your own spiritual development. "Be good, do good."

7. Bhajans and bliss

Date: 08 March 1997 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Shivarathri

The goddess of prosperity walks in the wake of Truth; Fame follows sacrifice; Knowledge follows diligence; The intellect is governed by actions. (Sanskrit Shloka)

SATHYA-ANUSAARINI Lakshmi (As long as people adhere to Truth, prosperity will attend on them). Truth is that which is valid for all the three categories of Time - past, present, and the future. Truth is Divine. The one who adheres to Truth will lack nothing in the world. "Thyaga-anusarini Keerthi" (Fame will follow the man who has the spirit of sacrifice). In the world today both truth and sacrifice are rare. These two are the proper goals for human existence. "Abhyasa-anusarini Vidhya" (Knowledge is gained by the extent to which it is diligently pursued). Diligent study is essential for the acquisition of knowledge. The Geetha has declared that earnest practice leads to success in meditation. Meditation helps to promote the spirit of sacrifice. Peace is secured from sacrifice. Hence, diligence is essential for achieving anything. All actions in one's life are performed well through Abhyasa (constant practice).

Bad actions pollute the intellect

"Buddhih Karmanusarini" (Actions determine the course of the intellect). In the actions performed by the person, there are two types: the proper and the improper. Man's intellectual tendencies depend on the nature of his actions, good or bad. Bad actions pollute the intellect. Good deeds purify the intellect. Hence the condition of the intellect is determined by one's actions.

To ensure that one's actions are good, one has to cultivate good company. Association with the good influences the intellect in the right direction. Your company shows what you are. It is, therefore, necessary to cultivate the company of good people and foster good qualities. In this world, who is a true preceptor? One's heart is the true preceptor. Time is a true teacher. The

world is the best guide-book. God is the ideal friend. Hence, there is no need to search for a preceptor. The heart is your conscience. When you consult your heart or conscience, it tells you what is right. It is the right preceptor. It will not let you go astray. Then you have Time. It is going in the right direction. In any circumstance you cannot go against Time. Teachers are of two kinds: the painful and the illuminating. Time belongs to the type of teacher who illumines. Time is the devourer of all things in due course. But the Lord, Eeshvara, is master over Time itself. Therefore, one should act according to the needs of the Time, with full faith in the Lord. This is the proper way to act.

The cosmos is the best text

People read all kinds of sacred books- the Geetha, the Bible, the Quran, the Granth Saheb and others. All these books confine their reachings to specific subjects. They do not cover other subjects related to the physical, the social etc. But the cosmos itself constitutes the most comprehensive text-book, covering all subjects, the physical, the mundane, the ethical and the spiritual. The cosmos is therefore the best text. There is nothing you cannot learn from the universe.

However intelligent a man may be, he learns all that he knows from the world around him. Without the world knowledge cannot exist. In the distant past, the world was enveloped in darkness. For millions of years the world was covered by a heavy mass of clouds. Then started a downpour which lasted for thousands of years. This was followed by the formation of oceans, mountains, rivers and forests on the earth. The dissolution of the clouds gradually dispelled the darkness enveloping the world. Then, the sun and the stars became visible from the earth. Man has to learn many things from the phenomena taking place in the universe. Next, there is the question: "Who is one's best friend in the world?" There are any number of fair-weather friends. Who is a lasting friend, who will stand by you in weal and woe, who is pure and unselfish? God alone is such a friend. When you make God your friend, you will be free from all troubles. Your worldly friends may desert you any moment. But God will always be with you, above you, around you. Your

dearest and unfailing friend is God alone. All of you were engaged in the bhajans whole of last night. They appeared to be largely Vyavaharika (kind of ritual). What is the origin of this worldly ritual? It has come from Paramarthika (the spiritual). This shows that there is an element of spirituality even in worldly actions - whether it be the practice of a profession, or a business or the pursuit of knowledge. Worldly activities get sanctified by association with spirituality.

Equanimity is characteristic of the ocean

From the worldly activities arise what are called Prathibhasika activities (reflections of the worldly activities). What is the relationship between these three types of activities? The Paramarthika (spiritual) is like the ocean. From this arise the waves of vyavaharika (worldly activities). The main characteristics of the ocean are to be found in the waves also like chillness, saltiness, etc. Prathibhasika is represented by the foam arising from the waves. The foam has all the qualities of the ocean. The relationship between these three types has to be properly understood. Without the ocean, there can be no waves. Without the waves, there can be no foam. It is clear that without the Paramarthika (the spiritual) there can be no Vyavaharika (worldly) phenomenon. Without the Vyavaharika waves, there can be no Prathibhasika foam. Their interrelationship is comparable to a grandfather (the ocean), father (waves) and son (the foam). The ocean is not diminished by evaporation or swollen by the flow of river waters. This equanimity is characteristic of the ocean. It is free from egoism and possessiveness.

People, however, consider the three states. Paramarthika, Vyavaharika and Prathibhasika - - as different from each other. This is totally wrong. The Vyavaharika (worldly activities) should not in any way be divorced from the Paramarthika (spiritual). Only then can peace be got from worldly activities. What is the cause of sorrow in this world? It is the result of separating the worldly activities from the spiritual and considering them as distinct from the other. The transient nature of worldly activities should be understood. It is associating them with the spiritual that they acquire sanctity. The spiritual basis of all activity should never be forgotten.

Spiritualize the Bhajans with heart felt devotion

The bhajans this time were done in a ritualistic fashion. Greater attention was paid to raga, thala, laya and shruti (the melody, the beat, the rhythm and the tone). All these are vyavaharika (conventional qualities). To elevate the bhajans to a spiritual level what are required are true feeling and ecstasy of devotion. The songs should flow not from the lips but from the heart. When the songs come out of the heart they will be blissful for the ears. That heart is comparable to the ocean. Hence, the Lord is described as Hridhayavasi (the Dweller in the heart). The heart is the seat of compassion in man. Only when men are kind, you can call humanity "mankind".

Do not think that God dwells in some temple, shrine or place of pilgrimage. He is omnipresent and His abode in man is the human heart. When Naradha sought to know from Vishnu what was His permanent abode, the Lord replied: "Wherever my devotees chant my glories, I am present there." When God dwells in the heart, why should devotees seek Him elsewhere? Conduct your bhajans with a pure unsullied heart, oblivious to all worldly desires. When you chant the Lord's name with a pure heart, you will experience the Divine. "If a man, devotes one moment of the time devoted to thoughts of family, friends, business and wealth, to thoughts on the Lotus Feet of the Lord, he will have no need to fear the messengers of death." Men's thoughts today are wholly concerned with acquisition of material possessions, power and self. How much happier would they be if they devoted a fraction of their time to contemplate the glories of God. Hours, days, years are wasted in the pursuit of things of the world. One moment devoted to the thought of God will make all the difference. What meaning is there in acquiring millions? A contented man is happier than a millionaire. The poorest man in the world is the one who has insatiable desires. Be content with what you get and carry on your duties. This is Thyaga, a life of sacrifice.

Adhere to Truth and Sacrifice

Today the world needs Truth and Sacrifice. What does sacrifice mean? Today

there are millions of people who consider themselves Sai devotees. There is no need to go outside the Sai fold. If the Sai devotees alone adhered to Truth and Sacrifice, the entire world will be transformed. If you wish to change the world, these two principles are the recipe. Sathya (Truth) purifies the heart. Thyaga (sacri-fice) transforms the physical environment. By this double transformation the entire world is divinised. How long will men continue to wallow in the mundane world, forgetting .the Divine? You must yearn for God and redeem your life. Men desire to become millionaires. But how many of the millionaires have peace of mind? Money can give many things that are conducive to Comfort. But it cannot give peace of mind. It should be realised that the body and all the appurtenances of the mind have been given to man to enable him to achieve Atma-shanthi (spiritual peace). If spiritual bliss is not attained, all other physical attachments are worthless. Man has been endowed with a body to practise righteousness. Man has to rise above the level of birds and beasts. Dedicate your lives to the service of your fellowmen. Do not lead an idle life. Bharath has any amount of land and water. Why should people suffer from want? Because they are not engaged in the right type of activities. Many are wasting their rime. Time is God. Time wasted, is life wasted.

Pray to God and transform work into worship

In the worship of the Divine, there are two schools of thoughts - -those who worship the formless and those who worship the Divine in different forms. The differences over this issue are fruitless. Water that is formless acquire a form when it becomes ice. The formless water molecule and the ice block with the form are one and the same. Vedantha has clearly pointed out the futility of this controversy. People get confused by the way some scholars deal with spiritual subjects on the radio and TV. The teachings are often based only on bookish knowledge without any practical experience, Knowledge should be based on experience. For instance, the saltish water from the ocean that is turned into vapour by the rays of the sun becomes pure and sweet. It has no trace of salt in it. It has been transformed.

The same process takes place when the grace of the Lord's rays falls on the

polluted mind of man and transforms his thoughts into pure and sweet feelings. The importance of the mind in the process of transformation should be properly understood because the mind is the cause of bondage or liberation. Your actions are the cause of your happiness or sorrow. Do not blame others for your condition. Every thought, every word and every action has its reflection, resound and reaction. It is a sign of weakness to blame others for your troubles. You have to bear with the consequences of your actions. If they are unbearable, pray to God for relief. God alone can give relief in such cases. He is all-powerful and therefore take refuge in Him.

Pray to God and draw from Him the magnet of His grace and offer to the world the power of His electrical energy.

This is the energy which man can mobilise for the good of all. It is all-powerful, because it is Divine. It is within you. What a pity that people should be unaware of this and feel themselves powerless! All energy and all bliss are within us. Because of ignorance people are resorting to all kinds of useless exercises. They are unnecessary. Have full faith in your Atma-shakthi (spiritual power). Adhere to the truth of your faith, without criticising others. Whatever you do, have the name of the Lord on your lips and faith in God in your heart. Thereby work will be transformed into worship.

Enjoy bliss in silence

Today, you have to open your hearts and close your mouths. But people are doing exactly the opposite. This is treason to God. Practise silence as far as possible. The ancient sages practised mounam (absolute silence) as a spiritual discipline. Today people indulge in excessive talk over the trivial and the unimportant. When silence is practised, bliss will manifest itself. The one who talks much will do little. One who acts will talk little. I have been observing how the bhajans are sung. When the girls sing, the boys do not follow in chorus. When the boys sing, the girls do not respond. When both are singing the Divine name, why should not they sing in unison? What is the reason for this narrow separatism? This should be given up.

Once Emperor Akbar asked his court musician how would he account for the fact that a wayside beggar's music moved him more profoundly than the music of the state musician. The latter replied that while the beggar sang from his heart to please God, his music was constrained by the desire to please the Emperor.

You should sing whole-heartedly with the desire to please God. God makes no distinction between a proficient musician and a beggar in the street. It is the devotion and sincerity that matter. Merge your soul in the bhajans you sing. Spiritualise your bhajan-singing. Then you will experience real bliss.

Don't distort Svami's teachings for convenience

In following Svami's teachings people tend to follow them according to their convenience. For instance, when Svami said that there is only one caste, the caste of humanity, this statement is used as authority for uninhibited marriages between any two persons. This is a travesty of Svami's teaching. Caste differences are to be eliminated. But cultural differences should be respected. Svami has emphasised that every cultural group should adhere to its culture. Svami's teachings should be adhered to in their entirety and not selectively according to one's convenience.

I fervently appeal to all devotees to participate in the bhajans with their heart and soul and make community singing a blissful spiritual experience for one and all.

8. Right use of Time

Date: 07 April 1997 / Location: Brindavan

Like the oil that is in the til seed,
Like the presence of ghee in milk,
Like fragrance in a flower,
Like juice in a fruit,
Like fire in a piece of wood,
So does the Divine permeate the cosmos.

IF WE wish to discover the presence of the all-pervading Divine in the universe, we have to recognise the Divine in our daily life. Like the power of sight in the eye and the power of hearing in the ears, God manifests as consciousness in the human body. There is no place in the world where God does not exist.

Creation is a manifestation of God. It is the form of God. It is called *Prakrithi* (Nature). Hence, man, who is a child of Nature, is inherently Divine. Man is born with Divine qualities. Just as a sapling grows out of a seed, a flower from the sapling and fruit from the flower, God is the seed of the entire cosmos. Man is intrinsically a combination of morality, righteousness and spirituality. Unfortunately, forgetting these basic qualities, man today is bereft of morality, righteousness and spirituality. When we consider the sacredness of human birth, it is a shame that man should be so degraded today.

Man is an embodiment of *Sath-Chith-Ananda* (Being, Awareness and Bliss) which are the attributes of the Divine. But forgetting his humanness, man has descended to the level of the animal and behaves like a demon. People do not respect the words of elders or follow the teachings of the wise.

In the land of Bharath where virtues like truth, righteousness, forbearance

and compassion were highly esteemed, today cruelty, selfishness, intolerance and ill-feeling are rampant. Love is hardly present anywhere. What passes for love is not real love at all. There is a simulacrum of love for selfish purposes.

Many people are installing the statues of great men. While installing these statues, they are giving a burial to the teachings of these great men. Why carry on these ostentatious shows? It is not fitting for human beings to install statues and ignore the teachings.

The trinity in man: Purity in thought, word and deed

The true nature of the trinity - Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshvara - should be properly understood. They symbolise the qualities of Sathva, Rajas and Thamas which are present in every human being.

Who is Eeshvara? The Veda has described Eeshvara as Atma. It has proclaimed the identity of the heart with Eeshvara.

"Eeshvaras-sarvabhoothanam" (Eeshvara dwells in the region of the heart of every living being)

declares the Geetha. Hence, Eeshvara is described as "*Hridhayeshvara*" (the Lord of the heart). The seat of thoughts is the mind. The mind has been described as symbolising the form of Vishnu. Vishnu means one who pervades everything. The mind has the power to reach out for anything in the universe. Hence the cosmos is rooted in the mind. The thoughts emanating from the mind find expression in *Vak* (words or speech). Thus, the heart, the mind, and speech together constitute humanness. Sanctifying these three has been described as *Thrikaranasuddhi* (purity in thought, word and deed). The worship of the Trinity really calls for purification of Vishnu (mind), Eeshvara (heart) and Brahma (speech). Men today are immersed in transient worldly activities. They should sanctify all actions by purifying their feelings.

Develop good thoughts and do good deeds

We are celebrating this day as New Year Day. The new year is called Eeshvara. Eeshvara means one who is endowed with all forms of wealth. People greet the new year as if it is going to confer on them some new benefits. The good or evil, the gains or losses, the renown or infamy experienced by people are not the outcome of the passage of years. They are the consequences of their own actions. *Samvathsara* (the year) is one of the names of God. Because God is associated with time. He is also known as *Kalatmaka* (Time-spirit). Hence, we should not consider the Lord, who is the spirit of Time, as likely to cause good or ill to us. Our actions, good or bad, bear fruits, according to their nature.

There is no need to wait for a new year to bring new tidings. Every moment is new. Many are wondering what troubles and losses the new year will bring. For all our troubles and difficulties the year is not responsible. Our conduct alone is responsible. If our actions are good the results will be good. Bad actions will lead to bad consequences. People think that good and bad are related to bad time. Not at all. Their thoughts are the cause. Hence, they should develop good thoughts and do good deeds. They should cherish good feelings and associate with good persons.

People should realise the preciousness of Time. Most of the time available is wasted by people. This is utterly wrong. Time should be used always for right purposes. That is the foremost duty of every man. Waste of time is waste of life. The Lord of Time protects those who take refuge in Him, even against the Lord of death, "Kala". Time takes its revenge on those who misuse it. A nation's prosperity is dependent on how people make use of their time in the performance of good actions.

Lack of unity is the cause for present situation

Bharatheeya culture is based on two fundamental principles - "Speak the truth. Follow righteousness." The heart is the seer of righteousness. It should

be filled with compassion. As the In-dweller in the heart is the same in all beings, people should cultivate the spirit of unity. Shivaraj Patil in his speech earlier pleaded for unity among the people he also urged that in addition to unity and purity, there should be love. When unity, purity and love come together, oneness is experienced.

What is the situation today? Where is unity to be seen? Today nation is divided against nation. There are conflicts between states and within them. There are disputes over borders between states. When there are inter-state disputes, how can there be unity in the nation as a whole? All are brothers; all belong to the human fraternity. There should be unity among all the people. All should strive to promote the reputation of the nation. No one can claim any right to a particular state. All have equal rights. "The one Spirit is the Indweller in all beings." If this truth is recognised there will be no room for internecine conflicts. Selfishness is at the root of all conflicts in the world. All are human beings. The Caste of Humanity. The Religion of Love. The Language of the Heart. This unifying truth should be recognised. Everyone is constituted of the same five basic elements. Why, then, there should be differences between them?

Render benefit to society

All claim to be devotees. But if they are real devotees, why should there be differences amongst them? What is the source of these differences? What is the cause of envy?

The truth is that people merely call themselves devotees. It is a delusion. They should examine whether they have the qualities of devotees. Everyone seeks to know what good he can derive from other individuals or from society. No one asks himself what good or benefit society derives from him. Start with rendering benefit to society.

Everyone goes about trying to see what he can get from society. Today, thanks to the influence of the Kali Age, two kinds of diseases have grown. One is the insatiable thirst for wealth. In every city there is a mad rush for making

money. Everyone is caught up in this craze for money. No doubt money is necessary, but only up to a limit to meet one's needs. Owing to excessive desire people lose all sense of proportion. Men turn into demons in the pursuit of wealth. It may be asked whether at least they make good use of their immense wealth. No, ultimately, the money may fall in the hands of robbers or others. What you get from society, give it back to society. That is the primary value to be cherished by every one.

The second malady is the thirst for power. The thirst for power and position is unquenchable. Afflicted with these two maladies man is converting the whole world into a madhouse.

Do your duty sincerely

The desire for wealth and power is not wrong as such. But wealth and power should be used for right ends. Whatever position you occupy, see that it is used worthily. A cobbler stitching shoes is pursuing as worthily an occupation as a Prime Minister governing the country. Therefore, everyone has to do his duty properly. There is no high or low in these matters. To each person, his occupation is a matter of pride. Hence, do your duty sincerely. Everyone should be filled with this feeling. He should see that he does his job well without any lapse or defect. When everyone does his duty in this spirit the well-being of the whole world will be automatically ensured.

People proclaim that they desire the well-being of one and all in the world, but they do nothing to promote it. They are concerned only about their own well-being. This is not the right attitude at all. This year goes by the name Eeshvara. At least in this year everyone should cultivate the *Eeshvarabhava* (godly feeling) and live in amity with each other. Every one should be filled, with the feeling that the Divine dwells in his heart - that the heart is Divinity itself - that mind should be filled with godly thoughts as it symbolizes Vishnu. No mean thoughts should be allowed to enter the mind. The mind should not be allowed to go astray. Brahma is said to have emerged from the navel of Vishnu. He symbolises speech. When the trinity are seen as symbols of the Divine qualities in man, man will discover the divinity within him. There is no

need to seek the Divine outside one's self. It is futile to go on pilgrimage. The scientists are committing the same mistake. They are exploring outer space, but are making no effort to explore the heart within.

Service to society is service to God

The devotees are going from one mutt to another. Of what avail is it? The Divine resides in your heart. Seek Him within you. God is omnipresent. God is in everyone of you. All of you are Divine. Do not harm anyone. Develop such qualities. Sage Vyasa's ultimate advice was: "Help Ever; Hurt Never."

It is disingenuous on the part of people to plead that in their busy preoccupations they have no time to think of God. Persons who waste their time watching TV or playing cards in clubs cannot pretend that they cannot spare a few moments for God. Make proper use of time. Time is Divine. Dedicate every activity to God. Seek to serve society and your fellow-beings.

There is no need to worship inanimate idols, but ignore the needs of living beings around them. What kind of worship is it which ignores the needs of fellow human beings? God comes in human form. Human beings are Divine. Once Emperor Ashoka was going round his empire together with his minister. At one place he saw a Buddhist monk. He went up to the monk and bowed his head before the feet of the monk. The minister felt unhappy over the emperor's action. "Should the head of the great Emperor Ashoka be placed at the feet of an ordinary monk?" he thought. After returning to the capital, the minister expressed, his feelings to the emperor. He told Ashoka: "The head of the emperor is supremely precious. Is it fitting that it should be placed at the feet of a mere monk?" This, he said, saddened him. Ashoka did not give any reply. He smiled and retired, to his apartment.

Ashoka teaches a lesson of humility

Ashoka was waiting for a suitable time. After a few days, he summoned the minister and told him: "I want three heads." "What are they? I shall certainly get them," said the minister. Ashoka said: "The heads of a goat, a tiger and a

man." The minister went out, found a goat and got its head. He went hunting in a forest and obtained the head of a tiger. He went to a cemetery and got the head of a dead man. He informed the emperor that he had brought the three heads as desired by Ashoka. The emperor directed the minister to take the three heads to the market-place, sell them and bring proceeds. In the market, the goat's head and the tiger's head found ready buyers. But there was no buyer for the human head. The minister returned to the emperor and told him that no one was willing to buy the human head. The emperor told him to give the head free to anyone who might accept it. No one came forward to accept it.

The minister reported to the emperor that there was no one to receive the head even as a free gift. The emperor then told the minister: "This head has value only when there is life in the body. When life is gone, it is utterly valueless. Therefore, even while there is life, place your head at the feet of the noble ones and secure their blessings." The moral of the episode is that you must make proper use of the body while there is life in it. What is wrong in prostrating before a monk? Many atheists as well as believers criticise those who offer their prostrations to holy persons. Such prostrations represent use of the body given to human beings.

What is meant by *siras* (the head)? It is the storehouse of intelligence.

"Prajnanam Brahma" (constant integrated awareness is Brahman)

declares the Upanishad. The head bears prajnanam as long as there is life in the body. When life leaves the body, prajnanam also goes.

In the Mahabharata war, towards the end, Dhuryodhana was on his last legs. Bhima was approaching him with intense bitterness. Dhuryodhana lay on the ground gasping for breath. Bhima kicked Dhuryodhana's head with his foot. Dhuryodhana said: "Bhima! I could have shown my strength if I had been in

possession of my vital powers. To kick my head when I am dying, is it heroic on your part? Very soon, crows and vultures will feed on my dead body." The head has its value while there is life. Hence, the head should be used while, you are alive to acquire merit by placing it at the feet of the holy ones. This is the value of prostrating before noble souls.

God is the only constant companion

Hence, while one is alive, one should engage himself in good deeds and lead a sacred and meaningful life. All relationships are confined to the living. God alone is the only unfailing kinsman throughout life and beyond it. He is the only constant companion wherever you may be. Realise that life is impermanent. Only your good deeds will protect you. Peace, truth and virtue have to be acquired only through your actions. Achieve proximity to God and then become one with God.

Today you call yourself human. If you develop your devotion to God, you can divinise yourself. Divinity is your real nature. This has been proclaimed by the Upanishads in the famous declarations,

'Aham Brahmasmi," Ayam Atma Brahma," and "Thath-thvam-Asi"
(I am Brahman, This Atma. is Brahman and That thou art).

Develop this conviction, with confidence and courage.

You are prepared to believe in the words of an astrologer. Once a king Summoned an astrologer, who had acquired some reputation. The astrologer felt proud that he had been invited by the king himself. Most astrologers are full of ego and conceit. The astrologer examined the king's horoscope. Because of his conceit, he did not realise how he should speak on specific occasions. He told the king after examining the horoscope that all his sons would die early. The king was very angry. He ordered the servants to take the

astrologer to prison. The prediction was correct, but it should have been conveyed to the king in an appropriate manner that would not cause consternation. The king summoned another astrologer to verify whether the earlier astrologer's prediction was correct. This astrologer was a man of humility. He examined the king's horoscope and said: "Maharaja! You have a very long life. Your sons may not live so long." This manner of conveying the prediction was more satisfying to the king.

Sweetness in speech is essential

Sweetness in speech lies in the words you use and the manner of speech. The first astrologer, by predicting the premature deaths of the king's sons, provoked his anger and displeasure. The second astrologer conveyed the same prediction in a less unpleasant way by predicting long life for the king, though it would mean his outliving his sons. This means that even in conveying truth one should see that it is not conveyed in a harsh or unpleasant manner. Even an unpleasant truth should be conveyed in soft words. For instance, if you see a blind man, you should not ask him brusquely: "Oh you blind fellow! Come near me." It is bound to wound his feelings. How much better is it to go near him say, "Oh Surdas! Please get up." The words you use should be sweet and pleasing. For this, you should have love in your heart. **Only the man who fosters love in his heart is a true human being.** A man without love is a lifeless corpse.

This is the New Year Day. Its name, "Eeshvara", holds the promise of all prosperity in the coming months. It is also associated with the heart which is the abode of the *Eeshvara* (Divine). From today try to cleanse the heart of whatever impurities there may be in it. How is this to be done? One, by meditating on God. Secondly, by service to society. By these two alone is purity of the heart achieved. If you secure the love of God, you can secure anything. There is love in you. Use it to win the love of God.

Pray for God's love and bliss

Embodiments of love!

Many pray to God all over the world. They pray for the realisation of worldly desires of one kind or another. This is not the right kind of prayer. You should pray to God for the grace of His love. That love is everlasting. It is infinite. God has another attribute. He is the embodiment of bliss. He is Sath-Chith-Ananda (Being, Awareness, Bliss). Pray to God to confer that bliss on you. God's bliss is boundless and everlasting. All mundane pleasures are transient and ephemeral. Only he is a true devotee who prays to God for his love and bliss. One who prays for other trivial things is no devotee at all. Worldly benefits come and go. They are not the things for which you should prate. Seek what is eternal.

Pray for God's love and bliss. Seek to realise your Divinity. Then you will experience the Divine in the entire cosmos. You will experience the bliss that fills the universe. When you see the world with the eye of divine bliss, you will find bliss everywhere. If there is hatred in your vision, you will see hatred everywhere. Hence, change your vision to start with. Look at the world with the vision of peace, love and compassion. Then the whole world will appear loving and peaceful. When your heart is filled with love, you will experience the Divine in the entire cosmos. See the Divine in everyone. Eschew hatred and ill-will. After years of devotion, many still lack a broad outlook and an all-encompassing love.

Embodiments of love.

Promote love in your hearts incessantly - the love that is immortal and infinite.

Young men have to spring into the sphere of action and strive to the best for the building up of a happy peaceful world. They must shed the desire for power. The desire to uproot corruption and immorality, and the urge to work hard should firmly be implanted in the heart of every student. Mother India's future depends on them and she is waiting for them. Even as it is the duty of children to serve and please their mother, it is the bounden duty of every

child of Mother India to make her happy. To serve the Motherland selflessly should be the sacred ideal of one's life.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

9. The Saints of Tamilnadu

Date: 10 April 1997 / Location: Chennai

EMBODIMENTS of love! The human being is a combination of Naithikam (morality), Dharma (righteousness) and Adhyathmikam (spirituality). All three constituents are con-rained in man. Hence, to recognise the Divine in man, his humanness should not be divorced from his Divinity. Divinity is immanent in man. Men consider themselves as mere human beings. This is nor so. All of them are manifestations of the Divine. It is because men do not recognise this fact, all kinds of confusions arise in respect of human activities in the phenomenal world. Every person should develop the awareness that he is Brahman - "Aham Brahmasmi." Only then will he understand his true nature. God is not distinct and apart from man. Bharath has been conveying profound truths to the world from ancient times. It proclaimed the universal message: "Lokassamasthas-sukhino bhavanthu" ("Let all people everywhere be happy"). Unfortunately, because of attachment to the things of the world, the people have lost this sense of universal well-being and are wasting their precious lives. Worldly wealth and comforts are transient. Bharatheeya culture has glorified adherence to Truth and Righteousness.

There is nothing greater than forbearance

God is the Indweller in the human heart (spiritual heart). There is no meaning in going elsewhere in search of God. Realising this, men should lead a life of kindness to all beings. A man without kindness is an animal.

There was once a person in Tamilnadu who belonged to a place named Puumpuhar on the banks of the river Kaveri. He used to earn a living by weaving cloth and selling it. In the same place there was a rich man whose son was a naughty boy. This lad came to the weaver and asked what was price of the sari he was selling. The man replied: "Three rupees" (the price of those days). The lad tore the sari into half and asked what was the price of half the sari. The weaver replied- "A rupee and a half." The lad tore it again into two and asked what was the price of the torn piece. The man replied-"It is

worth twelve annas" (three-fourths of a rupee). The weaver did not get angry at the lad's behaviour. He was calm and unruffled. The young lad was astonished. He asked the weaver: "How did you acquire this quality of Kshama (forbearance)?" The man replied: "Forbearance is truth. It is right conduct. It is non-violence. It is a source of joy. It is heaven itself. It is the summum bonum in this world. There is nothing greater than forbearance in this world." The weaver composed numerous poems in praise of Kshama (forbearance). This work is known as "Thiruvachakam." Its author is none other than the Saint Manikkavachakar. Manikkavachakar, who achieved the highest goal of life by the quality of forbearance, brought glory to Tamilnadu by his devotional songs. Over the centuries many other saints known as Alvars were born in Tamilnadu.

"Everything belongs to God"

Here is another example: Among the various Tamil kingdoms, the reign of Pandyan Kings is famous. One of the Pandyan rulers wished to develop his kingdom by breeding horses. He had a young minister in his court. He was a man of character, full of piety and devotion. He led a pure life. He led a life of integrity and dedication. The king gave him the necessary money and commissioned him to purchase horses. The minister set out on his mission with his escorts. On the way he saw a Shiva temple in ruins. There he saw a holy man, Shivayogi. Conversing with the yogi and listening to his teachings, the minister stayed with him as a disciple. He lost interest in the mission of buying horses. He was immersed in the contemplation of God. He used the money he had brought with him for the renovation of the Shiva temple. This news reached the Pandyan King. He summoned the minister and charged him with misusing the money that had been given to him for buying horses. The minister replied: "I have not misused the money. Everything belongs to God. I have used the money as an offering to God." The king asked: "Who gave you the money?" he replied: "It all came from God. You did not earn it. It was all a gift from God. And I offered it to God". The king sent the minister to prison. But because an innocent man had been sent to jail, the king could not sleep or take food. The prisoner was singing poems in praise of God. These poems have become famous as "Thirumanthram." This work is esteemed as another

Veda in Tamilnadu. The author is known as Thirumuular. Such a sacred land as Tamilnadu has witnessed a decline in spirituality. Selfishness is rampant. Very few are filled with fear of sin or love of God. Fear of sin, love of God and morality in society have become scarce. People can experience God if they adhere to the path of truth. Very few pray to God for His grace. Most people pray for material benefits which are ephemeral. The sacred and precious human life is being wasted in the pursuit of trifles. Men are stricken with the maladies of the craze for wealth and power. What is earned should be used for the benefit of the society. There is one other disease with which all are afflicted to varying degrees. It is the disease of Ahamkara (egoism). There is no basis at all for this conceit. There is no reason at all for anyone feeling proud about one's wealth or any other possession. The only thing about which one should feel proud is one's goodness. People should cultivate love and cherish the feeling of oneness with all beings.

Embodiments of Love! All your bhajans, penances and the like are of no avail unless you have a pure heart filled with love. It is like preparing food in an untinned vessel. It is bound to get spoilt. It is to develop a loving heart that you have to embark on the spiritual path. This pure love is the direct path to God. It is love which is unbounded and divine. The love of God should not depend on whether your prayers are fulfilled or not. Remember what ordeals the sages and saints passed through in their devotion to God. They braved all difficulties and earned lasting fame as great devotees. Life is a challenge- Meet it! Life is a game- Play it! Life is love- Enjoy it! Life is Awareness! The best way to love God is to love all, serve all.

10. Serve the Nation with pure hearts

Date: 11 April 1997 / Location: Chennai

Life in this world is impermanent; Youth and wealth are transient; Wife and children are not lasting; Righteousness and renown alone are lasting. IN this mundane world, human life is like a water bubble. Truth is like a fleeting cloud that does not stay long. Wealth is impermanent. Wife and children are equally impermanent. Dharma and fame are the only permanent things in the world. Fire emerges from the rubbing of two sticks. Butter emerges from the churning of milk. By constant meditation on name and form Divinity is experienced. Listen, oh valiant son of Bharath! (Telugu poem).

God is omnipresent. Just as there can be no light rays without the sun, this cosmos cannot exist without God.

In the modern age young people consider the phenomenal world as the only reality. This is not so. "Having taken birth in this impermanent and sorry world, adore Me," says Krishna in the Geetha.

The life span of man is melting away every moment like a block of ice. Youth is transient. The only permanent and changeless entity is the Divine. Forgetting this, man is going after fleeting, trivial pleasures.

What is it that is permanent in this world? What is the purpose of human life? When one puts these questions, he does not get the right answers. Men pursue studies, jobs, wife and children in the search for happiness. They find no peace in any of these. Why? Desires are the cause of peacelessness. Without purifying the heart, all desires can only lead to unrest. Moreover, impurity in the heart is the source of many diseases. When the heart is pure, man will be free from disease.

How, then, is the heart to be purified? There is no other way except cherishing godly thoughts. All other rituals are of no avail except to provide temporary mental satisfaction. But the mind does not get satisfied easily. It is

continually wavering and is uncontrollable. What should be done is to divert the mind towards God.

The greatness of Rama's name

Once, a lady approached Kaushalya. When Kaushalya enquired who she was, the lady replied: "Mother! Don't you know that my son leapt over the sea in one jump? I am the mother of Hanuman." A short while later, another lady came there. She informed Kaushalya that the sea over which Hanuman leapt in one hop, was drunk by her son in one gulp. "I am the mother of Agasthya, who performed this feat," she said. Kaushalya smiled on hearing their claims. She said: "For your son leaping over the sea or for your son drinking the waters in one gulp, it was the name of Ramachandhra which made it possible. I am the mother of Rama." The three ladies were conversing in this manner. There is a saying that when three ladies meet even stars will tumble down during the day!

While they were discussing who among them was great, Rama joined them. "What are you discussing?" He asked. Kaushalya said: "Son! By chanting your name Hanuman was able to leap over the sea. This was possible because of your grace." She went on: "Again, by the power of your name, Agasthya drank the sea in one gulp. This also was by your grace. I am supremely fortunate in giving birth to such a son." Rama, who was utterly egoless, then told the three ladies: "These fears are not the result of my grace. This body was given the name Rama at birth. It is the power of this name that has enabled them to accomplish such heroic feats. It is because this name was given to me I was able to overcome the valiant Ravana." Thus, the name of the Lord is all powerful. By chanting the name of God, all latent powers in man are awakened.

Only the Divine name helped Dhraupadhi

You all know Dhraupadhi. Her husbands were great heroes including the powerful Bhima and the valiant Arjuna. In their presence, Dhuryodhana sought to humiliate Dhraupadhi in the open assembly. Neither the powerful

Bhima, nor valiant Arjuna, nor the very embodiment of Dharma, Yudhishtira, ventured to come to her rescue. Ultimately she cried out: "Oh Krishna! The kinsman of the hapless!" Physical prowess did not come to the rescue of Dhraupadhi. Only the name of the Divine came to her help. People tend to treat lightly the name of the Lord. They do not realise the potency of the two syllables in the name of the Lord. All the powers of the cosmos are contained in those two letters. You must understand properly the significance of the name and use it the right way. Namasmarana (chanting the Lord's name), is the panacea. It is the easiest path to Godrealisation. It is the boat that will take people across the ocean of mundane existence. How does the chanting of the Lord's name transform the devotee? Every word that we utter sets in motion waves that fill the world. The radio waves sent out from the broadcasting station in Delhi reach out to every part of the world.

Namasmarana is the best way to purify the heart

Today the atmosphere is filled with the discordant and disturbing noises of various kinds. These radio waves get into the minds of people and pollute their thoughts. Hence, if we wish to listen to pure sounds, the atmosphere must be free from pollution. The pollution cycle starts from smoke and clouds and ends in the food we eat. Hence the state of our minds depends on the kind of food we consume. The nature of the food depends on the environment. The environment is determined by human actions. Today men's actions are not along right lines. Most devotees are like the fruits of the fig tree' attractive to look at from the outside, but infested with worms inside. Devotees should strive to purify their hearts. For this purpose they have to chant the Lord's name.

The effect of Nama-smarana has to be properly understood. Chanting the Lord's name purifies the environment. The first step is to purify one's own heart. Transform yourself before you set out to transform others. The role of bhajans in purifying the atmosphere should be recognised. In this context, the role of community singing should be understood. Singing bhajans in your home, you may indulge in your fancies and derive whatever joy you get therefrom. Sankeerthan (community singing) calls for whole-hearted, soulful

singing, which moves the hearts of the listeners. Bhajans should not be a routine ritual. You must put your heart and soul into the singing.

In reciting the names of the Lord you have to bear in mind another her. When you recite the names thousands of devotees are listening. You must chant names which are familiar to all of them. You should not expect people to follow whatever you sing. You should see that they can easily respond to your song. The names you chant should be short and sweet. If you use big words and complicated terms, the devotees will not be able to follow you. In that situation they may get depressed. What can they do when they do not hear you properly and cannot respond in chorus? They get disgusted.

Simplify the bhajans

Therefore, in your bhajans use short names like Rama, Krishna, Allah, Yesu and so on. Then all would be able to follow you with ease. If you use high-sounding words, few can follow you. Eschew any aversion to any faith or nation. Have no ill-will towards anyone. Do not cause hurt to anyone. Look upon all alike. This feeling of oneness should spread all over the world. Krishna declared: "The entire cosmos is sustained by a fragment of my potency" This means that the Divine permeates the entire cosmos. What, then, is our duty? To fill our hearts with love. Then the whole universe will be filled with love. There is no use in singing bhajans if the singers hearts are filled with jealousy and hatred. There is no greater spiritual recipe for people in the Kali Age than the chanting of Hari's nama. Foolish people speak derisively about the bhajans conducted in the presence of Svami. They have no idea of the joy derived by the devotees from the singing of the Lord's name. Will the bees which are fond of honey in the lotus go after any other flowers? By constant eating even the bitter leaves of the neem tree acquire a sweetness of their own. By spiritual sadhana all objectives are achieved. (Telugu poem).

Adhi Shankaracharya's "Bhajagovindham"

Wherein lies the greatness of chanting the Lord's name? This was the

discovery made by Adhi Shankaracharya, the supreme exponent of Adhvaitha (Non-dualism), who declared that there was only one Absolute and no second. Even he had to seek recourse to dualism because he found that apart from chanting the Lord's name there was no easy way to experience the Divine. Out of this conviction was born the famous devotional song "Bhajagovindham" (Svami sang stanzas from the song).

The message of the song is clear. There is no meaning in dry scholarship. The only thing that will save a man in his last moments is adoration of Govindha. Shankara called upon youth to realise that there is no room for feeling proud about one's youth and wealth, which may vanish in one moment in course of time.

Hence, when participating in bhajans, you should enjoy the singing and share that joy with others. Do not be indifferent to the reactions of others to your singing. Leaders in bhajans should realise that many overseas devotees are deeply interested in bhajans and are eager to take part in them. The bhajans should be simple and easy for them to follow. The goal of all religions is one. The underlying meaning of all names is the same. You must appreciate this oneness. Whatever be the name used, all are children of one God. All belong to the caste of humanity. The distinctions between religions are the result of historical and geographical factors. People may use diverse names for God, but God is one alone. Having been born in Bharath, you may feel legitimately proud about Bharatheeya culture. But mere birth, alone does not make one a true Bharatheeya. All those who adhere to Sathya and Dharma. (Truth and Right conduct) are Bharatheeyas. They may belong to any country - America, Japan or Germany. Truth is God. This is the cardinal principle of Bharath. Recognising this fact, people must strive to spread the message to all.

Two ways of God-realisation-devotion and knowledge

Sai devotees should understand the essence of our culture. Sacrifice and service are the two basic elements.

There are two ways of God-realisation. One is the path of devotion where the

devotee considers himself a servant of God. By repeatedly declaring, Dhasoham (I am your servant) he goes on reducing his ego till the bondage of worldly attachment falls off. The other means is Jnanamarga (the path of knowledge). By constantly developing the sense of oneness with the Divine-Shivoham (I am the Divine) his consciousness expands to the point where it becomes one with the universal consciousness and all worldly bonds are snapped. Give no room for the ego. If any one examines his position in this vast cosmos, he will realise his infinitesimal smallness. Egoism arises out of ignorance. Expel the ego and develop love. With love, develop the spirit of sacrifice. Sacrifice alone can confer immortality, says the Upanishath. Sacrifice can confer bliss and health. Experience the joy of sharing. Renunciation is the key to sound health.

Do not indulge in criticism of others. Count your own faults and rectify them. See the Divine in one and all.

Elevate the quality of human life by living in amity with all. Chanting the name of God is the sure means of cultivating this universal love.

Melodious music can move the Lord

There is special merit in singing the Lord's name with due regard for melody and rhythm. The Lord is a lover of music. Moreover, when singing is done with fervour, it helps to drive out all bad thoughts from the mind.

Melodious music can move the Lord and move all the participants. (Svami demonstrated the effect of melodious singing by rendering the song; "Rama! nannu-kapaduma" - 'Oh Rama, protect me'). Melodious music will move the Lord Himself. Hence, when you take part in bhajans sing with all your heart and soul. You must sing with such love for the Divine that you forget yourself. When you sing the praise of God with a pure heart, you will purify your environment, your country and the world. People are looking forward to April 14th as the New Year Day. The name of the new year is "Eeshvara." What does Eeshvara mean? As Chittibabu (who spoke earlier in Thamil) said, the Lord is "Ammal-Appa" (mother and father). Their coming together is

represented by the concept of "Ardhanareeshvara" - the Divine couple in one body. Every man is a symbol of "Ardhanareeshvara". The body is inert. The Atma is Consciousness. The body is Prakrithi (Nature). The Atma is Eeshvara. The combination of Prakrithi and. Paramatma constitutes humanness.

Therefore, you should regard yourself as a symbol of "Ardhanareeshvara" (The Divine Couple in one body).

Do good and reap good results

As the new year approaches people are wondering what it has in store for them. It is not the year that brings good or ill. Your actions determine what you will get. What have the years that have gone brought you? Each year brings you the fruits of your past actions. Do good and reap good results.

Your conduct should be good, befitting your human condition. Revere elders. Love all. Honour your nation. Give up attachment to the body. Then you will have fulfilment in life. You all know what troubles the country is going through on account of the political situation. The basic cause is selfishness. Leaders are fighting for their own personal ends and not for the sake of the country. No one seems to be bothered about what is happening to the society, to the people and the country. "My power and my position" is all that each one is concerned about. How long will the chair last? When the body itself is impermanent, what is the meaning in chasing the chair?

Hence, all should develop a broad outlook. Banish narrow considerations. From the new year, cherish broad ideas, truthful ideas, loving thoughts and noble ideals. Only then the nation will be peaceful and prosperous.

Bharath lacks nothing by way of natural endowments. It is a misfortune that it is in its present plight today. Realise the sacredness and great culture of Bharath. I bless you all that from the new year you should lead pure lives chanting the Lord's name and promote the prosperity of the country.

11. The perennial message of the Raama story

Date: 16 April 1997 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Rama Navami

In this phenomenal world, all forms manifest peace. All names are auspicious. Sath-Chith-Anandha express the One Absolute. Its attributes are: Truth, Beauty, Goodness. The Supreme, that is to be Comprehended through the Vedas, Took birth as the son of Dhasharatha, Became the soul of Ramayana of Valmeeki (Sanskrit verses).

VAALMEEKI proclaimed in the Ramayana that the supreme Lord took His birth as the son of Dhasharatha and shone as the embodiment of the Vedas. Nevertheless Valmeeki described the saga of Rama as that of an ordinary human being. Valmeeki saw the Divine in Rama as an ordinary human being. Ravana saw Rama entirely as a mere man. The entire Ramayana is like a game of chess. The scene in the Ramayana is a kind of battlefield. It is a battlefield where the forces of right and wrong are waging war. Rama represents righteousness and Ravana represents unrighteousness. The battle between the two is the war fought on the battlefield.

Selfish desire is the root cause of Ravana's ruin

Ravana taught a great lesson to the world. He exclaimed: "Oh men! Do not live as I have lived and ruin your lives." What is the root cause of Ravana's ruin? Unable to conquer his desires, unwilling to get rid of his impulses, he ruined his entire clan. His sons were killed. His brother and other kinsmen were killed and ultimately his country itself was reduced to ashes. Ravana confessed- "In the end I ruined myself." This was the message Ravana gave to his countrymen in his last moments.

Only by suppressing desires does a man manifest his humanness. A man who is unable to put an end to his desires, puts an end to himself. A good man by his good conduct achieves greatness. Ravana sought to achieve greatness but did not strive to lead a good life. Rama's career is different. He aspired only to be a good man and did not seek greatness. The world today is in dire

need of the message of the Rama story. For one thing, sons today do not follow the injunctions of their fathers. Fathers do not set the right example to the children. Disciples do not respect the preceptors properly. Preceptors do not treat the disciples with affection. There is no love lost even between friends. Relations are estranged among themselves. In all fields of life - in the administration, in agriculture or in business or politics - - discord is rampant. Divisions and conflict prevail in social, political and even spiritual fields. If you enquire into the causes for this situation you find that selfishness is at the root of it all. The basic elements are common to all mankind. The world itself is one family. All men are brothers. Rama preached to the world this basic truth. He taught the world the duties of everyday life, the social duties and family obligations. This triple stream of duties is the message of the Ramayana. Whoever bathes in this triple stream is absolved of his sins and is redeemed. Such a great work as the Ramayana has to be read, reread and lived upto by everyone.

The great qualities of Rama are countless

It is impossible to describe the greatness of the life of Rama. The great qualities of Rama are countless.

Valmeeki wrote his Ramayana while Rama was still reigning over the kingdom. Rama was ruling over Ayodhya at that time. What does Ayodhya signify? It symbolises the place which cannot be penetrated by evil forces and which is invincible. That place is the heart. That is the place where Rama resides.

What is needed today is to make every human heart an Ayodhya. It should be free from any kind of pollution. It should be pure and firm. Then there will be room in it for the story of Rama to enter.

After completing his great epic, Valmeeki was considering how to make it known to the world and how to sanctify the lives of people by spreading its message. The Ramayana evokes joy in the listeners by the very sweetness of its poetry. Its shlokas (verses) relieve people of their sorrow. Kusha and Lava

(the sons of Seetha) who were dressed like ascetics and who could sing melodiously and move the hearts of the listeners by their charming music, came to Valmeeki and offered their salutations to the sage. The two children were like twin birds. They were extraordinary children. They were utterly fearless. They would not shrink from anyone out of fear.

When the two appeared before Valmeeki, the sage told them-"Children! I have composed the Ramayana with a pure and unsullied heart through arduous effort. You should proclaim to the world this sacred story." Lava and Kusha reverentially accepted the sage's command. They offered their pranams (salutations) to Valmeeki and said: "Guruji! Give us your benediction. We shall go forth into the world and make the Ramayana known to every nook and corner of the land." At one place, many sages had come together in a big assembly. Lava and Kusha went to them and sang the Ramayana in their sweet voice. The sages listened to their recitation in rapture, oblivious to everything. They felt that such moving story should be propagated to the whole world.

The Ramayana in blissful song

The two boys went along singing and entered Ayodhya. Standing in the heart of the city they went on singing the Ramayana. All the people strolling on the road stopped to listen to the song. They were rooted to their places and were lost in the music of the great epic. This is known as Bhava-samadhi (the state of blissful feeling). The hearts of the listeners were filled with the bliss of the soulful music. At that moment Rama was coming in his chariot to the spot. He heard the singing. Returning to the palace, he sent word to the two boys to come to his palace for singing their songs. In this manner Lava and Kusha sang the story of Rama in a manner that moved the hearts of one and all - from commoners to King Rama himself.

Rama story: great ordeals met with fortitude

Thus Rama himself enjoyed the narration of his story in song. He posed as if he did not know his own story. In this context, the human aspect of Rama

should be noted. He lived like a common man, but ordinary men did not live like Rama. That is the secret of this phenomenon. Though Rama was divine, he moved about like an ordinary-man. Common men should live like Rama to manifest their divinity. It is not enough to recognise the human aspects of Rama. People should also realise the divinity in everyone. Rama dwells in the heart of everyone. "Ramayathi ithi Ramah" (Rama is the one who pleases). The word Rama has another meaning. It refers to a three (woman). Ramayana means that it is the story of Seetha. 'Hence Ramayana is esteemed as the story of both Rama and Seetha.

In the sacred epic of Ramayana many profound secrets and truths are embedded. But Rama did not impart these secrets to anyone at anytime. What is the reason? A ripe fruit is bound to fall. Rama felt that people will realise the truth spontaneously when their hearts ripen in due course. Because Rama faced all the ordeals, troubles and difficulties of life with great fortitude, he was hailed as Ramachandhrumurthi. Rama taught the world how to remain unruffled in the presence of difficulties or joys, in pain or pleasure. He responded with a smile to any criticism. He did not exult over praise. Thus he displayed total equanimity in weal or woe, success or defeat, gain or loss. This is the attitude which everyone should cultivate. Today devotees tend to get elated when they experience pleasure and get depressed when they face adversity. This is the result of attachment to the body. In Rama's days, there was not this body consciousness. People were indifferent to the body. They were immersed in Atmanandam (the bliss of the Spirit). Atmabhiraama and Abhinaya-rama (Rama the Divine Spirit and Rama the actor). Rama acted his role without attachment to the body. People today perform many spiritual exercises. They study many scriptures and engage themselves in meditation and bhajans. They sing the glories of God and offer prayers. All these are external exercises. No one asks himself what for all these are being done and for whose sake. They are being done with selfish interests in view.

Revere the Guru truly and not out of self interest

There used to be a preceptor and a disciple. The disciple used to carry out the preceptor's commands. He did not know what for he was doing all that the

guru asked him to shut himself in a room and perform sadhana. The disciple was doing as he was told. Meditation had to be done three times a day - morning, noon and evening - according to the guru's directives. One day he was offering worship to the guru at noon. At that moment the guru came to his house. It was very warm outside. The heat was scorching the feet. The preceptor could not bear the heat and cried out- "Shishya! Shishya!" and knocked at the door. The disciple asked from inside, "Who are you? You. are disturbing my puuja." The preceptor answered. "I am your guru." The disciple said: "You should not interfere with my sadhana. Please wait for a while." The guru asked- "Whom are you worshipping?" The disciple replied, "I am worshipping you." The disciple was worshipping the guru, but kept him standing in the scorching heat. This is the way spiritual sadhana is being done these days. What is the purpose of worshipping the guru ? Why all this sadhana? They are being done out of self-interest and not to revere the guru truly. Likewise, what is the use of claiming to worship Rama without realising Rama as the indweller in the heart? It is only a physical exercise related to the body. The first requisite for all spiritual aspirants is Atma-abhimanam (spiritual yearning). Attachment to the body should be given up.

True devotion calls for control over senses

It was because of his attachment to the body that Ravana was a prey, to all kinds of troubles. This was the message given by Ravana: "Oh people! Because I could not kill my bodily impulses I killed myself. I destroyed my entire breed. Hence, be warned from my fate." Rama's message was: "Citizens! Live like me and achieve a worthy end." Ravana met with a Dhurgathi (bad end). Rama achieved a Sadhgathi (glorious destiny). Ravana had Dhurmathi (a wicked mind). Rama's was a Sumathi (pure mind). Rama's words were righteous. Ravana's words were evil. Hence, people should strive to have pure minds. People take any number of births but there is no transformation of their minds. Without such transformation all spiritual practices are utterly useless. The Rama principle offers to the people a sacred path to God-realization. After the completion of his Yaga (sacrifice), Vishvamithra took Rama and Lakshmana to Mithila. Both of them saw the beautiful places in Mithila. They knew that they would have to witness the

lifting of Shiva's bow the next day and then return to Ayodhya. They wanted to go round, the great city of Janaka. Rama told Lakshmana that they were under the care of Vishvamithra and should not do anything without the permission of the guru (sage). They approached the sage with their request. He told them, "You have incarnated on earth to protect all the world and put down the evil forces. Do go round the city of Mithila and sanctify all the people of the city" Rama and Lakshmana set out to go round the city. As they were going, it seemed as if they were illuminating every place where they went. Everywhere the people looked at them without a wink. Children playing on the streets rushed towards them on seeing them and lovingly clasped their hands. "Uncles! Where from have you come? Please visit our homes," cried all the children. Everyone was attracted by the brothers. Ladies going on the roads were keen to see the beautiful eyes of the two brothers. They scattered flowers in front of them hoping that Rama would look at them. But Rama never looked at women. He went on with his head bowed. This was one of the lessons taught by Rama. True devotion calls for control over the senses (the eyes, the ears, speech, etc.) Because Rama had control over senses, he could win the hand of Seetha (daughter of the Earth). If we wish to control the external world, we have to control our vision. One who has no control over his vision becomes a slave to the world. Such profound lessons can be gathered from the illustrious story of Rama.

Dhasharatha's readiness to hand over rulership to Rama

Here is another episode- Dhasharatha was sleeping in his palace. He had a dream. In that dream he saw that the whole ocean had dried up, the moon was falling in a myriad pieces, an elephant in rut was tumbling down and collapsing, with the howdah on its back falling apart. He woke up with a start. "What is all this? It is said that a dream in the early hours of the morning portends what is to happen. It is now the fourth quarter of the night. What does this dream portend?" thought Dhasharatha. He got up from his bed. He stood before a mirror. He noticed a bizarre change in his face. He saw grey hairs stretching out between his two ears. He realised that old age was creeping on him. He tried to drink a glass of water. He noticed that his hand was trembling. He could see that his organs were beginning to fail. He felt

that he could carry on his reign as long as his senses were perfect. But now they were declining. He went out and summoned all his ministers and the preceptor. He told them: "I have reigned for as long as I could. I sought always to please my subjects in every way. I looked after their welfare as that of my own children. This kind of feeling is possessed only by Rama. The time is appropriate to install Rama as the heir to the throne." The subjects and ministers present suggested that the king was fit to continue to rule for some more time. Dhasharatha felt that perhaps they were not in favour of Rama's coronation as king. They submitted to the King: "Maharaja! We are well aware of Rama's sterling qualities. But he is still inexperienced in the arts of administration. You may install him as Yuvaraja (Crown Prince) and give him guidance." But Dhasharatha told them that when his senses had begun to weaken, it was not proper for him to continue as king.

Sing the glories of the Lord like Lava and Kusha

Today, people who have lost their sight, are hard of hearing and are not able to move about, still want to stick to their offices. The reign, of Dhasharatha was different. He was a Dharmik ruler. It was a government based on justice and morality. When Lava and Kusha went about singing the glories of Rama they had no nervousness or apprehension. Today, young persons hesitate to put on any auspicious marks on the forehead when they visit temples and do not venture to fold their palms in reverence when they meet sages. On the contrary, Lava and Kusha forgot all bodily considerations and sang from their hearts the glory of Rama. They thus taught what is relevant to youths today - the path to a God-oriented life. There is nothing greater than chanting the name of the Lord.

People are eager to listen to gossip. But the ears are deaf to the sweet names of God. You do not hesitate to go to the films endlessly; But your eyes find it hard to look at God in the sanctum. What for are the eyes given? What for do you have cars? You should remember God's name and go to the abode of God.

In this manner Lava and Kusha went about glorifying the greatness of Rama

joyously and telling the people how they should adore God.

Namasmarana should emanate from the heart

Today's youth should take a resolve to spread the love of God among the people without any hesitations or fear. They should make every man realise the sweetness of the Lord's name, the divinity enshrined in it and the purity associated with it. These feelings should emanate from the heart. That is true namasmarana (reciting the Lord's name). The Ramayana propagated the great ideals of Rama in song and story. Rama was ever auspicious, ever the heroic wielder of the bow (Kodhanda-Rama), ever the anointed ruler (Pattabhi-Rama), and the Divine indweller in the heart. People have to enthrone Him in their hearts and adore Him. Thyagaraja grew ecstatic when he sang about Rama and His various attributes and glories. (Svami sang melliflously Thyagaraja's song beginning with the words: "Rama! Kodhanda Rama! Rama! Pattabhiraama!" - - "Rama! You stand by the word you have given. For me, you are the only wealth. Your song is the only song. Your path is the only path. Rama! You are Seethapathi (the consort of seetha). You are the Gathi (the goal). I bow to you. I surrender to you, Oh Rama. Rama! Your name is supreme. Rama! Thoughts of you are enough. Rama! I am yours. Please speak to me.") The great devotees of Rama revelled in singing the glories of Rama in this manner. Such a moving and inspiring story as the epic of Rama cannot be found in any other country or language. Even after thousands of years, the story of Rama continues to be related in innumerable villages and cities.

Experience Rama in your heart

In Bharath today there is no place where Rama's name is not chanted or dhanam (charity) is not practised. Even in the tiniest hamlet there will be a small Rama temple. But these temples are not so very important. The temple in which Rama should be worshipped is your heart. God is the Hridhayavasi (dweller in the heart). You need not seek Rama anywhere else. Without going out anywhere, without incurring any expense, you can experience Rama in your heart and achieve liberation.

Today, on Shri Ramanavami Day, in spite of the good fortune of being born in the Rama Janmabhumi (sacred birth place of Rama) you are not recognising the Rama Principle. There is nothing great about celebrating the birthdays of great persons. You must put into practice the teachings of those great figures. What is the use in celebrating birthdays and ignoring the teachings? Practice is the touchstone of devotion. Knowing the ephemeral nature of the body, people should follow the conscience and lead a godly life. That is true devotion to Rama. You should dedicate your body, mind and everything, to God.

God is the embodiment of love. You should promote love in your hearts. Turn your mind to God before the end comes. It may come at any time.

Outgrow body consciousness in divine feelings

Valmeeki prostrated before Rama and confessed- "I have done no penance or spiritual experiences of any kind. By the constant chanting of your name I have been blessed with this beautiful experience. In my youth I had committed many atrocities and incurred many sins out of selfish motives. But, ultimately, chanting your name, I forgot my body altogether. An anthill grew over me. But the name Rama came out of it." That is what everyone should aim at. Outgrow the body consciousness and merge in the Rama principle. You must eschew all worldly attachments and fix your mind on God. Make good use of the Sai who has come to you. Adore the feet of this Lord at Parthi. Offer your devotion and achieve liberation. Do-not go after all and sundry. Awake! Abandon your delusion. (Telugu poem)

Develop such divine feelings. Do not go after power and pelf. The people of Ayodhya concentrated on their dudes. They considered duty as worship. When Rama was leaving for the forest the people of Ayodhya were in deep distress. They did not want to stay in Ayodhya without Rama there. Every man, woman and child was in agony at that time. That was the intensity of their devotion to Rama. The same devotion should fill your hearts today.

Dhasharatha had eight dedicated and truthful ministers. He had great sages

like Vasishta and Vamadheva as preceptors. If we had such. ministers and preceptors today we can have Rama Rajya.

Develop faith in Rama and cultivate love for Rama. Love and faith are most important.

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. The dull and the inert will hesitate to be active, for fear of exhaustion or failure or loss. The emotional, passionate individuals will plunge headlong and crave 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 results to God. They know that they are but instruments in the hands of God.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

12. Mother's Love and Divine Grace

Date: 06 May 1997 / Location: Kodaikanal / Occasion: Easwaramma Day

EMBODIMENTS of Love! There is no nobler quality in the world than love. It is wisdom. It is righteousness. It is wealth. It is Truth. Everything is permeated with love. Everything in the cosmos arises from love, grows by love and merges in love. Every human being is born from the mother's womb. He is fostered by the mother's love and enjoys many things in life because of the mother. He enjoys, all happiness in life because of the mother's love. Hence, there is no higher divinity than the mother. But this divinity relates to the body alone.

Man has to recognise the truth that the food which sustains his body is derived from the sun. The sun helps food crops to grow. Hence, without the sun man cannot have food to sustain life. The term Sathyam (Truth) is made up of three syllables which represent life, food and the sun. It follows that man is inherently an embodiment of truth. As such, he should lead a life based on truth. Unfortunately, man today leads a life divorced from truth. Consequently, he becomes a prey to innumerable troubles. He has no peace. He is racked continually by many afflictions. Man has to recognise the significance of Love and Truth, which are fundamental to human existence. The mother represents these two basic qualities.

Love the mother and revere the father

Rama attained godhood because he was the son of Kaushalya' Lava and Kusha became heroic children because of their great mother, Seetha Dhevi. It is the noble thoughts of the mother which make the children great. A mother may go wrong in other respects, but she will always strive for the well-being of her children. Hence every son has to love the mother as the primary duty. Then he should love the father and revere the preceptor. The mother confers the body. The father protects it. The preceptor imparts knowledge and wisdom. For every human being all three are essential for getting on in the world. Many great men have embarked on noble deeds after securing the

blessing of their mothers. For instance, before going to battle to fight against the demon, Tarakasura, Sanat Kumara got the blessings of his mother, Gowri. Similarly, Parasurama received his mother's blessings before he went to fight his foes. Likewise, Vinatha blessed her son Garuda. Every mother similarly blesses her son by saying: "Shri Rama Raksha" (May Shri Rama protect you always.) It is because of the blessings of noble mothers, the wives of great sages, that many men were able to perform heroic deeds. Shankaracharya taught that sons who did not get the blessings of the mothers suffered from various vicissitudes in life. Those who had the blessings of their mothers often secured freedom from rebirth. Many high-souled men have extolled the greatness and power of mothers. It is the foremost duty of children to secure the blessings of their mothers for their worldly well-being. However, spiritually man's obligation is different, according to Vedantha. Here, there is room in the heart only for the love of God. Affection for the mother and reverence for the father are necessary. But parents and preceptor are transient. Even friends are impermanent. God alone is permanent and unailing and God alone should have the permanent place in the heart.

Use the body as a divine instrument

The human body acquires its sacredness from the fact that it is the abode of the Divine. The Geetha refers to the body as Kshethra (sacred field) and the Divine Indweller as the Kshethrajna. Be cause of the sacredness of the body, it should be used properly as an instrument of the Divine. Man should develop faith in God. Without that faith, life will be meaningless. Man can have no happiness or satisfaction in life without the grace of God. Men today are too much immersed in affairs of the world. The result is they have no peace of mind. They can have peace only from the supreme embodiment of peace: God. He is the abode of infinite love and enduring peace. God's love should be secured by chanting the Lord's name. You should be grateful to your mother for endowing you with a body which enables you to chant the Lord's name. The greatness of the Lord's name is illustrated by the following episode. Once, Hanuman's mother Anjana, went to Kaushalya because her son was a great devotee of Rama. Kaushalya did not know Anjana and so she asked Anjana who she was in a sweet tone. Anjana was proud about her valorous

son. She replied: "Mother! Have you not heard about me? Hanuman is my son. He leapt over the ocean in one jump. How is it that you did not know about one who had performed such a great feat? Staying in this palace you did not know about my son?" Kaushalya replied in a soothing tone- "Dear mother! I now know that Hanuman is a really great hero." While the two were conversing in this fashion, the mother of the sage Agasthya came there. Kaushalya made kind enquiries about her. She replied: "I am the mother of Agasthya. Don't you know that my son drank in one gulp the ocean over which Hanuman merely leapt? Are you not aware that I am the mother of such a pious saint's son?" Then, Kaushalya addressing the two ladies said: "For your son's leaping over the ocean and your son's drinking the ocean in one gulp, it is the name of my son that enabled them to accomplish these exploits. Because they remembered his name they could do these marvellous deeds." By then, Kama arrived on the scene. He was apprehensive about disagreement among the three ladies. Rama was totally free from pride and egoism. He was pure in heart and free from selfishness. He told his mother: "Mother, it is not because of my name that Hanuman and Agasthya performed their great exploits. This body of mine was given the name of Rama. The greatness of the name Rama enabled Hanuman to leap over the ocean and Agasthya to drink it one gulp. The power of the name is at the root of their achievement." Thus, the power of the Lord's name is incalculable. However great a mother may be, if the son does not have the grace of the Lord he will not be able to accomplish anything great. For this reason, mothers always pray to the Lord to shower His grace on the children.

Adhi Shankara's intense yearning for Divine Mother

Here is another illustration from the life of Adhi Shankara. He was born in Kaladi in Kerala. When he was a six-year old boy, his mother, Aryambha, told him- "Son, your father was a very pious person and. He used to worship God according to the prescribed rituals. You must follow his example. You are very lucky. I am always devoted to God. Having taken birth as my son, you should conduct yourself in such a way that you achieve great name and fame and bring a good name to me. Act according to your father's example. It is the mother who makes the son noble and great. It is a noble son who brings glory

to the mother. Hence, remembering this, act according to your father's injunctions." The father of Shankara was a regular worshipper of Dhevi Raja-rajeshvari for many years. He used to offer milk every day to the goddess. One day, when Shankara was barely four years old, the father had to leave his home to visit a neighbouring village. Every day after finishing his puuja and offering milk to the goddess, he used to distribute the remaining milk to his wife, son and others as prasadam. He told the boy: "Son, your mother cannot perform the worship which I do. You better do the worship today." After the father left, the boy followed the father's instructions. He filled a tumbler with milk, placed it before the image of the goddess Raja-rajeshvari and prayed "Mother! Accept this offering of milk." He went on praying to the goddess. When he found that the milk remained untouched, he was in great anguish. He cried: "Oh Mother! What crime have I committed? When my father offered the milk you used to take it. Why are you not taking it when I am offering it?" He was in deep distress. He was thinking whether there was any lapse on his part. He became desperate. He declared in agony: "Mother! If you don't take the milk I shall end my life. I would have dishonoured my father. I would also be guilty of failing to fulfil my mother's command. If I cannot please my parents, what use is there in my living?"

Cherish the mother and seek God's grace

He prayed intensely to the Goddess in great agony. Moved by the naive entreaties of the boy, Raja-rajeshvari appeared before him. She told him, "Child! Be happy. I am immensely pleased with your devotion. I shall drink the milk." So saying, she drank all the milk offered in the tumbler. The boy was aghast to see that the whole tumbler was empty. "Oh mother!" he cried. "If you drink all the milk, what is left for distributing as prasadam? My mother will think I have drunk all the milk. I have to give prasadam to her. My father used to give some milk as prasadam to others also. Therefore please restore some of the milk in the tumbler." How can the milk once consumed be brought back? Can the river that has joined the ocean be made to return? Can an apple that has been digested be brought back? The goddess told the boy that it is impossible to bring back the milk that had been consumed and vanished.

The boy was in deep distress again. He thought within himself: "I will get a bad name from my mother." He prayed: "Mother! Please give at least a little quantity of milk." Responding to the prayers of the young boy the goddess drew milk from her breast and gave it to the boy. It was the sacred power of the milk which enabled Shankara in later years to master all the scriptures and earn lasting fame as a great spiritual teacher, revered by all. Knowledge of all the Vedas came to him effortlessly: It was due to the grace of the Divine Mother and the love and blessings of his own mother. When one is blessed with Prema and Anugraha (love and grace) he is transformed from the human to the Divine.

Hence, every person, man or woman, should respect the parents, install the Divine in the heart and pray to God constantly. It is everyone's duty to bring a good name to one's parents. When the children are good, they bring a good name to the parents. It was because of the noble behaviour of Lava and Kusha that their mother, Seetha, became renowned. When Lava and Kusha were engaged in a battle with Rama, Lava aimed an arrow at Rama with the prayer that if his mother Janaki was a Sadhvi (a supremely noble woman) the arrow should render Rama unconscious. Rama became unconscious when the arrow hit him. See what happened. The mere thought of his mother lent so much power to his arrow! This shows that when you cherish the mother and seek God's grace, the blessings of the mother become more powerful.

God-realisation is the supreme achievement

In the world today such mothers are rare. Many mothers are worried about the future of their sons if they adhere to the righteous path. They fear that such children may not be successful in life. In ancient days mothers thought otherwise. They would be immensely happy if they found the children devoted to God. They would feel happy with the thought. "My son will be a good man. He will earn a good name." Even now, in this sacred land of Bharath, parents should strive their utmost to bring up their children on right lines. Children also should revere their parents, who account for their physical existence. But they should realise what they owe to God, who is the basis of all life. Recognising this double obligation to the mothers and to the Divine -

they should redeem their lives by purposeful living. There are greater things than even life itself. The supreme achievement is God-realisation. It is the summum bonum of human life. This was the lesson which Aryamba taught to Shankara. She assured him: "When you have secured the grace of Dhevi, what is it that you will lack in your life? You will bring fame to the country as a whole." Achieving a great name, however, is not all. Shankara lived in a state of perpetual bliss. Within a short span of 32 years he achieved incredible things. All because of Dhevi's grace. I wish all young people to develop faith in God and lead worthy lives.

You wear coloured glasses and see everything through these glasses. Correct your vision; the world will be corrected. Reform yourselves; the world will be reformed. You see many because you seek the many, not the One.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

13. Purity - The Path To Liberation

Date: 15 May 1997 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Buddha Purnima

EMBODIMENTS of Love.! Jnana (Knowledge) does not an mere acquaintance with books. Nor is it worldly knowledge. Only the person who has recognised the oneness of the Jeevatma (individual spirit) and the Universal Spirit is a real Jnani (one who possesses the supreme wisdom). True wisdom consists in the awareness of the rarity of the individual and the Samashti (collective whole).

How can a man who is not aware of his humanness recognise the Divinity within him? Hence the first requisite is the recognition by everyone of his human essence. Basing on this truth, Buddha declared that everyone should cultivate at the outset Samyag-dhrishti (a pure vision). it is only when man has a pure vision that he can get rid of impurities in the body, speech and mind. It is this purity that can protect man from invasion of impurities through the eyes and the ears. Hence the first requirement for every man is Samyag-Dhrishti. The second quality that is needed is Samyag-Sankalpa (pure thoughts). Everyone should have pure thoughts. Only the person who has developed purity in vision can have purity in thoughts. The third requirement for every man, along with purity in vision and thought, is Samyag-Karma (pure deeds). Everyone should do pure deeds. Through pure deeds man is able to recognise his human essence. Man is not merely an embodied being. By his capacity for developing good vision, entertaining good thoughts and performing good deeds, he has the power to transform humanness into Divinity A fourth requirement for man is Samyag-Shruthi (listening to sacred words). When one listens to unsacred words he can have only unsacred thoughts. The fifth quality prescribed by Buddha is Samyag-Jeevanam (living a pure life). What is meant by "living"? It is not leading a worldly life attached to worldly pursuits. True living means making one's life meaningful by ideal actions. Man's life must be governed by idealism in action.

Real sadhana is to remove all impurities from mind

Next, Buddha declared that everyone should aim at Samyag-Sadhana (Achievement of the highest good.). Sadhana means elimination of the evil tendencies in man and acquiring good and sacred qualities. True sadhana is the eradication of all evil in a man. Study of sacred texts, meditation and penance do not constitute the whole of sadhana (spiritual exercise). To remove all the impurities in the mind is real Sadhana. After this comes what Buddha called-Samyag-Samadhi or Nirvana (Pure Realisation or Liberation). What is meant by Samadhi? It means treating pleasure and pain, gain and loss alike. Sama-dhi (equal mindedness) is "Samadhi". To look upon light and darkness, pleasure and pain, profit and loss, fame and censure with an equal mind is Samadhi. Buddha termed this equal mindedness as Nirvana. It is the recognition of the sacredness of the qualities of all the senses in man that constitutes real humanness. At the very outset, one has to keep the tongue pure. This was referred to as Samyagvak (purity in speech). The tongue has to be sanctified by refraining from falsehood, slander and abusive speech.

Next comes Samyag-Dharshanam (seeing only things that are holy). You must see only things which please your conscience. Seeing all worldly things is not proper seeing at all. Buddha laid emphasis on seeing good, thinking good, speaking good and doing good. Seeing all sorts of things is not good for anyone. The eyes should be used for seeing only what is pure, what is holy and what is edifying.

Buddha's search for Truth

Although all Avathars (divine advents) have been preaching only good things, men today are content to observe their birthdays without following their precepts. Buddha did not attach any importance to yajnas and yagas and other religious rituals. The reason is he felt that it was more important to ensure that the five sense organs were pure to begin with. Buddha sought to find out why the mind gets disturbed. He could not bear to see anyone suffering. He was deeply grieved at the sight of persons afflicted with old age. He was intrigued at the sight of a dead body. None of these natural happenings gave him peace of mind. Buddha considered the movements of the planets and the sun and the stars as natural phenomena. He undertook

many spiritual exercises to find out what transcended these natural phenomena. Failing to find the answers by these exercises, he approached many great elders to find the answers. None could give him satisfactory answers. Ultimately he reached Gaya and sat under a banyan tree to meditate on the problems that worried him.

"Ahimsa Paramodharmah"

Because Buddha did not interest himself in the study of the Vedas or in the performance of yagas and yajnas, he was dubbed an atheist. This is utterly wrong. Buddha was a pure hearted person. When he was born, a renowned astrologer had predicted that he would be either a great king or a great renunciant. On knowing this, Buddha's father, Shuddhodhana arranged to keep out of his son's sight all unseemly worldly sights of happenings in this world. From his childhood, Buddha could not bear the sight of anyone in pain. He was saddened at the sight of the old ill-treating the young, of men in authority harassing the people and the big fish swallowing the small ones. He realised that it was wrong for anyone to cause harm to others. Hence he declared: "Ahimsa Paramodharmah" (Non-hurting is the Supreme Dharma). No one should cause hurt to others by speech, action or in any other way. According to him true Dharma (Righteousness) consists in refraining from causing harm to anyone in thought, word or deed. Truth is God. Buddha taught that people should adhere to truth and uphold it. Among Buddha's teachings the foremost were Sathya (Truth) and Dhama (Righteousness). These two are the teachings of the Vedas: "Sathyam vada, Dharmam chara" (Speak the Truth, practise righteousness').

The name given to Buddha at the time of birth was Sarvartha Siddha. Shuddhodhana got his son married to Yashodhara, daughter of his brother-in-law, Shuddhabuddha. He apprehended that his son may become a recluse and turn away from the world if he was left to himself. But Buddha did not feel that a married life was the proper thing for him. Buddha felt that man was bound by various attachments in worldly life. Friends and relations were the cause of this bondage. Various human relationships were the cause of sorrow in the world. So he declared: "Sarvam dukham dukham" (All is

sorrow) He also declared: "Sarvam Kshanikam, Kshanikam" (everything is momentary). "Sarvam nashyam nashyam" (everything is perishable). Buddha felt that nothing was truly lasting. Parents were subjecting their children to various kinds of bonds and making their lives miserable. As soon as the children come of age the parents are keen to get them married. They do not know what kind of happiness he can get from married life. What happiness have they derived from their own married life physically, mentally or otherwise? No person, however intelligent, thinks about this matter. Even eminent scholars do not care to examine whether it is worthwhile pursuing sensuous pleasures instead of seeking what is beyond the senses. Buddha felt intensely unhappy that his parents and others combined to commit him to the bondage of married life. One day, at midnight, Buddha left the palace, giving up his wife and young son, Rahul.

Nirvana is the only truth

He abandoned everything out of the conviction: "There is no mother or father, no kinsman or friend, no home or wealth. Awaken yourself!" He resolved to find out something which transcends all worldly relationships and pleasures. Buddha asked himself: "What is this life? Birth is misery. Old age is misery. Wife is a cause of sorrow. There is misery at the end of life. Therefore, be alert and awake." Happiness is not to be found in any of the things of the world. Everything is fleeting. Man is wasting his life in the pursuit of petty ephemeral pleasures. Nirvana is the only truth. It is the sense of oneness with all life. To turn the mind towards that which is permanent is Nirvana. Before he attained Nirvana, Buddha summoned his stepbrother Anandhabuddha. Buddha's mother Maya Dhevi passed away on the seventh day after his birth. Shuddhodhana's second wife Gauthami, brought up the child. Because he was brought up by Gauthami, he was named Gauthama Buddha. At the age of 28, he gave up everything and turned a renunciant. What is the significance of this step? Buddha declared: "Sangham sharanam gachchami", "Hands in the society, head in the forest." He renounced everything to think about promoting the well-are of society.

He declared: "Dharmam sharanam gachchami." What is this Dharma?

"Ahimsa paramodharmah. " Dharma means causing no harm to anyone.

The decline of Buddhism

Basing his teachings on these two declarations, Buddha went about preaching his message. Buddha's message spread to many countries like Tibet, China, Ceylon, Burma, Thailand and Japan.

In course of time schisms developed which led to the decline of Buddhism. Buddha's emphasis was entirely on purity in every aspect of daily life. Purity in vision, purity in thought, purity in speech and purity in action. He considered the spirit of sacrifice as true yajna. Sacrifice is the means for attaining Nirvana (freedom from the bondage of mundane existence). Buddha was totally opposed to anyone being forced to lead a worldly life against his will. When Buddha was going round begging for alms as a mendicant, his father, Shuddhodhana, called him and said: "Son! Why are you going about as a beggar? I am a king and you are leading the life of a beggar. This is not proper at all." Buddha gave him a fitting reply. "Sire, you are Brahman and I am Brahman. You are not father and I am not son. Both of us are Brahman. In the phenomenal world, you belong to the lineage of rulers. I belong to the lineage of renunciants. All those who follow my ideals are all renunciants. Your lineage is based on Raga (attachment). My lineage is based on Viraga (renunciation). To those who have attachment, it becomes a toga (disease). To the renunciants, detachment becomes the means to Nirvana (liberation from bondage)." Buddha taught his message in this way to his father, wife and son.

True meaning of the Buddhist prayer

The Buddhist prayer must be properly understood. When the Buddhists say: "Buddham sharanam gachchami, Dharmam sharanam gachchami, Sangham sharanam gachchami," the real meaning of the prayer is: You must divert your Buddhi (mind) towards Dharma (right conduct). And the right conduct should aim at serving society. When this is done, society gets purified.

It is not enough to read the lives of avatars and messiahs. Their teachings should be put into practice as much as possible. People must gradually outgrow their material attachments and develop divine love.

Shuddhodhana tried to protect his son from all external worldly influences by keeping him in the palace and not even sending him to school. What happened ultimately? Buddha decided to renounce everything in quest of the truth about human existence and he declared Ahimsa (nonharming) as the supreme good.

What is it that people need today? These are three things: A heart pure and white like the moon, speech soft and sweet like butter, a face that is loving and kind. These are lacking in the world today. The entire atmosphere is frightening. There is harshness in speech. There is no softness in the heart. The heart should be pure and soft like butter. Today, on the contrary, people are hardhearted. Fill your hearts with compassion. Let your speech be sweet and truthful. You will then be truly human.

Ahimsa is the supreme virtue

Buddha taught one great truth to the world. He declared that it is not what the Vedas and Scriptures say that constitutes truth. People should bear in mind that non-harming is the supreme virtue. Do not cause harm to anyone by thought, word or deed. The tongue is given to you to utter truth. Jayadeva exhorted his tongue to manifest its sweetness by chanting the names of the Lord Govindha, Dhamodhara, Madhava. Whatever be the number of religions, their goal is one and the same. (Svami sang a song pointing out how faiths may be many but God is one only). To carry on daily life in the world people pursue many vocations. But does all this constitute real living? Can a life led without remembering God be called life at all? What kind of life is it where there is no purity, no morality and no spirituality. Morality and integrity alone can lead to Nirvana (liberation). Today these two are absent. People must strive to base their lives on Neethi and Nijayathi (morality and integrity). They should become, as Jesus said, messengers of God. Embodiments of Love! We are celebrating today Buddha Purnima or Buddha Jayanthi. What does

Puurnima (fullmoon) signify? It signifies wholeness. When the mind is filled with love, it achieves fullness. As long as the mind is filled with darkness (evil thoughts) there is no meaning in celebrating Buddha Puurnima. Get rid of this darkness. Without the light of love in the heart, what use is there in having illuminations outside? Light the lamp of the Divine in your minds. Banish hatred and envy from your hearts. Man is the victim of two evil planets: attachment and hatred. To escape from their grip, the only way is to cultivate love.

Temples are intended to instruct men in the art of removing the veil of attachment that lies over their heart. That is the reason why Thyagaraja cried at the temple in Thirupathi, "Remove the veil within me, the veil of pride and hate." The fog of Maya melted away before the rays of grace and so, he could discern and describe the image of Divine charm in the song, "Shivudano Madhavudano" and drink deep this sweetness of that Form. The churning of his heart by the Divine formula produced the spark of Jnana, and grew in to the flame of Realisation.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

14. Role of Sai Youth in World Crisis

Date: 16 July 1997 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Wealth once lost, can be regained; A lost friend can be retraced; A lost wife can be replaced; A lost land can be recovered; But the time that has gone cannot be recovered. EMBODIMENTS of Love! Young men and women! Future citizens of the world! When one's wealth is lost, it can be acquired again. If one friend is lost, another can be got. If the wife passes, one can marry again. If land is lost, it can be acquired, again. But if time is lost it cannot be got back.

In this vast cosmos and among the myriad species, man is the highest and noblest being. He is sublime. He is full of good traits. If a man loses these attributes of humanness, they cannot be easily regained.

Young men and women! The prosperity and well-being of the world depend on the conduct of the youth. Only when their conduct is good, the world can have an ideal future. The night that has passed Cannot be recalled by any means. The waters of the Yamuna, once they have merged in the ocean, cannot be turned back. A fruit that has been eaten and digested cannot be recovered. Man is spending his days aimlessly without any awareness of what is in store for him in the future. He is not aware of the continuous erosion of his life-span by the passage of time.

Life is like a mega-clock. Its three hands indicate the rate at which the days, months and the year are passing. Man rejoices in the movement of the clock's hands but does not realise that every movement is a reminder of his diminishing lifespan. Hence, before the final hour strikes, every man should realise what his duties are and see that the remaining time is well spent. What is the root cause of man's birth in the world? What are the duties of man? No one seeks to recognise the inherent divinity in man. Young men and women today waste a good deal of their time, without realising, the preciousness of human life.

Transform from the human to the Divine

There are two qualities in man. One is the animal nature; the other is humanness. Unfortunately man is forgetting his humanness by falling a prey to the six enemies - lust, anger, greed, envy and others - and misusing his God-given talents. He thereby degrades himself to the level of the animal. On the other hand, man should use his mind, status, and talents to become virtuous, pursue the path of righteousness and strive to raise himself from the human to the Divine. All things in the world should be used properly, and not misused. A knife can be used for cutting vegetables or another's throat. How a knife is used depends on the man using it. His mental state should be in proper condition. A man's conduct is related to his thoughts and feelings. The heart is inherently pure. But one's thoughts can pollute it or keep it pure. One can make or mar his destiny by his thoughts and actions. Today everywhere the world is haunted by suffering, tin-rest, disorder and agitations. Any country filled with noble beings is bound to be peaceful and happy. What is the reason for the sad plight of a country? It is the absence of men and women of high character. To protect a country it is not so important to have arms and missiles and atom bombs. It is most essential to have men and women of great virtue. The World's prosperity or otherwise is based upon the character of the youth - men and women. Hence, young men and women should be pure hearted and render selfless service to the country. They should keep the company of the good and godly. Losing Papabheethi (fear of sin) and not cultivating Dhaiva preethi (the love of God), men today have lost the essential quality of humanness. This has resulted in the loss of peace in the world.

Show your gratitude by serving the society

Every one should realise what one owes to the society in which one is born and from which one derives so many benefits. Young people should reflect on the question what gratitude they can show to the society which has given them so much. What service are you doing to society? Every man should show his sense of gratitude to society by rendering selfless service. It was for this purpose that the Seva Organization was started. But even here the Seva

Organizations are being used to promote one's name and fame and not to render service for its own sake. The body is given for rendering service to society. Today wherever you turn - in the administration, in the business world, in politics or other fields - you see no spirit of sacrifice. In every field the atmosphere is saturated with pollution. This foulness has to be removed. Today the pollution affects people in authority, the parents, the educationists and intellectuals. Those who preen themselves on their scholarship have no humility that should characterise genuine scholarship.

People should consider the whole world as the mansion of one human family, when this spirit of oneness prevails, there will be no tendency to harm others. You should forgive even those who harm you. The youth should cultivate the quality of forbearance. Forbearance is a supreme virtue in man.

Love of God is selfless and everlasting

Embodiments of Love! Man should be free from fear. Animals inspire and birds are subject to fear. But man should neither cause fear in others nor be afraid himself. Today's young men and women should develop fearlessness as a principal quality. You should be afraid of only one thing: fear of sin. God is the only being to be loved. All other forms of love are transient and selfish. Love of God is selfless and everlasting. God seeks nothing from you. He is utterly selfless. Today if you wish to earn the esteem of society you have to secure Dhaiva preethi (the love of God). For this you have to entertain fear of sin. What is sin? It covers all those activities which are motivated by selfishness born out of regarding the body and sensual pleasures as the primary things in life. Punya (merit) arises from all actions which take one nearer to God para + upa + kara = Paropakara. Sin has been defined as Parapeedanam (causing harm to or forgetting the Divine). To remember the divinity in everyone is the means to acquire merit. Young people today have lost the feeling of forbearance and as a result have become a prey to many bad qualities like anger and envy. They should remember that today most young people are afflicted, in varying degrees, with Ahamkara (the disease of egoistic pride). And this is the cause of all sickness in the world. This egoism has no real basis because the individual is an insignificant speck in the vast

cosmos. it is born of ignorance. This ignorance will go if man realises that the whole universe is permeated by the Divine and belongs to the Divine. Everyone should do what is good and never forget God. That is the way to overcome egoism.

"Hands in the society, head in the forest"

It is the privilege and duty of the young men and women to promote the welfare, progress and peace of the world. Transform all your actions into sacred duties. Experience the love of the Divine. That is the meaning of Svami's declaration: "My life is my message." Adhere to the ideals set before you by Svami. Today people tend to forget Ashayalu (ideals) and foster Ashalu (desires). Selfishness prevails over patriotism. This should change. Never forget your motherland. Remember that our ancients enthroned sacrifice as the supreme virtue. They stood for justice and truth. And as a result they enjoyed peace.

Today humanity is haunted by fear because there is no spirit of sacrifice; righteousness is at a discount and truth has become rare. Young people should enthrone Thyaga (sacrifice) in their hearts, wear the crown of justice on their heads and carry the sword of Truth in their hands. These are the weapons needed, to defend the nation. Young people should consider the true purpose of life. They should get rid of all the impurities in their hearts. With pure hearts they should embark on service at all times and everywhere. "Hands in society, head in the forest." From today develop an unwavering mind and a steady vision. That is the way to divinise the world.

Goodness is more vital than greatness

People should realise the distinction between "greatness" and "goodness". Most parents want their children to acquire greatness. But they have no true idea of what is greatness. They may desire that their children should become great scholars, get big jobs and the acquire large wealth. Do these constitute greatness? No. Man is the one who sees the human in God. But the one who sees God in human is a good man. The mark of goodness is to see the divinity

in every man. There is no use in acquiring greatness without goodness. You must seek goodness and not greatness.

Today there are many "great" men in this country. What is the benefit the country has derived from them? Ravana was a great scholar. Rama was equally great as a scholar. But he was much more than that. He was a good man. Ravana performed rigorous penance and mastered a vast deal of knowledge. The result was ignorance arising from indigestion. Unable to control his desires, he brought ruin on his clan and his kingdom. All his studies did not save him from his evil qualities, which brought about his ruin. The only desire all should cherish is to win Dhaiva preethi (the grace of God). Rama was devoted to truth and righteousness. Hence he became a good man and not a mere great man. After thousands of years, the very name Rama evokes veneration. Rama manifested divinity in the human. That is the sign of goodness. To see humanness in Rama is nothing special. Being human yourself you see the human traits in others. What you must see is the divine in human beings.

You must realise that greatness related to power, position or wealth is transient. It is lost when power and position go. But goodness is respected always. Therefore dedicate your lives to goodness. What is goodness? It is living according to Dharma and justice, to love all and cherish faith in God, to help the needy and raise the lowly - all these constitute goodness. Young men and women! Today at the inaugural function only the broad pattern of the tasks before you has been presented. In the ensuing days the details of the duties you have come to discharge and the programme of activities you have to rake up, will be considered. What is basic to all these in the spiritual path is the chanting of the name of the Lord. By this means you can experience God. You must chant the name with love. Inaugural discourse to the Sai World Youth Conference in

Transformation of the heart is what is called for. All that you do should lead you nearer to God. When you act in this way nothing bad will touch you.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

15. Love God, fear sin, guard Human Values

Date: 17 July 1997 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: World Youth Conference

If free from arrogance, you are loved. If free from anger, you are free of sorrow. If free from desires, you gain wealth. If free from greed, you become happy. (Sanskrit Shloka) EMBODIMENTS of Love! So long as a man is puffed up with pride, none, not even his wife and children will love him. One should shed his ego and arrogance, if he wants to be loved, by others. One has to stiffer grief and misery as long as he is prone to anger. It is only when he gives up anger he can be happy. So long as one goes on multiplying his desires, he will continue to be in want. When he controls his desires, man attains prosperity. Greed makes a man unhappy and miserable. Only when greed and miserliness are given up can one have an enjoyable and peaceful life.

The whole world and the objects therein are inter-related by the bond of love. It is love that binds the human race together. The world cannot exist without love. God is love and resides in the heart of every one as embodiment of love. Based on this Truth we pray, "Lokas-Samasthas- Sukhino Bhavanthu" (all the people in the world should be happy). In ancient times, the sages and saints sacrificed everything for the sake of the welfare of humanity. Even the youth of those times followed suit. They are remembered even today because of their spirit of selfless sacrifice. On the contrary, the youth of today are becoming exceedingly greedy and totally selfish and harbouring feelings of hatred and jealousy, while those in the ancient times were leading a life of Thyaga and Yoga (sacrifice and sense control). The present day youth want to lead a life of Bhoga (enjoying worldly and carnal pleasures) which results in toga (disease).

Make God your friend

On the journey of earthly life, people take some wealth for expenses and when they finish the journey and reach the goal, they hand over the balance to some trustworthy friend and sleep soundly. Everyone brings the wealth of

love from the moment of his birth. In this Karmakshethra (field of activity) that is the world, it is difficult to safeguard the treasure of Prema (love). Therefore, everyone should look for a faithful friend. To-day, the only true friend is God. When you hand over the wealth of love to God, it will be easy for you to can?' on a life of security and peace.

There is no greater teacher than your heart. Time is a great preacher. The world is a scriptural text. God is the great friend. With full faith in these four entities, one should lead his life on this earth. Prema (love) is the natural possession of every human being. It is the fruit of the tree of life. There are certain impediments in your enjoyment of the fruit. But, before tasting a fruit, you have to remove the skin and rind covering the pulp inside and also cast off the seed. The fruit of love is covered by the thick skin of ego. You have to peel off this skin of 'mine' and 'thine.' Then only you can taste the sweet juice. That is why the Vedas describe God as Raso Vai Sah (Supreme sweet essence).

By pure love, you should establish unity with the Divine. The path of Prema (love) is the straightforward road to realise the Divine. The human life is a journey from 'I' to 'We'. It is also progressing from Svam to Soham (individual self to the state of merger with the divine).

Three types of Prema

This means that everyone of your actions must be done as an offering to God. But, nowadays people start their journey from 'I' and come back to the same "I". This is selfishness. The day you give up selfishness you are on the right path. You experience love in three ways- Svartha Prema (self-oriented love), Parartha Prema (love towards all fellow beings) and Anyonya Prema (mutual give and take type of love). "I should be happy. I should enjoy all pleasures and be comfortable. I do not care for others." This is the attitude of Svartha Prema (selfish love). Anyonya Prema represents the feeling that not only himself but also his relatives and friends should be comfortable and enjoy a good life. But, Parartha Prema represents the feeling that all should be happy in the entire world. This is the highest type of Prema. There are three

examples to illustrate these three types of love. Svartha or selfish love is comparable to the bulb that illumines just one single small room. This cannot be called love at all. Anyonya Prema is like moonlight. Though it illumines all directions, it is very dim. It does not help one to have a clear perception. You may mistake a rope for a serpent and a stump of wood as human body in moonlight. Similarly, you may mistake a good man to be a wicked one and vice versa due to illusion. But Parartha Prema is like Sunlight which is very bright and will not give room for any doubt. The confused person will be overpowered by delusion. He may believe the words of wicked persons which may appear to be sweet. The words of wise people may appear to be unsavoury but they communicate nectarine Truth. Divine love is like a downpour of rain, although sometimes interspersed with hard hailstones hurting you. But remember! They melt into the water of love for you. Similarly divinity sometimes may appear to be hurting you. But you should realise it contains nothing but love. God is love. Love is God. Live in Love. You should make an effort to lead such a life.

Look for your own defects

Some persons consider small defects in others as huge mistakes and criticize them while they ignore even great drawbacks in themselves. This is highly improper. The correct method is to magnify your own small mistakes and consider them as big mistakes and the big mistakes of others as small ones of no consequence. That is how you can control the commission of errors. With this attitude, you will be able to realise the Divine. The Love of humans is earthly and selfish while Divine love is spiritual and selfless. it is pure love. The ancients described the Divine as eternal, immortal, pure and unsullied. In order to experience Love of God, you should give up petty minded selfishness and expand your love. Let us take an example of how the love of a newly married man to his spouse decreases as days go by. In the beginning he shows considerable concern when they are walking on the road and comes across a thorn. The man shows a lot of concern and pulls the wife aside. In the same situation a few months later, he retorts, "Are you blind? Can you not see the thorn?" Thus the worldly love will become diluted, while Divine Love will be constant and steady. People cannot understand the greatness of

Divine Love. They misconstrue this love and even blame God when they do not get their low desires fulfilled. Some want liberation. What is liberation? It is liberation from desires. They want to see God. Should you not have the requisite faith and feeling in your heart for this? .

Aspire to experience Divine Love

Even when you live close to God you cannot see God unless you have the faith and devotion, just like a frog in the pond which is ignorant of the honey in the lotus, though nearer to it. While honey bees from far-off places know the existence of honey in the flower and come and taste it, people from distant lands come and experience the sweetness of God's Love, while those nearer are not able to do so.

The proximity to the Divine can elevate human to the level of the Divine. But many fail to realise this and waste their lives. Love is in everyone, but, because it is turned to selfish ends, it becomes attachment. You should aspire to experience Dhaivi Prema (Divine Love). In the modern world, youth should know the nature of true love. Many from abroad, mix with persons of the opposite sex, calling them boy friend and girl friend. If you really love each other you must get married and not continue living as friends. A few years back a foreign youth was sitting under a tree with a crest fallen face. He was just in his late teens, and when questioned by Svami, he said that his second wife had deserted him and he was anxiously thinking of his child she bore. If at this age he had worries, imagine what would happen when he became older? Some young people even before they are twenty years of age get married, divorced and remarry again and get separated from wife and child too and later feel sorry for themselves. They do not realise the value of human life which is both rare and sacred.

According to the Upanishaths, human life is sacred and rare. The human being is noble and powerful. He is called Manava, that is, 'not new at all but eternal. It is the body that changes often, not the Atma (the Inner Being or Self).

God is the changeless Truth

Young men and women! You may be getting a lot of thoughts because of your food and other habits. You should discriminate whether they are good or bad. You should not be carried away by bookish and superficial knowledge. You should, have practical knowledge to make your life useful. Achieve coordination between your education and behaviour. Perfect harmony in thought, word and deed is the hallmark of a human being. You should have full faith in God with no doubt at all. Divinity is beyond your human comprehension with the physical equipment you have. Your thoughts are only reflections, resound and reaction of the outer world. God has no such reactions. He has only one Sound, that is Truth Absolute. You should follow the twin ideals "Speak the Truth and do righteous deeds." God is the changeless Truth but no one understands this. You can do so only when you follow the righteous path of morality and integrity.

Man has become a slave to money. He may forget God but will never forget money. You provide yourself with an air conditioner, a good bed, fans and other accessories with a view to having a comfortable sleep. But you do not get sleep. Why? You should have mental peace to sleep well. Your body, mind, chittha (will power) and Ahamkara (egotism) being the Inner Instruments must all be oriented towards peace as well as the external limbs and sense organs. This can be achieved only by developing Divine love, which is selfless love and which always gives and never takes, while worldly love is keen on getting and then forgetting.

Harming a fellow being is harming the Divine

Divine love has no equal. It stands supreme. You pray to God for trivial worldly things. You should ask for something that you do not have. You are not having selfless love; hence you should only ask for love which the Divine has in plenty God is the embodiment of bliss. Pray for love, peace and bliss. You should be able to distinguish between earthly happiness and Divine Bliss. Today, people pray for many trifles. God knows what is good for the devotee and gives it. He is a witness to all the thoughts, words and actions. Therefore,

surrender whole-heartedly without any reservation whatsoever to God, and lead an ideal life. You are all embodiments of the Divine. So you should love all and never hurt anyone. If you harm anyone, you are harming the Divine.

St. John used to consider all as his brothers. But, on one occasion he punished one brother. Jesus appeared in his dream and questioned him, "Do you think you are hurting that man? No, you are hurting Me." You should understand this truth that any harm done to a fellow being is harming the Divine. You should cultivate the spirit of oneness. Bhajan, meditation, etc., are only exercises for purifying the mind. "Chitthasya Shuddhaye Karmane." Develop love which is your life breath. When a tree is full of green leaves, branches and fruits, you are attracted by it. When it becomes dry, you destroy it because there is no life in it. A person without love is akin to a dead tree only. Love is as vital for a human as fire is vital for a lump of coal to sparkle. You should get rid of weakness by concentrating on Divine Love, as Divine grace confers the greatest strength. All other things may come and go but Divine Grace is ever flowing. Whatever you may or may not be able to do, develop Divine Love. God is the director and all humans are mere actors. be good performers in God's play. Only to train you for this role, this Youth Conference has been convened. In the midst of the world replete with fear, distrust and mutual recrimination, you have to prove yourself to be the messengers of the Divine and embodiments of love, peace and truth. Declare your reality as Divine to the world at large and make them realise the Divinity in everyone.

Embodiments of love! You young men and women should know what is truth, what is love and what is God and what relationship is there between mind and world. Youth go abroad in quest of money. You are not satisfied with what you can earn here and out of greed you go for coming more. You should have hands in society and head in the forest. This is real rest. Men spend their entire life with attachment to money to such an extent that even while on death bed they cannot think of God. In this conference, you have been told about fear of sin and morality in society. You have to carry these ideals with you and practise them.

God is the hero, rest are Zeros

You must radiate human values and ensure unity in thought, word and deed. At present there is chaos and mutual animosity amongst various people. You. Have to spread the message of unity, purity and divinity: Vivekanandha said: "Give me ten men who are pure and perfect. I can change the whole world." But I say, "I can bring about transformation even with one truly perfect human being." You should have divine as the base number one. Any number of zeros placed alongside the figure of one will carry value; value increases many fold with its additional zeros. But, without the number one, if you put zeros, they carry no value at all. the Divine is ONE. Sun, moon, earth, etc, are all mere zeros. They get value only because of the primary number ONE, which represents the Divine. So God is the hero and the rest are all zeros! Have full faith in. God and surrender to God. Do serve with a spirit of dedication as an offering to God. Spread the message of the glory of God in every village by chanting the name of God. Then the atmosphere and climate of the world will change for the better and become sacred.

Bhakthi is not a uniform to be worn on Thursday evenings to sing bhajans. It must mean the promotion of an attitude of humility, of revering parents, teachers, elders and others; it is a mental outlook, an attitude that is ever-present.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

16. Adhere to Truth: Realise Divinity within

Date: 18 July 1997 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: World Youth Conference

EMBODIMENTS of the Divine! young men and women! Truth is God. It is only through Truth you can get peace, plenty and prosperity Truth only bears the wealth of the whole world. There is no greater Dharma than Truth. The mansion of Dharma is raised on the foundation of Truth. Though people may follow several spiritual paths, Truth is the most important of all. Anywhere and at any time, for any individual, Truth is absolutely essential. Because Truth is forgotten, the whole world is in turmoil. It is only from Truth that all creation has originated, including human beings. The whole creation merges back into Truth. One who follows Truth and Righteousness will always be successful. Mere strength of armoury, valour, skill and ability will not do. These are only worldly and external powers. The power of Truth is supreme. To foster Truth and Righteousness is the bounden duty of man. He should recognise the importance of harmony on thought, word and deed.

The inner meaning of Truth: Life sustaining energy

You may think that relating exactly what you saw is Truth. It is not so. Suppose you see a person taking the role of king in a drama. You see him on the stage with the royal robe and crown, etc. But when you see him off the stage after the drama is all over, he may be in his usual dress. Which is true? Is it his role on the stage or is it his role outside? If you analyse this, it becomes obvious that what is subject to change may be termed as fact but not Truth. Truth remains true at all points of time.

In Sath-e-yam, sath mean s life; 'e' stands for food; yam stands for Sun. Food is essential for every individual. Sun helps production of crops which constitute our food to sustain our life. Smt. and light never change. Sathyam stands for life-sustaining energy. If you read the word Sathya, Sa-tha-ya, on the reverse it is ya-tha-sa. "ya" de notes outer and inner discipline as part of Thapas or "tha." When you do much Thapas, you acquire divinity or "Sa" Thapas is triple purity, that is purity in thought, word and deed. we are not

able to know our own potentialities. Divinity is in the Microcosm and in the Macrocosm. Everything is a combination of atoms. You are not able to realise the divinity within, in spite of all your education and scholarship. Whatever you study is only about the physical world and the gross matter. If you want real lasting happiness you can get it only by union with God. God is all-pervasive. Why should you search for God while he is within you? Body is like a water bubble and mind is a mad monkey. Don't follow them. You should follow only your conscience - -which is Sathya - the principle of Truth. If you have an unpolluted heart and engage in unblemished action, you will experience the manifestation of God. We say often we have no Shanthi (peace). Why? because you are multiplying your desires. One who is bereft of desires is peaceful. You must breed only good thoughts and progress forward transcending all thoughts and reaching a state of ending the mind which is but a conglomeration of thoughts. Desire is like the luggage during a journey. If you have less luggage, travel will be more comfortable. So also in life's journey you should restrict your desires which burden you. You should lead a life of morality and character. The Upanishath says: "Sathyam Bruyath" (speak Truth). This is the physical aspect of the directive. "Priyam Bruyath." This is the Dharmik or virtuous aspect which means you should speak Truth in a nice and palatable way. Next is "Na Bruyath Sathyam apriyam." This is the spiritual aspect. You should avoid speaking even truth when it is not pleasing the person. At the same time, simply because it satisfies the other person, don't speak untruth. It is written on the board "Truth is God." This is not enough. You should have this imprinted in your heart. Truth is changeless and eternal. This conviction is not traceable among persons in the modern world. You should join good company which will help you to entertain sacred thoughts to be translated into action.

Time is God; so is food; do not waste them

Young men and women! You are all wasting time which is divine. God is described as Kalakalaya namah. He is the master of Time. The four days that you have spent here are just a minute fraction of time. The same individual passes through stages when he is termed as boy, adult, old man, etc, due to the passage of time. Time is God. Therefore you should not waste time.

Excessive talk is waste of time. When you switch on the Radio and listen to all unnecessary programmes the current is wasted. The body is like a Radio Receiver. Chanting the name and singing the glory of God are useful. But while you indulge in unnecessary gossip, the energy is wasted. In doing wicked deeds also, you waste energy, thereby facing dangerous consequences too. By adhering to the twin ideals of Sathya and Dharma (Truth and Righteousness) you can sanctify your life and avoid wastage of the precious energy that you are endowed with. Instead of preaching the ideals - which is unnecessary as they are already there - you should put them into practice. Propagation is 'quantity' while practising is 'quality'. Quality is always important. A spoon of cow's milk is much better than a barrel of donkey's milk. Youth should turn their minds away from distractions and concentrate on practising human values. I always advise people to avoid waste of time, energy, food and money. Young people should take up a job or profession and start earning money. They should know how to use it properly. Food is God. Time is God. So you should take care-not to waste them.

Transform work into worship

be good, see good, hear good, talk good and do good. The basis for such discipline is to think good which entails the control of mind. You must perform all actions as offering to God. Meditation on God is one of the steps for achieving steadiness of mind. Concentration is needed for every action such as walking on road, talking, reading, etc. You must concentrate with single minded devotion on God. Performing work as worship is also tantamount to meditation. When you have the feeling of divinity in you, you will not think, see, hear, talk bad or do any evil. Having full faith in the Divinity within is self-confidence. This is the foundation on which the walls of self-satisfaction have to be raised with self-sacrifice as roof, so that the mansion of Self- Realisation is complete.

Enquiring into the Self

In Vedantha, man is urged to inquire "Who am I?" You will realise that the body, mind and intellect are only your instruments. The single letter "I" is the

Inner self or Atma while the three letter 'eye' refers to the body. You are the master and should make use of these instruments. You should be careful to use your mind in the right direction. Just as a piece of cloth is a bundle of threads, mind is a bundle of thoughts. If threads are removed there is no cloth. When you remove the thoughts there is no mind and no worry. I often point out that you are not one but three persons in one. The one that you think you are - at the physical (body) plane; the one others think you are - mind; the one you really are - Atma. When you have pure thoughts your heart is pure and full of love, radiating human values. In the term MAN 'm' represents mind, 'a' represents Atma and 'n' stands for merger of two. It also indicates Nirvana (Liberation). Buddha undertook spiritual pursuits and finally felt sorry that he had wasted his life in such external pursuits while he had everything within himself. Man forgets Divinity within and indulges in wasteful exercises. The five vital airs in man are termed as Pancha-pranas. In reality Sathya, Dharma, Shanthi, Prema and Ahimsa - the five human values should be deemed as the five-fold life breaths or Pancha Pranas - Prana, Apana, Udhana, Samana. and Vyana (the incoming, outgoing, upward flow, even and circulating breaths). Since the values constitute the life-breath, one who does not radiate the value in his actions is deemed to be lifeless! There is an example for this in the case of five great elements: Earth, water, fire, air and ether. Earth has the five attributes of sense such as sound, touch, form, taste and smell. Hence it is very heavy and cannot stretch out. Water has all the other attributes except smell and it spreads to a limited extent. Fire has three attributes only, namely, sound, touch and form. It spreads more than water. Next comes air which has two attributes only - sound and touch. It spreads around. But, Akasha (ether) has only one attribute-sound. Hence it is all-pervasive. God who is attributeless is present everywhere in every object.

When form and formless unite you get liberation

Modern boys ask, "Where is God? I want to see and catch Him." You are aware of air because without air you cannot survive. Can you see or catch it? Similarly God is everywhere. Though you cannot see Him, you cannot live without God. God is consciousness. We know by experiment that two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen combine to produce water. Both these are

inflammable when they are independent of one another. But, when they combine they produce water which can put out the fire. Separately they cause fire, when they join together they put out fire! There are two entities namely, Nirakara and Sakara (formless and with form). In ice which is with form, there is formless water. Only when Form and Formless unite, you get liberation. This is similar to hydrogen and oxygen combining in a particular proportion giving water. Consciousness which is all-pervasive and in all beings can be comprehended only by human beings. Animals and birds do not have this faculty. It is Divinity.. from this you get 'Conscience' which is limited to body. The word 'Conscious' is related to senses. Consciousness is everywhere. All these three are in man. from the Dhehatma Bhava (body identification) you have to rise to pure Atma (consciousness). Conscience warns you when you move on the wrong path. You. should not entertain any thoughts which do not conform to the dictates of your conscience. "Yath bhavam Thath bhavathi" (As you feel so you become).

Science has developed but senses have degenerated

Youth! You should mould your life by pursuing a good path, practising the ideals of Sathya and Dharma and grow spiritually. Today spirituality is being reviled. You give importance to Technology which is nothing but "Trickology"! It may yield temporary gains but is ultimately dangerous in the long run. In ancient times they observed Sathya and Dharma (Truth and Righteousness) and had no fear. But in modern times Science has developed but senses have degenerated.

Science is a semi-circle while spirituality is the full circle. The Vedhik dictum says, "That is full. This is full. This full has come from that. What remains is also full." You should keep everything within limit. Scientists discovered the Atom Bomb and also the Hydrogen Bomb, wasting huge stuns of money to produce instruments of mass destruction. All that money could be utilised for the welfare of humanity. If you have the feeling of brotherhood of man, then there is no need for fear and consequent building up of nuclear arms. In Mahabharatha, you have the Pandava brothers of whom Dharmaja is the eldest. Bheema, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadheva are the other brothers in

order of their age. Now you have America and Russia leading in the world in technological skill and destructive power. But Bharath is like Dharmaja. Even though Bheema and Arjuna were endowed with more strength and valour than Dharmaja, they always bowed to him. Now Bharath is the nation upholding Dharma. When once you develop Dharma there is no need to attack or harm anyone. Hence no need to have destructive weaponry. Dharma is the Asthra (weapon). Sathya is the Bhavam (attitude). Truth is common to all countries in the world. If you practise Sathya and Dharma, you have no need to have bombs.

Peace and love go together

We always chant at the end of all prayers and bhajans: "Om Shanthi! Shanthi! Shanthi! Why are we mentioning Shanthi three times? It is to invoke peace for body, mind and Atma (Inner Self). Atma Shanthi can, not be there without Shanthi of body and mind. Hence we invoke peace of all the three entities. You should restrict your talk to the barest minimum. When you talk too much, you may stray away from Truth. That is why the ancients practised "less talk, more work." Love is the most essential undercurrent of your talk and work. Speaking with love is Sathya and doing work with love is Dharma. It will give you Shanthi. Prema thathva (Love principle) should be followed. God is Love - Live in Love. we have only polluted love. We should practise pure love. With the same set of eyes, you see your mother, wife, daughter, etc. Though the eyes are the same, the vision is different. You see the mother with respect, wife with anuraga (attachment) and daughter or son with vathsalya (affection). The feelings are different. As you feel sorry when someone teases our sister, the others will feel likewise when you tease other girls. This principle of oneness should be imbibed by you. Students are generally good but change their behaviour due to environments. The famous scientist Einstein invented great scientific truths. But, in the last stage of his life he began realising the Truth and took to the study of Bhagavath Geetha! He used to say "Tell me your company. I shall tell what you are." What is good company - Sath Sanga? Sath is Truth, that is, God. So this means you should always be with God. Sathsanga does not mean Bhajan participants. If you realise your. Reality which is Divinity there will be no trouble. When Mahatma

Gandhi wanted to go abroad to England for higher studies, his mother did not like it. Gandhi understood his mother's fears about his maintaining sobriety and purity of conduct. So he made promises that he would not drink, would not smoke, and would have no contacts with women. He kept up all the three promises and returned with his principles of morality preserved intact.

Today the mothers themselves encourage their sons to go abroad and do not bother about their behaviour and conduct. You should have the feelings of oneness of humanity. Wherever you are, you should not hate anyone.

Realising oneness, the essence of Spirituality

Goldstein mentioned that 2,000 delegates attended this conference from abroad. He did not mention about the large number of delegates from India at all. You should consider the whole world as a mansion in which countries are different rooms. You should develop this feeling of oneness. The main lesson of spirituality is to share and live together in unity. Svami does not like the word 'Religion' which is often misused. Religion should help one to realise one's Reality. But people have narrow compartmentalised feelings as Muslim, Christian, Sikh, etc. Love makes no difference. It is the basis of all human values and you should practise it with full vigour to justify your real humanity. Having come here, you should return after leaving all your bad thoughts and feelings.

Prashanthi Nilayam is just like an automobile where all parts of a car are repaired, reconditioned and returned to the owner with new tyres, new parts and new painting. You, who come here, should shed your evil habits and thoughts like untruth, etc., and go back with fresh outlook so that your friends and others should find you to be a transformed person. They should feel happy from your better behaviour. Thus you will contribute to the progress of your nation also.

Serve your parents and your country

Speak softly and obligingly. By using harsh words even to your mother, you

will ruin yourselves. Consider Mother, Father, Teacher and Guest as God. You have to respect your parents even after your marriage, since they gave birth to you and brought you up. Wife is your selection. But mother is not so. Mother should be given first place. You have to talk to her sweetly, softly and respectfully. You should also try to influence your friends and relatives, inspiring them to transform and make their life meaningful by doing service to humanity. What is service? It is to do good and share your knowledge with others without selfishness. Many people invite me often to visit other countries. I do not like to go abroad before setting this country right and transforming its citizens. Many people go abroad begging for money. Many also resort to begging in the name of Svami. Svami has absolutely no selfish motive. You must serve your mother country first. Svami wants nothing from you. You must become true embodiments of love and serve to remove fear. Be good and get happiness. Do good and you will be good. Through sacred action, make life sacred with the principles of Sathya and Dharma as your guide posts.

17. Cultivate Character: Lead an ideal life

Date: 19 July 1997 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: World Youth Conference

JUST as there is oil in the sesame seed, butter in milk, fragrance in the flower, tasty juice in the fruit, fire in wood, there is Divinity in this vast Universe. The Divine is all pervasive and is present in every being. It is the Divine Power inside that makes it possible for the eyes to see and ears to hear. The entire creation is the expression of the Will Power of God. *Prakrithi* (Nature) is a manifestation of the *Paramatma* (Supreme Divine).

Man is born to manifest and reflect Divinity. All constituents of Nature reflect their inherent qualities. Man also has to do so but is not reflecting his innate human quality. Every one should consider devotion and discipline as of the utmost importance - duty comes only next to these two.

You, the youth (both male and female) are intrinsically very good. But you lack in discipline. You should observe good discipline. You should not waste time which is precious and sacred.

How should you utilise the time usefully? You have to follow the ideal path reflecting sacred human values. Nor only that, but you should also inspire and encourage others to follow a disciplined life. Today, people do not understand discipline. They sit in a meeting and go on cheering and clapping when a speaker tells something to please them. This is sheer waste of time and energy. Every second is valuable and should be used well.

Character is the most important life principle to be imbibed. This is the golden period in your life span and if you spoil this fine opportunity in careless living, your future will be ruined. The sapling has to be tended very carefully, so that it could grow into a mighty tree in the right manner and serve the people well. To whatever country you may belong, cultivation of character is essential at any point of time. There is no such thing as American character, Russian character and so on. Character is common to the entire humanity.

There is only one caste, the caste of Humanity;
one language, the language of Heart;
one Religion, the Religion of Love.

Whatever country you may hail from, whatever language you speak and whichever faith you follow, you should maintain sterling human character.

Control of senses is the hallmark of character

In ancient times the youth maintained good character. If you maintain good character, the future generation will prosper. Individual sacredness and purity ensure sacredness of society and country. When all countries are filled with such noble people the world will be blooming with peace and prosperity.

If you say that the world is not a bed of roses but is a place of misery, the fault lies in you, the inhabitants. It is Character that marks the life of a good individual. If you go through history you will find that in the ancient days people were noted for their control of senses. Take the example of Janaka, the great ruler and father of Seetha, offering his daughter in marriage to Rama immediately after the latter broke the Shiva Dhanush (the formidable bow of Shiva), in terms of the proclamation made by him. When Janaka repeatedly asked Rama to look at Seetha and take her hand, Rama looked in a different direction because he should not look at a woman till he tied the wedding knot around her neck. This is the ideal propagated by the great Avatar Rama.

Exemplary behaviour of Lakshmana

Later on, when Lakshmana followed Rama and Seetha to the forest and stayed with them for fourteen long years he never once looked at the face of Seetha who was just an eighteen year old damsel. Abundant testimony to this exemplary behaviour of Lakshmana is borne by the episode when Rama and

Lakshmana acquitted the friendship of the monkey-king Sugreeva. Sugreeva bade the monkeys to bring the bundle of jewels dropped by Seetha when she was being abducted by Ravana. When Rama saw this he was overwhelmed and asked Lakshmana to identify whether they belonged to Seetha. But Lakshmana respectfully said, "I can only identify the anklets worn by mother Seetha as I used to worship her feet every day. I cannot identify the bangles or necklace worn by her as I have never looked up at her face." Because of such worthy and laudable behaviour, they are remembered even today, though thousands of years have passed.

Youth should protect Character in that way. Both men and women should consider character as their very life breath. You may go to villages for doing *Seva* (service). Doing selfless service is the best way to cross the ocean of *Samsara* (transmigratory life). The Vedas declare, "Not by penance, not by undertaking pilgrimages to holy places, but by rendering service to humanity you can achieve the goal of liberation." Ego is eliminated by the spirit of Service and thus it is linked to progress in spirituality.

When the great Sage Valmeeki completed composing the epic Ramayana, he was contemplating as to who could propagate this great Epic to the world at large. The two boys Lava and Kusha came before him. When questioned by them as to what he was contemplating on, Valmeeki said that he wanted the story of Ramayana which he had composed in poem be taught to the people and the Divine Glory of Rama should be spread far and wide. The boys with folded hands submitted to the sage who was also their preceptor, "We are ready to even sacrifice our life for your Seva. Command us and we shall follow." Valmeeki was moved to tears at the spirit of service exhibited by the young boys. He said, "Go out and spread this epic story without delay". Valmeeki had taught them the scriptures and moulded their character too.

The nectar like contents of an earthen pot are far better than poison kept in a golden jar. The human body is only a mud pot. God exists in this mud pot as *Amrith* (nectar). We do not want a golden vessel with poison. The world is tempting like a golden vessel but is full of poison of worldly pleasures and pains.

Spread the message of Divinity

God resides in the heart of persons and not in shrines like Tirupati, Badrinath or Prasanthi Nilayam. He is essentially *Hridayanivasi* (Indweller of the heart). Valmeeki told the boys, "Go and spread the message of Ramayana with the spirit of selfless sacrifice for the welfare of the world." The boys wore garlands of beads and holding musical instruments in their hands, started on their sacred journey. It is Valmeeki's inspiration that made them pursue this noble task with utmost zeal.

Nowadays, youth are reluctant to wear *Vibhuti* (sacred ash) on their foreheads and participate in *Nagarasankeerthan* (community singing of the Lord's name). They go forward quite willingly and openly for indulging in wicked deeds but feel shy to participate in singing the glory of God. They revel in singing cinema songs of low taste while they fight shy to sing the Divine Names. To spend life in such unholy pursuits is a wasteful exercise and will not bring credit. Morality is the backbone of the community and a society of people bereft of moral values is worse than the jungle infested by wild animals. Even beasts have season and reason while man has lost both.

Service to people in rural areas

You are all embodiments of God. It is proclaimed in the Geetha that all beings are sparks of Divinity. You should not feel shy to speak the truth when you are going to pilgrim shrines such as Tirupati or Parthi.

You should not also fight shy of engaging yourselves in service, especially in rural areas, as the villages lack amenities and hygienic conditions. They need your attention more. You may not be able to visit the villages frequently when you are employed in any job due to difficulties of getting leave. When you go to a village, collect a few young persons of the village and teach them health and hygiene and impress on them the necessity to maintain environmental cleanliness. You need not spend much money for travelling to distant places. Select the villages close by and teach the villagers principles of health,

hygiene, and living in clean surroundings. You can take doctors to give them treatment and health check-up. You should inspire the villagers by your attitude of service and humility.

Serve with humility as Hanuman

You know the greatness of Hanuman who was the symbol of selfless service. He was endowed with mighty power, valour, strength, and he was hailed as a great scholar of impeccable character. Yet when the demons in Sri Lanka, questioned him who he was, he never hesitated to reply that he was the servant of Sri Ramachandra, You will have to feel honoured to call yourself as a servant of God and humanity. If you start serving with the attitude that service to man is service to God you will find God there. The same thing you cannot experience in *japa* (repetition of the name) or *dhyana* (meditation).

You have to "shut your mind and open your heart," which happens while doing Seva.

Some may ask, "While you are God, why worship God?" Even as you realise you are Divine, you have to do certain things as part of your duty. According to the tradition of Bharat, you have to do things to please God, or in other words transform work into worship. When you practise this, it becomes easier to realise God. Everything you learn by practice only. Walking, talking, eating, singing, and serving need practice. Practise dedicating all activities to God.

A boy prayed to God to give him strength. What for? It is not for watching T.V. or movies, but for serving God through service to mankind. You say diamond and gold are highly valuable. If you enquire deeply, man is more valuable than all the wealth of the world. Men alone decide the value of gold and diamond, and other materials. Man should have faith in himself. Every one should chant the name of God and engage in service in accordance with the advice given by Hanuman to Vibheeshana. He said, "Mere chanting Rama's

name won't do. You should also engage yourself in Rama's work." Vibheeshana went on chanting the name but failed to make any effort to alleviate the suffering of Seeta and Rama on their separation while Hanuman engaged himself in the service of Rama.

Light the lamp of the world with Divine Love

You should use your will power to engage in such sacred tasks. A common example can be seen in an electric light. *Dharma* (virtue) is the wire which carries the current, *Shanthi* (peace) is the bulb and *Prema* (love) is the light. Light the lamp of the world with Divine Love. Divine Love lights the lamp of life, which you are not able to perceive. None can regulate Divine Love. Worldly love is fraught with conditions and expectations in return. Divine Love does not expect anything in return.

Some say they are searching for Truth. This is meaningless because you are yourself the embodiment of Truth which is nothing but God. Because you are not aware of this, you indulge in wrong pursuits. In a co-educational institution, what happens is that a boy and girl in the impressionable age when there is no self-control, first look at each other exchanging glances; then it goes on developing into friendship by smiling, talking, exchanging letters and finally leads to coming together. You should control your vision initially.

Many saints have prayed to God to give them the correct vision only to see good, ears to hear songs of Divine glory, and hands to engage in worship. Jayadeva in a song appeals to the tongue not to indulge in untruth, not to speak ill of others, and avoid excessive talk. *Nagara Sankeerthan* (community singing of spiritual songs) has been arranged as part of the programme of the Sathya Sai Organisation to still the mind in the cool hours of early morning and purify the atmosphere and make the singer and the listeners peaceful and happy with thought of the Divine.

You must make it a practice to observe silence for at least one hour daily. It saves your cosmic energy and ensures peace of mind. You should also

develop the discipline of simple living and high thinking. You should avoid gaudy dress. Your white dress reflects the inner purity of your heart. Dress should be simple but clean. You have to enquire "who am I" instead of asking everyone else "who are you?". You must uncover your reality which is hidden by the outer coats of ego and attachment. You have to remove them to see your bare chest. These represent, the three qualities of *Sathva*, *Rajas* and *Thamas* (goodness, passion and inertia) covering your innate Reality. You have to transcend them to realise your inner Self.

Good character is of primary importance

Embodiments Of Love! Young men and women!

Character is the basis for all. your behaviour, quality and actions. None can be perfect but you can make an effort to develop excellent character.

When you go to villages, you should create a good impression in them by your behaviour. You should reflect peaceful and happy demeanour. You should be careful not to disturb their work. They should, not mistake you for a gang of rowdies. You must behave with humility and start working sincerely. Avoid talking too much. Learn to turn over a new leaf even if you have not lived an ideal life in the past. Do not brood over the past and worry about the future. Concentrate on the present. Take everything as the gift of God; discard worry. You cannot demand sweet medicine for your illness from the doctor. You must take whatever is prescribed. Do not give room in the heart for anything else but God. The world outside is reflection of the Inner Being. Be happy within and joyful outside and have enthusiasm for service. Do not bother about others heckling you as you are engaged in Service to God.

Shed only tears of devotion for God

If some are questioning your faith in God, tell them that He is in your heart and the others have no business to question your belief. Have strong and-unshakable faith. Be fearless and avoid "crying". You have to shed only tears of devotion to God. Such tears have spiritual meaning, because *Nara* means

water and *Nayana* means 'eyes'. Both together make Narayana.

Difficulties are like passing clouds. There are no permanent clouds at all. Even though there are millions of youth in the world, only those of you who have come here are lucky to experience this unique chance. **Wherever you go for service, Swami will always be with you. Whatever happens I shall protect you. Do not be carried away by profit or loss. Think of God ceaselessly.**

Even the great saint composer Thyagaraja doubted for a moment, the *Shakthi* (power) of Rama but immediately repented and said the fault was his to have doubted, but, God was all powerful. Never give room for doubt. The inner current of all the nine types of devotion is *Prema* - Love for God.

The teachings you have heard here during the four days should follow you like a shadow wherever you go. The cow consumes plenty of grass wherever it sees a green patch, but goes to its shed and slowly chews the cud. Similarly, you should go to your places and recapitulate all that you learnt here and follow them scrupulously. You should stick to the principles of faith in God, and Unity in Diversity.

Swami is prepared to do anything for you if you follow the path explained to you and become good and useful to the society This is my only desire. You must spread the message to others, each one instructing hundreds of persons in your places. While you render service in the village, the villagers should be inspired and encouraged to do the work themselves. When you go out for service, do not fail to take permission of your parents. If they object, tell them softly that this body is given only for doing service and not for wasting in eating, drinking, sleeping and idling. They will not object once they are convinced that you are going for genuine service. You must behave in an exemplary manner.

Worthy son makes father proud

Usually, a father distributes sweets when a son is born. But a father will be

really happy only when the society respects his son. True happiness is derived only when you earn a good name. Be good. See good. Do good deeds. This is the ideal Swami wants you to imbibe. All of you have been behaving well during these four days of your stay here. Continue this even when you go to your places. Because of emotion you may sometimes lose self-control. You should avoid getting emotionally charged and upset. You must control emotion, reduce your talk and practise Truth. Make your life blissful. Worldly pleasure is only temporary. Permanent bliss can be had only in association with the Divine. It is "heart to heart and love to love connection." You have Swami's Blessings in abundance.

18. Manifest the Divine within you

Date: 20 July 1997 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Guru Purnima

Truth is the mother;
Wisdom is the father;
Righteousness is the brother;
Compassion the friend;
Peace is the wife;
Forbearance the son;
These six are men's true relations.

In this phenomenal world, the physical body has parents who are physical and impermanent. When this is viewed from the spiritual standpoint, the true relations for the real and permanent human spirit are indicated in the opening verse.

"Sathyam matha"
(Truth is the mother).

Truth is changeless. It is the same over all the three categories of time past, present and the future. Such truth is one's real and lasting mother.

"Jnanam pitha"
(Wisdom is the father).

What is this wisdom? Does it pertain to the physical world, the mundane existence, the scriptures or science? No. true wisdom is:

"Adhvaitha dharshanam Jnanam"
(perception of oneness is true spiritual wisdom).

The wisdom that makes one aware of unity alone is wisdom. Such wisdom is one's true father.

"Dharma bhratha"
(Righteousness is the brother).

We have brothers. Between them there are differences of opinion. But righteousness which is unvarying and ever the same is one's true everlasting brother. Righteousness is Divine. The sages hailed Rama as the very embodiment of righteousness.

"Dhaya sakha"
(Compassion is friend).

There is no greater quality than compassion. It is compassion, which redeems human life. Whether one is a deity or a demon, compassion alone can ennoble him. Hence, one's true friend is compassion.

"Shanthih pathni"
(Peace is wife).

One cannot have a greater wife than peace. Peace is the greatest blessing.

Today because there is no peace in the minds of people, the world is plunged in conflict. Peace verily is divine.

"Kshama Puthrah"
(Forbearance is the son).

People believe that the son will help them in this world. But it is not a son who redeems a person. God is the only redeemer. Forbearance is a divine quality. Whoever possesses it has a worthy son.

Everything is Brahman

God is adored as mother, father, kith and kin, friend, wealth and everything else in the world. God is immanent in every atom of the universe. All that you see, the mountains, trees, insects, birds and beasts, the food you eat, the air you breathe are all manifestations of the divine. There is a Telugu song which proclaims, "All is Brahman - the stars, the sun, the moon, the heaven, the Lord's abode Vaikuntha, the mother and father, the words in a speech, the discussions in a debate, the life itself, the birth, growth and death, the wife, the time that passes, the body, the whole of nature, the love you bear to others - all is Brahman." **This assemblage is Brahman and this Sai who proclaims this is verily Brahman.** What more can I tell you, oh, good people gathered here?

God is omnipotent. Nature is reflection of that omnipotence. All the powers present in the Nature are present in every human being. Hence it should be recognised that God, Nature and the individual are all equally divine. God and the individual are not different from each other. The cosmos and the Lord of the cosmos are not separate from each other.

"Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagath."

This cosmos is permeated by the Divine.

Vishnu is the cause. Nature is the effect. The Divine is the embodiment of Cause and Effect.

Hence there is no need to go in quest of God. Man is the repository of all divine potencies. They are all latent in him, remaining incognito like the Pandavas during the last years of their twelveyear term of exile. Not realising this truth, man considers himself ignorant and weak.

Energy is Brahman

Scientists, after long investigations, have discovered that the whole universe is made up of atoms. The *Vedanthins* (spiritualists) on their part, declared that everything is permeated by the Divine. The terms used are different but the meaning is the same. Energy is Brahman and Brahman is energy. The cosmos is filled with energy. All that you, see and all that you do are energy. You observe an object. You see an individual. Both the object and the individual are manifestations of energy.

What the scientists call 'matter' is nothing but energy. An object appears as matter. But it turns into energy later on. Likewise, one may appear to you as a *Jeevi* (Individual), but even he becomes energy in due course. Hence, all the forms and names you see are manifestations of energy.

What is this energy? It is something, which you cannot see or conceive in the mind. Energy is energy alone. It is Divine. Every physical object has a base. There is electrical energy in man. Likewise, there is radiation energy in man. There must be a basis for all these energies. You see that in the world every object is based on some other object. God is the base for all the energies in the cosmos. The Vedanthins called this energy as *Atheetha Shakthi* (Transcendental Energy).

Scientists have termed it "Super power." The names used may vary, but the substance is one and the same.

In every man there is numerous latent potencies of which. He is not aware. The scientists have given different names to the different energies such as "psychotronic energy" and "bio-plasmic energy." Vedhanthins have described it by the compendious term "Transcendental Energy." How is the presence of this energy to be recognized? The Vedanthins described the process of recognition as involving *manasika shakthi* (will power), *dharana shakthi* (concentration), *jnana shakthi* (meditation) and *samadhi* (deep awareness). By these four processes, one can experience *Atma shakthi* (power of the Spirit). This means that in the final analysis, every individual, every object and every form of energy becomes one with the Divine.

Eight potencies of divinity

In this context one has to understand the implications of oneness with the Divine. One desires to merge in God and achieve *Moksha* (liberation). How is this to be secured? God is formless. He is the source of all energy. He is effulgent. Eight kinds of potencies have been attributed to God. He is the source of all sound, all motion, all light, all speech, all bliss, all excellence, all illusion and all prosperity. How is one to realise such an omnipotent Divinity? Water can integrate with water. Air can combine with air. Fire can merge with fire. As God is formless, to become one with God, we have to become formless. What does this imply? It means that we have to get rid of the attachment to the body. This is achieved through *dhyana* (meditation). While retaining attachment to the body one cannot hope to achieve oneness with God merely by praying for it. You have to become formless to realise the formless Divine. As God is the embodiment of effulgence, you have to make your life effulgent to experience God. You have to realise that the light of your life has come from that *Param-Jyothi* (supreme source of all light). This individual flame should merge in the Supreme Divine effulgence from which all other lights have emanated. Meditating on the Param-Jyothi, the individual has to merge his individual effulgence in the Supreme Effulgence.

Move from dualism to oneness with God

There is one other matter, which you should consider in this context. You are performing bhajans, japa, dhyana, yaga, yajna, or other spiritual exercises. All these are external forms of worship which do not serve to promote *Nivritthi-marga* (the exploration of internal spirit). They are good acts in themselves. But they are unrelated to spirituality. Spirituality implies relationship of Atma to Atma. (Spirit to Spirit). All actions have appropriate consequences. Every act results in its own reward. Good acts yield good results. But they do not contribute to spiritual progress. Hence the good acts should be stepping stones for the spiritual journey. You should not remain content with performing rituals and acts of worship - *sath-karmas*. When will you embark on the real spiritual adventure? You should go forward from *Dvaita* to *Advaita* (dualism to non-dualism). You become a jnani only when you have the *advaitik* consciousness (the experience of oneness with the Divine).

Magnetism of Divine Love

Man possesses within himself the constituents' needed for generating electrical energy, radiation and telecommunication. The whole world is filled with electromagnetic energy. The world is governed by the principle of mutual attraction. Green grass attracts the cow. The child attracts the mother. The law of universal attraction is related to this magnetic power. Rama is the supreme symbol of power of attraction.

"Ramayathe ithi Rama"

(Because of his powers to please everyone he is called Rama).

This Rama is not the son of Dhasharatha but the spiritual Rama who is *Atma-Rama* (Indweller in every heart). The Atma is universal magnet which attracts everything.

Today if so many people from all over the world are drawn to this place, it is due to the power of attraction. When you keep a flower here, bees are attracted from afar. They are drawn to the flower because of the sweet honey in it. Not a single bee will be attracted by a plastic flower. The sweetness that attracts people is *Prema* (love). This love may be manifested in many forms - maternal love, filial love, fraternal affection, marital love, friendly love and so on. Divine Love is the basis of all these forms of attraction. It is a powerful magnet. It is present everywhere including every human being. Every child bears the imprint of its parents. As all human beings have come from God, they should carry the marks of the Creator. Man has taken birth to manifest the Divine in him. Every being and every object in the world is divine energy. It cannot be destroyed. But it can be changed from one form of energy to another. For instance, magnetic energy can be converted into electricity. From electricity you can get light or atomic energy. In this manner energy can be converted to different forms, but it cannot be destroyed. This indestructible character is divine. Hence there is no place or object in the cosmos which is not permeated by the Divine. There is divinity in every particle and every cell. The sages therefore declared: "That which is subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the vastest and which is present everywhere as the eternal witness is the Atma." The Atma is atom and the atom is Atma. All the three terms - Brahman, Atma and atom - represent one and the same thing.

Prahladha proclaimed omnipresence of divinity

It took the scientists one thousand years to discover that what was present in the whole universe was made up of atoms. But many aeons earlier, in the Kritha Yuga itself, this truth was recognized by Prahladha. He told his father that there was no place in the cosmos where the Divine could not be found if searched for. Long ago Prahladha confidently proclaimed that the Divine principle was omnipresent. Because he was aware of this transcendental unity of the Divine in the universe, he could overcome every ordeal, discard the body-consciousness and realise the Divine. Immersed in God-consciousness, he fearlessly faced every ordeal and survived all the tortures to which he was subjected. With the name of Narayana on his lips he came

out unscathed when he was pushed from a cliff. Likewise he faced ordeals like trampling by elephants or attacks by snakes. He was utterly free from body consciousness. Ever contemplating on God he had no fear at all. (Swami recited a Telugu poem describing how Prahladha faced cheerfully all the ordeals to which he was subjected by the demonic agents of his father).

The one who is immersed in the body consciousness is a prey to all kinds of troubles and worries. It should be realised that the body is only an instrument and is bound to perish some time or other. When death is bound to follow birth why worry about it?

The state of no-mind

The Gopikas realised that Krishna was beyond the reach of the mind because of His cosmic subtlety and immensity, but they experienced His divinity in their hearts because of their devotion.

There is in every human being this divine energy which grows when it is properly used. The water in the well rises as more and more of it is drawn. Likewise, the more you share your wealth and joy, they will multiply. Hence, share your endowments with others. Strive to manifest the latent potencies in you. To realise God, practices like repetition of the name of God are of little avail. What is essential is *Amanaska* (stilling the mind). The waking state and the dreaming state are the two kinds of dream states. The only reality is the consciousness that is present in both the states. This unifying awareness is the real-it. To experience God you have to proceed from meditation to concentration and then to the amanaska state where the mind is virtually non-existent and one is free from attachment to the body: In that state one experiences samadhi.

Samadhi has two meanings. One is equal mindedness in all situations - whether of pain or pleasure, loss or gain. You should not feel distressed by a calamity or elated by a happy event. This state of mind is conducive to the development of extraordinary powers. Certain activities have to be carried on

in the day-to-day world. But the teachings of some Gurus in regard to these activities lead to dehumanisation. The term Guru means one who dispels the darkness of ignorance. Gu means one who is beyond *gunas* (attributes). Ru implies one who is beyond *rupas* (forms). This refers only to God. That is why the Guru is hailed as Brahma, Vishnu or Shiva. Only God is the true Guru. All others are merely teachers, like the teachers of different subjects in a college. Guru is the one who reveals the *guri* (target) to the disciple. Guri here refers to Athmik Principle.

Qualities of a true Guru

The true Guru is one who has understood his own Self. Emperor Bali promised to give Vamana - Vishnu who had come in the form of a short Brahmin lad - whatever he wanted. Bali's Guru Shukracharya, warned Bali against honouring his promise on the ground that it would prove disastrous, for him. But Bali stood by his promise despite his preceptor's warning and intervention. Bali esteemed God as greater than his preceptor. He declared that there could be no greater sin than breaking one's promise. A Guru who advises his disciple to go back on his plighted word is no Guru at all. In the Mahabharatha, Dronacharya, the teacher in archery for Arjuna, turned away Ekalavya from being his disciple because he had agreed to teach no one else all the arts he had taught to Arjuna. Ekalavya, however, learnt more than what Arjuna had been taught, by merely worshipping an image of Dronacharya. When Dronacharya came to know about this from Arjuna, he demanded from Ekalavya his right thumb as Guru Dhakshina (offerings to one's preceptor) so as to incapacitate Ekalavya from making use of his proficiency in archery. Ekalavya readily offered his thumb out of his devotion to Dronacharya, whom he regarded as his preceptor. This conduct on the part of Dronacharya in response to a demand from Arjuna, who was envious of Ekalavya's superiority in archery was unworthy of a true Guru. Gurus who are governed by selfish considerations or narrow loyalties cause great harm to the cause of spiritual enlightenment. They are worldly teachers, not spiritual preceptors.

Place trust in God who is true Guru

You may learn from anyone, but dedicate all your knowledge to God. That is true spirituality. That is true devotion.

Today is celebrated as Vyasa Purnima - the full moon day dedicated to the sage Vyasa, who codified the Vedas, and presented them to the world on a full moon day. This is the day when people should seek to make their minds as pure and bright as the full moon. The day should be celebrated by purifying the mind and understanding the mystery of the universe. *(Swami recited a song of Ramadhas in which he describes human life as consisting of seven forts - vices - in the heart of which dwells the Lord, who is very difficult to reach)*. Place your entire trust in God and not in self-seeking Gurus. Before performing any act utter a prayer offering it to God. Try to understand the sacred teaching in all the Vedhic and other scriptures.

Embodiments of love!

Realise that God is not separate from you. Strive to strengthen this sense of oneness with the Divine. This was the way Meera experienced the presence of Krishna in her heart, when her husband, the Maharana, expelled her from the Krishna temple built by Him.

The light of the Divine is within you.
Why go seeking for it elsewhere ?
This is the light of love and of bliss.
Never forget God, whatever may happen to you.
(Telugu poem)

There is no greater form of meditation than constant remembrance of God at all places and on all occasions. God is the indweller in the heart. When you experience this you will lack nothing and will be ever blissful. You will commit no wrong and will fear none. Your conscience will be your guide. Love all.

You can see God only through the *Jnana-chakshu* (the eye of wisdom). Realising that God dwells within you, you must treat God as the universal Guru, as the preceptor for mankind, irrespective of differences in names.

Youth is the stage in life when the slightest turn towards wrong will spell disaster. Thoughts shape the career. 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.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

19. The spark and the source

Date: 25 August 1997 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Krishna Jayanthi

Like oil in the til-seed, like ghee present in subtle form in milk, like fragrance in a flower, like the sweet juice in a fruit, like fire latent in fire-wood, the divine is immanent as a witness in the entire cosmos of living and inanimate objects. This Divinity is beyond description in any way. (Sanskrit verse) THE Lord of the Universe remains unseen like the thread that holds the gems in a necklace. He is the Cosmic Consciousness, the Supreme Spirit Atman, that pervades the entire universe. Embodiments of Love! What is the meaning of human life? What is its goal? What is its purpose? Wherein lies its uniqueness? Very few human beings strive earnestly to seek answers to these questions. Imagining that food and sleep and sensual pleasures are the only important things in life, man is forgetting his inherent divinity. This is totally wrong. To recognise his divinity and to convey this experience to others in society constitute man's duty in life. For everything in life, the inner feeling is most important. The inner feeling is at the root of all action. Even when one wishes to write a simple letter, one thinks in advance about the person to whom it is to be written, the message one wants to convey and only then one embarks on writing. The idea comes first and action follows.

"Knower of Brahman becomes Brahman himself"

Hence, at the very outset one should try to understand what is humanness. One has to ponder over the idea of divinity. The Vedantha proclaims that the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman himself.

This is illustrated by the example of Rathnakara, who was a highwayman who became the sage Valmeeiki by reciting the name of Rama on the advice of the sages. While chanting the name of Rama he was also meditating on the form of Rama. Rathnakara experienced and acquitted the effulgence of Rama.

Likewise, the child Prahlada, because he was constantly chanting the name of Narayana, reflected in his rice the effulgence of Narayana. The great

scientist, Darwin, similarly acquitted as a student the traits of his teacher, Henslow, because he was constantly admiring his teacher and wished to be great like him. These examples show that whatever the object on which we set our hearts and go on thinking about it, it becomes part of us. Hence, it is only when you concentrate your thoughts on what is good, engage yourself in good deeds and be good always, you will manifest your true humanness. This truth is expressed in profound terms by Vedantha when it declares that every being is a fragment of God on earth. "Mamaivamso Jeevaloke Jeevabhuthas-Sanathanab" (Every living being is a fragment of my eternal Self). The Divine has clearly declared: "Oh man! You are not a mere creature of the five elements. You are a spark of Myself. You are divinity itself." The Divine therefore calls upon every human being to conduct himself in a godly way because he is a spark of the Divine. Many good persons who recognise this truth nevertheless stiffer from various troubles and ailments and lament over their experiences. To entertain such feelings is a repudiation of their divine essence. The divine knows no trouble or sorrow. He is free from .all worries. When a man grieves over troubles and difficulties he is denying his godly quality: What is the nature of such people? They are victims of either animal or demonic tendencies or are subject to vacillations and hence are immersed in difficulties.

Every one is a spark of the Divine

How many recognise their inherent divinity? Very few indeed. It is the bounden duty of every human being to recognise his divine origin and act accordingly. Only those who recognise their divine essence are true human beings. The question may be asked- "What about the others who are also leading their lives?" It is true they are living, but what kind of life are they leading? Those who do not think of God are living like animals. They think like animals and lead an animal existence. The one who leads a godly life experiences divine bliss. He is ever blissful. He enjoys real happiness. Hence every man should realise the truth that he is a spark of the Divine. This means that everyone should seek to experience God as the indweller in the heart. Once Arjuna was troubled in mind over the state of things around him and asked Krishna why this should happen to him when he had such faith in

Krishna. Krishna then explained to him that it was not enough to remember God occasionally when one felt the need to remember him. This kind of remembrance is a matter of convenience and expediency. What is required is Anusmarana, constant remembrance. Only that will relieve the devotee of his troubles and worries. Anusmarana calls for remembrance at all times, in all situations. Krishna told Arjuna that he is thinking of God only on some occasions and for some specific purposes. This is not the proper way. "If you remember Me at all times, I am always with you," said Krishna. Krishna's injunction to Arjuna was- "Remember Me at all times and carry on the fight. That alone will help you. It will confer success on you.

All possessions are gifts of God

In human life, there are two attitudes to the objects with which one has to deal. There are things for which one is only a temporary guardian by virtue of one's position in relation to them. There are things which belong to one and which one can take along with him and use as he pleases. The latter type of relationship is called marakam. The former type is called tharakam. Men should cultivate the attitude of Tharakam, namely, that nothing belongs to them and that everything comes from God.

All are gifts of God. You must treat all possessions in that spirit. You must take good care of them as long as you have the responsibility for their proper use and maintenance. That is your duty.

As long as you live in the world, you have the responsibility to take care of your wife, children and possessions. But you must regard this as an obligation imposed by God. You must not get attached to them as your possessions. Most people in the world, however, are deeply attached to kinsfolk and properties. How lasting are these possessions? You can never know when you may have to leave all of them behind. Hence, the proper attitude for men is to recognise one's duty towards others and consider everything as a gift from God.

Krishna's Miracles

Arjuna was made to realise the divinity of Krishna by recalling the boyhood miracles performed by Krishna in lifting the Govardhana giri to protect the people of Gokulam from a terrible downpour, and how he revealed to His mother Yashodha the entire Cosmos in His little mouth to assure her that he had not eaten dust as complained by His older brother, Balarama. What Balarama did was only to make his mother realise the divinity of Krishna. When Yashodha saw all the worlds in the mouth of Krishna she wondered whether it was all a dream or the maya of the Lord or some inexplicable phenomenon. It was because of her maternal attachment to Krishna that she could not readily recognise His divinity: Men stiffer from doubts about divinity as long as they have attachment to the physical body. The body should be recognised as a temple of God. Based on this feeling, men should worship the Divine.

Not all can experience this kind of feeling. Only the Gopikas of Brindhavan could experience the Divine in every being and in every object. When Krishna sent Uddhava to the Gopikas with a message, they bluntly told Him that their hearts were already filled with love for Krishna and that there was no room in them for any message. Their minds, their eyes and everything else were concentrated on Krishna. Krishna had totally captured the hearts of the Gopikas. When they missed Krishna for a time, they appealed to every plant and flower to disclose the whereabouts of Krishna. (Svami sang a poem in which the Gopikas described Krishna's beauty and asked the jasmine flowers to reveal his hiding place to them). The hearts of the Gopikas were soft, sweet and blissful like butter. Hence, Krishna relished their pure love even more than the delicacies his mother offered out of maternal affection. (Svami recited poems to describe the purity and intensity of the Gopikas devotion to Krishna). It is because men lack this kind of total love for the Divine that they are a prey to all kinds of troubles. When they recognise their inherent divinity as fragments of the Divine, there will be no room for bodily attachments and the troubles arising from them. God is the embodiment of wholeness and perfection. Whatever is offered to him should be total and perfect. This was demonstrated by the Italian Violinmaker Anthony (Stradivarius) who took one year to make one violin, but made it to perfection as an offering to God.

Whatever is said, done or given, it should be perfect. To please God, who is perfect, whatever is offered should be perfect. Anthony declared that he was making perfect violins only to please God.

Pray for Peace and Bliss

When people pray to God they should not seek any favours. You should not even pray for the curing of any illness, because the world is full of disease. You must feel that what is ailing numerous others is also ailing you. The world is full of wealth, houses and many other things. You must seek from God what is not readily available in the world. You do not have peace. You must pray for peace. Only the divine has peace. The Divine has been described as the very embodiment of peace in the prayer addressed to the Lord beginning with the word "Shanthakaram." Nobody else except God can give you real peace. The second thing for which you must pray is Sukham (happiness). Real happiness cannot be had from others. They may give momentary worldly pleasure. But only God has enduring happiness and permanent bliss. You must pray for that bliss. God alone can give it. He is the Lord of Bliss. You must pray to God for enduring peace and bliss and not for any earthly gifts. Thyagaraja once passed through a period of doubt in Rama's capacity to relieve him of his distress. But on further reflection he realised that if there was any deficiency, it should be in himself rather than in Rama's powers. He sang a song praising the great prowess of Rama, which could attract the adoration of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, Lakshmana the mighty warrior, Bharatha who was endowed with supreme intelligence, and which endowed Hanuman with the capacity to leap over the ocean. (Bhagavan sang the song with all sweetness).

Have firm faith in God

Devotees are subject occasionally to doubts. Many declare their resolve to act according to the Divine will. But sometime or other they go back on their resolves. Those who are steadfast in their devotion to God at all times are very few indeed. You should, strive to develop steadfast faith in God. Only then, can the nature of the Divine be properly understood. Krishna

demonstrated in His life not only many miraculous powers but also many profound truths. Krishna's divinity is omnipresent, but it is experienced by devotees according to their spiritual condition. Persons who go to the Ganges for bringing the holy water can take with them only as much as their containers can hold. Hence, it is essential to broaden the spiritual container in you, namely, your heart. Divinity cannot be realised by various forms of worship. They are good acts in themselves and give their appropriate rewards. But they do not promote spirituality, which consists in establishing association with it only by concentrating on the realisation of that oneness. The Divine has no birth or death and pervades every being as the witness. What is required is a transformation of the heart. All bad thoughts and feelings should be expelled from the heart. Even in the performance of bhajans there should be whole-hearted participation in them. It should not be a mechanical ritual. Once your heart is filled with sacred thoughts and feelings, they will be reflected in your bhajan-singing. Through your singing you should give joy to all the participants.

Power of Love alone can bind God

Devotees should, realise that what matters most is the intensity of feelings. Kabierdas declared that he could not attain God by spiritual exercises of any kind. But he said that there was one most powerful weapon with him to realise God. That was his love for God. With that love he said he could bind. God. God submits only to the power of the devotee's love. Without love all forms of worship are of no use. That was why the Gopikas appealed to Krishna to fill their parched hearts with the love flowing from His flute so that saplings of love could sprout in their hearts.

Devotees entertain sacred thoughts on festival days like Krishnashtami (birthday of Krishna). But these are forgotten soon after. They should make every, moment holy. Only by this means can the Divine be realised.

God is omnipresent, but you are unable to see Him. You see a person. God is the indweller in him. You see his external form and not the Divine in him. But without the power of the Divine how can he exist? You cannot deny the

existence of the air all around you, though you cannot see it or grasp it. Likewise God is everywhere but is subtle and invisible. You will experience Him in your heart, when you make it absolutely pure. You must see the Divine in everyone. This is the true trait of a sadha (ascetic). The wearing of the ochre robe does not make a man a Sadhu. He must possess the qualities of a sadhu. He must be pure-hearted. Transformation of the heart is what is called for. All that you do should lead you nearer to God. When you act in this way nothing bad will touch you.

Triple attributes of Krishna

Krishna is omnipresent. The word has three meanings. "Karshayathi-ithi Krishna" (The man who ploughs is Krishna). The heart is the symbol of a field. The heart should be filled with love. The seeds of the Lord's name should be sown in it. Krishna encourages the devotee to do all this. "Akarshathi-ithi Krishna" (because he attracts, he is Krishna). Krishna has the supreme power of all attraction. By his words, his sport, his music and all his actions he attracts all people. This power of attraction is present in everyone. Hence everyone is potentially Krishna. "Khushyathi-ithi Krishna" (because he imparts bliss, he is called Krishna). Everyone seeks happiness. The Divine, who is the embodiment of happiness, is in you. God wants you to be happy, but you do not realise it. Try to recognise the source of bliss within you. It is not the true nature of man to be unhappy. When anyone is otherwise, persons around him are concerned about him. You should always be happy because you are the embodiment of the Atma. Never give way to worry.

As a spark of the divine, you have to behave like the Divine. Do not give room for grief. What use is there in turning over the beads of the rosary while your mind is thinking of mundane matters? First of all, purify your mind. Dedicate all actions to God. Free yourself from all attachments. Treat all things as gifts from God for which you are the custodian and not-the owner.

Avatars appear to redeem hummanity

Embodiments of Love! God's love is pure and simple. His greatest gift is His

love. The Gopikas realised this truth and declared: "Oh Lord! we are offering to you the love, which you gave us. What else can we offer at your feet?" Do not calculate what you have offered to God in terms of money or otherwise. Whatever you offer, consider only the feeling with which you offered it. Even a small thulasi leaf offered with love becomes a great offering to the Lord. Offer anything with a full and loving heart. By offering with love, you become the embodiment of love. That was the case with Prahladha, Naradha and others. Identify yourself with the name and form of the Divine of your choice. You may carry on all your normal daily duties, but keep in mind always the name of the Lord. That is the injunction of Krishna' Do not allow any evil thoughts to enter your mind. Then the good thoughts in you will find expression in good deeds.

Develop firm faith in God. In daily life you base all your actions on faith in your dhoby, your barber and many others. Why then don't you place your faith in God.? God is the indweller. Lack of faith in God really means you have no faith in your own self. Faith in yourself leads to faith in God. This is the secret of greatness. Faith in God alone will help you. All others are time-servers. The lives of all great believers in God show how they were protected by their faith in God through all their difficulties. Ramadhas, who was imprisoned by Thaneesha for diverting government revenues to build a temple for Rama and to make jewels for the idols, felt at one time bitter about his sufferings and even blamed Rama for his plight. Later he repented and sought Rama's forgiveness. devotees should not grieve over their troubles, which are only "passing clouds." Some devotees, like laya and Vijaya, were born as opponents of God as a result of a curse, but they were so anxious to return to God that they preferred the role of enemies of God so that they could meet with their death at the hands of God. Avathars appear for various reasons to save devotees Avathars teach mankind lessons about how to realise God. Humanity needs divine teachers to redeem it from its troubles. This is the purpose of Avathars, who come down to show mankind the ways of realising the Divine. You must recognise this truth. The Divine does not make the descent as an Avathar without a purpose. The purpose is to enable Nature to fulfil its role. To be born as human beings is a rare blessing. The Avathar instructs humanity how to redeem human existence.

Festivals like Rama Navami and Krishna Janmashtami are designed to remind people about the purpose of human life devotees who participate in such festivals should learn a lesson from the cows. Absorb as much of the teachings as you can during your stay. Ruminating over them when you go back, like the cows chewing the cud they have caught. Do not forget what has been taught here. After ruminating over what you have heard, try to put into practice what has been taught. Always contemplating on God, make your lives meaningful.

20. Significance of Ganesha Principle

Date: 07 September 1997 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

EMBODIMENTS of Love! One who recognises his identity with the Divine is a real Jnani (the knower of the Absolute).

All Bharatheeya festivals are sacred and invested with deep spiritual significance. They are not to be celebrated as mechanical rituals. Bharatheeyas hail Vighneshvara as; "Oh son of Parvathi! Master of the Ganas (Ganadhipathi)." Who is this Parvathi? What is the relationship between Parvathi and Ganapathi? People do not normally enquire into these matters. Usually Parvathi is considered as the mother of Ganapathi and no one recognises the underlying unity between the two. Where are Parvathi and Ganapathi to be located? Are they in the external world or are they immanent in every human being? The truth is both of them are all-pervading and convey the message of Ekatmabhavam (spiritual oneness).

Meaning of the name 'Ganapathi'

What is the meaning of the name Ganapathi? Where are the 'Ganas'? What is their form? When you investigate this, you find that the Jnanedhriyas and Karmendhriyas (five organs of perception and the five organs of action) are the Ganas. The mind is the master over these ten organs. Buddhi (intellect) is the discriminating faculty above the mind. The ten senses, the mind and the intellect together constitute the Ganas. In the word Gana, Ga stands for Buddhi (intellect). Na means Vijnana (the higher knowledge or wisdom). Ganapathi is the Lord of the intellect and the higher knowledge. The question may be asked: "Are the intellect and the higher knowledge present in the external world or are they to be found within man?" The answer is that He is present within each human being. There is no need to seek for Him in the outside world. Ganapathi dwells in every human being in the form of intellect and wisdom.

When Ganapathi is described as "Parvathi thanaya," who is this Parvathi?

Parvathi signifies Prithvi (Mother Earth). Everyone is a child of Mother Earth. The meaning of Parvathi thanaya (son of Parvathi) is that Ganapathi, who is the Lord of the Ganas, is the son of Parvathi, who symbolizes Shakthi (the Divine Energy). The adoration of Parvathi and Ganapathi is not of recent origin. Ganapathi is lauded at several places in the Rig Veda. This clearly shows that Ganapathi is as ancient as the Vedas. In several places Ganapathi is mentioned both in the Vedhas and the Upanishaths. There are many prayers addressed to Ganapathi in the Maha Narayanopanishath. There are prayers to him in the Thaithiriya Upanishath also. The Ganapathi Gayathri Manthra also figures in the former Upanishath.

Ganapathi has the appellation Vinayaka because there is no master above him. He is all powerful and independent. Without recognising the esoteric significance of the Vinayaka Principle, people look only at the external form and offer worship in mundane terms.

Vidhya is total awareness of Life

In what form does Vinayaka - the one who has no master - exist within a human being? It is in the form of the Atma. The Atma has no master. The mind is the master of the Indhriyas (senses) Indhra is the master of the Indhriyas. People conceive of Indhra as presiding over his own celestial realm. But as the Lord of the Manas (mind), he resides in everyone. The Buddhi (intellect) which is the master of the mind, is the very embodiment of Jnana (Wisdom or Awareness). What kind of awareness is this Jnana? It is Constant Integrated Awareness. It remains unchanged, neither growing nor diminishing. it is called Vijnana. Unfortunately, nowadays Vijnana is equated with science. Science is not Vijnana. Science is phenomenal knowledge. It is based on demonstrability. Students today worship Ganesha for success in academic studies and. for developing into good scholars. As a matter of fact, all that is learnt by these studies may be termed education or learning but cannot be called Vidhya (true knowledge or wisdom). To apply the term Vidhya, which has a profound inner significance, to modem academic education is a misuse of language. Vidhya is awareness of the power that animates every cell in one's being. It is through this awareness that man

learns all about the meaning of events in one's life from birth to death. Vidhya, in this sense is "a way of life". Everything you do is part of Vidhya. It is total awareness of life. It comprehends everything in its totality. It is for this kind of' total knowledge that you should pray to Vinayaka. The acquisition of degrees does not constitute Vidhya. To know upto the last moment how you should give up the ghost is Vidhya. The entire life of a man should be regarded as one continuous process of learning. A true student is one who pursues knowledge in this spirit. The student is called Vidhyarthi (vidhya + arthi - seeker of knowledge). The knowledge to be sought is not book knowledge or knowledge of the phenomenal world. It is Atma jnana (spiritual knowledge) that should be sought. Knowledge of the Self is the highest knowledge. The Geetha declares: "Adhyatma Vidhya Vidhyanam" (Among all forms of knowledge I am the knowledge of the Self). The true aim of life is to acquire this knowledge. Vinayaka is the preceptor for this knowledge. That preceptor is within you. The Vinayaka Principle is in everyone.

Offerings to Vinayaka

There is a practice among Hindus when they go to Gaya to give up what they relish most among vegetables and fruits. In modern times this practice has been perverted in such a way that what are given up are the vegetable and fruit they do not like. In this connection there is a mythological story which reveals how the practice of offering fresh green grass to Ganapathi during the Vinayaka Chaturthi festival originated. Once, the story goes, Parvathi and Parameshvara were playing the game of dice, with Nandheeshvara (Parameshvara's vehicle, the bull), as the umpire. Although Eeshvara lost the game, Nandhi declared Him as the winner. Enraged at this unfair decision Parvathi cursed Nandhi that he would be afflicted with an incurable disease. Nandhi, seeking Parvathi's forgiveness, explained that he gave the verdict in Parameshvara's favour because the latter was his master and his duty as a servant was to serve him. Parvathi relented and said that Nandhi would be freed from the curse if he offered to her son Ganapathi what was most relished by Nandhi. Nandhi pondered for a moment and declared that what he loved most as a bull was fresh green grass. He would offer that to Ganapathi. That was how the practice of including fresh green grass among the offerings

made to Ganapathi during festival occasions came into vogue. Ganapathi accepts as offerings many things which men consider useless and trivial. One of the names of Vinayaka is Arkadronapriya (one who loves thummi and jilledi flowers which are usually not valued by people). Other offerings to Vinayaka include a special kind of grass. There is a story relating to this.

Why Eeshvara is known as 'Bhola Shankara'

once upon a time there was an Asura (demon) named Gajasura. He performed a penance. Eeshvara, pleased with his penance, offered him as a boon whatever he desired. Eeshvara is a deity who is easily propitiated. Hence he is known as Bhola Shankara. When he is pleased with a devotee, He gives the devotee whatever he asks. Sometimes he gets into a difficult situation, as in the case of Bhasmasura who was granted by Shiva the boon to turn into ashes anyone on whose head he placed his palm. Immediately after getting the boon Bhasmasura wanted to test his power by trying to place his hand on Shiva's head itself! What was the boon Shiva gave to Gajasura? The demon desired that fire should go forth from him continuously so that no one dare approach him. Shiva granted him the boon. Gajasura continued to do penance and Shiva used to appear before him off and on once Shiva asked him what he wanted. The demon said- "I want you to dwell in my stomach." Shiva granted the boon and lodged himself in the demon's stomach. Shiva's consort Parvathi, searched for Shiva everywhere and could not find Him. As a last resort, she went to her brother, Vishnu, and appealed to Him to trace the whereabouts of her husband. The all-knowing Lord assured her: "Don't worry dear sister. Your husband is Bhola Shankara. He grants readily whatever boon his devotee prays for, without considering the consequences. I suspect that he must have got into some trouble. I shall find out what has happened."

How Vinayaka got Gajasura's head

Vishnu, who is the director of the cosmic play, staged a minor drama. He converted Nandhi (Shiva's bull) into a dancing-bull and led it before Gajasura, while himself assuming the role of a piper playing music on the pipe while the bull did the dancing. Gajasura was in ecstasy over the dancing performance

of the bull. He asked the piper (Vishnu) what he wanted. The piper replied- "Can you give what I ask?" "What do you take me for? I shall readily give you whatever you ask." The piper said: "If that is so, release from your stomach Shiva who is dwelling there." Gajasura then realised that the piper was none other than Vishnu Himself, who alone could know the secret of Shiva's presence inside his stomach. He fell at the feet of Vishnu, released Shiva from his stomach and prayed to Him for a boon. He said- "I have been blessed by many boons from you. My last request is that all should cherish my memory by worshipping my head after I pass away" Shiva thereupon brought his son and placed Gajasura's head on him. Ever since, the tradition has prevailed in Bharath that every auspicious function of any kind commences with worship of Ganapathi. It was the result of Shiva's boon to Gajasura. What is the inner significance of worshipping the elephant-faced deity? The elephant is a symbol of might and magnitude. The elephant's foot is larger than that of any other animal. The elephant can make its way through the densest jungle. In this way, it signifies the quality of a leader who shows the way for others. The elephant is highly intelligent. The elephant is also known for its fidelity and gratitude. In any circumstance it will not forget its master. Even in its last moments, if it hears the voice of its master it will open its eyes and look for him. It will sacrifice its life for its master. These are the lessons man should learn from the elephant. Intelligence without gratitude is valueless. Every man should be grateful to those who have helped him.

Significance of steam-cooked offerings to Ganesha

There are some inner secrets that should be noted in the worship of Ganesha. Bharatheeyas make some special offerings to Ganesha as food offerings. These preparations are made entirely by using steam instead of heat from a burning stove. Combining rice flour with jaggery and thil (sesame) seeds, balls are prepared which are cooked in steam. In Ayurveda this edible is accorded a high place for its curative properties. The jaggery in the edible is a remedy for various ailments. The til seeds serve to purify the arteries. It also helps to improve the vision. The inner meaning of all this is that the food offerings to Ganesha have health giving properties. It should be noted that edibles cooked in steam are easy to digest. In the Super Speciality Hospital,

steamcooked idlies (rice cakes) are offered to heart patients the very next day after surgery. Oily preparations are not given. Idlies are given because they are easily digested. The Vinayaka Principle, in short, symbolises health, bliss, peace, wisdom, prosperity, and many other things. Unfortunately this truth is not recognised by most people. People are content to offer some kind of mechanical worship to any odd figure made of clay and add to the pollution around them. What should be offered to God are things which will please Him. This is what Parvathi enjoined on Nandheeshvara. She told him: "Offer to my son what will please him and what is most pleasing to you." The Vinayaka festival is designed to celebrate the offer of such pleasing things to Ganesha.

Symbolism of the Mouse

Another notable fact about Vinayaka is his vehicle, the Muushika (mouse). What does the mouse represent? It represents darkness, which is the symbol of ignorance. The mouse moves about in the dark. Ganapathi is regarded as controlling the darkness of ignorance. The mouse is also known for its strong sense of Vasana (smell). Based on the smell emanating from an object, the mouse finds its way to it. The inner significance of Vasana in relation to humanity is the heritage of Vasanas which they bring from their previous lives. These Vasanas (inherited tendencies) account for the actions of human beings in their present lives. They also signify desires. Without recognising this underlying significance and desires, people merely wonder how a large being like Vinayaka could ride on a tiny creature like a mouse. Vinayaka signifies the triumph of wisdom over ignorance and of egolessness over desires. Once there was a contest between Vinayaka and his younger brother, Subrahmanya, as to which of them would go round the world first. Vinayaka was highly intelligent and had extraordinary discriminating power. Above all, he was totally free from self-interest of any kind. This is the supreme attribute of the Divine. There is no trace of self-interest in what the Divine does. Few people can understand the true nature of God's love. Men tend to compare their own love with that of God. They do not realise that their love is based on attachment to what they like or what they are accustomed to enjoy the attraction or otherwise is not inherent in the objects themselves but in the vasanas (cravings based on past impressions) of the individuals concerned.

Vivekanandha's discovery

Vivekanandha discovered this truth by observing the reactions of different persons to the same situation. seeing a man who had fallen on the wayside after taking intoxicating drinks, two thieves, who were themselves drunk, remarked that the man must be a thief like themselves who had got drunk after a thieving expedition in the night. A man subject to epileptic fits though that the man must have fallen in a fit. A sadhu seeing the unconscious state of the man, thought that he might be a yogi in a state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi (super conscious state of meditation) and started massaging his legs reverentially. These varied reactions showed that men judge things not as they really are, but on the basis of their own feeling and experiences. Vivekanandha then realised that his doubts regarding the spiritual eminence of Svami Ramakrishna were the result of his own misguided thinking and had no relation to Paramahansa's qualities. he realised that there was no blemish in Ramakrishna and the fault lay with his own feelings. He regretted having come away from Ramakrishna and confessed to his mother his grievous mistake. He appealed to his mother to permit him to go back to Ramakrishna. She allowed him to act according to his inclinations. Vivekanandha realised that man's wayward thoughts accounted for his doubts and confusion regarding the Divine. The Divine is beyond blemish and deficiencies. Hence God is described as perfect, free from any taint, formless and attributeless. Ganapathi has been described as Aprameya (transcendent and all-encompassing). Hence he can be worshipped in any manner.

Prayers and tests

Chittibabu, in his speech earlier, appealed to Svami to give you all good qualities, good thoughts and the strength to lead a good life. He went on speaking about receiving favours from Svami, but said nothing about what he was offering to Svami. God is ready to offer anything you want. But you must be eligible to receive it, like a depositor who can withdraw money upto the amount of his deposit. The same rule applies to what one can receive from God. It depends on the size of his deposit with the Divine. Then the cheque of

his prayer will be duly honoured. To enable your prayers to reach God you have to affix the stamp of 'faith' and address it with 'love' If you have faith and love, your prayers will reach God regardless of distance. You must see that your love for God is pure and unsullied. You must be prepared to subject yourself to God's rests. The sooner you pass these rests, the nearer you will get to God. There can be no spiritual advance without going through these rests. Students should be aware that for going to a higher class they have to pass the prescribed rests. In life, you are tested as to how much you are attached to the ephemeral things of the world and how much you yearn for the Divine. If your love for God is a tiny fraction of your love for mundane things, how do you expect God to shower His grace on you? (Svami sang a song of Jayadeva in which he exhorts men to devote at least a fraction of the time they spend on their possessions and family to contemplation of God who will come to their rescue at the time of death).

How much more sacred it would be if men thought about God even for a few moments out of the many hours they waste on thinking about worldly things? People should develop their faith in this truth. Whatever faith they have in themselves that faith they should have in God. That is the mark of greatness. One who has no faith in himself, how can he have faith in God? Turn your faith away from the temporal and the transient to the unchanging eternal reality.

Power of faith

The power of faith is illustrated in an incident from the life of Christ. Once a blind man approached Jesus and prayed: "Lord! Restore my sight." Jesus asked him: "Do you believe that I can restore your sight unhesitatingly: "Yes, Lord!" "If that is so, then open your eyes and see it," said Jesus. The blind man opened his eyes and got his sight. Likewise, people pray to Svami to give something or other. Do you believe that I have the power to give what you seek? My response is dependent on your faith. Even a person like Vivekanandha had doubts about Svami Ramakrishna Paramahansa's saintliness. There have always been doubting Thomases. To test Ramakrishna's aversion to wealth and possessions, Vivekanandha once kept

some gold coins under the pillow of Ramakrishna. The moment he reclined on his bed, Ramakrishna felt as if he was lying on a bed of thorns. Immediately, Vivekanandha realised how baseless were his doubts. He felt that to rise to the heights of the great souls he himself should elevate his soul. Men today are like a man on the ground who wishes to see the pilot of a plane moving in the sky. The only way he can see the pilot is to get into the plane himself. To experience God you have to aspire for a vision of God. That is the way to lead an ideal and blissful life. Ganapathi should be worshipped for this purpose because he is the master of the senses and only the mastery of the senses can make man turn his mind God-ward. If you want to lead a life of happiness, free from troubles and difficulties, you have to pray to Ganapathi, the remover of all obstacles. There is no need to go to any temple. Vighneshvara dwells in each one of you as your Buddhi (intelligence) and Vijnana (wisdom). When you make proper use of your inherent intelligence and wisdom, you will be successful in life. People must realise the inextricable union of Prakrithi (Nature) and Purusha (the Supreme Divine) and base their life on this sense of oneness. Humanness is a combination of the body and consciousness. Man has to embark on self-scrutiny as the first step in spirituality. Only then the reality can be comprehended. No one undertakes self-examination, though everyone is ready to condemn others. Only the person who is prepared to examine and punish himself for his lapses is competent to judge others.

Why Ganapathi festival lasts for ten days

Students! Realise that you have a conscience that is your guide and consciousness which represents your divinity. Ganapathi, who presides over the senses, should be your guide in acquiring mastery over the senses. There is an inner meaning in worshipping Ganapathi for ten days. The idea is that each day should be dedicated to acquiring control over one of the Indhriyas (sense organs).

Students and devotees should realise that control of the senses is quite simple. What is necessary is not to encourage negative feelings when they arise, but to adopt positive attitudes. For instance, Buddha confronted the anger of a demon with his love and transformed him. Many students today

are subject to depression and are confused in mind. The reason for this is their weakness owing to lack of self-confidence. When there is total faith in God there will be no room for depression.

Students! There is need for observing festivals like Vinayaka Chaturthi for external satisfaction, but what is more important is to realise the inner significance of Vinayaka worship which is likely to have lasting effect. The worship of inanimate idols should lead to contemplation on the subtle spiritual entity represented by the idol. This is the process by which realisation of the Atma (Self) takes place. Realise and act on the basis that the living Divinity is within you, Ganapathi represents the ideal person who is guided by intelligence and wisdom. Engage yourself in acts which will please the Divine such as moderation in speech, giving up ill-will and hatred and eschewing all bad thoughts and restraint on desires. By combining spiritual practices with academic studies make your life fruitful.

God is ignored in sunshine. He is wanted only when there is no light. Devotion must persist and flourish, unaffected by time, place or circumstance.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

21. Welcome God's tests

Date: 14 September 1997 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Onam

What can kalipurusha do To one whose heart is filled with compassion,
Whose speech is adorned by truth, Whose body is dedicated to the welfare
of others?

EMBODIMENTS of Love!

Only that person can be said to lead a full human existence whose heart is filled with compassion, whose speech is adorned by Truth and whose body is dedicated to the service of others. Fullness in life is marked by the harmony of thought, word and deed. The heart should be filled with compassion. Every speech of a human being should be adorned by Truth. Everyone should note the purpose of human life. The ancient adage declares: "The body is given for service to others." The body should be used not only for one's own purposes but also for the benefit of others.

In every human being, Divinity is present in a subtle form. But man is deluded by this unmanifested presence of the Divine into believing that God does not exist. The innumerable waves on the vast ocean contain the same water as the ocean regardless of their forms. Likewise, although human beings have myriads of names and forms, each is a wave on the ocean of *Sath-Chith-Ananda* (Being-Awareness-Bliss). Every human being is invested with immortality. He is the embodiment of love. Unfortunately he fails to share this love with others in society. The root cause of this condition is the fact that man is consumed by selfishness and self-interest. All his words, thoughts, and actions are inspired by self-interest. He has become a puppet in the hands of self-interest. Only when this self-interest is eradicated man will be able to manifest his inner divinity. Every individual is an incarnation of the Divine. But few attempt to understand this. Developing attachment to the body and

forgetting his Divine essence, man leads a meaningless existence. To get rid of selfishness, man has to engage himself in selfless service and chanting the name of God.

Show gratitude to God

Man leads his life on earth, depending on the mutually inter-related five elements: ether, air, fire, water and earth. Every object in the world, whether it is a bird or a sheep or anything else, has a value of its own. Man alone has lost his value because of his involvement in mundane pursuits. Man has no gratitude to the five elements which confer on him gratis innumerable precious benefits like light, heat, air and water. Man has to pay a price for so many small amenities like electricity and running water. But what price does he pay for the light of the sun who illumines the world? This light is a gift of the Divine. What price do you pay for a soft breeze or a heavy downpour of rain? God is providing freely such precious benefits to man. What gratitude does man show to God for all these? The only way to show one's gratitude to the five elements is *Smarana* (to chant the Lord's name incessantly). For so many trivial services in life we express thanks, but what thanks do we offer to God who is the provider of the most precious benefits in life?

Chant the Name from the depth of your heart

In expressing your gratitude to God by chanting His name, you should do the chanting from the depth of your heart and not as a musical performance. Ravana, for instance, used to repeat the five syllable Shiva Manthras "Namah Shivaya" constantly, but did not give up any of his demonic qualities because the recitation was done mechanically. On the other hand, Prahladha, though he was the son of a Rakshasa, repeated the Narayana Manthra - "Om namo Narayana" continually with all his heart and soul. This served to save him from all the terrible ordeals to which his father, Hiranyakashipu, subjected him. His father cast him from a precipice, had him trodden over by elephants, got him bitten by venomous reptiles, pushed him into the sea, but he came out unscathed from all these ordeals by chanting the Lord's name from his heart. Every instrument of torture turned into the Lord's form.

It must be noted that reciting the Lord's name with one's whole heart is true Smarana. The chanting of the name should not be done to earn the approbation of others or for show. It is enough if one is able to please the Lord. In the process one becomes united with the Divine. Man, who should manifest his inherent loving nature, has become stony-hearted. To accomplish his desires man should cultivate forbearance, love, and compassion, and not resort to sinful means. Your desires will not be fulfilled by causing harm to others. You cannot please God if you are full of envy, pride and ostentation. God will respond only to unsullied love and not to wealth or position.

Chaithanya appealed to Krishna to show him the path to realise God, as he was not acquainted with spiritual practices of any kind. He said that the only means at his command was his pure love for God.

Many people speak about getting a vision of God. This is a naive desire. They do not realise that the Divine is present in everything they see. The Vedas declared that man fails to see the Divine though the Divine is manifest in everything that he sees. The Vedas declared such a person as a complete fool. Everything in the universe is permeated by the Divine. Everyone should seek to realise his/her divinity and recognise the divinity in all beings.

Bali's supreme offering

This profound truth is expounded in all the scriptures of Bharath. Men are used to making all kinds of gifts - land, wealth, property, etc. But the greatest gift of them all is to offer one's self, as Emperor Bali did. Even his preceptor Shukracharya, warned him against making such a gift and tried to prevent it.

Emperor Bali had a heart filled with compassion, was-a firm adherent of Truth and was dedicated to the welfare of his people because of these three qualities, the Lord showered His grace on Bali. Bali firmly told his preceptor that there could be no greater sin than going back on one's plighted word. "Whatever troubles may happen to me I will not go back on my promise," declared Bali. Emperor Bali was always concerned to promote the people's

well-being and happiness.

Everyone should act according to the role allotted to him in life. This can be illustrated by a story from the life of King Bhoja in which an actor, first appearing as a renunciant in the King's court, declined his offer of a plate of gold coins, and on the second, appearing as a dancer, declared that the gold coins offered to him as a dancer were inadequate. Today persons don the *Kashayam* (ochre robe), but their hearts are polluted. People do not live up to the roles they assume. When you are given the human form, you should play your part as a human being. As a student, or as a householder, or as a renunciant, you should play your specific role well.

Recognise your Divinity

The mere form of a human being is not significant. What is essential is the observance of human values. Men exhibit external enrages, but there is no mental transformation. Many people come repeatedly to Puttaparthi. Physically they have changed, but there is no change in their mental outlook. Without such transformation man ceases to be human. *Gunas* (qualities) should change, not the *Guddalu* (raiment). The Divinity in each human being will become manifest the day each one recognises the Divinity in every being. You must all realise the supreme sacredness of human birth. The qualities of forbearance, love and broad-mindedness should germinate in every human being. In ancient days everyone developed self-reliance and did not depend on the services of others. During the reign of King Bhoja, the Queen used to take care of all the needs of the king, including cooking and other domestic chores. Today people are lazy and depend on others for many things which they can do themselves. The ancient rulers used to teach these lessons in selfreliance to their subjects.

When the Queen was attending on King Bhoja, she discovered signs of the greying of his hair owing to old age. She felt sad about the onset of old age, but the King told her that these were the first signs which showed that he should prepare for his final end.

There were four signs from providence about what was in store for man. The first warning comes from grey hair. If this is ignored, then cataract appears dimming the sight. The third message from providence is the appearance of wrinkles. The fourth warning comes when the hands and feet begin to tremble. If all these are ignored the final end comes at the appointed time.

"As is the king so are the subjects"

Taking heed of the first warning the king summoned his Chief Minister and told him that he was repairing to the forest for penance, leaving the affairs of the kingdom in the minister's charge. The moment the subjects heard about the king's decision, they declared that they would leave for the forest to do penance for securing long life for the king as there was no use their staying in the kingdom without their loving and lovable king. The people offered penance and the Lord appeared before them and asked what they wanted. They said the Lord should bless their king with long life. "So be it," said the Lord. The people announced with joy the Lord's boon to the king that he would live for a hundred years.

The moment she heard this, the Queen sought the king's permission to go to the forest for doing penance. While the people wondered what had prompted the Queen to go to the forest, the Lord appeared before the Queen and asked what she wanted. The Queen said that long life for the king with no such longevity for the people distressed her. She prayed that the people also should be blessed with equal longevity. Pleased with her high-minded prayer, the Lord said that not only the people but the Queen also would be blessed with long life. In those sacred days, the people and the rulers were equally broad minded and noble. The rulers and the people matched each other in their goodness. The adage declares: "As is the king, so are the subjects." Today it is rare to find such rulers or such citizens. Each one is wallowing in one's own selfishness.

It is essential that everyone should cultivate a broad outlook. Everyone should recognise that God is the indweller in every heart. Then alone humanness will become meaningful and redemptive.

Goodness is an index of quality

This day is the sacred day when the Lord as Vamana Avathar conferred liberation on Emperor Bali. Bali was a great person. But he had one weakness. He suffered from a slight sense of ego.

Who is a great man? One who sees the human even in Narayana (God). But a good man is one who sees God even in man. Hence it is more important for people to be good rather than being great. Most parents these days desire that their children should become great in various ways - in scholarship, wealth and position. This is totally misconceived. They should really desire that their children should be good. Greatness signifies quantity. Goodness is an index of quality.

Because of the undesirable quality of ego in Emperor Bali, Vamana incarnated to eradicate it. Bali was known for his love of his subjects. Poverty was unknown in his realm. He looked after the welfare of his people with equal eye. He felt proud about his kingdom and his people. Vamana wanted to remove even this pride and redeem Bali. Before leaving for the nether-world Bali gave a promise to his people whom he loved. He said he would come back to them every year on Onam Day and bless them.

Onam is celebrated as the day of advent of Vamana and Bali. It marks the beginning of a new life. That is why it is celebrated by wearing new clothes and resolving to lead a new life. Even now, despite the vicissitudes of history and the occasional manifestation of atheistic tendencies, the Kerala people have remained pious and God-loving. You see devotees everywhere. When you watch the people going in and coming out of Padmanabha Swami Temple, you see the depth of their devotion. The existence of opposing qualities is part of the nature of life.

For instance, pleasure and pain go together. Pain is often the means by which God tests human beings. They should welcome such tests, because they serve to promote one's spiritual development. Students should welcome

examinations because they are preliminary to promotions to a higher standard devotees at the present day do not relish "tests". They forget that without overcoming tests they will remain where they are. Even students unfortunately are averse to examinations. This is foolish. Only through tests they can progress in life. You should welcome tests and difficulties. By overcoming them your divinity is revealed. The Pandavas realised their Divinity only when they faced many ordeals during their exile.

Recognise the power of love

Embodiments of love!

Your foremost aim today should be to recognise the power of love. God dwells in every one's heart as love incarnate. The goal of life is to recognise this truth and share your love with those around you. Every human being should deem self-realisation as the main purpose of life and dedicate all his activities to the service of his fellow-beings, with constant remembrance of God as the indweller in all. This is the way to redeem one's life. Renunciation is a very much misunderstood term. It is not mere giving up of family and possessions. It is the total giving up of possessive feelings of any kind, whether they relate to family or other parochial attachments.

*Swami illustrated this truth by references to incidents from the life of Swami Ramatheertha, a renunciant who could not forget his regional **vasanas** (tendencies) even after settling down in Rishikhesh.*

Real renunciation means giving up all ideas of attachment to anything. Love can emerge only when there is such total detachment. Consider everything as a manifestation of God.

Man can realise his mission on the earth only when he reveres all others as Divine. And man has to worship God in the form of Man. God appears before him as a blind beggar, an idiot, a leper, a child, a decrepit old man, a

criminal or a mad man. You must see even behind those veils the Divine Embodiment of Love, Power and Wisdom - the Sai - and worship Him through Seva.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

22. Recover the spirit of sacrifice

Date: 22 September 1997 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Bhakthi alone confers the supreme good;
Bhakthi alone destroys the disease of worldly existence;
Bhakthi alone fosters yearning the Supreme;
Bhakthi alone leads to final liberation.

EMBODIMENTS of Love!

For the realisation of the Supreme, *Bhakthi* (devotion) is the royal road. The Lord's name has been offered to man to escape from the cycle of birth and death and the diseases incidental to human life. From ancient times Bharath has been propagating divine teachings to all mankind. The true aim of spirituality is to foster among the people devotion as the essence of Bharatheeya Culture. It is not arms or political institutions that protect a nation. It is love of the country, the spirit of sacrifice and faith in the Divine which serve to protect the nation. Every man and woman should be filled with the spirit of sacrifice, devotion and the spiritual urge to protect the nation. From age to age Bharath has been the spiritual leader for all nations. It has welcomed people, of different cultures with open arms despite the vicissitudes of history. This is the unique stamp of Bharatheeya culture.

Culture determines the daily conduct of the people. It is their way of life. Bharatheeya culture helped to promote mutual good-will and harmony among the people. But unfortunately people have gone astray and are subject to unrest and disorder today. The nation can recover true freedom and peace only when it turns to spirituality Love of the Divine should take root in the heart. The world has lost peace because people have no fear of sin and no love of God and are no longer human in their behaviour. The spirit of sacrifice has vanished.

Heroism of Karna

Mankind needs rulers inspired by the spirit of sacrifice and people filled with love of God. The history of Bharath is full of stories of sacred lives. One such is the story of Karna, a hero of the Mahabharatha war. When Karna lay wounded on the battlefield, Krishna was grief-stricken, although the Pandavas had reason to rejoice over his fall. Krishna told Arjuna that the passing of Karna would be a great loss for Bharath. No one could excel him in giving gifts. Bharath has always given the first place to the quality of sacrifice. Krishna assumed the role of a Brahmana to prove to Arjuna the readiness of Karna to make the highest sacrifice even while he was bleeding on the battlefield. Karna knocked out one of his gold-filled teeth to offer to the Brahmana the gold he wanted for making the *mangala suthra* (marriage pendant) at his son's wedding. When the Brahmana refused to accept it as it was taken from his mouth, Karna cleansed it by producing pure water from the earth by aiming an arrow at the ground. Arjuna felt humbled by this demonstration of Karna's unrivalled magnanimity and prowess. Krishna extolled Karna's devotion and large-hearted generosity and revealed His Divine form to Karna. He told Krishna that having seen the Divine form he had no other boon to ask before he passed away.

Every Bharatheeya should develop the spirit of sacrifice which has been the hall-mark of Bharatheeya civilization. God can only be realised through sacrifice. All the scriptures and epics have extolled the supremacy of sacrifice. All religious practices without sacrifice are artificial rituals alone. God examines your feelings and not your external observances. Divinity can be experienced only when worship of God is done with a pure heart. Whatever form of worship one may adopt, it has to be done wholeheartedly. There must be complete harmony between thought, word and deed.

True humanness consists in the combination of three H's - Heart, Head and Hand.

Misuse of discrimination

Embodiments of Love!

Think for a moment how people in Bharath are misusing their power of discrimination. When people build big mansions they allot a small corner for the worship of God. God says: "Oh fool! What sort of room is it for me? Your heart is my abode." Meerabai also declared: "Krishna! My heart is your temple."

Treat the heart as the temple and consider the entire mansion as His. You may use it as you like, but realise that God is everywhere. Have the faith that God is omnipresent. This morning we had the *Rathotsavam* (festival of Golden Chariot) organised by the Sai Padhuka Trust, Madurai, under the dedicated guidance of Shri Subramania Chettiar, who has been a steadfast devotee of Bhagavan for over fifty years. Over many years Subramania Chettiar has been engaged in promoting *Padhuka Seva* (service of the Holy Sandals of the Lord). It is not easy for one at his advanced age to carry a burden of this magnitude. I am aware of the good service he has done so far. Hereafter he should take rest and devote himself to his personal sadhana. It is true that service is a form of service to God. But he is no longer in a position to do this. Moreover you have to be told about today's car festival. Whether you believe or not, I have no liking for such functions. What should be offered to Bhagavan is unsullied love. That love is God. Live in love. Offer that love to the Divine. Why should I be bothered with this immense burden of a Golden Chariot? I do not at any time desire such things. Instead of this, you may spend any amount of money on social service activities.

Offer only pure love to Bhagavan

Here or anywhere else, what you have to offer to Bhagavan is pure love. Do not make such offerings as Golden Chariot anywhere. Anyone who desires such offerings cannot be Divine. When the Divine is immanent in everything,

what is it that you can offer to the Divine? How are you eligible to make any offering at all? Everything belongs to God. Henceforth devotees should not bring here any gold ornaments or ornamental chariots or golden chariots. It is better to sell such objects and use the money for providing drinking water to the people.

From the outset I had resolved on three things in the Bharatheeya tradition. From the ancient times Bharath has been providing three things to the people. One is *Vidhya* (education). Next comes *Vaidhya* (free medical aid). Vidhya relates to the head. Vaidhya is related to the heart. For this reason I have been providing free education. Nowhere in the world is such free education offered. Today, heavy donations have to be given for admission even to the first standard. As I feel that every child belongs to me, I see nothing special in offering free education to my children. All are mine and hence I offer these things to them. What I give and what I accept is love. It is a relationship of love to love, heart to heart.

Promote purity of heart

Therefore, whatever Subramania Chettiar may feel, if somebody is ready to bid for this Chariot, I shall be glad to give it away and use the money for providing drinking water to more villages. He brought the chariot here out of his immense love. He had one overwhelming desire in his life. He was keen to celebrate this Rathothsavam (festival of Golden Chariot) in his life time. He did not worry about what happens to him thereafter. It was to please him that I mounted this Chariot. Otherwise I would not have gone near it at all. I have no desires of this nature. Nor should you entertain such intentions. The relationship between God and devotee is heart to heart and. Has nothing to do with external paraphernalia. You must cultivate this internal quality. Promote purity of the heart. Engage yourselves in selfless service.

You have to cherish three cardinal principles -

Fear of sin, Love of God and Moral life in society.

That you will foster your devotion in this manner, I bless you all.

23. Foster firm faith in God

Date: 23 September 1997 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Who destroys conceit becomes endearing
By subduing hatred one is freed from grief
By overcoming desires one becomes selfless
By destroying greed, one achieves happiness

EMBODIMENTS of Love!

As long as a man remains arrogant - full of *Ahamkara* (self-conceit) - no one will love him. However wealthy one may be, whatever position he may hold, however intelligent he may be, if he is arrogant, even his wife and children will not love him. The day he sheds his egoistic pride, all will begin to love him. If one desires to earn the love of the world, he has to get rid of his egoistic pride, Ahamkara - "I-am-the-doer." Only the egoless person deserves the world's love.

"Krodham haithva na sochathi" (Destroying anger, one is free from grief).

As long as one is filled with *Krodha* (anger or hatred), one cannot be happy. In this world people undertake all kinds of sadhanas to get rid of grief or unhappiness. But whatever penances, japas or sacrifices they do, they are unable to get rid of unhappiness. The reason is they have not been able to get rid of their hatred. Ravana was a valorous person, with many talents and accomplishments. But because he was filled with hatred, he could have no happiness. By harbouring hatred, man renders his life miserable. "The angry man fails in everyone of his enterprises." (Telugu saying). Anger brings in its train all kinds of ill-fame. Haunted by infamy, he can have no happiness.

Conquer desires and greed

"Kamam haithva nissvarthavan bhavathi" (By conquering desire, one becomes unselfish).

As long as one is overwhelmed by desires, one cannot be contented. He loses control over his senses. He is intoxicated with insatiable desires. No doubt man cannot avoid desires. But there should be a limit to them. Limitless desires can result only in ruin. Prosperity will elude him. The moment man is able to control his desires, all things will come to him of their own accord.

"Lobham hithva sukhee bhavathi" (Conquering greed, man realises happiness).

Greed is another cause of human misery. Greed makes a man distant from every kind of happiness - material, intellectual or spiritual. Greed accounts for the failure of Dhuryodhana and Dhusshasana to feel happy despite all their wealth and power. Hence people must banish greed from their hearts. How is this to be done? When they foster the spirit of *thyaga* (sacrifice), greed will vanish. With greed-filled hearts there is no room for joy. You cannot fill a tumbler full of water with milk. First empty the tumbler and then fill it with milk. Likewise, get rid of greed and fill your heart with thyaga. "A mind full of evil thoughts has no room for good thoughts." (Telugu saying).

Embodiments of Love!

Take note of the fact that the rapid passage of time is consuming man's life-span at a rapid pace like the melting of an iceberg. The end comes even before man realises his role in life. It would be a shame if human life is

wasted in this manner.

The One chose to become the many

Man suffers from numerous ills because he has not understood the purpose of life. The first thing he has to realise is that God is one, by whatever name and in whatever form the Divine is worshipped. The one chose to become the many. "God is one. The wise hail Him by many names" is the Vedic pronouncement. It is the imagination of the observers which accounts for the apparent multiplicity of the Divine. The sun is only one, but his reflections appear in a myriad vessels. Likewise God is present in the hearts of different beings in varied forms and natures.

For the individual self, the body is like a chariot (or a temple). The different parts of the body have different functions as the different parts of a car. The four aims of life *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha* (Righteousness, wealth, desire-fulfilment and Liberation) - are like the four wheels. The wheels have to be filled with the air of *Vishvasam* (faith) without which they cannot run. The wheels can move only when they are properly steered. The steering is done by the mind in the human body. To get the mind working, the switch of *Buddhi* (intelligence) has to be turned on. The stomach is the engine for the human chariot. The food you consume is the petrol. The Divine is the charioteer in the body It is the *Atma* (Self in all). When this is understood, one can reach the destination of human existence. All the potencies present in the external world are present in man. The material substances constituting the human body have together very small value. But realise how valuable the human body itself is. To animate the physical body a vibrant power is needed. That vibration power is derived from the *Prana* (Life-Force). All the activities of the body are rendered possible by this Life-Force. The life-force itself derives its vibrancy (or virtuality) from a higher source - the spiritual power of radiation. It is these three potencies that are symbolised by the terms Bhur, Bhuvah and Suvah in the Gayathri Mantra. Ignoring these profound truths men are wasting their energies and live in meaningless pursuits. People should establish the right relationship with God. This means that spiritual exercises like chanting the names of the Lord or meditation on God should

not be verbal or mechanical but should come from the heart. Ravana was a worshipper of Shiva. But it was all formal. His heart was not in it. So, he remained a Rakshasa. Those today who do the chanting of the Lord's name without their heart in it must be said to belong to the Ravana breed.

How to pray

People must pray to God with Love for God and not for petty favours or material benefits. People must seek the Divine internally, not in external objects. Devotees should strive for transformation in their hearts and minds so that they totally give up their attachment to worldly objects and get immersed in God. God values your feelings and not your physical performances. Make the Lord's name the goad for controlling the mind which tends to behave like an elephant in rut. Men should seek to lead ideal lives in the service of society Above all, they should act according to the dictates of their conscience. There should be harmony in thought, word and deed at all times.

When the Padhukas are worshipped, the thoughts should be concentrated on the Feet of the Lord. Bharatha is the supreme example of one who worshipped Rama's Padhukas with such devotion. Settling himself in a hermitage outside Ayodhya, he worshipped Rama's Padhukas with such concentration for 14 years that his mind merged in the Lotus Feet of Rama. He identified himself totally with Rama and dedicated every moment to Rama.

Develop one-pointed concentration

Devotees should develop that kind of one-pointed concentration. There is no need to go in search of God who is omnipresent. If devotees develop *Prema nethra* (a loving vision) they can have the vision of the Divine within themselves. Just as no seed can sprout without rain and without seeds no rain can produce a crop, the devotee must sow the seeds of *Nama-smarana* (chanting the Lord's name) and develop devotion with the help of the shower of grace from the Divine. This was the prayer of the Gopikas to Krishna that

he should water their parched hearts by the flow of love from his flute. The Gopikas prayed to Krishna to play on his flute in such a way that the essence of the Vedas flowed out of it as melodious music. (*Bhagavan sang the Gopika-song melodiously*).

Everyone should try to convert the body into a flute for the Divine to make His music flow through it. The body should be made a fit instrument for such music. Then it becomes a means of service to others.

The best way to love God is to love all, serve all.

You must learn even to love your enemy A kind word even to an enemy may eliminate his hatred. It is through love that man should refine his nature. Every prayer, every name used in japa or worship should come from the depths of the heart. All names and manthras should be recited with a full understanding of the meaning of each word. Some famous musicians mispronounce the Telugu words in a Thyagaraja Keerthana (musical composition) which completely distorts its meaning. At the Padhuka festival banners have been put up misspelling the Sanskrit word Padhuka as Badhuga. This sort of mispronunciation and misspelling of Sanskrit words should be avoided.

Look upon God as a friend

Thyagaraja used to address Rama in all his Keerthanas in the singular. In the famous Keerthana "Rara ma intidhaka," he invites Rama in familiar terms to come to his house (after he had recovered the image of Rama from the Cauvery river). The familiarity is an expression of his devotion to Rama. You must look upon God as an "Old friend." There is no greater friend in the world than God. God only looks at the purity of your loving devotion. Treat the universe as your text-book and your heart as your teacher. There will be no need to seek God elsewhere. All that devotees need to do is to use all their

limbs and organs of perception to experience the Divine. Tulsidas used to lament that as long as he did not use his limbs to experience God he was a useless cripple. No devotee should allow his faith in God to weaken under any circumstances. You will achieve victory by facing any adverse circumstance with faith in God.

Embodiments of Love!

Foster intense faith in God. All other beliefs are of no avail.

24. From the corporeal to the Divine

Date: 05 October 1997 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

EMBODIMENTS of Love! The body, the Sense organs, the mind and the intellect are the instruments for a human being. Only the person who understands the secret of these instruments will be able to comprehend the Athmik Principle. If a man cannot understand the vesture he is wearing, how can he understand the mystery of the Infinite Indwelling Spirit? First comes the body it is called Dheha because its ultimate destiny is cremation. The body is burnt after life goes out of it. The body may be judged by its form. But it is in fact a receptacle for all kinds of garbage and is subject to numerous ills of the flesh. Recognising its impermanence, man should turn his mind towards the feet of the Divine. The body has also another name, Shareera, which means that which is subject to decay. The body at the beginning is a lump of flesh (as foetus). Then it acquires an attractive form. Youth confers on it special charm. In old age it develops deformities. The body is consumed by the fire of worry when a man is alive or is burnt on the funeral pyre when he is dead.

The Scriptures declare that man is endowed with a body primarily to lead a righteous life. The Bhagavath Geetha describes the body as Kshethra. One meaning of this term is that it is the abode of the Divine. Places of pilgrimage are called Kshethras. Another meaning of the term Kshethra is "a field." If you want to grow a crop on a field, you have to prepare it suitably for the purpose. Ploughing, sowing and watering have to be done for the crop to grow. As is the seed so is the crop. Likewise, the actions of the body determine the nature of one's life. Everyone should resolve to perform good-deeds to enjoy good results.

"Both the body and the Atma are divine"

The body as Kshethra is a temple in which the Divine dwells as Kshethrajna, the knower of the Kshethra. The Kshethrajna is the Atma (the Self). The Geetha declares that both the body and the Atma are divine.

However great a scholar may be, however profound his knowledge of the scriptures, .he has to learn all about the body because it brings with it the consequences of the previous lives of the individual. The body is the basic instrument for all actions in this life and for the acquisition of all knowledge and skills. Everyone at the time of birth brings with him a necklace from the Creator made up of the results of his good and bad actions in past lives. Everyone reaps only the fruits of what he sows. Only good actions can produce good results. Your happiness or sorrow is related to the nature of your actions. In a sense, all actions of man can be regarded as Yajnas. To cross the ocean of Samsara (the cycle of birth and death) all that is necessary is service to good people and no other religious observance. By such service, one receives the grace of the Divine. All actions have to be done as an offering to God to secure this grace. They then become Yajnas (holy sacrificial rituals). One should think of God and offer prayers, at least four times a day - at dawn, at noon, at sunset and before going to bed as food for the soul.

Body is sacred and precious as the abode of Atma

The body should be regarded primarily as an instrument for the realisation of the Divine through the nine forms of devotion. Attachment to the body for physical pleasures should be given up. It is essentially sacred and precious as the abode of the Atma and should be used only for sacred purposes. God is one, whatever the name or form in which He is worshipped. God blesses a devotee according to the depth of his devotion, without regard to the name or form used for worship.

Today, before the commencement of the Yajna, the rithviks rubbed two sticks against each other to produce fire for the homam. What is the significance of this procedure? It indicates that for a Yajna the fire should be started in a natural way and not by any artificial means. Two sticks are used for the purpose. Similarly the body and the mind should be rubbed against each other to generate Jnana-agni (the fire of wisdom). It should also be realised that there is a-divine energy latent in man - like fire in the wood - which enables the eyes to see, the ears to hear, the mind to think and the body to move about. All organs are able to function because of this divine energy.

Man feels proud that he is the doer of all things. There is no basis for this pride. Such egoism is a fatal disease. Egoism is accompanied by another dire disease called *Asuuya* (envy). There are cures for all kinds of diseases in the world. But there are no remedies for egoism and envy. Total restraint is the only cure for these two diseases. Man should realise that there should be no excessive indulgence in any desire, whether it be food or other necessities. This is the lesson we have to learn from our ancients, who practised self-restraint in every aspect of life. In the ancient days you did not have the kind of education that is imparted today. They did not secure high degrees. But they led a life of purity and integrity with the name of Narayana on their lips.

The triune peace can be conferred only by God

Today people should develop pure hearts and unwavering minds to secure peace. Not all the wealth of the world or the great advances in space technology confer peace on people who have not found it within them. When at the end of a bhajan, we say *Shanthi* three times, the prayer is for peace of the body, the mind and the Spirit. Without this triune peace man cannot have real peace. And this threefold peace can be conferred only by God. This means that spirituality is essential for the health of the body, the peace of the mind and the bliss of the Spirit. The Cosmic Spirit is one only, though it may be called by many names and worshipped in varied forms. You should see the Divine in everyone, including those whom you may regard as aliens or enemies. True spirituality consists in this sense of spiritual oneness. It can arise only when the attachment to the body is given up. People imagine that it is difficult to give up this attachment. It is not so. When you develop the conviction that you are the *Atma* (the Self), then it will be easy to give up attachment to the body. When people in general develop this feeling, there will be a great transformation in the life of mankind. Peace should spread from the individual to the family, to society, the nation and the world and not vice-versa.

Spiritualising effect of vibrations from the Vedas

Embodiments of Love! Today the Veda Purusha Jnana Saptaha Yajna has been inaugurated for promoting the welfare of the universe. Every individual has to play a part in this endeavour for world peace and prosperity. Whether you understand the meaning of the manthras or not, the vibrations emanating from the chanting of the Vedas will have a spiritualising effect on the listeners. There is bliss in the vibrations of the Vedhic hymns. Brahman (The Cosmic Self) is described as the embodiment of cosmic vibrations which permeate the universe, fill it with effulgence, wisdom and bliss. Make use of the opportunity provided by the Yajna to purify your life and raise yourself from the human to the Divine.

25. Sacred use of Indhriyas

Date: 06 October 1997 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

IN THE pursuit of sensory pleasures man forgets his Divine origin. Man can redeem his life only when he understands wherefrom he has come, what is his role in life and what is his destination. The first thing man has to learn is the role of Indhriyas (sense organs). The sense organs are termed Mathras, meaning measuring instruments. For instance, the tongue measures the taste of what it eats. The eyes evaluate the form of what it sees. It will notice that a man with a flat face has a snub nose. The senses recognise the differences among various objects in terms of size, quality, etc. The senses have also another function to discharge. They indicate to man the limits to which sensory objects should be used or enjoyed. As the senses are God-given gifts, abuse of the senses by excesses will not only mean transgressing the divinely ordained limits, but will also lead to many harmful consequences. Hence everyone has to adhere to the appropriate limits prescribed for the use of the senses. For instance, take the case of nostrils. They are to be used for breathing purposes and for smelling objects and discarding foul-smelling objects. The respiratory process conveys a significant spiritual message when air is inhaled and exhaled. The message is contained in the mantra So-ham, which is also known as Hamsa gayathri. (Svami demonstrated how during inhalation the sound "So..." is produced and how "ham" is produced when air is exhaled.) So Ham conveys the message of identity between God - "SO" and the individual Aham. This mantra contains the essence of Adhvaitha (non-dualism). What happens when the nose that is to be used for such sacred purposes is used for raking snuff? It is not merely abuse of the nose, but is the cause of various respiratory diseases. Most ailments are the result of misuse of the sense organs for improper purposes.

Recognise the proper role of the sense organs

Jayadheva rebuked men for not using the God-given tongue for chanting the sweet and sacred name of the Lord. The tongue should be engaged only in speaking the truth, in speaking sweetly and in consuming what is pleasant

and wholesome for the body. Man degrades himself by consuming intoxicating drinks and non-vegetarian food and by indulging in smoking. These noxious habits affect the brain also.

Saint Suurdhas lamented on the behaviour of people who would not listen to the hymns of praise of God with their God-given ears or gaze on the beautiful form of the Lord in their God-given sight. Persons going on the road should concentrate on the road and not allow their eyes to stray on the wall posters and shop windows. It is necessary that everyone should recognise the proper role of the sense organs and use them properly.

In this context it may be noted that different animals are victims to different kinds of sensory experiences. Deer are a prey to sound - the roar of a lion or other wild animal. The elephant is afraid of the touch of the mahout's goad. Insects are attracted by light or a flame and lose their lives. Fish are lured by the taste of the worm attached to the angler's hook. It is a pity that man who possesses all the five senses of perception (sound, touch, sight, taste and smell) is a bond-slave to all of them. Thereby he forgets his freedom.

The senses should be used for sacred purposes

How, then, can man experience real happiness? Only by turning his senses towards God. Man has five senses of perception and five senses of action. The master for all these ten senses is the mind. The ten senses are like ten wives pulling the mind in different directions. It is difficult for the mind to control the senses. Man should realise that all pleasures derived from submission to the senses are momentary and leave a trail of suffering behind. He should realise that the senses are to be utilised for sacred purposes and the practice of human values. Only then he will understand the true purpose of human existence. The senses are gifted by God for humans to lead ideal lives. See good, think good thoughts, speak sweet words and listen to what is good. Be good and do good. A young student who spoke earlier referred to Svami's advice to all of them to "Speak less and work more." The ancient Indian Sages practised silence as a spiritual discipline because they realised the myriad benefits derived from Mounam (silence). Svami Vivekanandha learnt a

valuable lesson when he found that after ten days of endless talk he had forgotten all the shlokas he had learnt by heart. By practising complete silence for a fortnight he got back his memory powers.

People should realise that God's grace is secured by the sacred use of the senses endowed on man by the Divine.

Man is enveloped by five Koshas (sheaths) - Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnanamaya and Anandhamaya (food, life-breath, mentation, awareness and bliss). Modern man has been able to progress only up to the Manomaya stage. He must strive to go beyond the mind up to the stage of bliss.

You wear coloured glasses. Correct your vision; the world will be corrected. Reform yourselves; the world will be reformed. You create the world of your choice. You see many, because you seek the many, not the One. Try to subsume the many in the One: the physical bodies of yourself and others, the family, the village, the community, the state, the nation, the world. Thus, you will progressively march on towards more and more inclusive of loyalties and reach the stage of unity in thought, word and deed.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

26. Transcending the mind to realise God

Date: 07 October 1997 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara

ONLY the one who is aware that the Cosmic self is Shiva and that Shiva is also the Jeeva (individual self), is a complete Jnani (knower of Absolute Truth). The reason is that the cosmos is the Vibhuuthi (grandest manifestation of the Absolute Truth). To understand this monistic principle (Non-dualism) is the supreme wisdom. However, the Divine principle is associated with the qualities of the individual self through the mind. The characteristic of the mind is to entertain thoughts and counter-thoughts endlessly. Sometimes man is unable to keep pace with the speed of the thoughts and is swept off his feet. Man some-rimes gets intoxicated by his thoughts, which are influenced by the aberrations of the Kali Age.

The mind, the Gathi (goal), the Sthithi (status) and the Sampathi (prosperity) are inter-related. The one who misuses these four turns into a demon. Today there-are many incurable diseases, but these relate not to the body but to the mind. In a sense, all diseases get into the body through the mind. Even ordinary ailments like a head ache or a stomach ache have their origin in the mind. Whatever influences the mind affects the body also. But unaware of this profound truth, man attributes all ills to the body and not the mind. Most ailments are really mental and not physical. Because of this we witness a wide prevalence of psychic disorders. we find that mental illness are on the increase all over the world. The reason is that there is too much of mental tension and worry.

Attachment and aversion are the diseases of the mind

The mind is subject to varying moods - sorrow or joy anger or fear, love or hate. For all the diseases arising from the mind the basic causes are two-Raga and Dhvesha (attachment and aversion). The mind is filled with these twofold feelings. Consequently, it tends to forget its basic human nature. The mind in this state considers the six basic enemies of man - lust, hatred, delusion, greed, envy and pride - as virtues. These six vices can poison a person's

entire being. He then forgets his inherent divinity and ceases to be human. He is a victim of infamy. But a person filled with good feelings enjoys peace and happiness. The ancient Indian sages practised self-control, entertained good thoughts and led a blissful life. When a man's inner self is filled with love, his life becomes full of bliss and he is always hale and hearty. Today man suffers from numerous ailments the root cause of which is a diseased mind. There is no death for the mind, though when the body is facing death the mind thinks it is dying. The mind, it has been said, is the cause of one's bondage or liberation. Bad thoughts beget bondage. Good thoughts lead to liberation. Hence, everyone should develop good thoughts and perform good deeds. Such good feelings can arise only out of love. Today all man's actions are governed by mundane desires. To achieve liberation man has to go beyond the vagaries of the mind. He should follow the Anthahkarana (Inner Voice).

Buddha's teaching on self-realisation

Buddha, before he attained Nirvana (Self-realisation), summoned his step-brother Anandha to his side to impart his last message. Anandha was in tears. Buddha told him: "Anandha! It was for realising this blissful state that I had striven all these years. Why do you shed tears at this moment? How many are able to secure such bliss? Few at all. You are looking only at my earthly body. You cannot know the internal bliss I am experiencing at this moment. I suffered a great deal over the past thirty years because of the aberrations of my mind. It was the mind that stood between me and Self-realisation. Today I am free from the hold of my mind. That is the cause of my bliss. When the mind is absent there is bliss." This was the lesson Buddha taught to Anandha. Anandha prayed to Buddha to confer on him a similar mind-less state.

Any happiness experienced through the mind is not spiritual bliss. It is transient physical pleasure. Not recognising this truth many pursue so called spiritual exercises with the mind. The mind should be ignored. It is concerned only with thoughts of one kind or another. The Athmik Principle can't be understood by such thought processes. Divert your attention towards the Atma and dismiss all thoughts. If you cannot get rid of thoughts, then

cultivate good thoughts. Turn your thoughts towards the Supreme Lord. I have often compared the heart to a lock. If you turn the key left ward, it gets closed. Turn the key to the right and the lock opens. Turn your heart Godward.

The spiritual disciplines of the ancients

To control the mind the ancients resorted to various disciplines including food control. They fasted on full moon day and gradually increased their intake up to new moon day. From the next day they gradually reduced their intake till full moon day. Students need not resort to this discipline now, but they should avoid eating excessive food. By their spiritual discipline and regulated eating and other habits, the ancients led long and healthy lives. Bheeshma, who was Commander-in-Chief of the Kaurava forces in the Mahabharatha war, was 126 years old at the time. He lived a pure celibate life, making a great sacrifice for the sake of his father. Bheeshma took a vow of life-long celibacy to enable his father to marry the woman whom he desired, whose father insisted that the son born to her should be the heir to the throne. Bheeshma not only renounced his title to the throne but also took the vow of celibacy to ensure that he would leave no progeny to claim the right. After he fell in the battle he lay on a bed of arrows for 56 days for the auspicious moment of the northward motion of the sun to give up his life. He had such will power that he could bear any amount of personal suffering. He spent his last days imparting the highest wisdom to the Pandavas. The history of Bharath is full of stories of such heroic and noble souls. Unfortunately young people today, ignoring the examples of such great figures, lead purposeless lives. They get prematurely old because of their ways of living. Students must lead righteous lives, acquire courage and manliness and realise the Divine. They have to recognise the supreme importance of keeping the mind under control. To get close to God you have to go beyond the mind. To have control over the mind is the mark of jnana (wisdom). To seek to achieve proximity to God you have to develop devotion. Millions of people all over the world are seeking God-Realisation. But all their efforts are at the mental level. They have to go beyond the mind to realise the Divine, who is the embodiment of Truth-Wisdom-Omnipotence.

When we have more money, it breeds pride, sloth and contempt for others. In pursuit of money, man descends to the level of the beast. Money is of the nature of manure. Piled up in one place, it pollutes the air. Spread it wide; scatter it over fields; it rewards you with a bumper harvest. So too, when money is spent in all the four quarters for promoting good works, it yields contentment and happiness in plenty.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

27. Vital role of the Buddhi

Date: 08 October 1997 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara

EMBODIMENTS of Love! Does one need a lamp to see the light from another lamp? And yet, man who has the light of wisdom in his heart goes in search of wisdom elsewhere. This search, born of ignorance, leads him to seek gurus. To acquire Atma-Jnana (knowledge of the divine Self) man needs no guru (preceptor). No preceptor can give this knowledge because Prakrithi (Mother Nature) has herself conferred on her children the keys to this knowledge for their protection.

Every man is a son of Bhuudhevi (Mother Earth). As a mother, Bhuudhevi is teaching many lessons to her children. She calls on her children to learn everything from herself instead of going after other preceptors. "Scholars and intellectuals are cutting me to pieces to acquire knowledge and conduct their experiments," laments Mother Earth. "They are subjecting me to great suffering by their diggings and blasting. But I am not worried about all this. Learn this spirit of forbearance from me. Whatever abuse or attack others may level at you, bear them with fortitude. Treat praise or blame, good or bad with equanimity. This is the highest knowledge." Another vital element in Nature is water, which is also one of the manifestations of the Divine. The lesson that water teaches is: "Son! By nature I am pure, sweet and cool. Purity, patience and perseverance are three good qualities you have to cultivate." Agni (Fire) is another of Nature's preceptors. It tells man: "My son! I make no difference between good and bad. I do not gain by burning one thing or lose by not burning something. I treat all alike whatever comes into my orbit. Learn to see the Divine in all things. This is the way to gain knowledge of the Self."

Nature is the best text book

I have often said that Nature is the best text-book for one and all. Many valuable things can be learnt from the behaviour of wind, which sustains life by respiratory process and is all pervading. To exercise the power of

discrimination, man is endowed with Buddhi (the intellect). The intellect has to be unwavering and steady. Man fails to use this discriminating power properly and fully because of his qualities of Raga and Dhvesha (attachment and aversion), his obliviousness to his inherent divinity and his preoccupation with mundane desires. If these tendencies are removed, the intellect will come into its own as an instrument of discrimination. The intellect is the highest among man's endowments starting with the body. Above the body are the senses. Subtler than the senses is the mind. The intellect is subtler than the mind. Above the intellect and much more subtle is the Atma (Self). Because of its proximity to the Atma, the Buddhi is very subtle.

In the Taithireeya Upanishath the Buddhi is compared to a bird. The seat of the intellect is said to be the head. The right wing is described as Ritham and the left wing as Truth. The tail is called Mahat-thathva (great directing principle). The body is described as Yoga. The Buddhi is said to be composed of these five constituents each of which represents a power like discrimination, truth, etc. Most people tend to accord a higher place to Medha Shakti (intelligence) than to intellect. Intelligence that lacks interest and steadiness which characterise the intellect is inferior to the intellect. This was declared by King Vikramadhithya at an assembly of scholars who could not decide the issue. It is the combination of interest and firm faith which serves to divinise man.

Ritham signifies the harmony in thought, word and deed. Truth is the expression in speech of Ritham. Homage is paid to Ritham and Sathya before one takes food as a prescribed ritual. Once Ubhayabharathi, the wife of Mandhana Mishra, after taking to sanyasa following her husband's defeat in philosophical debate with Adhi Shankaracharya, taught a lesson in detachment and giving up of anger to an ascetic who described himself as a Brahma-Jnani. No one can call himself a knower of the Absolute as long as he has attachment and aversion. This episode shows how in ancient days men and women equally pursued the quest for Atma- Jnana (the knowledge of the Self).

Role of the Intellect: Divinisation and Determination

To acquire this Self-knowledge, purity of the intellect is essential. The intellect should be unwavering and totally free from attachment. The mind is subject to unsteadiness because of desires. Desires are roused by the impressions received by the senses from outside. The only way to avoid these external impressions is to turn the senses inwards. To effect this change in the use of the senses, the power of discrimination derived from the intellect should be employed. The intellect should be used to determine what impressions should be kept out and which should be let in. The intellect should determine what kind of company we should keep, what kind of food we should eat, what are desirable practices and what are undesirable. It is by the right use of their intellectual judgement that the ancient sages achieved spiritual eminence.

Same Cosmic Self dwells in every one

People should understand that the Atma (Self) is one only. There are so many in this hall., Each one of you may consider that everyone has a separate and distinct Atma. This is totally wrong.

Like the reflection of the Sun in a myriad different vessels filled with water, the same Cosmic self is dwelling in everyone. The reflection is one and the same, though the vessels might be different. Names and forms may be different but the indwelling Atma is one. How is this oneness to be recognised? For this purpose, the difference between the body and the heart should, be examined. The Vedantha taught as follows: "Son! birth and death are common to all. Hunger and thirst are equally common. Joy and sorrow are equally common to all." If you go deep into these three statements, you will realise that whether one is a millionaire or a pauper both are born from their mothers' wombs. Though a rich man and a poor man may eat different kinds of food, the object of eating is to appease hunger, which is common to both. The same applies to thirst. If in this manner people examine what is common to all mankind, they will realise the unity that underlies the diversity in mankind. This will reveal the divinity that makes humanity one spiritually. There is no need to pursue difficult spiritual exercises to experience the Divine. Many of the physical postures recommended by some Gurus for

spiritual exercise are anything but comfortable" The real need is to have a heart filled with compassion and meditate on God. Physical postures are not so important. It is in making one aware of the difference between the physical body and a compassionate love-filled heart that the Buddhi plays its vital role.

The source of Bliss is within man

The source of bliss is within man, not in the external world. God is omnipresent and is not separate from you. This is the main teaching of Sai. The description of the cosmic form of God as Vishva-Virat Svaruupa means that he is present in every minute particle in the universe Students! The world today is moving in a direction opposed to spirituality This is utterly wrong. To forget God is to forget your own Divine essence. Ramana Maharishi always told the-devotees who came to him "Know who you are." "Know thyself" does not mean knowing facts about your body; mind or senses. It is to know the one who claims ownership of the body, the mind, etc. You have to find the answer to the question- "Who am I?" The body, the senses, the mind and the intellect are all your instruments. You are their master. Master the mind and be a Master. For a human being the Atma (Self) is the Master. It is the power of the Atma (Self) which enables the senses to perform their different functions like seeing, hearing, etc. You have, therefore, to realise that you are the Atma and not the body You may all know what happened today Karunyanandha had been with Svami for forty years. He was a centenarian. Today his body merged in the five elements. For the passing of any person the time, the place and the circumstances have to come together. Here in this hall, the recitation of the Vedas is going on. The Jnana Yajna is being performed. He was listening to all these sacred things. He went to sleep at night and passed away in his sleep. He came to me a week ago. Svami asked him, "Karunyanandha! What is it you want?" he replied: " I need nothing. I only want to merge in your Lotus Feet. There is no purpose in my continuing." I asked him why he was speaking in this manner. "What more is there for me to enjoy in life? I have stayed and moved with Svami for forty years." he came with me to Kashmir and Shimla, Gaya and Prayaga. He came with me to all places, wherever I went Staying with me, he passed away with a sense of fulfilment. This kind of contentment should come to everyone in life. One

should not end up with a feeling of frustration.

The mark of greatness

Ask yourself the question- "Who is the richest man in the world?" It is not men like Tata or Birla who are truly the richest men. He who has greatest satisfaction in life is the richest man. He who has much desires is the poorest man. To be free from all desires is the mark of greatness. All kinds of things are all the time happening in the world. Births and deaths are like jokes for me, though you may not know it. When someone comes to me and wails "My husband has passed away." I remark: "Santhoshara" (well). She may remark- "How can you be happy if my husband has passed away?" All events are the same to me, I am always happy one lady comes to me and says that she is suffering from an unbearable stomach ache. I observe: "Chala santhosham" (Very happy). Padmanabha Shastri (the Mandhir priest) came to me forty years ago. He is known to all of you when he performs the puuja in the Mandir every morning. He performs abhishekham for the idols. He is engaged in this puuja morning and evening. He also passed away today Both Karunyanandha and Padmanabha Shastri had been with me for forty years. They passed away when their end came.

Be ready for the end

Bodies come and go in this manner. They are transient like passing clouds. No physical body is permanent. In human existence you must be prepared for the end at any time. It is like remaining "steady" when a photographer wants to take a picture of a person or group. If you are not steady, the picture will be blurred. The photographer may give you a warning signal, but so far as death is concerned, you cannot know when the end may come according to divine will. Be always ready You cannot know when the call will come. Unfortunately, in the world today few care to listen to the voice of God. They are guided by the promptings of their ego. This is the mark of the Kali Age. All are victims of egoism. So much so, they have doubts about every word of the Divine. They don't listen even to good counsel and therefore suffer evil consequences. During the past three months I had been advising

Padmanabha Shastri to realise that he is a diabetic patient. "The wound in your leg is getting worse. Ultimately amputation may be unavoidable. You are neglecting your leg. Heed my words." I was repeatedly warning him. But ignoring Svami's warning, he was consuming sweet things like payasam and laddus. Today his blood pressure rose to 400 and he had a severe heart attack. You can see what happens when Svami's warning is ignored. If they acted up to my advice, it would be good for them and their families and I would be happy from time to time I have been singing a song about the consequences of not listening to my words but behaving foolishly The result is they come to grief.

"Whatever I do is for your good"

This is not proper. You have to heed the words of advice and follow them. My advice is not for My sake but for your good. I shall soon be reaching My 72nd year. In all these years I have never entertained a single selfish thought. Whatever I tell you is only for your good and not for My benefit. Whatever I do is always for your good. Not recognising this, many are deluding themselves. What is the use in regretting at the end? You must be on your guard from the beginning.

Chant the Lord's name at all times. Understand the role of the intellect. Tomorrow I shall speak about the Athmik Principle. I expect that some at least will derive benefit from this series of discourses.

28. Discovering the Aathma

Date: 09 October 1997 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara

There is no penance equal to peace; There is no happiness greater than contentment; There is no worse disease than desire; There is no righteousness equal to compassion. EMBODIMENTS of Love! No penance can be equal to peace. Real penance consists in not leading the life of an ascetic in a forest but in worshipping God in thought, word and deed. Where is the need for any penance to acquire peace if that peace is already present in the heart? Peace can be got when one's vision is turned inward.

"Na santhoshathparam sukham"
(There is no happiness greater than contentment).

How many miserable people are there in the world who have all the comforts they need! Dhritrashtra had all regal comforts and had a hundred sons but could find no peace. Creature comforts cannot be equated with peace. Contentment, it is said, confers the greatest happiness. It follows that true happiness resides in the heart and everyone should, seek it there. Excessive desires are the source of all ills. There is momentary satisfaction from the fulfilment of some desires. But when desires are not realised, man becomes sick in many ways. There is no more dreadful disease in the world than insatiable desire.

"Na cha Dharmo Dhaya samah"
There is no right conduct equal to compassion

- for the simple reason that a compassionate heart is the abode of the Divine. Where there is compassion there is no need for other acts of charity.

Awareness is pure and unsullied consciousness

The Indian sages from ancient times have given the highest place of honour and esteem to the word Atma. This is also known as Eruka (Awareness or Consciousness). This awareness finds expression in the term Aham ("I"). When this Aham identifies itself with a bodily form, it becomes Ahamkara (the ego). This ego is not the natural state of Aham. It is by relating itself to a particular form that it becomes Ahamkara. It is pure and unsullied consciousness. It is the mind that comes in the way of the proper understanding of Aham. Just as the clouds that arise out of the vapours produced by the sun may hide the sun for a time, the mind veils the Aham by its thoughts and desires, though the mind arises from the Atma. The role of the mind in relation to the Athmik principle has to be properly understood. It operates as an obstacle to the awareness of the Atma. The term "I" (nenu in Telugu) originated in the Atma. The "I" is the form of Aham. Terms like Aham, God, Awareness and Atma are all synonymous. When the Aham ("I") is rightly understood one becomes an Atma-jnani (knower of the Self). There is a fundamental principle to which the 'I' is related. The "I" has no basis in the body It has to recognise its 'link with its primary source.

The Athmik principle is one and one only

Every object in the world has its origin in a primary source. This cannot be created by anyone. There is a primordial source, which is responsible for all creation. Very few care to enquire into the nature of this source.

From the worldly point of view, we have a Kartha (doer), the Karma (duty) and the Kriya (deed). But from the spiritual point of view all three are one and the same - the doer, the duty and the deed. This Athmik principle is one and one only. It is said that Sath-Chith-Anandha (Being-Awareness-Bliss) are the attributes of the Atma (Self). In my view these three are not three distinct entities. They are not three different states. Chith (Awareness) and Anandha (Bliss) are present in Sath like sugar which is dissolved in water and becomes one with it as syrup. There is an illustration, which explains why it is difficult

to recognise the Athmik Principle. There is a cup containing fruit juice. The cup is nor aware of the nature of the juice. A man uses a straw to suck the juice. The straw does not know anything about the juice. The Buddhi recognises the taste of the juice. It does not enjoy it. The juice is sent down to the stomach, where it gets converted to three parts - the gross, which is excreted, the subtle which becomes blood and helps to sustain life and the subtler goes to the Prajna-Shakthi (Constant Integrated awareness), which is synonymous with the Self. In this analogy, the cup is the body; the straw represents the senses. Prajnana is the Atma. Prajnana, Awareness, the "I", Atma, Anandha,- Brahman are all synonymous terms. Worldly persons may see differences in these words, but in spiritual parlance they mean the same thing.

Two kinds of "I" : attached and detached

The Aham ('I') is of two kinds. One that is associated with attachment to the body and the other that dissociates it from the body Both are "I" (nenu in Telugu). But the 'I' that is identified with the body becomes Ahamkara (the ego). The ego carries a form wherever it goes. But the formless "I" not identified with the body is the Atma. The formless Atma has no attributes. But when it is associated with a form it has all attributes. Today people experience only the Aham. ("I") that is identified with the body. They cannot conceive of an "I" without a body. But, by treating the body as the basis, if the vision is turned inward, the Atma can be experienced in due course. This is called Atma-sakshatkara (Direct Perception of the Self). This means tracking the 'I' to its source. A man walking with his back to the sun will be treading his own shadow. Only when he reverses his direction will he be able to leave his shadow behind. The same process applies to the realisation of the Self. The journey must be directed towards the Self within and away from the external world. What is needed today in the world is the diverting of the mind from preoccupation with the external world of Nature to the Divinity within. This is the sadhana you have to do. In this way you see the Divine in everything instead of seeing Nature as a physical phenomenon. When you see the external world as a manifestation of God, you will not notice the phenomenal aspect of Prakrithi (Nature). View Nature as a manifestation of God. How is

this to be experienced in real life with its joys and sorrows? This can be understood from an example. When you sleep, you have dreams in which you experience joys and sorrows. They seem real as long as you are asleep. On awaking, you realise that they were all unreal and mere dreams. In the waking state you have other experiences. What is the relationship between these two categories of experiences? What you experience in the waking state is also a dream. The reality is that in both the states - the sleeping and the waking - you are present as the dreamer.

The concept of Athmik principle

The difference between a dream in sleep and what happens in the waking state relates mainly to the time factor. In a dream in a sleep, a person may go through the entire experiences of his life from childhood to old age in a few minutes. The dream compresses the experiences of many years within so many minutes. Likewise what happens over many years in the waking state may appear as a few moments in spiritual experience. Our conception of reality is related to the time factor. Time causes great difference between what is Prathyaksham (directly perceived) and what is paroksham (indirectly experienced). The Atma is the unchanging entity that is able to recognise the changes brought about by time. The awareness of the unchanging reality underlying the phenomenal world of change is the Athmik principle called Eruka. It is present in every one as the Aham. But each one views the world from one's particular circumstance, background and experience. The Athmik Principle is explained or described in different ways. There is no connection between its reality and the way it is experienced. The analogies used for explaining the Athmik Principle have their inherent limitations. God is declared to be omnipresent. How do you decide this omnipresence? There is a practical means of deciding this. We are aware of the basic elements - earth, water, fire, air and space - with five qualities - smell, fluidity, illumination, touch and sound. The earth has all the five qualities, including primarily gandha (smell). Water has rasa (fluidity). It is lighter than earth and is mobile. It has four qualities. Fire has three qualities of which ruupa (form) is most prominent. It is lighter than water. Then you have air, which is lighter than fire and has two qualities: sparsha (touch) and shabdha (vibrant movement). Last

comes akasha (ether or space) which is the subtlest of the five elements and is all-pervading. Transcending space is God, who is omnipresent.

Spiritual progress is related to reduction of desires

When you pursue your enquiry in this manner you find that the different qualities account for feelings and reactions. These qualities have to be brought under control. Simultaneously one has to reduce the burdens of mundane existence and the desires that fill the mind. Man today is weighed down by the overwhelming burden of desires. Spiritual progress is directly related to the reduction of desires. God's grace goes with human effort. Earlier two teachers spoke about their experiences and extolled Dhaiva-shakthi (power of the Divine). But this Divine power does not operate independent of human effort. In fact, every individual has this Divine power. They are invoking Divine power as an auxiliary to their own power, which comes from the Divine. Failing to recognise their inherent divine power, they attribute it to someone other than themselves. Some devotees tend to blame Baba if their desires are not fulfilled. When devotees pray with pure hearts, their purity itself helps to bring them relief. But they are thankful to Baba for saving them. Baba is not involved in either of these results. They are the fruits of the devotees efforts and attitudes. In our college, there is a placard that carries the saying; "Dharma protects its protector. It destroys its destroyer." Likewise, when your faith in the Divine is total, that faith will help you. Develop that confidence in the Self. The Self is not visible even as the foundations of a big mansion are not visible. But without the foundations the edifice cannot stand. Likewise self-confidence is the base for self-satisfaction. The roof of mansion is self-sacrifice. Then you have self-realisation.

The Self alone is eternal and changeless

Men must develop strong faith. That will confer all spiritual experiences. The Upanishaths declare: Arise from the slumber of ignorance and go forward towards awareness of the Self." Embodiments of Love! Whatever other beliefs you may cherish or not, have firm faith in God. All things in the world are liable to perish. The Self alone is eternal and changeless. It is unfortunate that

the vast majority of mankind lead mundane lives forgetting God. Make God the foundation of your life. Carry on your normal duties. Duty is God. Work is worship. Spiritualise all your actions and treat whatever happens as actions for your good. Learn to experience perennial bliss by seeking union with God. Never forget God. Do not go after the things of the world. Have no fear of death. When your life is rooted in these three maxims, you will realise the Atman.

29. Develop Self-reliance and faith in God

Date: 11 October 1997 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara, Vijayadasami

FROM ancient times Bharath has been conveying themes-sage of peace and prosperity to the world by its adherence to spirituality The people have always prayed for the welfare of all nations. The greatness of Bharatheeya culture can be appreciated only by those who have experienced magnificence. It is a culture that has survived the vicissitudes of history and stood the test of rime. The greatness of that culture is reflected in Sanathana Dharma (the perennial phi-1osophy of life). Righteousness is the external manifestation of this philosophy. it is this righteousness that sustains human life. it is only when this righteousness governs human life that ideals like equality, fraternity and liberty will be realised in practice. Conflict and discord in the world will cease when men learn to practise sense-control. Bharatheeyas today are ignoring the profound truths of Indian Culture. This is because they are forgetting their inherent divinity in the pursuit of self-interest and the sway of selfishness. The natural tendencies of man to be kind and considerate to others should be properly fostered. Today men are not doing this.

Understand the secrets of creation

There is no basic conflict between Man and Nature. Man is entitled to enjoy the fruits of Nature even as a child is entitled to the mother's milk or a bee to suck the honey in a flower. The creation is greater than mankind. It is humanity's privilege to understand the secrets of creation. Man should also seek to know the relationship between creation and the Creator. The human body consists of different organs like eyes, nose, hands, legs, etc. Human beings are limbs of society human societies are limbs of humanity. Humanity is a limb of Prakrithi. (Nature). Prakrithi is a limb of Paramatma (Cosmic Self). If you consider this chain of relationship, you can see that man is related to the Supreme embodiments of Bliss. But, why .is this Bliss eluding man? Because he has not recognised the Divinity within him. Man is considering nature as entirely a creation of Providence for his enjoyment. This is a

mistake. Nature exists for enjoyment by man according to certain limits. Scientists today are exploring the powers of nature with a view to enjoying them without limit. They want to bring all those powers under human control for their unrestricted enjoyment. This is responsible for so many of the natural disasters that we witness today. What is the cause of droughts and floods which occur in the world? Man seeks to enjoy the benefits of Nature which has grave consequences. Here you have a globe. If you hit it one way, its balance is disturbed. We should always see to it that in the utilisation of natural resources a proper balance is kept. Excessive use in any one direction will result in harm in another direction.

In the exploitation of natural resources, people are observing no limits in the name of their hakku (right) to act as they please. I do not understand wherefrom this "right" is derived. In reality, there is no such thing as a "right." In fact, what they have is responsibility. If one's responsibilities are properly discharged, some rights may emerge from them. If responsibilities are ignored, what can be the outcome? Only disorder and lack of peace. When rain falls, there will be water in the channels. How can you hope for water when there is no rain? Hence, you have to pray at the outset for rain. Only then you can enjoy the flow of water in the rivers. Similarly, you have at the outset to discharge your duties and then you will secure your rights.

Duties are most sacred

Today everyone talks only about rights. This appears utterly meaningless. Consider for a moment how everyone is spending his day. From the moment he wakes up to the time of going to bed everyone is filled with worries of one kind or another. Time is sacred. Actions are even more sacred. Duties are most sacred. Accomplishment of something by an activity is not enough. Till the very end of one's life success has to be achieved in every undertaking. As the Chief Minister Shri Chandrababu Naidu observed in his speech, people must do all their actions in an ideal manner. Mere mechanical existence does no credit to one's humanness. Human birth is immensely precious. Three things have to be observed as a mark of real humanness: Fear of sin, love of God and morality in society. People should refrain from sinful acts. The

Sanskrit saying declares- "Men desire the fruits of meritorious acts, but indulge in sinful acts." When people develop purity in thought, word and deed, they will reap the fruits of good actions. Human life is filled with worries of all kinds from birth to death. The only way to get rid of all these worries is to turn your mind towards God and think of Him at all times. Moreover, people should develop self-reliance. They should not look to others or to the Government to do what they can do for themselves. You must do as much as possible to help yourself and enjoy the fruits of your labours.

Use your abilities before seeking Divine help

Most people today have neither confidence in themselves nor the determination to accomplish what they desire. They want to get quick results, without the necessary effort on their part. How can this happen? It is not proper to cast the responsibility, on God or Government. God no doubt can help but He expects you to use the strength and talents given to you before seeking Divine help. To rely on God without using to the utmost your God given abilities is misconceived. People must try to purify the environment in which they are living. There is no peace or harmony anywhere. Devotees should try to purify and sanctify this atmosphere by developing love and practising human values. They may meet with opposition or discouragement from some quarters. They should overcome these obstacles. These critics are like the pests which can destroy extremely valuable things.

Those engaged in welfare activities should not bother about these critics but carry on their good work according to the dictates of their conscience. This point has also been made by the Chief Minister. When you are convinced that you are doing what is good for the people, why bother about the criticism of small-minded men? Develop self-confidence. Today in Bharath millions of people suffer from shortage of drinking water. This problem to some extent is due to the conduct of the people themselves. How far are the people acting in the right way?

There are three types of behaviour among human beings the Divine, the human and the animal. What we are witnessing is the growth of animality and

decline of humanness. The reason for this trend is the limitless growth of desires and the steady disappearance of ashayalu (ideals). Selfishness is growing, selflessness is declining. Trickery is spreading, integrity is vanishing, attachment to the body is waxing, and love for the country is waning. The result is that the character of the people is getting degraded.

Sacrifice is the real secret of happiness

How different was the state of things in the good old times of our ancients. They rejoiced in the company of good devotees, they welcomed the arrival of the poor and needy to their homes, they loved to hear the hymns in praise of God. They considered only such days as sacred days. Life can be redeemed only by such virtuous living. The ancient Bharatheeyas placed the quality of sacrifice on a high pedestal, adored justice, esteemed righteousness as the supreme virtue and welcomed truth as a valuable friend. Today the state of things is at variance with all these. Sacrifice is the real secret of happiness. Everyone should share with others to the extent of his capacity his income and possessions and contribute to the well-being of others. There are so many people who are destitute and suffering in various ways. It is the duty of those who are better off to go to the help of these unfortunates.

Live up to your words

Embodiments of Love! Today you have listened to the speeches of many leaders. They have spoken from their hearts and given expression to their concern for the welfare of the people. If these words are translated into purposeful action, the country is bound to make good progress. It is a welcome sign that such leaders have come forward to give assurances of this kind on occasions like this. They are bound to generate enthusiasm and confidence among the people. The Chief Minister, the Speaker of the Karnataka Assembly and the Union Minister have all spoken with conviction and enthusiasm. This should get implanted in the hearts of the people. The assurances should be translated into action. Bharath as well as the rest of the world, is racked by myriad problems. What is the remedy? There has to be a radical transformation in the minds of men. People should recognise the

inherent divinity of man.

When this mental transformation and recognition of divinity come together, there will be the divinisation of mankind.

Embodiment of Love! Today the Yajna, which began on the 5th, has come to a close. It is Vijayadhashami day. It is an auspicious sign that the drinking water project is being transferred on this day to the Andhra government and the Chief Minister has accepted the responsibility for the proper maintenance of the project. There are many more similar welfare schemes which have to be carried out for the good of the people. My entire being, from head to toe, is dedicated to the service of the people. I wish to do many things for the good of the people. I do not wish to talk about them. Action must speak for itself. The Speaker mentioned that the drinking water problem was acute in his district also. Unlike some other districts, the Kolar district has no rivers. Everyone should resolve to see that he contributes his mite to the solution of such problems. Everyone should realise his obligations to society because of what all that he owes to society. Wherever necessary people should come together to solve their problems by their own cooperative action.

There are many young people who are idling away their time at homes. Their energies should be mobilised for constructive welfare work. The Chief Minister referred to the scheme of Shramdhan (gift of labour). Everyone in the village should be involved in such Shramdhan to construct village roads without waiting for help from others. This kind of voluntary co-operative activity should be undertaken to meet as many of the villagers needs as possible. The help of others can be sought when necessary.

Bhagavan's assurance of all out help

I am prepared to help anyone from any village, any state or any community. I do not cherish differences of any kind. Whether you believe it or not, I may assure you that I respect only one caste, the caste of humanity, only one religion, the religion of Love and only one language, the language of the heart. I shall never say "No" to anybody who seeks My help, whatever his

caste, region or creed may be. A good many devotees are gathered here. I am prepared even to part with Prashanthi Nilayam to meet your requests. I am prepared to do anything for the good of the people. That is My only concern. I am working only to make the people worthy of the Lord's grace. Few persons recognise this fact. Even those who have been coming to Me for years do not recognise this truth. It is difficult to comprehend the truth about the ways of the Divine. All of you should attend to your duties with faith in the Divine. All will be well with you. You can accomplish everything with ease. This is the path pursued by our ancients. In those days there were no parties and warring factions. All acted with one mind. That was the message of the Vedas. "Let us work together, enjoy together and love one another and share our joy with all" - this was the glorious message of the Rig Veda. Men based their lives on the injunctions of the Vedas. Today when these injunctions are not respected, how can human life be sacred?

If your heart is good, no harm can come to you

No one need be afraid of what others say or think as long as one is doing the right thing according to his conscience. Courage should go along with good action. If your heart is good, no harm can come to you.

Apart from the Ananthapur district, I am hoping to meet the needs of some other districts. In this context I wish to assure you of one thing. Whether in Bharath or in any other country there will be no lack of resources for carrying out welfare schemes. Resources are available in plenty. Only the impulse to undertake such schemes is not present. When that impulse is there, anything can be achieved. If people can go to the moon, cannot they make the journey to their hearts? When I took up the drinking water project, our Trust members told me-"Svami! There are not enough funds in the Trust. How are we to embark on this gigantic project?" I assured them-"That is My concern. I shall see that this good project is completed." That has been accomplished without any impediments.

Much remains to be done in Bharath. As the Speaker of the Karnataka Assembly said, water is a primary need all over the country. Pure drinking

water should be made available to the entire people. That is My resolve.

From My earliest years I have been concerned about providing three primary requisites for our people: Free education, free medical aid and free basic amenities like drinking water. Education is for the head. Medical care is for the heart and pure water for the body. These three cover the main requirements of life. To provide these three gives the greatest gratification.

Task before leaders

Try to provide free education wherever you can. Provide free medicines and treatment for the poor. Co-operate among yourselves, as far as possible to provide drinking water. In Rayalaseema people suffer from the iii effects of fluorosis. Please see that at least the future generation is saved from these ailments. I bless you all and assure you of My grace in all your beneficent activities. I desire that all the authorities concerned should act in concert to carry out welfare programmes.

The Chief Minister, who had been yearning to come here for a long time, is fortunate in being present here on this auspicious and memorable occasion. I am confident that he will carry out his programme well. I am happy that he has accepted the responsibility for the future maintenance of the scheme. He is no outsider. In fact, all are spiritually one, though in names and forms they may be different. By his acceptance, we have been relieved of an onerous responsibility. I may have to take on new burdens in the future. I am well prepared for that. This is not the end of the story.

I assure the people of Kolar that I shall see to the fulfillment of their needs in the near future. By the 72nd birthday, the drinking water needs of the Kolar people will be met and people in every village will be well served. Even in Ananthapur district, some areas remain to be served. I assure them that all that remains to be done will be completed. If any area is not covered I shall get the work done if I am informed about it. I am yours , and you are mine. Our relationship is a spiritual one. You are entitled to approach Me and I am bound to respond to your wishes. Do not entertain any doubts on this score. I

bless you all.

The human body is the most wondrous machine in the world. It has a bewildering multiplicity of limbs, organs, veins, nerves and cells which co-operate to maintain it: under varied conditions. If anyone of these rebels and refuses to rescue another, the body is bound to suffer. So too, a society, a community or nation can be safe, secure and happy only when the individuals comprising it are mutually helpful and bound together in skilful and sincere service.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

30. Women's role as Mothers

Date: 19 November 1997 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Ladies Day

GAAYATHRI is the mother of Vedas and also of all creations, Gayathri principle can be sub-divided into the following four components.

Sathyavathi: The all-pervasive Truth which pervades the entire creation just as butter is present in every drop of milk.

Angavathi: Every person is made up of the five elements. Differences are only in the outer forms. Divinity behind the five elements is the same in all.

Anyavathi: Different forms of the Divine are indicated by corresponding symbols - Rama by the bow, Krishna by the flute or the peacock feather, Sarasvathi by the Veena, Shiva by the *damaru* (hand-held drum) and Vishnu by *Shankha* (Conch), *Chakra* (Wheel), *Gadha* (mace) and *Pad ma* (the Lotus Flower). Divine forms have various characteristic symbols but Divinity is the same in all.

Nidhanavathi: Nidhanavathi is represented by the nine paths of devotion, namely - listening, singing, chanting the name of the Lord, service, seva to the Lord's feet, adoration, prayer, friendship with God and surrender to God.

The mother is the first teacher and as compared to male teachers, the teachings of women teachers are better assimilated by students because the latter teach from the heart with love.

A woman should not neglect her home

A married lady has many great titles like *Dharma Pathni* (Righteous wife), *Griha-Lakshmi* (Goddess of the house), *Illalu* (lady of the house) and *Ardhangi* (equal partner of the husband). These titles have more value than socially recognised titles like Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan given by the Government. A lady must look after the home first and then work outside, if

necessary A house without a mother is like an empty choultry. A lady should be an ideal mother to her children, look after her husband and then do outside work. She can study, get degrees, enter politics or do any other work but she should not neglect the home, which is the very foundation of her life. Husband and wife are both equally responsible for establishing harmony at home. But times have changed. Womanly-ideals are not being practised and there are no ideal men and women today. That is why the world is in such a sorry state. Parents must aspire to make their children good persons (those who see God in man) and not great persons (those who see man in God). Though Sri Rama and Ravana were very learned persons, Sri Rama set an example of a good person by his deeds, while on account of his excessive ego and desire, Ravana became an evil person though he was great in his own way.

Goodness is the natural quality of a woman

The acronym MAN stands for Maya, Atma and Nirvana. The teaching contained in this term MAN is firstly 'Get over Maya', secondly 'see the Atma', and thirdly 'At-rain Nirvana.' It is well known that a great person has no peace and is always worried while a good person is peaceful wherever he goes. So, not even in a dream should a person aspire to be a great man. A person becomes good when he is respected as such in society. Goodness is a natural quality of a woman while greatness is that of a man.

God is one's greatest and closest friend. He is interested in one's real welfare while worldly friends are influenced by one's position and wealth, only as long as these last.

Nature is the best teacher, heart is the real Guru and God is the only Friend.

As the Greek lady Ms. Hellen Sotiriou had smog at the end of her talk, the relationship with God should be based on love. Love for God alone leads to

Bliss. Spiritual vibration comes out of a heart full of Love for God. Such Love makes one rejoice always and under all circumstances.

31. The educational crisis and the way out

Date: 22 November 1997 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Convocation - 16

Wealth has been apotheosised; Arrogance has become a creed; Peace has become remote from man; Egoistic boast is fashionable Property has become an adornment; Selfishness is installed in the heart; Sense of self respect has declined; Hypocrisy has become the hall-mark; Love and affection have become sickly; The heart is divorced from righteousness; Life has become a burden; People have lost their moorings. What does the future hold? Make education value-based And ensure a future for Bharath! STUDENTS! Embodiments of Love! Educationists! Bharath, which has been the treasure-house of spirituality, is steadily going down in Dharma (righteousness). Injustice, dishonesty, immorality and other demonic qualities are having free play in the country. In this situation, students alone - both men and womens - will be able to deal with these evil forces and establish peace.

Students! If your parents will feel unhappy if you are backward in your studies, how much more unhappy will Mother Bharath be feeling over the decline of moral values! Students must take a resolve at the outset to serve their mothers and the Motherland. They must strive for restoration of peace and order in the country. A country does not mean a piece of earth. It is the people who make the country. What is the meaning of transformation of people? Transformation is not one specific object. it is the entire process of refinement by which people get rid of their bad thoughts and actions and cultivate good thoughts and do good acts in daily life What is the meaning of Vidhya (education)? What is the kind of education suitable for young people today? What are the norms of right education? What kind of education will promote the elevation of man? What is the use of the present system of education? The one who examines and finds the right answers to these five questions will be a wise adviser for the nation. The value of a person is not derived from education alone. The cultural refinement of his life-style is also essential.

What is meant by culture? It is the realisation of the inherent divinity in man

and making it manifest in one's way of life. A life without culture is like a house without light. A dark house is a home for foul-smelling bars and not for fragrant objects. A person without culture is like a stringless kite, which is tossed hither and thither. An education bereft of culture is worthless like a counterfeit coin. Hence culture is most important, especially in relation to one's character.

Education for life, not merely for living

In the sphere of education many revolutionary changes are needed. Since the attainment of freedom 50 years ago, many committees have been set up by the government to go into the problem of educational reform. These committees have recommended many reforms. There has been no implementation of these reforms. Even now, no one is trying to restore the ancient ideals of education. As a result, the country is riddled with violence and disorder. Educational institutions have become centres of disorder. Vidhya means acquisition of knowledge. In the English language this is called "Education". The term education is derived from the Latin term e-ducare, which means "drawing out". The idea is to draw out what is latent. Acquisition of knowledge is a worldly aspect. But what has to be discerned is the divine feeling present in the human heart. One refers to living and the other to life itself. In addition to earning a living one has to understand the purpose of life. Both these aspects are as essential as the two eyes for a person. Today there is too much concentration on one aspect - how to earn a living? Even here, there is a steady decline in moral standards.

No one makes a serious attempt to realise the divinity in man. No attempt is made to understand one's true nature. That is the real purpose of life. True education means trying to manifest the inner divinity in man. How is this manifestation to be brought about? Education is that which illumines the physical, the mental and the social environment of man. It is not confined to one specific sphere. Education should illumine every aspect of life the economic, the political, the moral, the spiritual and other spheres of life. Students consider book knowledge as education. This gives them only superficial knowledge. They need practical knowledge. This knowledge should

enable them to Lead righteous lives. Today people are worshiping wealth as divine. This is totally wrong wealth can never give peace of mind. It may provide physical comforts but not mental peace. Without understanding this, people and the government imagine that there is great progress in education. What is this progress?

Justice and morality are confined to books. The hearts have become the abode of all that is foul. Hands have become instruments of selfishness. This is the progress achieved by education today. (Telugu Poem)

Education must be for the well-being of the society

Is this the mark of true education? No. Efforts must be made to eliminate such feelings. Moreover, all that is learnt must be utilised for promoting the well-being of society. All should work for the welfare of society. "Sarva loka hithe rathah" (Let all rejoice in the well-being of all people in the world). "Sarve jnana Sampannah" (Let all possess wealth of all knowledge). "Sarve Samhitha gunaihi" (Let all be endowed with good qualities). These are three main pronouncements regarding the educated persons. This implies that every student, after completing his studies, should dedicate himself (or herself) to serving society. For this service, one should acquire all the necessary knowledge. Students should have all good qualities. A good student should promote a calm atmosphere wherever he stays. He should be ever prepared to help others These are the marks of a good student. Unfortunately students today are not having any of these qualities. Who is to blame? Not the students. Not the teachers. All in society are responsible. Students do not possess the requisite abilities to pursue the right path. Teachers also lack these abilities. They do not take up the task of moulding the character of students from an early age. To do so they have to train themselves to be ideal teachers. When the teachers lead an exemplary life, the students will follow their example. There is no scrutiny of how teachers teach or how students study. The Government is spending over Rs.2,000 crores a year on education. No one knows what the outcome of all this expenditure is. What transformation is taking place in the students? What is their future? No. one seems to enquire into all this. Only money is spent endlessly.

It is not greatness but goodness that matters

Nor is that all. Politicians are invading the educational field and ruining the students. Students have, of course, to study political science. But the educational field should not be politicalised. Today students are entering the political field and not only spoiling their studies but ruining their entire future. Hence students should resolve to pursue their studies with devotion. Parents also should encourage their children to pursue education in the right spirit. They should not desire so much that their children secure high ranks. It is not greatness that matters but goodness. They should, wish that their children should earn a good name rather than achieve purely academic excellence.

Make proper use of your education for the good of society. Be men of good character. That will make you shine before the public. True education will make you divine. Education is not mere knowledge of words. It should broaden the mind. The mere acquisition of degrees is valueless. Character is more important and it can be developed only by taking to the spiritual path. Of what use is an education that does not promote good qualities?

Humility is the hall-mark of true education

Students! Boys and Girls! Together with academic education you have to acquire wisdom and a sense of right and wrong. Knowledge without wisdom, scholarship without determination, music without melody, learning without humility, a society without discipline, friendship without gratitude, speech without truth - all these are utterly useless. Hence everyone should seek to follow the correct path.

There is no sense of respect for people in society. Gratitude is absent. Scholars are without discretion. The educated lack humility. Humility is the hall-mark of true education. Humility does not mean moving about with a bowed head. It calls for respect to humanness. It is beastly to go about causing fear in others. Humans should be free from fear. Both fear and frightening are animal qualities. Men must be fearless. Today fear haunts

every place. How does fear arise? When one is full of bad thoughts and bad feelings.

Educational institutions today are full of disorder and indiscipline. How different were the ancient abodes of learning! In ancient times education used to be offered free. In those days, the preceptors used to send the students to the forests. The students used to be examined periodically about their studies. For instance, the students would be asked: "What tree did you find useless in the forest you visited?" The replies of the students varied, each one saying that one particular tree was useless. The preceptor did not accept their answers. He told them that all trees were useful, each in its own way. Every tree had something or the other which had medicinal properties. If a tree did nothing else, it served to take in the carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and release the life-giving oxygen for the benefit of man. Every tree serves a useful purpose. Equally every human being is valuable.

Today education has become very expensive. Education should be made free. Then there would be no room for corrupt practices over seats.

The uniqueness of Sai Education

In the Sai Educational System, there are no problems of student unrest because education is free. Our students are happy. All of us are also happy. Because of free education the students behaviour is exemplary All the students feel spontaneously: "Here we are getting free education. We must conduct ourselves well to show our gratitude to all concerned." Opportunities must be provided for students to develop such an attitude towards their alma mater. In our Institute no fees is charged for anything. We must strive to revive the ancient system of free education. Today such a sacred approach to education is lacking among students, parents, teachers and the authorities. The change must come at the Governmental level. Then the public at large will also change. There must be a change in the moral climate of the educational system. Only then the educational institutions can turn out young men and women of character.

Tribute to Sai Students

The first thing students have to learn today is moderation in speech. Talk less and study more. Although I do not speak about it often, I am immensely happy over the character of our students. They are inspired by high ideals. Some of the students even go to the extent of reforming their parents. With due humility and reverence they tell their parents to change their ways of living. Whenever I hear reports of such conduct by our students I rejoice in the fact that we have such students. I do not expect anything from the students. All that I desire is that they should earn a good name when they go out. Their behaviour should be beyond cavil. Ill-educated students are worse than illiterates.

Skepticism seems to grow with more and more education. The more intelligent the students are, the more doubts develop in them. Lacking self-confidence, ultimately they fail to reach Selfrealisation. Our Institute students are always happy. This happiness lends beauty to their lives. It is not physical beauty, but the spiritual beauty derived from good character. Our Vice-President (in his Convocation address) dwelt at length on Dharma. Today Sathya and Dharma are not very much in evidence. Dharma seems to be fleeing from the people. Sathya and Dharma are declining among the people. The ancient sacred Vedhik teachings are disappearing. It is essential to revive them. Students should not be obsessed with earning dhanam (money). They must be keen on acquiring gunas (good qualities). Education without ethics is no education at all. Education must teach men to be sincere in thought, word and deed as the mark of humanness. The state of Indian education is such that it breeds all sorts of bad tendencies in the students. It encourages deception and dishonesty.

Education should result in the purification of the heart. Students need not be over-anxious to score high marks. It is more important to cultivate a good heart. Revere your parents. Promote social improvement. Co-operate with your fellow-men. These are the things you should learn.

Make Nature your teacher

Make Nature your teacher, instead of relying too much on books. The vast universe has many lessons to teach. Make your heart your preceptor. Esteem God as your best friend. He will never fail you, unlike most fait-weather friends in the world. I prefer to hear that you have earned a good name for your behaviour than praise for your scholarship. Do not calculate what money you can earn from your degrees. You must ask yourselves: "What good can I do to my family? What help can I render to my fellow men?" Education is not for securing a job. It is for acquiring knowledge and wisdom. It is unfortunate that education has been linked to jobs and earning money. You must move among the people in a friendly and comradely spirit. Do not hate anyone. Follow the principle- "Help ever; hurt never." Today many occupy high positions and earn fabulous salaries. How many of them do work that can justify the salaries they are paid? Men who receive Rs.20,000 a month do not do even Rs.20 worth of honest work. This is treachery to the nation. An educated person must give proper return for the salary he receives. Students must bear this in mind when they enter service. They must give adequate return for the salary they receive. That will give you job satisfaction and soothe your conscience. Our students are behaving in an exemplary manner. Whatever their background before joining the Institute, within a month the new students are transformed into ideal students. They develop commendable qualities. Boys and girls! Wherever you may go and whatever institutions in which you may work, bring a good name to the Institute and earn a good name for yourselves. Girl students who may get married should serve their in-laws in such a way that the good name of the institute is vindicated. The mother-in-law should be proud of a well-educated daughter-in-law coming from the Sai Institute.

The good name you earn will rejoice Me. Do your duty wherever you may go. Earn the esteem of your employers. That will please Me. This is My message to you.

Students' devotion to Svami

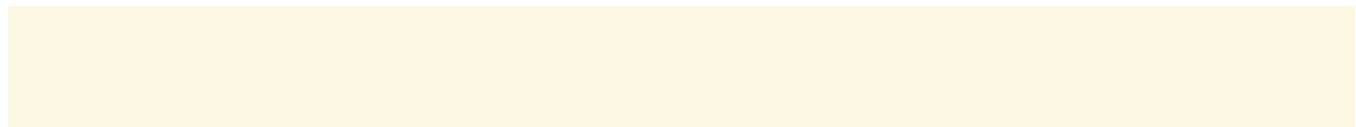
Students! Many of you have secured high ranks in the examinations. This

year 150 students of the Sathya Sai Higher Secondary School appeared for the public examinations held by the Central Board. All of them passed in I class. In many States when one or two candidates get I class, they give publicity to it. I asked our students why they do not get their photos published in the papers when they have secured a 1st class. "We studied for the sake of Svami and not to get our photos published in the papers," they replied. Those words delighted Me immensely. That such high sentiments are present among young children is known to very few. The children are full of fine qualities. They have the ability to develop the whole world. But they do not try to utilise it. Students should realise the integral relationship between them and the world. Hence they should, not hesitate to serve the world with determination. They can achieve anything they want to.

Students possess immense power, more than anybody else. My students are My property Earn a good name wherever you go - from the home to the nation. That will please Me more than anything else. When you earn a good name, your human birth is redeemed. Shankaracharya has warned youth against being proud of wealth, progeny or youthhood. All these are transient. What are enduring are Sathyam and Keerthi (truth and fame). Never bother about success or defeat, loss or gain, happiness or sorrow. They are incidental to life in the world. With the conviction that very soon our students will go out into the world, set an example to everyone in whatever institutions they may work and usher in a new era, I bless one and all. One more thing. I do not mind whether you achieve high ranks or not. But do not get any "remarks" against you. I am aware that nearly all of you are behaving well. But one or two may go astray. I desire that everyone should be exemplary. This is My benediction.

Trust in My wisdom. I do not make mistakes. Love My uncertainty, for it is not a mistake. It is My intent and will.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba



32. Recognise your Divine Identity

Date: 23 November 1997 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Birthday - 72

Neither merit nor sin, neither joy nor sorrow;
Neither manthras nor pilgrimages; Neither charity nor yajna;
Neither eating, nor food, nor consumer of food. I am none of these.
I am the Eternal Bliss Divine, The One Absolute. I am Shiva.

EMBODIMENTS of Love!

You are neither endowed with merit not with sin. You are nor creatures of happiness or sorrow. You are not creatures of manthras (sacred chants). Nor the products of manual or mechanical skills. You are not renunciants or hedonists. Who, then, are you? Your real form is *Sadhanandha Roopam* (the eternal Bliss Divine), the Divine form of Auspiciousness (*Shiva*).

But, because of the differences in external physical forms, you are victims of the ignorance of your true selves. from a pauper to a millionaire, from an ignoramus to a great scholar, irrespective of whether one is a male or a female, young or old, anyone, when describing one's Self, uses the term "I" (nenu). The scriptures have described it as *Atma* or *Hridhaya*. Hridhaya means that which enshrines kindness. Hence all of you are embodiments of kindness. It is only when everyone recognises this quality of kindness that world peace will be realised. People pronounce the prayer -

"Lokas Samasthas Sukhino Bhavanthu"
(May all the people in all the worlds be happy).

But few practise that kindness which will make the people happy.

The "I" Principle

No Individual can introduce himself (or herself) to the outside world without using the term "I" (*nenu*). Even birds and beasts are not using the term "I" because they do not know human speech. Otherwise, each of them would declare: "I am a cow," "I am an eagle," "I am a dog" and so on. All beings in the world proclaim their existence by using the term "I." The "I" is present in all beings. The all-pervading Brahmic Principle is also the "I." Without properly understanding the nature of the "I" man identifies himself with the body and is immersed in the delusion caused by this mistaken identification. The whole cosmos is associated with *dhvaitham* (duality or plurality) based on the distinction between "I" and "this" (the other). This refers to *dhrishyam* (what is perceived). "I" refers to the *dhrashtha* (seer). Without the seer, the seen cannot exist. Let Me hold up this handkerchief. This is a cloth.

The reference to the cloth cannot be made without using the term "this". The term "this" has to be used to refer to a specific object. When I say "this is a hall.," the statement points to a specific object that is perceived.

All names and forms are associated with objects of perception. It is the *dhrashtha* (seer) who testifies to the existence of what is perceived.

The seer and the seen

You see the bulbs shedding light in the hall. What is shedding light is not the bulb but the current in the bulb. The bulb is a *Upadhi* (vesture). If you ask a young boy when he came to Prashanthi Nilayam, he will answer - "I came on the 20th, Svami." If he is asked, "Why did you come?" he will answer: "I came for the Convocation."

Who is it that came? The body (of the boy). Identifying himself with the body, he replies that "he" came on the 20th. Yesterday, he slipped and sustained a fracture in the leg. Today, he comes to Me and says - "Svami! My leg has sustained a fracture." Does not this mean that his leg is different from him? At

one moment you identify yourself with your body. At another moment you distinguish yourself as separate from your body. That means that all that you perceive belongs to the realm of *dhrihyam* (the seen). The perceiver who enters into the perception of all things is the Reality. He is unchanging and remains changeless through all the categories of time - past, present and future. The *Shruthis* called that unchanging entity as "I" (Nenu). That "I" represents the Atma. The Atma becomes Hridhaya, the seat of karuna (compassion). All terms like "I", Karuna, Atma, Hridhaya or God are all synonymous. They are all different names given to the same entity in common parlance. The name Rama or Krishna by which one may be called is a name conferred on a person and is not born with him. The first name given to anyone at birth is "I." Even for God the first original name is "I". The Upanishaths declare -

"Aham Bhahma-asmi" (I am Brahman).

In this declaration Aham ("I") comes first and Brahman comes thereafter. Hence, the "I" is the primal basis for everything. Very few make any attempt to recognise the nature of this "I." Many persons are engaged in different kinds of spiritual exercises. For whose sake are these exercises done? The usual answer is "I am doing the sadhanas to seek God." Where is the need to search for God, when he is omnipresent? It is a ludicrous exercise. When you are yourself Divine, where is the need for a quest? A man who goes enquiring about where he is will be deemed crazy.

Role of the Mind

Man today has failed to recognise his Divine identity. This situation has to be changed. How is it to be done?

A bent branch may be straightened, A rock may be softened, But can a

perverted Mind be reformed?
(Telugu poem)

It is the incorrigible perverted mind that accounts for man going astray. The mind is the root cause of man's happiness or sorrow, health or disease, his goodness or wickedness. What, then, is the meaning of man's search? It is the desire to experience a vision of the Atma (Self).

The different forms of devotional exercises in which people engage themselves are not really for experiencing God but for some kind of mental satisfaction. If you want to go on with these spiritual exercises, you must do so with only one aim in view, namely, to get rid of the anatma-bhava (forgetting the Atma and identifying one's self with the body). You will then realise that the Atma is the only reality. The anatma-bhava is like the darkness in a room. It has no existence of its own. The moment a light is brought, the darkness disappears.

God has no form or name

You may ask: "How am I to declare "Aham Brahmasmi" (I am the Brahman)? Yes, you can do so. But, first of all you must understand the Aham, the "I". The "I" principle is the Divine. Vedantha declares -

"Ekam Eva adhvaitheeyam Brahma."
The Absolute is One only without a second.

In the work-a-day world, men are used to worshipping the Absolute with different names and forms. But the Supreme Reality is only one. Different names are used in the context of different functions. It is like calling the same person by different epithets according to the particular function he is discharging at any moment. God has no form or name. All names and forms

are creations of the human mind. The Shruthi has declared that the Lord is the attributeless eternal Reality.

In this context, there is no point in people going after gurus and preceptors. You are your own preceptor. You must subdue your mind. Only then you can develop good qualities. Man is losing peace because of giving a free rein to the mind. The Divine nature of the Aham ('I') must be properly understood. That "I" is the master of the body, the senses and the intellect. It is the power that permeates the entire cosmos. To worship such an omnipresent power in a small shrine is hardly appropriate. To confine the infinite Divine to the limits of a small photograph for worship is hardly befitting. What is the need to have a number of photographs? It is demeaning the Divine to adore Him in a multiplicity of pictures.

(Svami sang a song in Telugu which dilated on the futility of trying to erect temples, light lamps or confer names on the infinite cosmic Lord who is boundless, infinitely effulgent, is the indweller in every being and contains within Himself the entire universe. How can such a God be offered food or adored in anyway?)

All the forms in which God is worshipped are products of the human imagination. The proper way to experience God is to feel with all your inner being that you are the Divine itself. That experience will make you feel the presence of the Divine in all beings and in all things. With that experience there will be no room for hatred towards anyone. Such a one will nor do evil deeds. What is the reason for the ubiquitous existence all over the world of violence, discord and disorder? It is the absence of the feeling of the spiritual oneness of all beings. The same Divine Indweller is present in all beings, like the current that illumines all bulbs. All are manifestations of the Divine, as declared in the Geetha.

(Svami sang a song to describe how the Gopikas found it impossible to realise the true nature of Krishna, whose divinity was manifested in the subtlest particle and in the infinite vastness of the cosmos).

Recognise the omnipresence of God

When men begin to recognise the omnipresence of God they will be transformed. All their thoughts and actions will get diminished. It may be asked: "Who is responsible for the evil in the world?" The persons indulging in the evil deeds are responsible. God is only a witness. The rewards or punishments people receive in life are fruits of their own actions and not conferred by God.

When all actions are done in a spirit of dedication to the Divine and with recognition of one's own divinity, all actions become sanctified. Identification of the "I" with the body is the cause of all troubles. It turns the "I" into the *Ahamkara* (ego). The ego is at the root of all troubles. There is nothing wrong in looking after the body, but life should not be based on attachment to the body.

As I was coming to the Hall, many devotees greeted Me with the words, "Happy birthday!" They should wish "happy birthdays" for those who are not happy I do not need your birthday greetings.

The divine is Nithyanandham (perennially in bliss).

The Divine is ever blissful, confers supreme happiness on others,
is the very embodiment of the highest wisdom, has transcended the opposites,

is vast as space, cloud-like in complexion, with perfect features.

(Sanskrit verse)

Like the lightning in the heart of a cloud, wisdom should illumine your hearts.
That wisdom will reveal the Divine in you.

Understand the spiritual basis of "I" principle

Embodiments of Love!

You have all come here at great expense and trouble. Make the utmost effort to understand the spiritual basis of the "I" principle. When you regard the "I" as the Atma (Self), you will be free from all suffering. In case troubles come, they will vanish like the snow on a mountain. Why should you bother about these passing clouds? When you have realised Atma-jnana (Self-awareness) there will be no need for you to worry about anything. All troubles arise because, obsessed with the mind, man forgets the Atma. When your life is illumined by the effulgence of the Atma, the mind will be put in the shade. When you ignore the body and the mind, you will understand your true nature - the Athmik Principle in you. When you have realised this basic truth, you can carry on all your daily activities and do your duties in a spirit of dedication. Today there is no peace anywhere in the world. What is the reason? People have forgotten Atma-thathva (the reality of the Spirit). They have lost faith in the Spirit and have developed attachment to worldly things. People look at the phenomenal world. But they do not see it as a manifestation of the Divine. Herein lies their foolishness. All that is perceived by the eyes is divine. The perceiver is also divine. Spirituality points out the Divinity that is present in both the seer and the seen. When this basic spiritual oneness is realised, the division between man and nature disappears.

God is closer to you than any mother

Have the conviction that God is with you always. A mother may forget her child, but God will never forget you. He is closer to you than any mother. Never forget God. Are all those who are coming to Prashanthi Nilayam experiencing "Prashanthi"? No. They are engaged in too much talking, moving about from one place to another. What for have you come? For whose abode have you come? Why should you wander about restlessly? Make use of this golden opportunity to acquire peace of mind. Gather as much spiritual experience as you can while you are here and ruminate over it when you go back like a cow chewing the cud. You have come here to strengthen your relationship with the Divine. Hold on to it firmly Put into practice at least one of the things you learn here. Of what avail is a mountain of' book knowledge

without a modicum of practice? It is not enough to chant the names of God. God must be installed in the heart. Make your conscience your guide and preceptor. That will promote true devotion. All external paraphernalia have no use.

There are four mottos, which all devotees should follow:

1. Avoid bad company
2. Welcome association with good persons.
3. Remember always the transient and the permanent.
4. Ceaselessly engage yourself in meritorious acts.

It is by these means that you become good. Remember the message of Vyasa epitomised in the dictum:

"Help ever; hurt never."

If these basic rules are followed, all countries will be happy and peaceful. Each country is a part of the mansion of planet earth. Bharath is a part of this mansion. When we have this broad vision, humanity will be one in spirit. Svami does not rejoice in the celebration of birthdays. Since all of you have come for this celebration I am obliged to give you satisfaction. I have no wants. Whatever I do is for your sake. Recognise this truth. I have no dislike for anyone and no one dislikes me. All are mine and I belong to all. My benediction is "May all be happy". Everyone should adhere to the path of righteousness. All should manifest their spiritual bliss. Till you realise that spiritual oneness, you have to perform devotional acts like bhajans, japas and prayers.

Advice to Devotees

You must install in your hearts the essence of today's message to all of you.

want you to exercise control over five vital things in life.

First : "Do not waste money." Realise that "Misuse of money is evil." If you wish to keep a photo (of Bhagavan), have only one. Why do you waste money on buying too many photos? Do not go on buying photos.

Second: "Do not waste food." Realise that "food is God." Your body is the product of the food taken by your parents. Waste of food is waste of God.

Third: "Do not waste Time." Time is God. The scriptures have extolled many ways God as the Master of Time. Time wasted is life wasted.

Fourth: "Do not waste energy." Energy enters into every one of our actions. When you see, speak, hear, act or think energy is expended. In every one of these activities you should see that you do not waste your energies unnecessarily.

Fifth: "Do not forget God," at any moment whatever you may be doing. God is present wherever you may go. He is with you, beside you and around you always. Hence there is no need for you to go to some temple to pray to God. Your heart is your temple.

Turn your vision inward. Thereby understand the Athmik Principle. In your journey to Prashanthi Nilayam you must have undergone many inconveniences. In future avoid unnecessary journeys. You may do so when you need it for your contentment. Hence, do not waste time. Do not give room for useless thoughts. Do not waste your love. Love is life itself. Without love one is as good as dead. Install love in your hearts.

Avoid bad company

Avoid unnecessary and excessive association with all and sundry. Many of you have come here away from your kith and kin. People have come from America or Japan, Germany or Russia, leaving their parents or other relatives. Why, then, should they cultivate new relationships with others here? Keep

yourself to yourself as far as possible. Keep your mind pure. There is no need to indulge in talk with people in all sorts of places. Talk less, think more. Cultivate this habit. Unnecessary association with strangers may have unexpected consequences of a serious nature. You might have noticed in the play staged by the students how one person got into trouble because of his association with some undesirable persons. Ultimately he recognised his mistake and felt that his mind had been poisoned by association with bad persons. Others should not be blamed. The mistake was his in not keeping his association confined to good persons. He cried over his folly in joining bad company. To join bad company and come to grief is a self-wrought calamity. Keep your association with anyone to the barest minimum. Genuine spiritual aspirants should be particularly careful in eschewing bad company. They should create an environment conducive to their spiritual progress and mental peace. That is the only thing Svami wants. Having come to Prashanthi Nilayam, all of you must become exemplary devotees. Outsiders must feel spontaneously how exemplary is the behaviour of Sai students and Sai devotees. That reaction will do you more good than satisfying Me.

Sathya Sai is the devotee of devotees

I have no devotees. You may describe yourselves as Sathya Sai devotees. I am myself a devotee. Whose devotee? A devotee of those who claim to be My devotees. My duty is to fulfil their desires. I belong to you and you belong to Me. Understand and strengthen this relationship. **This is My sole desire.**

I do not relish the celebration of my birthday or pompous decorations for the purpose. Such ostentation is not good for anyone. Adopt a practical attitude towards the spiritual life. With the holy thoughts, in you on this auspicious day, you must go out into the world and spread our sacred feelings among others. Do not confine your feelings to yourselves or retain them only during your stay here. Spread them wherever you go. Svami is above all distinctions of caste, religion or language. The caste of humanity, the religion of love and the language of the heart - these are what I stand for. Experience this truth and share your joy with others.

When you do not love man, your heart will not love God. Despising brother men, you cannot at the same time, worship God; if you do, God will not accept that hypocrisy. God is resident in every heart; so, if you serve anyone, that service reaches the God within him. It brings to you the grace of God.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

33. Dedicate your lives to the Divine

Date: 25 December 1997 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Christmas

Faith, Daring, Courage and Intelligence,
Energy and Valour - wherever
These six qualities exist
Divine protection is assured.

EMBODIMENTS of Love!

Vishvasam (faith or confidence), Sahasam (daring or determination), Dhairyam (courage), Buddhi (intelligence), shakthi (energy) and Parakramam (valour) - when a man has these six qualities, the Divine will stand by him in all his endeavours. In any age or at any place or in any circumstance, these six good qualities are essential. No worry will haunt any man who has these six virtues. These six qualities cannot be acquired by education nor can they be imparted by any preceptor. Nor can they be inherited from one's parents. These qualities are secured only by Atma -vishvasam (Self-confidence).

Faith is essential for every activity in life

The first among the six qualities is Vishvasam (faith). In our daily experience faith is evident from the simple act of posting a letter. No one will send a letter by post if he did not have faith in the postal department. The address and the postage stamp on the letter are unaffected by distance. Likewise, God makes no distinction-between those near to Him or remote from Him. One's faith should be properly addressed. The faith should be unwavering, total and free from doubts of any kind. The letter of Faith has also to carry the stamp of Prema (Love). It should be selfless love. Selfish love will be useless. When firm faith is associated with unselfish love, the prayers addressed to Bhagavan are bound to reach Him. This kind of faith has become rare

nowadays. Self-confidence is totally absent. How can one without confidence in himself have faith in God? And how can such a person hope for God's grace? Hence, every man must cultivate firm faith. Today in every field, firm faith is essential. Any one who leaves home for his office sets out with the confidence that he will return home in the evening. No one will embark on any undertaking unless at the outset he has the confidence that he can do the job. Faith is thus essential for every activity in life.

The ancient sages accomplished many great things by their faith. Their achievements are cherished by people today, even after thousands of years. Unfortunately, because of the influence of kali in the present age, faith is declining from moment to moment. People change their beliefs constantly. Such changes are mental aberrations. They do not pertain to the Spirit (which dwells in the heart).

What are human values?

Mankind has a history of lakhs of years. But Humanity is yet to realise the greatness of humanness. After all these years, man is still unable to answer the question: "What are human values?" Men study books, listen to discourses, experience gains and losses, joys and sorrows, but all these do not give them a firm hold on what is permanent in life. If they had acquitted this hold they would have realised that the world is one family. The Vedas taught the concept of one human family. The Vedas declared that the Brihath (Supreme Cosmic Principle) has no limits. It is infinite. Mankind has also no bounds or barriers. In fact, there are no barriers between humanity and every other species of living beings like birds, beasts and insects and even trees. All of them belong to a single family of living beings. In the Tree of Life, man appears in many forms - as animals, birds and insects. In all these forms he experiences his divine essence. You are all aware of the fact that Ganapathi has two mothers, Gauri and Ganga.

For every man there are four mothers. The first mother is *Sathyam* (Truth). The second mother is *Dharmam* (Righteousness). The third is *Prema* (Love). The fourth is *Shanthi* (peace). Man must live in such a manner that he pleases

all the four mothers. Man, however, has given up these four sacred mothers and adores four others who are adopted mothers. Who are they? Injustice, immorality, unrighteousness and falsehood - these are the adopted mothers. As a result, man is a prey to many difficulties.

Man, who ought to adhere to Truth, Right Conduct and Love, has become a creature of injustice, wickedness and untruth. As a result of abandoning one's natural mothers and clinging to unnatural relationships man is leading a polluted life and forfeiting peace. In an earlier aeon, Rama declared that the mother and the Motherland are greater than Heaven itself. But man today has given up his natural mother and is adoring meretricious mothers. Man should love Truth, Righteousness, Love and Peace as his mothers. In no circumstance should he cause any pain to these four because that will result in great suffering for him.

The six inner enemies of man

The Creator has endowed man with numerous marvellous qualities. Besides the six virtues mentioned earlier man also got vices. The opposites of the six virtues are Kama (Desire), Krodha (Anger), Lobha (Greed), Moha (fascination), Madha (Pride) and Mathsarya (Envy). These are known as the six enemies of man. They are part of creation. The mind is the master of these vices. Man tries to train the mind to overcome these vices. But this is not easy for all. The reason is that, being unaware of how to control the mind, man becomes an easy prey to its vagaries. Everyone should strive to find out how to use the mind in any situation, at any time and in any circumstance.

Men today are dominated by three evil qualities: anger, hatred, and envy. These three qualities poison the mind of man. Consequently, every action of man gets poisoned. Every word he utters is venomous. All actions done by the promptings of the mind are tainted. All sensory actions are equally polluted. To transform these evil thoughts and actions into good ones, it is necessary to infuse love into all thoughts and actions. When the mind is filled with Love, all actions get suffused with Love.

Today man is totally unaware of what is meant by Love. Man equates desire with Love. He imagines that whatever he yearns for are prompted by Love. This is not true Prema (love). Prema is totally free from desire. It is utterly selfless. It seeks no return. It is all encompassing. It makes no distinction between friend and foe. Forgetting this concept of universal selfless love, filling himself with selfish desires, man fancies that he is filled with Love. This is mundane attachment. It is quite apart from the Love that flows from the Spirit inside. Spiritual love is boundless. It is free from the feeling of hatred. It is capable of expressing itself in universal terms. It is vital to fill the mind with Love and expel the six enemies residing in it. Every part of the body should be filled with Divine Love. That is the way to divinise man.

Fill the heart with Love and render service

Many people imagine that to divinise man and make him a godly being is a superhuman exercise. This is not so. Divine Love is within the competence of man. It is natural to man. He is entitled to possess it. Divine Love should not be considered as something transcendental or alien to man. But men tend to degrade this love by giving it different forms and names and degrade themselves.

The defect lies in the perversion of Love and is not inherent in it. Convert anger into Love. Turn hatred into Love. To effect this change what is needed is a change of heart - filling it with Love. When the heart is filled with Love, the whole world becomes loveable. The mind is restless and fickle. All troubles that afflict man stem from the mind. The thoughts arising from the mind are the cause of human birth. The Vedas describe man as Manuja . This implies that man takes birth to experience fulfilment of his desires. Hence, it is necessary for man to make his desires sublime. He should seek to know what could make his life ideal and exemplary. What can contribute to the well-being of society? What is ideal for the whole world? Thinking over these questions, one should develop sublime ideas. People should not act in haste on every impulse of the mind. It is said that the body is a prerequisite for the achievement of righteousness but it is important to note that man is endowed with a body to render service to others. The implication of the two dicta is

that while discharging his duties, man should also render service to others.

There is any number of helpful sea-vices to be rendered by men in this world today. We have here three types of devotees. There are those who are not conscious of their abilities. There are a second type of devotees, who seek God alone and do not desire anything else from God. The third type are those who adore God as the embodiment of Truth and get their wishes fulfilled by their prayers to Him as the omnipotent Lord. God is one. But devotees can worship him under different names and forms.

Divine exists in the microcosm and the macrocosm

Man has no need to seek anything outside him. He has the universe within him in his heart. He is potentially the Cosmic Being. He has in him the magnetic power of attraction. It is derived from the Divine. Every atom has his Divine power. Men think that only what is perceived by the senses is real and what is beyond human perception is unreal. This is wrong. It is the unseen that contains everything. When you see a man, you consider his physical features as the only reality about him. But you can have more conception of his powers and talents, which are not visible externally. He has Compassion, Love, the spirit of Sacrifice, sublime thoughts, none of which are apparent to you. For that reason, can you say that they do not exist? Likewise, the secret of man's actions may not be apparent. A flower, for instance, has fragrance, which has no visible form. The form of fragrance is to be found in the form of the flower. Without the flower there is no fragrance. It is said that Prema (love) has no form. But love has a form. The mother, who loves her child, expresses the form of love. Likewise, everything has a form. But the ignorant not aware of the truth, declare that what is formless is non-existent. There is nothing in the universe, which is without form. For one to understand this truth, he has to realise that the Divine exists in the microcosm and the macrocosm.

All are one! Be alike to everyone

There were controversies regarding Jesus. These differences were the cause

of the ordeals he had to go through. But Jesus was prepared to face any trouble or any penalty. He considered Compassion as the supreme quality. At first, he declared he was a "Messenger of God." Then, he announced: "I am the Son of God." Ultimately he declared: "I and my Father are One." You must take note of this oneness. You must proclaim your oneness and not your diversity. Today people talk about unity but do not practise it. In every discourse Swami speaks about love. How many practise it? How many have tried to understand the Love Principle? Who has this Love? Love is not to be seen anywhere. Where there is love, there is no room for hatred. Do not be envious of anyone. When this evil quality appears. Love takes to flight. **A pure heart is abode of Love. Where there is Purity, there is Unity. Unity leads to Divinity.** Today Purity is absent. How, then, do you realise Divinity? You must offer everything to God without any desire. Dedicate all yours to God. This was the teaching of Jesus. He considered everything as an offering to God. When he was being nailed on the cross, people around were weeping. At that moment an ethereal voice declared: All are one, my dear son! be alike to everyone." Jesus declared: "Death is the dress of life." Just as we change our clothes, we also change our bodies. The bodies are vestures (for the indwelling Spirit). Hence bodies should be regarded as mere vestures. We should not worry about the body.

Love is God. Live in Love

Buddha also, before he attained Nirvana expounded his teachings clearly. His step-mother's son, Ananda, was in tears at that time. Buddha told him: "Ananda! You should not shed tears like this. Why are you weeping?" Ananda said: "I am grieving over your imminent passing." Buddha declared - "I am not dying. Nor are you living. All have to give up this body. Therefore, you must not shed tears." How many heed such sayings? You must learn to lead ideal lives. That is the right way to observe the birthday of Christ. Few care to observe the ideals of the great teachers. **You must realise that there is nothing more divine than Love. Love is God. Live in Love. This is your duty. Fill your hearts with Love. You will then be free from all afflictions.** You must feel that you are suffering because of Love. But that suffering is due to constricted love. When your love is all-embracing there will

be no room for suffering.

Towards the end of his life Ramakrishna Paramahansa was suffering from cancer of the throat. All his disciples appealed to him to pray to the Mother; Durga Devi, whom Ramakrishna worshipped, to relieve him of his malady. Ramakrishna said: "I have prayed to the Mother." They asked him what the Mother's response was. Ramakrishna said - "The Mother told me: 'When I am eating so many things with so many mouths, does it matter very much if you are unable to eat with your one mouth?' her words opened my eyes."

Sing the glories of God and serve others

All mouths are the mouths of God. The Vedas proclaim that the Divine has a myriad heads and myriad eyes and myriad feet. This means that all heads are His, all eyes are His and all feet are His. God is infinite. Man is finite. The infinite Divine must be loved with boundless Love. God's love is limitless and undiminishing. It is ever pure and unsullied. You must serve everyone with a loving heart.

Christ was the victim of envious persons who were opposed to His teachings and who levelled accusations against Him. Devotees of God should not mind the criticisms of envious persons. All good people have to face such troubles. They should treat everything as meant for their good. This was how the Pandavas looked upon all the troubles they experienced. Yesterday and today the overseas devotees filled everyone with joy by their music programmes. **God is a lover of music and enjoys music. Saintly devotees like Naradha and Thumburu, who are always in the proximity of God, are always singing the glory of God. Nothing else can give so much joy as music. You can please God with your music. God revels in music. Music is therefore holy. It reflects the state of one's inner being. Singing the glories of God, render service to the people. You will derive the greatest joy when you sing and serve.**

34. Develop Love For God And Experience Unity

Date: 26 April 1997 / Location: Kodaikanal

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi , November 2015.

People acquire wealth through speech. Through speech, one creates relationships and attachments.

One also gets into bondage through speech. Speech can be the cause of death, too. (Sanskrit verse)

Embodiments of Love!

Speech is very valuable but does not cost anything. Speech should be pure, sweet, and bereft of emotions. The Bhagavad Gita says: One should speak only truthful, pleasing, and well-intentional words, which are beneficial to others (Anudvegakaram vakyam sathyam priyahitham cha yat).

Transcend the mind and experience the Atma

People perform all activities due to sunlight, but there is no connection between the activities and the sun. Similarly, the mind and intellect work on account of the light of the Atma . Without the light of the Atma , the mind and intellect can't function. Like the sun, Atma has no attachment to duties and activities.

Just as people get sunlight from the sun, they get strength from the Atma . Atma is the witness. The results of good and bad deeds don't affect the Atma . When the water is flowing, the image of the moon in it appears to move, but the moon doesn't move.

What is the cause of troubles, sorrows, and worries? Ego and attachment are the cause. Attachments, happiness, sadness - all arise in the mind. The mind

and intellect are the instruments. It is through these instruments that we get the experience of everything. The instruments are the cause of our problems. If we remove these instruments, we can experience the bliss of the Atma . You build a house. Even though space in the house is one, you divide it into the drawing room, bedroom, kitchen, bathroom, etc. Why call them by different names? It is because there are walls between them. If we remove the walls, it becomes a big hall.

We get bound by the connections we create. We think of someone as father, someone else as mother, and so on. They are all our imagination. Truth is the Atma ; that is real. We have forgotten our real nature. Because of bhrama (delusion), we have forgotten Brahma (Supreme Being). The body is made up of five elements. Though the body is inert, we can feel it because of the vibrations of the mind. The mind gets wisdom because of the radiation of the Atma . The radiation of the Atma is the source of all the powers of humanity.

Why do we forget the power of the Atma ? In the Kaivalyopanishad , it is mentioned that fire is produced when one piece of wood is rubbed against another. When we churn the mind and intellect by investigation, the light of wisdom arises in us. This wisdom shines in everybody, but the time duration of attaining it and becoming aware of it, varies with each person. Consciousness shines in everybody. Just as light is the nature of the sun and coolness is the nature of the moon, Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute (Sat-Chit-Ananda) is the nature of humanity. To obtain Self-realisation (Atma sakshatkara), to realise one's Self, no effort is required. Those who do not know this secret make a lot of effort and fatigue their mind. They do not understand the existence of knowledge about themselves within themselves. This sacred awareness pervades throughout the body. We should develop this awareness (prajnana). We find it difficult because we do not perform our duty properly.

Consciousness shines in all

The ash that comes out of the fire covers the fire. After you blow off the ash, you can see the fire. You get this awareness without any spiritual effort

because divine consciousness is there in you. Because of the ash of ignorance, you have ego and attachment. Remove these and you will see the Atma in everyone.

Everyone is a form of the Atma , and consciousness shines in all. That consciousness is Atma . If you develop this awareness, you do not need any other spiritual practice.

You are unable to recognise what is sacred because of the veil of ignorance due to your worldly feelings. Your involvement in worldly matters and giving importance to them is the root cause of this ignorance.

The body is just an instrument which moves and performs all actions. You do not get the desired fruit of your actions because you do not put the body to proper use. You should discharge your duties earnestly. Everyone should perform their duties whether they are a child, a youth, or an old person.

In childhood, one develops absorbing interest in play and enjoys the company of 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; one still craves money without contemplating on God, even at that ripe age.

Unable to give up vices and follow the path of righteousness, one gets trapped by the consequences of one's actions and thus wastes this precious human birth.

(Telugu poem) If the train comes late, we criticise the railway department and blame the government and society because some people did not carry out their duties at proper time. But we do not learn the lessons that we ought to learn.

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 (samsara). 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) But why has this body been given to us? The body is meant to undertake righteous actions (Sariramadyam khalu dharma sadhanam). The body has been given to perform righteous deeds and to act with discrimination. People should perform the duties enjoined on them.

The body has no power of discrimination or knowledge; Only the mind and intellect have discrimination (viveka), knowledge, and power. People today do not exercise fundamental discrimination. They have only selfishness, selfishness, selfishness. They use their intelligence to obtain what is good for themselves alone, without giving attention to the good of society. In this way, they use the body in wrong ways. They do not use it to follow the path that leads to enlightenment.

Love makes you divine

If you put wheat in the flour mill, you will get wheat flour. If you put rice, you will get rice flour. But if you put food in the body, only fecal matter will come out.

If you keep pickle in a jar, it remains intact for one year. If you put pickle in the body, it will rot in a short time. The nature of the body is like this. But the body is necessary for one to attain high ideals. So, in order to attain the goal of life, one should dedicate the body to God. One should put the body on the right path and shine as an exemplary human being.

But people perform spiritual practices that are temporary. They should realise that permanent bliss (ananda) is within them only, and not outside. Every person with human qualities should perform righteous actions. Sharpness of intellect and high learning are valuable. But good conduct is of highest importance. Only one with good conduct can be called a human being. But people today behave in a childish way. Discipline is very important for one to attain God. But the discipline should not be imposed by any external force; it should evolve on its own from the love that is inside a person. Love is the real

strength. Love is God. God is love. Do all actions with love. Develop love more and more everyday. By love, you become God. If you develop perfect love, God becomes yours. Develop this wisdom. People from distant places and different nations have come here after spending a lot of money. Why? Their love for God is the reason. If they did not have that type of love, they would not have come this far, undergoing so many difficulties. Love is in everyone. Consider everyone as a temple of God. Have true love for society, not illusory love. Have love for the entire world. Love everyone in the world. First develop love in you. Then expand your love to your family, to society, and the nation.

When the individual carries out their duties without fail, their family will progress. In the word 'samaja ', 'sam ' means that which you have attained and 'aja ' means pure. Samaja (society) means acquiring purity. When society progresses, we also progress. Perform all actions and spiritual practices, keeping the welfare of society in mind. You are the mirror of society. Think always of the welfare of society. When others are happy, you should feel happy. When others are unhappy, help them to become happy.

It is not blood circulation or the movement of the body that are important; your actions are important. Spirituality is not living alone in solitude. Spirituality connotes having equal vision for all, living among all, and serving all with a feeling of oneness (ekatma bhava).

Develop the feeling of oneness

Move in society with equanimity, keeping the focus of your mind and heart on God. Live with the awareness and vision that all are one only. Do not think that you are separate from others. Only then can you experience Divinity. Develop love for God and achieve oneness.

Put the great aphorisms "That thou Art (Thath twam asi)" and "Brahman is Supreme Consciousness (Prajnanam Brahma)" into practice. There is bliss and strength in Divinity. Practice is your life breath. There is bliss and strength in Divinity. Separate threads are not strong. They acquire strength when woven into cloth. Unity is very necessary.

Attain oneness by doing service to society. You will find divine bliss in oneness. When you travel alone, you may have fear and may have to face several difficulties. But when you travel with ten people, the strength of all of them will be yours. To experience the strength of unity is bliss (ananda).

Understand the principle of unity of humanity

The world is a mansion in which each country is like a room with a different name such as India, Japan, and America. Though the countries have different names, people living in them are the same. Understand this principle of unity of humanity. With unity, one can achieve anything, but effort has to be made for it.

Spending a lot of money, scientists have gone into outer space with enormous experience and effort. But they do not know their own heart. Look within yourself rather than venture into the outside world. Whatever we see outside is but a reflection of the inner being. Whatever is not inside does not exist outside.

For example, when you close your eyes, you cannot see anything. When you open your eyes, you see all that is visible. What you see is your own creation. It is your eyes that create everything. Everything is inside you. The whole world is inside you. This is the sacred teaching of scriptures. The Pandavas lived in the forest for ten years. For one year they changed their names and lived incognito.

What is the meaning of living incognito? It is to live without being seen by anybody. It is like our own inner power. We do not know about it, but it is there inside us. It is only through this power that we are able to walk, talk, sing, and act. All the feelings are also within us. Hatred and anger come from inside. They cannot come from outside. But we see only material objects. Our outlook is materialistic. This is ignorance! What we see outside is partly true. For example, we see a fat fair man who is 6 feet and 2 inches tall. This is only partial truth. We can know the full truth when we come to know about his qualities and conduct. When you don't have human qualities and if you say, "I

am a man", what you say is only half correct. You should say repeatedly, "I am a man, not an animal". (Swami repeated this three times).

If I am a human being, I should have human qualities, not animal qualities. Otherwise, I am not a human being.

Who is manava (man)? 'Ma ' means ignorance, 'na ' means without, and 'va ' means to conduct oneself. One who conducts himself without ignorance is a human being.

There is another meaning of the word manava . 'Nava ' means new and 'ma ' means without. So, 'manava ' also means "I am not new." You have taken several births. Swami knows about them, but you do not.

Lead a divine life

That is what Lord Krishna taught Arjuna in the battlefield. He said, "Out of ignorance, you are trembling with fear, thinking that you are going to kill others. In fact, you are not the one who is fighting. I fight, I take life, and I give life. I do it all.

"You have become feeble because of the weakness of your mind. You are suffering because of your attachment to your relations, who are temporary, like passing clouds. Before marriage, there is no relationship between husband and wife; before the birth of the child, there is no relationship with the child. You cannot understand this until you know that you have had several births. If you think about it, you would know that you had many births earlier." "I am unable to believe this," said Arjuna. Krishna replied, "Take a small example. You married my sister Subhadra on a particular date and you remember this. But if someone asks you, where you were on 26 April you do not remember. What is the reason? It is because you do not give importance to this date as you give to your wedding day. The reason for not remembering your previous births is also similar." An optimist and a pessimist looked at water in a tumbler. The optimist said that the glass was half full. The pessimist said that the tumbler was half empty. The optimist is full of

happiness. The pessimist sees the thorn below the rose; the optimist on the other hand sees the rose flower. Pessimism and optimism both depend on vision or attitude (drishti). The two are closely related. Hopelessness arises out of faulty vision. The optimist and the pessimist walk on the same path. The optimist looks up and sees the sky and the stars whereas the pessimist looks down and sees pits. Both are walking on the same road. But there is difference in their vision and their points of view.

Change your vision and see everything as God. Understand the difference between vision and spectacles. We see colours with our natural vision. With blue-coloured spectacles, everything appears blue, but we cannot blame the spectacles. When you see the world with the spectacles of love, the entire world will appear to be full of love. Everything turns into love. Spectacles cover the eyes but do not obstruct the vision. God is full of love. When you wear the spectacles of love, you see the correct colour and get the complete view. When the mind and intellect are proper, vision will be good.

Without love, whatever spiritual practice you undertake will be a waste. Do not speak ill of any individual, nation, or religion. Everything is God's creation. Discharge your duty, rid yourself of hatred, develop love, and lead a divine life. Fill your life with bliss (Ananda). (Bhagavan brought His divine discourse to a close with the bhajan , "Prema Mudita Manase Kaho Rama Rama Ram".)

35. Compassionate Heart is the Temple of God

Date: 27 April 1997 / Location: Kodaikanal

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.

Spiritual aspirants must first of all keep away from bad company. Tell me your company, and I shall tell you what you are. Seek only friendship with good people. A serpent may bite you only once, and that too when assaulted. But wicked people transmit poison constantly day and night. What was Karna's fate at the end? He was a great warrior, more valiant than Arjuna. But because of the bad company of Duryodhana, Dussasana, and Sakuni, he also became wicked.

Compassion is the basis of the world

With the help of good company, devotion is developed. It is not enough if you keep away from bad company; you must give up bad qualities and develop good qualities. Life is an ocean with waves of grief and joy. Separation and union are natural to a human being. People become sacred when they associate with good company and are separated from bad company.

What is merit (*punya*)? Worldly people consider merit as giving things in charity and helping others. But it is not its true meaning. Its true meaning is *paropakara*. 'Para' means divine, 'upa' means proximity, and 'kara' means doing. Those deeds that take us near God are paropakara. Proximity to God is paropakara.

Speak truth, speak pleasantly, and do not speak unpalatable truth
(Sathyam bruyath, priyam bruyath, na bruyath sathyamapriyam).

Some people say that money is the basis of the entire world (dhana moolam idam jagat). Others say that righteousness is the basis of the entire world (dharma moolam idam jagat). But the correct statement is that compassion is the basis of the world (daya moolam idam jagat). The five basic elements, the sun, the moon, and night and day all function on the basis of compassion (*daya*). The heart filled with compassion is divine. Even if others talk to us harshly, we should always speak amiably. One can find fulfillment in life only with compassion and mercy.

One may be a Brahmin, a demon, or a king, one may do a lot of yoga, one may grow beard like a renunciant, one may smear one's forehead with ash, one may keep on chanting names of God, but one avails nothing without possessing a heart full of compassion. Although compassion is a natural quality, people are not able to realise this. The entire world is based on kindness. Philosophies, religions, nations, and languages may be different, but the heart is the same.

One Atma dwells in all beings (Ekatma sarva bhutantaratma).

Truth is one (Ekam sath).

The Vedas declare that truth is one only. Water is called by different names in different languages. In Telugu it is neeru, in English it is water, in Hindi it is pani, in Tamil it a thanni, and in Sanskrit it is vari. Though the names are different, water is one and the same. Likewise, all hearts are full of compassion. Every thought should be filled with compassion. We use the word 'mankind'. He who has kindness is man. What is the use of life without kindness? One who is filled with kindness is near the Divine. A man of kindness is a friend of God. Such a person considers God as their mother,

father, wealth, knowledge, and everything. Knowledge also emanates from the heart.

Everything in this world is a reaction, reflection, and resound of the inner being. Whatever you do is reflected in the mirror of Nature. God is the object, a person is the reflection, and nature is the mirror. When you remove the mirror, only the object remains. In worldly mathematics, 3-1 equals 2 but in spiritual the sense, 3-1 equals 1. So, spiritual mathematics is more correct. In order to develop affinity with God, get rid of affinity with the world. Remove body consciousness and develop divine consciousness. If you want to develop divine consciousness, reduce the burden of desires and worries and become detached. Detachment does not mean leaving wife and wealth and running away to the forest; it is sacrificing negative feelings, desires, and delusions. Desire comes out of illusion (*bhrama*), not *Brahma* (God). Remove the illusion and reduce the desires to make the journey of life a pleasure. God is everywhere. He is all sweetness. As the Upanishads say, God is like a doll of sugar, every part of which will taste sweet. No matter what for and how you pray to God, you will get sweetness, because God is filled with sweetness of love.

Reduce the burden of your desires

Who is responsible for your burdens? Once a cowherd maiden (gopika) went to a well to fetch water. After filling water in three pots, she put one on her head and another in her one hand. She was trying to put the third pot over the pot on her head. But she was finding it difficult, and was in need of help from someone.

Since Krishna was standing nearby, she asked Him for help. But He refused. Meanwhile, another gopika who was passing by came forward and helped her in putting the pot on top of her head. Krishna followed the gopika on the way to her home. As soon as she reached home, Krishna came forward to help her put down the pot from her head. She then asked Krishna why He refused to put the pot on her head earlier, and why He came forward to help her put the pot down. Krishna then explained that it is not His nature to put burdens on

people; He is interested only in removing their burdens. People think that God gives them all burdens. That is not correct. There was a student who, after completing his education, got married. Before marriage, he had two legs. Now after marriage, he became fourlegged, like an animal. Some time later, he begot a son and he became six-legged, like a cockroach, and thereafter he got a daughter and became eightlegged, like a spider. In this way, people keep on increasing their burden. People are responsible for all their bondages, not God. Give all your burden to God, then you will be relieved of your burden. Gradually reduce your burden. Strengthen your relationship with God and reduce your relationship with the world to reduce your burden. Bliss comes naturally to you when sorrow is removed. Removal of attachment is liberation (Moha kshaya is moksha). Liberation (moksha) is not anything separate or different. It is reduction of attachment and development of detachment. It is possible only through the strength of devotion, which gives steadfastness, leading to detachment. Food, strength and liberation (bhukthi, sakthi, and mukthi) all come from supreme devotion (para bhakthi).

Perform service with love

Embodiments of Divine Love!

Divine love and compassion are naturally present in your heart. Try to protect them at all times. A compassionate heart is the temple of God. First give happiness to God within you. Many people visit places of pilgrimage in search of God. Do not waste your time and money. He is within you. It is God who is searching for a true devotee.

Ceiling on desires is of four types:

Firstly, don't waste food; food is God.

Secondly, don't waste money. Misuse of money is evil.

Thirdly, don't waste time. Time is God. The Upanishads say that nothing is more precious than time. If you waste time, it is as good as wasting the

opportunity given by God.

Finally, don't waste energy. We lose and waste energy by misuse of senses. Just as the batteries in a radio are drained when radio is switched on, we lose energy by talking too much. We waste our life by wasting energy.

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.

Today, people are worried about what they are incapable of. They do not think about what they are supposed to do. Students keep dreaming about the future, without attending to their studies. Past is past. Don't worry about the past. Whatever was done will not come back. Future is in the womb of time; it is unseen and uncertain. So do not worry about future. The present is very important. It is not ordinary present, it is omnipresent. The past is a tree, the future is also a tree; but the present is the seed. The past is in the present; and the future is also in the present. What you ate earlier, you will have its belch now. Experience the present properly. Don't worry; always be happy. While eating food, don't worry where the vegetables came from and what will happen to the consumed food tomorrow. So, don't think of past or future; be happy in the present. There was a mother whose son became ill and died of fever. After five years, her second son also became ill. The mother started worrying that the same might not happen to him.

Think of happiness, rather than unpleasant things. Past is past. Know the correct way to utilise the present.

People today worship lifeless objects while harming living beings. Spiritual

practice (*sadhana*) and devotion must be accompanied by the awareness that God exists in everyone. So, give respect and joy to all. That is sacred life, true devotion, and spiritual practice.

What is the way to love God? The best way to love God is to love all and serve all. But it should not be worldly, material love; it should be divine love, which is changeless and eternal. Worldly love collapses, perishes, and exhausts itself; whereas divine love is changeless and limitless and constantly renews itself. God is always with you, in you, and around you. There is no need to search for Him. In fact, God is in search of a true devotee.

We must recognise that the world is based on compassion. Perfect faith, dharma, and devotion to God residing in your heart will protect you. Once, God promised a devotee that He would always follow him wherever he went. Then the devotee got a doubt. He turned back to check whether God was really following him or not. Since he did not see Him, the devotee questioned, "God, You promised that You would be behind me; but when I looked back, I did not find You. Why?" God replied, "I was very much there behind you; that was true even when you turned back! That is why you could not see Me!" Divine power is real power. You may have all powers with you, but if you lack divine power, you can never succeed in life. Develop love for God, fear of sin, and morality in society. These are on the decline in the world today. When all individuals stick to moral values, society will become pure.

Spending time in rituals is not devotion. Perform service with love. Spiritual life is to love all and serve all. May you all attain the ability to love!

(Bhagavan brought His discourse to a close with the bhajan, "Sathyam Jnanam Anantham Brahma!")

36. Realise the Oneness of the Atmic Principle

Date: 28 April 1997 / Location: Kodaikanal

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi , January 2016.

If you leave ego, you become dear to all; If you conquer anger, you become free from worries; You become prosperous when you control your desires; You attain happiness only when you conquer greed. (Sanskrit verse)

Embodiments of divine love!

A person with ego cannot attain anybody's love. Ego is very harmful. An egoistic man loses the love of even his wife and children. In this vast world of infinite number of beings, where is the scope for people to develop ego?

Give up ego and anger

When you look at the map of the world, your own country Bharat (India) appears to be small, and within Bharat, the State of Tamil Nadu is very small, and in the State of Tamil Nadu, Kodaikanal is a tiny place. Your house in Kodaikanal is quite small; and you are only one among all in the house. It is ignorance to have ego. One Atma dwells in all beings (Ekatma sarva bhutantaratma).

From another point of view, if you enquire, you will realise that the whole world is in you. A scope to exhibit your ego crops up only when there is the second person.

Truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names (Ekam sath viprah bahudha vadanti). When you realise that all are one and you are just one of the vast number of beings, where is the scope for developing ego? Is your ego due to your position, education, wealth, or property? Any number of people are better off than you in many respects.

Whichever way you look at, ego is the result of delusion and ignorance. When you give up ego, the whole world will love you. So, if you wish to be loved by all, you must leave your ego. As long as you have anger, you cannot be happy at all. You will be happy and blissful only when you get rid of anger. Anger is a great enemy of man.

One with anger will not be successful in any endeavour. That one will commit sins and will be ridiculed by one and all.

That one's own people will abandon them. That one will lose all wealth and respect. That one's anger will ruin that one completely. (Telugu poem) With anger within yourself, you cannot experience happiness and bliss. How can you sleep peacefully when a snake is slithering in the house? How can you be peaceful when anger permeates your entire being? One bout of anger drains away the energy gained in three months; it pollutes and heats the blood, which takes three months to regain normal state. Anger makes a person physically and mentally weak. Therefore, give no scope to anger. When anger is subdued, it is an indication that your spiritual discipline is on the right path.

Limit your desires and leave greed

As long as one has desires, one cannot be truly rich or wealthy. Put a limit to desires. Who is the richest person? One who has contentment. Who is the poorest person? The one with many desires. Of course, one has to have some desires in order to achieve certain good things in life. But the country is facing all types of problems because of the limitless desires of people. Desires are like a forest fire; the more it spreads, the more it burns with added vigour.

What kind of desire one should have? Have desire for mental peace, good health, and knowledge about the infinite principle. Householders should have such desires that are suitable to their stage of life. Goddess of wealth Lakshmi will then enter their house.

A great devotee Ramdas sang: 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) God gives without your asking. Neither Sabari nor Jatayu asked Rama for anything, but He granted them supreme state of salvation. A greedy person has no happiness. People can experience all kinds of happiness when they conquer their greed. A miser may have everything in life but cannot derive any happiness from all those possessions. Here is a small story. Once two brothers lived together. One was a great miser, and the other was a greater miser. They were so miserly that they didn't enjoy anything they had. One day, they received the news that one of their close relatives in a nearby village had died. The elder brother decided to go there out of compulsion. He preferred to walk rather than spend money on a bus ticket. He got up early, lit the oil lamp to get ready, and proceeded on his journey.

When the younger brother saw the lighted lamp, he at once put it off lest it should consume oil. As he was groping in the dark, a scorpion bit him, and he writhed in pain.

Half an hour later there was a knock on the door. Seeing his brother standing at the door, the younger miser asked him, "Brother, why did you come back"?

The elder miser replied, "I returned to ask you whether or not the lamp was put out". "Brother, what have you done? The soles of your sandals would be worn out by coming and going," the younger brother expressed his worry. "Do you think I don't have even that much intelligence? I kept my sandals under my armpit while covering the distance," replied the elder miser. By developing excessive greed and miserliness, they could not experience peace and happiness in life.

Recognise the importance of practice

Sacrifice is very important in life. There is no higher quality than sacrifice. Immortality is not attained through action, progeny, or wealth; it is attained only by sacrifice (Na karmana na prajaya dhanena thyagenaike amrutatthwamanasu). You can live without many things, but not without breath. But if you inhale, you must also exhale. After eating food, if you do not excrete, you will fall sick. Blood must circulate continuously or it will lead to clots. Blood and money must remain in circulation. Stagnant water becomes infested with worms.

Money should be utilised properly. If you go on accumulating and don't spend it, it is like burying it under earth. Give up ego, conquer anger, limit desires, and get rid of greed. These four checks are very important, especially for spiritual aspirants. Mere chanting of God's name (japa) and penance (tapa) do not constitute spiritual discipline (sadhana). These are useless without mental transformation. The mind is the cause of bondage and liberation (Manah eva manushyanam karanam bandhamokshayo).

What is a good action? An action guided by discrimination between the eternal and the ephemeral is a good action.

All powers are inherent in a person. There is power of light in the eyes. The human body is like an electric generator. There are battery cells in the body. People are endowed with great magnetic power. But they are not able to recognise these powers. If they did, they would recognise themselves. If one knows oneself, one attains bliss. You ask others who they are and where they came from. Rather, try to know who you are, where you came from.

If you think you are a doctor, a businessman, or a professor; this is not the truth about you. This is your profession, not your reality. You say, I am an Indian. That is your nationality, not your reality. All these epithets refer to external, worldly things. If someone asks, "Who are you?", you should reply, "I am the Atma ." People read various types of sacred texts to know themselves. They interact with noble persons, but what is the use? There is no spiritual progress. If you recite all the 700 verses of the Gita , what you get is throat pain, nothing else. You may read the Ramayana and the Bhagavad Gita , but

without practice, nothing is gained. Put into practice at least a bit of what you read and hear. Will the darkness in the world be dispelled by the message of light?

Can the disease be cured by merely listening to the efficacy of medicine?

Can the poor get rid of poverty by listening to the principles of economics?

Can hunger be satiated by mere repetition of the names of various delicious dishes? No. You can attain bliss only when you put your knowledge into practice.

(Telugu poem) Just by hearing, you won't gain anything. For a cashier in a bank, will the money serve their own purpose? All powers are available within ourselves, but we are unable to utilise them. You say mine, mine. Who are you? When you know yourself, you will know what is yours. First know who you are. This is the teaching of all noble souls.

Open the heart and shut the mouth

You say, my body, my mind, my intellect (buddhi), my mind-stuff (chitta), then who are you? These are your instruments and you are the master. If you fail to recognise that you are the master and choose to be their slave, you will never reach the goal. Become the master and you achieve everything. Realising these as your instruments is all that is spiritual discipline (sadhana). Keep the body and all these instruments in good condition with proper food and clothing. Open the heart and shut the mouth. Today we open our mouth and close our heart. We waste our time in too much talking. All this is of no use. The heart is very valuable. So, open the gates of the heart. It requires no spiritual exercises (sadhana). The body is a temple and the indweller is God (Deho devalaya proktho jivo Deva sanathana). Recognise that the body is a temple of God and that God resides in your heart. Develop this awareness.

Many people in the pretext of devotion neglect the upkeep of body. It is not correct. When the body becomes weak, the mind also becomes weak. Keep

body, mind, intellect and mind-stuff in good condition to attain success in spiritual discipline (sadhana).

Here is a small example. In the bedroom, you have a bed, a pillow, a ceiling fan, and an airconditioner. What is the use of all these if you are unable to sleep?

What is the use of having the mind, intellect and mind-stuff if you are not able to attain peace? Why has God given them to you? God has given them to you to attain peace. When you realise that you are the Atma , you will know who you are. People think that the mind and intellect are the controlling factors; but the heart is the real controller. When one looks outward, one has no peace; outside there are only pieces. Physically and materially, humanity has made a lot of progress, but morally and spiritually, humanity is on the downward path. What is the reason? Selfishness is the root cause of all this. There is selfishness in everything we talk about and in everything we do. People today have become slaves of selfishness. Leave selfishness and connect with God.

Perception (salokya), proximity (sameepya), identity (sarupya), and merger (sayujya) are the four stages of spiritual discipline (sadhana). Equality, love, unity, and brotherhood are essential to attain these. With the attitude of seeing differences everywhere, how can one acquire this spirit of unity? You attain bliss by realising the oneness of the Atmic principle.

People are the repository of all powers

The same five basic elements are present in all bodies. There is no sixth element. From qualified non-dualism, we must advance to non-dualism. This is a beneficial perspective. Names and forms may be different but the five elements are the same in everybody. There is no difference whatsoever.

Whomever you salute, it reaches God (Sarva jiva namaskaram Kesavam pratigachchhati), and whomever you criticise, it reaches God (Sarva jiva tiraskaram Kesavam pratigachchhati). According to Vedanta , every action

has its fruit or consequence (karma or phala). There can be no action without a good or bad result. It may come immediately or after many days, many months or, even many births. For example, if you slice a fruit and cut your finger, bleeding starts instantly. So, you get the result immediately. When you sow a seed, it takes four or five days to sprout, five or six years to grow into a tree, three more years to bear fruit, and a few more days for the fruit to ripen. You eat in the morning, but it takes a few hours to digest. Every action has a consequence though we do not know when and where it will happen. Consequence of action is inevitable. What type of action should we do? We should do actions with divine feelings. Then we will attain divine bliss. Mundane actions performed with worldly feelings will yield mundane results, which are impermanent. Adi Sankara said that man should not forget God and should discard temporal things. Temporal things give only temporary satisfaction, but divine feelings, thoughts, and deeds lead to eternal bliss. A young man may exult at his own beauty and muscle power, but how long will they last? Lightning gives a flash of brilliant light, but immediately darkness follows. Adi Sankara therefore cautioned: 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 . Everything has reaction, reflection, and resound. If you say Om standing in front of a hall, you get the resound at once. The air compressed in a harmonium produces various sounds sa , re , ga , ma , pa , da , ni . But their root is one sound, that is Omkar (the form of AUM , or Om). Every sound originated from Omkar .

There is divine principle in one and all. In the Bhagavad Gita , Lord Krishna says, "Know Me as the seed of all living beings (Beejam mam sarva bhutanam viddhi)." If you plant a mango seed, you will get a mango tree. Every tree has many branches, each branch has many fruits, and the same type of seeds exist in all fruits. Where did the seeds come from? The eternal Atma in all beings is a part of My Being (Mamaivamsho jivaloke jivabhuta Sanathana). God is the one seed, universe is the tree, nations are the branches and sub-branches. All beings are the fruits; in every being, God is present as the Atma in the form of seed.

There is only one Atmic principle, and it is present in every being. Without

knowing this, we resort to hating others. When this truth of oneness is recognised, we will not entertain perverted feelings of hating others.

There are many powers within us, such as magnetic power, electric power, fire power, and laser power. The body is like a generator, the eyes are the bulbs, the ears are the loud speakers, the heart is the main switch, and the mind is the wire. When you put off the main switch, everything goes off. So, always keep the main switch on. Similarly, consider God as the life-breath, who is the indweller. There is no need to search for truth, righteousness, and peace (sathya , dharma , and santhi) anywhere.

You see so many light bulbs glowing here. What makes the bulbs glow? Is it the electric current or the wire? When you enquire, you come to know that all are important. Consider truth as the electric current, peace as the bulb, righteousness as the wire, and love as the light that emanates. If you want to have the light of love, you should have the bulb of peace, the wire of righteousness, and the current of truth. Then all become one. One Atma dwells in all beings (Ekatma sarva Bhutantaratma). Vedanta teaches many easy paths for salvation, yet people do not have interest in Vedanta because they don't understand it. If you develop interest in it, you will make spiritual progress. If you have interest, a spark can be developed into a fire. But on the contrary, if you have no interest, the spark will be put off in the first instance only.

Embodiments of divine love!

Develop sincere interest. Whatever you do in any field - moral, spiritual, or worldly - perform it with interest. Only then can you get the reward. Without interest, you cannot achieve anything. In matters relating to God, there should be greater interest.

Recognise the intimate relation between the body and God. The body is a limb of society. Society is a limb of nature, and nature is a limb of God. Who is the source? God is the source. God is the basis of the principle of unity. All organs should work in unity.

Suppose the eye sees a fruit on a tree and the mind desires to have it. The fruit won't fall by itself. The legs must walk toward it and the hand and fingers must pluck it. Even then, your wish is not fulfilled. You must put it into your mouth, eat it, and taste it. Then the stomach should digest it and send the essence to all the limbs of the body. You get the correct result only when all the organs do their duty sincerely. Each organ has its specific duty. All limbs are important. Even if one limb is weak, we become unhappy. When God has given such a comfortable and ideal life, we should use this life to attain fulfillment.

All work is God's work

True devotees show gratitude to God, saying, Oh Lord!

I offer to You the heart You have given me. What else is there with me to offer at Your Lotus Feet in worship?

Please accept this with my humble salutations. (Telugu poem) This is true surrender, sacrifice, devotion, and fulfillment. There is nothing higher and more valuable than this. Diamond and gold ornaments are considered valuable. But who has given value to them? It is humanity alone. People are much more valuable than all the wealth in the world. In a scenario where your value is decreasing, how should you redeem your value? Decrease desires in order to increase your value. God and world can be compared to the two ends of the seesaw. If you move toward God, the world is distanced. If you move toward the world, God is distanced. Use your power of discrimination and move toward God in order to realise your full power and value.

The Bhagavad Gita , the Ramayana , the Mahabharata , the Bible , the Quran are only guideposts; they show the divine goal. Making use of them, but you have to walk the path yourself. There is no use if you keep on chanting "Kodaikanal, Kodaikanal". You have to travel to reach there. It is no use saying, potato-chapathi, potato-chapathi ten times unless you take it in your hand and eat it. Do contemplation and practice to derive bliss. It is not mere talking that is important, action is important. Today, people only teach, they

don't put what they teach into practice. We read the Ramayana. But how many people follow the command of their father? Very few. Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita , "Those who think of Me under all circumstances will surely attain Me." But you think of God only when you are in trouble. This is part-time devotion. With part-time devotion, you will get only part-time fulfillment. You must think of God at all times and in all situations. Everywhere, at all times, under all circumstances contemplate on God (Sarvada sarva kaleshu sarvatra Hari chintanam). Consider your house work as God's work, your business as God's work. All work is God's work. It is a very easy path. God is not asking you to do any penance.

People today are living in darkness, making their lives miserable. Engage yourself in sacred actions to make human life fulfilling. Devotion is not just singing devotional songs (bajans). Bhajans are necessary, but only up to a certain stage. You should merge in love with God. I and you should become one. There is no second entity at all. God is one without a second (Ekameva adviteeyam Brahma).

There are many pots filled with water. There is only one moon, but it is reflected in all of them. Bodies are like vessels, the mind is like water. There is the reflection of Atmic principle in it. There is one sun, which causes activity in the entire world. There is no separate sun for America or for India. Similarly, there is one Atma , which is present in all. Understand this secret. Understand this divine principle properly. Bhagavan concluded His discourse with the bhajan , "Bhavabhaya Harana Vandita Charanaâ€i".)

37. Unity of Thought, Word, and Deed is True Humanness

Date: 29 April 1997 / Location: Kodaikanal

Editor's note: This discourse does not appear in the Sathya Sai Speaks series. It appeared in Sanathana Sarathi , February 2016.

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.

It is devotion that leads one to the knowledge of eternal truth and confers liberation, which is the ultimate goal of life.

(Sanskrit verse)

Embodiments of Divine Love!

Devotion is the royal road to reach the supreme state of spirituality. Devotion is also the way to get rid of worldly difficulties and sorrows and attain happiness. Removal of sorrows, achieving fullness in happiness and bliss, is liberation, which can be attained through devotion.

The path of devotion

The country of Bharat (India) has been imparting peace and security to the world since ancient times. The traditional prayer in Bharat is that everyone in the world should attain happiness and bliss. May all the beings of all the worlds be happy (Samasta lokah sukhino bhavantu)! In this land of spiritual eminence, we now find restlessness, injustice and untruth, which are increasing day by day. What is the reason? Lack of devotion and surrender to God are the main reasons for this. People are struggling all the time only to obtain worldly comforts and pleasures, which are temporary and transient. People do not try to achieve mental peace and Atmic bliss, which are eternal.

The price of bliss is love for God

One has to pay a price to acquire anything in this world. If you want to buy a handkerchief from a shop, you have to pay ten rupees for it. You can't take the handkerchief home without paying the prescribed price.

When you have to pay a price even for an impermanent and transient object, you have naturally to pay the appropriate price for obtaining permanent bliss. What is its price? Its price is pure love, which is sacred, ever new, and divine. This is not worldly love. It always unites, it has no ups and downs; it never waxes and wanes. This love always gives and never takes. Everybody should understand the difference between worldly love and divine love. Worldly loves only takes, never gives; divine love only gives, never takes.

The heart of a devotee

Here is a small example. Once Lord Vishnu asked Narada, which among the five elements was the greatest. Narada replied, "Earth is the greatest." Vishnu remarked, "Three-fourth of the earth is enveloped with water. In such a case, which among the two is greater?" Narada agreed that water was greater. Vishnu said, "But Sage Agastya drank up the ocean in a single gulp. So, is Agastya greater than water?" Narada replied, "You are right, my Lord, Agastya is greater than water." Vishnu asked again, "But, this Agastya is a tiny star in the sky (akasa). Now, is this star greater, or the sky?" Narada replied, "The sky is greater." The Lord agreed and said, "Your understanding is correct. The sky indeed is greater. In His incarnation as Vamana, the Lord asked for three steps from King Bali. In the course of taking the gift of three steps, Vamana assumed the form of Trivikrama and covered the entire earth in one step and the sky in the second step. There was no room for the third step. King Bali had to offer his head for the third step. So, now, is God greater or the sky?" Narada replied, "Swami, when the mere foot of the Lord covers the entire sky, how much greater His full form would be! God indeed is greater." "God, who envelops the entire cosmos, dwells in the heart of His devotee (bhaktha). So, now, is the devotee greater or God?" asked Vishnu. Narada replied, "Indeed, the devotee is greater than God."

Sankara's three sins

What is sin and what is merit? Once, Adi Sankara went to Varanasi in the course of his tour of the country with his disciples. Standing before the altar of Lord Vishwanath, he said, "I have committed three sins. Oh Lord, tell me the way to atone these sins.

"Oh Lord Vishwanath! My first sin is that in spite of my knowing and also teaching others that God is beyond mind and speech, I have tried to describe you through several hymns that I composed. This betrays lack of conformity between my thoughts and words.

"Next, having been convinced of the scriptural sayings that God pervades and permeates everything in the manifested universe, I have been preaching this truth to one and all. Nevertheless, I have come to Varanasi to have your darshan . This shows that my thoughts, words, and deeds are at variance with one another. This is my second sin. "Thirdly, I have firm belief in the teachings of the scriptures that one and the same Atma is immanent in all beings and there is no difference between the individual soul (jivatma) and the universal Self (Paramatma). While I have been proclaiming this truth in all my discourses, I have now come here to stand before you as if we two are separate and different from each other. This is my third sin.

"Hence, I pray that I may be absolved of all these three sins, of which I am guilty." Thinking one thing, saying something else and doing what is totally different is not correct. 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). Unity of thought, word, and deed is the underlying principle of true devotion and surrender. If you have staunch faith and love for God and if you dive deep into the depths of pure love, you will realise the nature of Divinity. To facilitate this, God comes on earth in human form, walks among humans, and interacts with them. God is in the form of a human being. (Daivam manusha rupena). Yet, it isn't

possible for all to recognise Him.

Unity in diversity

People attain different types of education in this world. There are any number of educated persons who see diversity in unity. But those who see unity in diversity are very few. We read scriptures and chant Vedic mantras without understanding their real significance and inner meaning. We constantly repeat mantras like a tape recorder but do not recognise the meaning implied in them.

Worldly education is for life here and spiritual education is for life hereafter. We think that worldly happiness is all that we need. No doubt, worldly education is necessary to live in this world. But we need spiritual education to realise the Atmic principle. A person's life is made up of both of these.

On the one hand, you have tendencies like desire, anger, greed, delusion, pride and jealousy (kama , krodha , lobha , moha , mada , and matsarya). On the other, you have virtues like truth, righteousness, peace, love, and nonviolence (sathya , dharma , santhi , prema , and ahimsa). Life is like a football field, where the ball gets kicked in both directions. We should kick the ball into the goal post. Where should the ball go to attain victory? The ball should go between two poles, the worldly education and the spiritual education. That is victory. If the ball goes outside these two poles, it is not a goal. People should have the right perspective of both the path of action (karma marga) and the path of righteousness (dharma marga). People say that God is a composite form of Sakthi and Siva (Ardhanareeswara). He has both male and female characteristics. In fact, every human being has these characteristics. A person is the combination of matter and energy. What is matter and what is energy? Human body is matter and the Atma inherent in it is energy. Body is the female principle (Prakriti) and Atma is the male principle (Siva). A person is a combination of both. The world itself is a combination of matter and energy. God permeates the entire nature.

God does not exist in a foreign land, He is in you.

Sin is not elsewhere. It is wherever a wrong action is committed.

(Telugu poem) The same principle exists everywhere. Truth is one, but the wise refer to it by various names (Ekam sath viprah bahudha vadanti). Truth is one, God is one. You can call Him by any name you like - Rama, Krishna, Jesus, Nanak, Allah. The names and forms may be different, but Divinity is the same.

One person may like jilebi , another gulab jamun , a third badam kheer . Names and forms of sweets are different, but the sugar in all of them is the same. Nobody should think that God is different. You are God. God is in you, around you. Contemplate on God, who is within you with pure devotion. You have forgotten yourself. Your true spiritual endeavour is to look within your own heart. Then you will see your image in the mirror of your heart.

Follow the path of wisdom and devotion

Try to recognise the difference between wisdom and ignorance (jnana and ajnana). Suppose there are mirrors everywhere in a room, on all four sides. A man enters that room and finds that whichever mirror he looks into, he sees his own image. He feels satisfied that he is everything. This is wisdom (jnana). When a dog enters that room, it sees many dogs there. Thinking that those other dogs want to attack it, it attacks them. As a result, several of the mirrors break into pieces. Actually the dog fights with itself. When it sees a way to go out, it feels relieved and goes away. This sort of state is lack of wisdom (ajnana). Ajnana is the cause of one's bondage. One thinks that one is different from the Atma . Though a person is the Atma , one is deluded to think that one is the body. People are bound by the chains of bondage. There are two ways to escape from these chains. Either grow big, break the chains, and get free or escape by becoming very small. To say, " I am Siva, I am Siva (Sivoham , Sivoham)" and grow very big and break the chains is the path of wisdom (jnana). To say, "I am God's servant (dasoham , dasoham), you become very small. To become very small and escape is the path of devotion (bhakthi) (devotion).

So, there are two paths to freedom, the paths of wisdom and devotion. The path of wisdom is difficult, whereas the path of devotion is easy. Devotion is total love. Have firm faith in your heart and fill your life with love. There is no path better than this.

Difficulties are not permanent

Embodiments of divine love!

Human life we see is full of hardships, difficulties, and all types of sorrows. Without trials and tribulations, one cannot attain an exalted state in life. Both individuals and nations are beset with many problems. Understand that pleasure is an interval between two pains. Difficulties, in fact, are the steps that take us to a higher plane. It is only after we face difficulties that we get the result. Even a realised person attains that state only after undergoing a lot of difficulties. What is the use of a diamond that is not cut? However pure gold may be, it has to be put into fire and beaten with a hammer to make jewels. Bear all difficulties with a view that these are steps to take you to a higher plane. Only then will you experience peace and happiness. If you keep on worrying about your difficulties, the difficulties will increase. When difficulties arise, do not treat them as problems.

The Pandavas lived incognito for one year after 12 years of exile in the forest. Krishna felt sympathy with them and always asked about their welfare. It is not that He didn't know how they were leading their life; He knew everything. All this was done to elevate them to a higher spiritual level. Once, Dharmaraja went for a walk with Krishna after telling his brothers to stay back. It was the custom in those days that the younger brothers obeyed their elder brother. During the walk, Dharmaraja said to Krishna, "Krishna, we are men, and we can put up with all difficulties. But Draupadi is suffering too much; she does not see the sunlight even. I cannot bear it. Kindly give her Your advice." Krishna said, "There is no need for that." Taking a leaf from a tree, Krishna wrote something on it, folded it, and gave it to Dharmaraja, saying, "When you face insurmountable difficulties, see what is written on this." What was written on it? Once when the Pandavas faced a grave problem, Dharmaraja

opened the leaf and read: "These difficulties aren't permanent."

Develop friendship with God

Spiritual practices like chanting, meditation, sever austerities, and devotional singing, are all subsidiary practices. The basic spiritual practice is love. Love should be the undercurrent of all these. Any one practice is enough if you have love. There are nine paths of devotion: listening, singing, contemplating on Vishnu, serving His Lotus Feet, salutation, worship, servitude, friendship, and self-surrender (sravanam , kirtanam , Vishnusmaranam , Padasevanam , vandanam , archanam , dasyam , sneham , and atmanivedanam). Friendship comes before self-surrender. So, develop friendship with God. When you are a friend of God, you are one with Him. Then, it becomes easier to reach the next stage of self-surrender. Try hard to have friendship with God. He is the only real friend. The world is the book, time is the teacher and God is the true friend. Your worldly friends will stay with you as long as you have power and position. Nobody will talk to you when you lose these. As long as you have money in your pocket, they will say, "Let's go to the hotel, let's see a movie." They will go away as soon as your pocket becomes empty. This is the nature of friendship.

Make God your best friend; do not waver. Only God is your eternal friend. He will never leave you; He will never let you down. You should merge with Him.

All are incarnations of God with different names and forms. Lord Krishna said, "All are sparks of God." Not only humans, even insects and other organisms are sparks of God.

Some people do not believe in God. They are called atheists. They say, "There is no God." But first they say "There is", and then say, "no God". When they say "There is", it connotes the existence of God.

Atheists say, "God is nowhere." If you attach w to no, it becomes "God is now here." This is a simple modification. Both the theists and atheists are the creations of God. So, both are close to God.

Everyone should love God. God is Love, Love is God. Live in Love. Whatever you do without love is useless. Contemplate on God with love. Realise that God is in you and you are God. (At the end of the divine discourse, Swami sang the song, "Prema Mudita Manase Kahoâ€i".)

38. Chant the Name of God and Experience Divinity

Date: 30 April 1997 / Location: Kodaikanal

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.

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)

Scientific advancements in ancient India

One need not resort to penance in order to realise God. One need not undertake pilgrimages either for liberation. How then can one cross the ocean of mundane worldly life? By serving pious people, it is said.

Who has to serve? All have to serve. Everyone is a servant in this world. The child is the servant of the mother; the mother is the servant of the child. The husband is the servant of his wife; the wife is his servant. The teacher is the servant of the students; the students are servants of the teacher. The government is the servant of its people; the people are servants of the government. Right from a king to a farmer, all are servants only. Looking at one's wealth, one may consider oneself a master. But there is one and only one master. That is God. All others are servants only.

Service: the royal road to fulfillment in life

Once an old friend of a king came to meet him. The king was glad to see his old friend and chatted with him affectionately. This man was very old and carried a stick with him for support. The king asked his friend as to how he was leading his life. His friend replied that in old age one needed some

support, and the stick was his support. The old man asked the king whether he was serving his people well, to which the king reacted that he was a king and could never be a servant.

The old man wished to teach the king a practical lesson. So, he dropped his stick to salute the king. Since he could not bend down to pick up the stick, the king at once bowed down, picked up the stick, and gave it to his friend. Then the old man said, "You say you are not a servant, but right now you served me. So, you are my servant." All have to serve one another at some point of time. To say that one is not a servant is ignorance. The spirit of service is present in everybody, but it varies from person to person depending on the state of their mind.

Rain water gets absorbed in sand, but it becomes sweet when it falls on clay.

However, when a rain drop falls in an oyster, it becomes a pearl and shines brilliantly. Similarly, service shines in a person depending on their deservedness.

(Telugu Poem) There is no specific time for doing service. One may need to perform service anywhere, at any time, to anybody. The attitude of service cannot be acquired through the study of scriptures. Service is the royal road to fulfillment in life. Once, an angel was studying a book of the Bible called Revelation . St. John went to the angel and asked him, "Oh angel, what are you studying?" The angel replied, "I am studying the book of Revelation . You too should read this book. But it is not enough to merely read this book. You must eat, chew, and digest it." Then the angel disappeared. St. John did not understand the meaning of those words. He wondered how he was going to eat, chew, and digest those pages of the book. He thought it over again and again. What is meant by eating the book? To understand the contents completely from beginning to end is eating, to contemplate is chewing, and to practise is digesting. It is only practice that gives you satisfaction and strength.

Today, people study scriptures, but not even one sentence of the book enters

their heart. Isn't it a waste of time?

St. John digested the contents of the book and started contemplating on its teachings. He spent his life in the service of God. In the Indian (Bharathiya) culture, it is said: The knower of Brahman becomes verily Brahman (Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavati). If we contemplate on God we become God. In the course of time, St. John's face started the radiating divine effulgence of an angel.

In Indian culture, there is the story of Valmiki, who used to rob and harm people. When he met seven great sages, he began to chant Rama's name constantly on their advice. He was so intent on this spiritual discipline that anthills formed on his body. Even then he did not stop chanting Rama's name. Ultimately, the radiance of Rama began to appear on his face, and he merged in Rama. The effulgence of Hari radiated on the face of Prahlada, because he was all the time chanting the sacred name of Hari.

You will become one with the divine form on which you contemplate, and the radiance will be reflected on your face. This is the truth. Such a person will always be in bliss, and their face will radiate happiness. Due to the constant chanting of God's name and due to His proximity, you will gain the wealth of Divinity.

When black charcoal comes in contact with fire, it also becomes red like fire. Satsang means proximity with God. You can find fulfillment in life by developing proximity with God and through performing service. Service to God means service to the world. Wherever it is required, do service to others. But do all actions to please God. This is the primary duty of humanity.

What does nature teach us? Nature works relentlessly. It doesn't rest even for a moment. The earth rotates on its axis at the speed of 1,000 miles per hour. We must think of its implication. Due to this rotation, we get days and nights. People in the world labour all day and get rest at night. Similarly, all beings on earth find rest at night due to this rotation. Even animals, birds, worms, and insects rest at night. The earth revolves round the sun at a speed of 66,000

miles per hour. As a result of this, we have seasons. Due to the seasons, we have rain; because of rain, we have crops; because of crops, we have food. The earth does relentless work to provide us food. The earth is always engaged in action.

People, who are born out of earth, should emulate it and do service. Otherwise, how can they be called children of mother earth? A person, being a child of the earth, must prove themselves worthy by engaging in selfless service.

Ships are guided by a lighthouse. Every divine thought is like a lighthouse to human. Krishna always used to address Arjuna as Partha. Even though Arjuna had several names, Krishna always chose to call him as Partha. Our original name is Partha, because we are born of earth. Partha also means one who has a pure heart. Arjuna had a pure heart. That is why he was called Partha.

A mother's heart is very pure. People may create pollution, but the earth remains ever pure. In case earth takes a rest, all life will come to a standstill. The scriptures say: Of all living beings, human birth is the rarest (Jantunam nara janma durlabham). People are not different from other animals with regard to sleep, food, and procreation. How then are they better than animals? A person has the power to discriminate between what is permanent and what is impermanent. This is also known as Constant Integrated Awareness. In the absence of this faculty, one is an animal indeed. Only humans have this power. But people today have forgotten his power. This power is God's gift to humanity. What you receive from God, you should offer it back to Him. You may be engaged in service to fellow people, but you should offer all your powers to God.

Attain God's grace by total surrender

Lakshmana always followed Rama. He had a wife, mother, kingdom, and also many responsibilities. But he could not live without Rama. So he sacrificed everything, saying, "Rama, You are everything to me. You are my only refuge. I can't live without You. Wife and children are temporary, like passing clouds

that come and go. You were there before my birth, and You will be there even after my death".

Truth remains unchanged in the three periods of time: past, present, and future (Trikalabadhyam Sathyam). Truth is God. One day in the forest, Rama pretended to be tired. Sitting on a stone, He said, "Lakshmana, please build a hut." Lakshmana asked, "Where shall I build the hut, Lord?" Rama replied, "Wherever you like." Lakshmana was in tears and started lamenting, "What sin have I committed?" Sita was surprised and asked, "What did Rama say to disturb you and bring on these tears?" Lakshmana said, "Do I have any liking of my own? I have surrendered totally to Rama. If Rama says I have my own likes and dislikes, then it means my surrender to Him is not total. This is what has caused pain to me." Rama was testing Lakshmana to demonstrate to the world the purity of his heart. Depending on the purity of heart, divine feelings originate in a person. This sacred history of Bharat (India) demonstrates ideal lives.

Even Arjuna had ego, and he spoke to Krishna harshly before the battle. He said to Krishna, Will the narrow-minded Kauravas give up all 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 good counsel to the wicked people is like throwing jasmine flowers into fire. Let us stop all this talk of peace. (Telugu poem) But on the battlefield, the same Arjuna complained, "How can I kill my own kith and kin? Take me back home, I cannot fight this battle." It was at this point of time that Krishna imparted the teachings of the Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna. From the first to the last verse of the first chapter of the Bhagavad Gita , Arjuna kept complaining and lamenting, and Krishna did not utter a single word.

When Arjuna stopped, Krishna asked, "Has your entire stock exhausted? Now I will tell you what you have to do; listen." After listening to the words of Krishna, Arjuna said, "I shall do whatever You command me to do (Karishye vachanam tava)." First, Arjuna considered himself a great hero unrivalled in

archery. But ultimately he became a servant. Only then did Krishna take complete responsibility for guiding and protecting him. When a crocodile caught hold of Gajendra (the elephant king), at first, Gajendra fought with the crocodile for a long time, depending all the time on his own strength. Later, he took the support of a tree, but even that was of no use. In water, the crocodile's power went on increasing, and the elephant became helpless. He then realised that only God could save him. He prayed: Oh Lord, I am exhausted.

My strength is failing me.

I know not any refuge other than You. Oh Lord! Please come and protect me. (Telugu poem) Only then did God take notice of his prayer. As long as you depend upon your strength, education, and wealth, God remains only as a witness. But when you offer everything to God and surrender to Him, He will take care of you. You need not do any service to God other than reposing total faith and trust in Him.

You may do a great deal of spiritual discipline (sadhana), but God does not want sadhana . What is sadhana ? Sa + dhana is Sadhana . Sa means Sarvesha (God) and dhana means wealth. So, sadhana means wealth of God. Divine power is real power. You must aspire to attain that power. When you have divine power, your face will shine with radiance. You may possess a lot of wealth and power, but in the absence of divine feelings in your heart, you will have a castor oil face. When you keep on thinking of God, His radiance will reflect on your face.

When you know God, you become God

Prahlada was a small boy. He was subjected to great ordeals. He was made to drink deadly poison and sit on a pit of fire; he was thrown before wild elephants and poisonous serpents. In spite of all this, he still continued to chant, "Om Namo Narayanaya ." When the minions of the king hurled their javelins at him, Prahlada would not wince or utter a cry, but only prayed to Vishnu calling Him, "Oh Pannagasayi ! (Oh Lord, resting on the serpent

couch!).

Oh Danujabhanjana (slayer of demons)". Never did he shed a tear of sorrow, nor was he fear-stricken.

(Telugu poem) What is the meaning of this? The serpent, the elephant, the fire and the poison - everything became Narayana (God). Prahlada also became God. One who knows God becomes God. We get the form of whatever we contemplate on. A mud pot is nothing but mud. Vessels made of gold are basically gold only, and nothing else. We have emerged from God. Therefore, all of us are God only. Due to our body consciousness, we get into all kinds of troubles.

What is this body?

It is a perishable leather bag with nine holes but not like a resplendent diamond. No fragrance but only foul smell emanates from it every moment.

It is made up of flesh, blood, bones, and fecal matter. Should we develop attachment with this body? (Telugu poem) Our attachment should be with the eternal and essential God in it. One day or other, the body has to collapse; it will be burnt and reduced to ashes. Do your duty while you are alive. Never give up your duty. Whatever you may do, think of God all the time. You cannot achieve anything unless God wills it.

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) When people achieve success, they attribute it to their capability; if they meet with failure, they attribute it to God's will. You can know the truth only when you recognise that everything happens by the will of God, and whatever happens is good for you.

Today, spiritual aspirants and devotees don't have this kind of faith. It is because of their part-time devotion. You should become full-time devotees. From dawn to dusk, do your duty with a firm conviction that all duties belong to God. Do your duty with love. Only then will you attain perfection. God does not want you to give up anything. When you can sing, think that it is God's grace. God loves music. Therefore, singing devotional songs is also a service to society. If you are doing some work, consider it as worship.

A true devotee never blames God

Sometimes, even staunch devotees lose patience. Some devotees blame God for not showering His grace on them despite their intense devotion. Thyagaraja was a great singer, who chanted Rama's name incessantly. Once, when he encountered formidable difficulties, he became disgusted and started criticising Rama, "Rama, I think of You every moment; then why are You giving me all these troubles? It is not right for You to do this. Either I do not have perfect devotion or You do not have the power to help me." The next moment, Thyagaraja realised his mistake and began singing a song extolling the greatness of Rama's power: 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 Bharatha 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, "Rama! In fact, I am a foolish person. You have immense, immeasurable, infinite, immortal power. I could not recognise Your power." In this world, there are three types of people who blame God. The first type are those who lack faith in God. The second type are those who blame Him when their desires are not fulfilled. The third type blame God for their insurmountable

difficulties. Sometimes, devotees criticise God due to unbearable pressure of troubles, but there is no hatred in their criticism. Real devotees will never blame God.

In whatever activity you are involved in society, do it with a spirit of service. There is no one in the world who is not a servant. You become God only when you serve others. Leaders of today lack this sense of service.

All the people in the world are bound by action. People in the world are bound by action (Karmanubandheeni manushya loke). The purpose of our birth as a human being is to help others.

Embodiments of divine love!

Remember that you are the children of the earth. Be like Partha and obey the command of God. Krishna said to Arjuna: Get up, Dhananjaya.

Destiny is all-powerful; justice always wins; selfishness will end in ruin.

This is the nature of yuga dharma . Know the truth (of what is to come). Dhritarashtra may be the father of a hundred sons, but there will not be even one to perform the last rites for him.

That is how fate works.

(Telugu poem) Arjuna then said with resolve, "Lord, I shall obey Thy command." The command of God is always beneficial for us. Obey the command of God and participate in social service, social welfare, contemplation on God, meditation, and worship. If people do such activities, the nation will prosper. Social service is service to God. Serve others and worship God. Worship and service should go hand in hand.

Today, all five elements are polluted. Air, water, earth are all polluted. There are horrendous sounds all over, and everything is polluted. Constant contemplation on God alone will eliminate this pollution.

Embodiments of love!

Chant the Name of God and experience Divinity. (Bhagavan concluded His divine discourse with the bhajan , "Bhava Bhaya Harana, Vandita Charana....")