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1. Transform yourselves and transform the world

Date: 01 January 1998 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: New Year

The Cosmos is controlled by God;
God is subject to Truth
That Truth is subject to the authority of Sacred and noble beings.

Men today must become embodiments of Truth. They must have mastery over Truth.

"The entire creation emerged from Truth (Sathya). Everything merges in Truth. What is there in the cosmos without its basis in Truth? This is the pure Truth of Being (Suddha Satwa) oh man."

Every man has his origin in Truth. He is sustained by Truth. And he merges in Truth. He is the embodiment of Truth. When every individual recognizes this truth, the whole world will be permeated by Truth. What man should seek today is not pleasure. Nor is his goal sorrow. Man should bring under his control the source of pleasure and pain. More than pleasure, it is pain that awakens the wisdom in man. If you study the lives of great men, you find that it is out of trouble and pain that they derived wisdom. Without sorrow there can be no wisdom. It is pain that teaches many wise lessons to man.

Not realizing this profound truth, man pursues pleasure endlessly. No doubt man needs to be happy. But how is happiness to be achieved? It is only when sorrow is overcome that man realizes happiness. Hence everyone should welcome sorrow in the same spirit in which he greets happiness.

Pain and pleasure are intermingled.
No one can separate them.
Pleasure is never alone by itself.
When pain is relieved, pleasure is experienced.

Wherefrom does pleasure come? When pain is got rid of, pleasure is secured.

Treat pleasure and pain alike as divine gifts

In our country today the young boys and girls are the inheritors of the prosperity or poverty of the nation. The future progress of the nation depends on them. Hence, these boys and girls are the true wealth of the nation.

It has to be realized that man is the architect of his own pleasure and pain. Hence he should face with equanimity whatever happens to him - good or evil.

God is described as Siddhiswaroopa (the embodiment of wish fulfillment). He is also described as Amogha (One without a limit or measure). This means that the power of the Divine is infinite. He is also known as Aprameya (the immeasurable). Hence, everyone should treat whatever happens to him as a gift from God. Pleasure and pain should be treated alike as Divine gifts. There is a unique joy in this process.

In daily life we tend to treat defeat, loss or grief as calamities. But, nothing occurs in the world without a cause. Hunger is the cause for eating. Thirst is the cause for drinking. Difficulties are the cause of sorrow. If man is to enjoy enduring happiness, he must discover the source of such happiness. That source is love (prema). There is nothing greater than love in this world. Everything has a price. The price to be paid for enduring happiness is Divine Love. Without Love, no object can give you real happiness.

Hence, the primary wealth for man is Love. Everyone should seek to acquire this wealth. With this wealth anyone can enjoy enduring bliss.

Pain divinizes the pleasure that follows it

We witness in the world all kinds of pains and sorrows. But none of these is permanent. Every term of pain is followed by pleasure. The experience of pleasure is refined and enhanced by the earlier experience of pain. Like the refinement of gold by melting in a crucible, pain divinises the pleasure that follows it.

The New Year or a new month does not bring with it any new joy or sorrow. As Sandipan Chatterjee (who had spoken earlier) said every moment is new. Every second is new, because it heralds the march of time. A year is in fact a succession of seconds turning into minutes, days and months.

It is only when every moment is cherished as new, will the new year become new. The sacred way in which every moment is spent will determine the fruitfulness of the year.

If you wish to lead a sacred life and have sacred experiences, you must engage yourself in sacred actions. The good and evil in the world can be changed only by the change in men's actions. Transformation of society must start with transformation of individuals.

This morning the students recited a Vedic prayer about students living together in amity and acting in unison. But they did not mention the crucial passage in the prayer which declares: Let us live in harmony free from conflict" The Vedic hymn stresses that unity can come only when people live together without discord. Hence everyone should give no room for conflict or unrest but lead a life of harmony and love with others.

Love is the dispeller of the darkness of ignorance

God is ever love incarnate. His love permeates the world. The universe is

termed Visvam because of the Lord's presence in the entire cosmos. One of the names of the Lord is Vishnu. Etymologically the word refers to one who is present throughout the universe. God is the cause and the cosmos is the effect. The Lord is also known as Atma, which means light or effulgence. The Lord is the dispeller of the darkness of ignorance.

Every word used in the ancient scriptures has profound inner meaning. This profundity is characteristic of the Bharathiya spiritual heritage. Very few are interested in exploring these profundities. Most people confine themselves to ritualistic worship for a brief time every day. They do not even attempt to know what for they are performing these rituals. There is no meaning in performing these rituals without understanding the purpose and goal of life. The ultimate purpose of all spiritual exercises is to realize the Love Principle (Love of the Divine). To foster love is the purpose of all spiritual endeavor. In no circumstance should love be given up or ignored. Where there is love, there can be no hatred, grief or want.

Time is passing. You are all growing in years. But there is little change in your attitudes. Purity in thought results in purity in knowledge and wisdom. Self-Realization can come only through spiritual wisdom (Jnana).

Many in the world acquire wealth, fame and position. But what have they achieved in terms of the goal of life? Their failure is due to lack of understanding of the unity that underlies the apparent diversity. It is a mark of spiritual goodness to recognize the divine in everyone. Prahlada declared that you can find God wherever you seek Him. His father, Hiranyakasipu, was a great person because of his attainments. But he failed to achieve goodness because of his denial of the Divine. A similar difference can be seen between Rama's goodness and Ravana's greatness.

The lesson for students today is that they should follow the sacred path of righteousness. They should work for the welfare of society. Students should cultivate three qualities. They should cherish love for all living beings; they should cultivate all good qualities; they should acquire all useful knowledge. Love is the basis for these three qualities.

Fill your hearts with Love

Embodiments of Love! See that your love for God does not fluctuate according to whether your wishes are fulfilled or not. Remember that you reap the fruits of your actions, according to whether they are good or bad. Love of God alone can confer enduring bliss. Eschew bad qualities like hatred and envy.

Today marks the beginning of the year 1998. At least from today fill your hearts with Love. Look upon all as God's children. Sri Krishna has declared that all human beings are sparks of Himself. This means that everyone should lead a godly life. Everyone should express his love to some persons everyday. Thereby the whole world will be filled with love.

Ponder for a moment on the phenomenon you are witnessing here today, with thousands gathered from all parts of the world. What is the reason? You are seeking to find something here that is lacking in your native land. What is that? It is Divine Love. You are missing it in your place. You have not found it in yourself. Hence you have come here, like a sick man going to a hospital. Now that you have come here, take back with you Divine Love. Fill your hearts with that Love. Carry it with you wherever you go like a sick man who carries his medicines with him. Let Divine Love guide you like the mariner's compass points ever toward the Divine. Dedicate all your thoughts and actions to the Divine. Thereby you will be divinising your entire life. It is by leading such a godly life that our ancients left a glorious heritage. Boys and girls today should fill their minds and hearts with such sacred ideals and transform the entire society into a loving community.

Role of sports in influencing young people

You are aware that on December 30 players from many countries came to Prasanthi Nilayam to take part in a cricket match. All of them had taken a resolve to play the game in a sporting spirit, with a pure mind and with due regard to the rules of the game. They played the game in this sublime spirit.

Not only did they enjoy the game, but they filled the large mass of spectators with joy. Our young students showed great interest in the match.

Among the spectators were large numbers of people from neighboring villages and towns. Sports and games have a welldefined role in influencing young people. Life is a Game, Play it! Life is a Dream, Realize it! Life is Love, Enjoy it! Life is a Challenge, Meet it! People must be ready to face all the ordeals in life. The capacity to face the challenges of life is given to man alone.

Every act in daily life can be sanctified by dedicating it to God. By dedicating all thoughts to God man can achieve peace. There is no need to wait for a suitable time for embarking on this exercise. The time is at your beck and call. Great people do not wait on Time. They make time their servant.

Endowed with a sacred body man is misusing it. Human life is like a bamboo that has many knots in the form of desires for wealth, wife and children. These knots have to be removed. From the new year, you have to understand the true meaning of humanness and transform your life. You will then be true servants of the nation. Play your part in every field of public life, keeping your heart pure and unsullied.

Sanctify all actions by dedicating them to God

Students! Remember that you are in a 'golden age' in your lives. Do not waste it. Do your duty. Love and revere your parents. Serve society. Adhere to the good qualities associated with right education. Be happy and make others happy.

From this new year onwards, when students cultivate humility, reverence for elders and love toward all, I shall feel very happy.

At a meeting of the Central Trust yesterday, I told the members including Sri Indulal Shah, that I had no interest in property. Do not involve me in any connection with these properties. I do not wish to have any connection with

money or property. My only concern is with my devotees. Telling them all this, I signed the papers.

You are my property. When I have this boundless property, why should I have any interest in material assets? Students are my property. Nothing can give me greater pleasure than what I get from seeing the students lead ideal lives. That is the return I expect from you. No fee of any kind is received from you for your education. But I want you to pay one special fee that is love. When you offer that fee, you will be offering everything, as it were.

Lakshmana surrendered to Rama totally, declaring that he was offering his family and everything he possessed to Rama. Everyone should follow Lakshmana's example. He revered his elder brother's wife as his mother.

The eyes should see only what is good

The eyes should see only what is good. The hands should be engaged in good actions. The ears should hear no evil and listen only to what is good. Talk no evil. Talk only what is good. Think no evil. Think what is good. Do no evil. Do what is good. This is the way to God.

The eyes should see only sacred objects. The whole world will be transformed when your vision becomes holy.

This is New Year Day according to the Gregorian calendar. We have other New Year days according to the practice in different parts of the country. There is no need to bother about the year as such. Devote every moment to actions that will please God. Develop love for God, which will confer every blessing on you. This is exemplified by the life of Harishchandra. He sacrificed everything in the cause of truth. And ultimately he got back everything by the grace of God.

On this New Year Day I wish you all every happiness and prosperity. The ancients used to bless those who come to them with long life of 100 years and good health. They wished the people long life so that they may lead

worthy lives. Lead a long life, happy life, peaceful life, loving life and divine life. Redeem your lives by practicing Divine Love.

2. Promotion of unity: Students' duty

Date: 14 January 1998 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Sankranthi, Sports Meet

Before desiring anything, a person must make themselves worthy. Charity (or generosity) qualifies someone for a good name. Adherence to Truth qualifies them to attain Heaven. Character makes them fit to enjoy happiness.

To do anything in the world, one must have competence (yogyatha). For the practice of righteousness (dharma), one must have competence. According to his fitness, man embarks on righteous action. To achieve fame man must qualify himself to deserve it. It is by generosity (danam) that one achieves a good name. Heaven is realised by Truth alone. Character is the root cause of all happiness for man. Hence, to get happiness, or go to Heaven or earn a good name, one must acquire the requisite worthiness.

The significance of Sankranthi

This festive day has been celebrated from ancient times as a day of fulfillment and joy. Every festival is a social occasion, arising in society, flourishing in society, and promoting the well being of society. Every festival has been designed to promote the welfare of society. With social changes, festivals also have undergone changes.

Today's festival is an extremely important one for Bharatiyas (Indians). It is a festival to celebrate the glory of the Sun God. The Sun moves every month from one sign of Zodiac to the next.

Sankranthi, meaning "sacred change", occurs every month as the Sun moves from one house of the Zodiac to another. But special sacredness attaches to the movement of the Sun to Capricorn (Makara-Sankranthi).

The Sun appears cool
The day is shortened
And is made pleasant by chill wind
On fields lit by moonlight
The crows caw over the grain heaps
While farmers sing in joy
Over the golden harvest
The flowers express their joy
By putting forth their petals
While in every home, filled with grain,
The people welcome the advent of Sankranthi

On Sankranthi day, the farmers rejoice over the fullness with the newly harvested crop of the granaries in their homes. When the Sun enters the sign of Capricorn, it begins its northward motion. The sun shines in every human body, illuminating the six chakras (spiritual centres in the body). Of these chakras, two are most important: the hridaya (heart) chakra and the sahasrara chakra.

The hridaya chakra has eight petals. God is the Lord of the eight-petaled hridaya chakra. These eight petals are regarded as eight consorts of the Lord. In this context, the Lord is adored in the form of the Sun. The world cannot survive without the Sun. The solar system is derived from the Sun. Hence, the Sun is worshipped as divine.

Sahasrara Chakra represents sixteen thousand gopikas

The ancient sages adored the eight-petaled divine centre in the heart and thereby reached the sahasrara chakra and enjoyed supreme bliss.

The sahasrara chakra has a thousand petals. Each petal carries sixteen

phases (kalas). Thus the sahasrara chakra is said to represent 16,000 cowherd maidens (gopikas), while the eight petals of the hridaya chakra are adored as the eight consorts of Krishna.

The syllable go in the word gopikas (cowherd maidens) has four meanings: The Veda, the cow, the earth, and the faculty of speech (vak). The gopikas derive their different attributes from these different meanings. They chant the Vedas, protect the cows, nourish the earth, and proclaim the glories of the Divine by their speech.

In making an offering to Krishna, the mantra that is used is Kleem Krishnaya Govindaya Gopijanavallabhaya Swaha. It is interesting to explore the full significance of this mantra. Kleem means the earth. It is the first element. Krishnaya signifies water. Govindaya signifies fire (agni). Gopijanavallabhaya signifies air (vayu). Swaha signifies space (akasa). Thus, the mantra represents all five elements in the cosmos as manifestations of the Divine.

The cosmos cannot exist without these five elements. They are all-pervading. It follows that there is no place in the cosmos where God is not immanent. The cowherd maidens, through this mantra, taught the world that God should be adored as the omnipresent Divine everywhere in the cosmos. Hence, in every atom, all the time, in every particle, the Divine is present.

The spiritual goal of the ancient sages

The ancient sages reached the thousand petaled Sahasrara through the adoration of the Lord in the eight-petaled lotus of the heart. They used all their God-given intelligence for this spiritual goal. But modern man uses his intelligence only for worldly ends. The sages considered cultivation of virtues, good qualities, and righteous conduct as true education.

What do the eight petals of the heart represent? They are: love (prema), truth (sathyam), forbearance (sahanam), sacrifice (thyaga), compassion (daya), beauty (sundaram), bliss (ananda) and peace (santhi). To realize the bliss of the Divine, all the other qualities have to be fostered. God is the embodiment

of all these eight attributes. Sacrifice is the most important of them.

The chakora bird is an example for man in the pursuit of purity. It will not drink any water except what rains from a cloud in the sky. It sees in a dark rain-bearing cloud the divine form of the Lord. Man should seek to see and experience the Divine in every object and every being. Students should experience the Divine in all their studies and sports. It has been said: Life is a game, Play it!

Life must be permeated with love. Through love, truth can be realized and a righteous life can be lived. The ancients attached the highest value to good character. They considered that if character was lost, all was lost. Today, people consider that if wealth is lost all is lost. They attach no value to character.

Men should strive to lead virtuous lives. The cowherd maids (gopikas) provide the supreme example of how to lead a life dedicated to the Divine. The episode of Uddhava's mission to the cowherd maids and their reaction to it as described in the Bhagavatam shows what true and one-pointed devotion to Krishna meant for the cowherd maids. They had totally surrendered their minds and hearts to Krishna.

The sacredness of Uttarayana

This day marks the entry of the Sun into the sign of Capricorn in his northward journey (Uttarayana). Bhishmacharya, lying on a bed of arrows after he fell wounded, waited for the commencement of Uttarayana to give up his spirit to the Lord. He lay on the bed of arrows for 56 days. This signifies the sacredness of this day. This is the moment to fill one's heart with divine feelings.

There is no need to seek God in a temple, mosque, or church. He is enshrined in every human heart. Unfortunately people go on expensive pilgrimages to all sorts of places, forgetting that God is the dweller in their hearts.

Why should Indian students go abroad for studies or jobs? It is better to earn ten rupees within India than ten thousand rupees abroad. This craze for going abroad is utterly meaningless. It is better to lead a good life within India than to pursue the mirage of careers abroad.

In this context, it is good to remember the teachings of the sage Narada on devotion. Narada is misrepresented as one who reveled in promoting discord. This is totally wrong. He expounded the highest truths about devotion (bhakti) and taught how man should realize oneness with God through intense devotion.

Integral relationship between society and nature

What people need today is yearning for unity in diversity. Human beings are like limbs of the body of society. They are integral parts of society. Society is a part of nature, and nature is a limb of God. Hence, the integral and organic relationship between the individual and God through society and nature should be properly understood.

The body is important in the spiritual process. The Gita has declared that the body (kshetra) and the indwelling knower (kshetrajna) are one. Hence, men should engage themselves in sacred actions that will promote the welfare of society and uphold its reputation.

To transform society, the first requisite is individual transformation. Purify your heart. Then society will also become pure. You should adhere to truth, like Harishchandra did, prepared to face any ordeal. Never go back on your plighted word.

Students! You have participated in many games. Prizes are awarded to winners in sports. But do not aspire for prizes given by others. Seek the reward of self-satisfaction. You must have the feeling, "I did my duty". Duty is God; work is worship.

Today, the wardens approached me and said that Swami should distribute

prizes to the winners in the sports events. At the outset, I did not agree to distribute. A prize is called bahumathi. The meaning of bahumathi is "multi-minded". When a single mind can play so many monkey tricks, what is the result of bestowing many minds? There is a saying that a bachelor is equal to a hundred monkeys. I do not like to confer prizes that unsettle the minds of the students.

What is the prize that should be awarded to the students? You are good! You are good! That is the award that you should earn from Swami. Many prize-winning students look forward to getting prostration at Swami's feet (padanamaskar) when they receive prizes from Swami. Yesterday, I allowed all students to offer padanamaskar because they were willing to forgo receiving the prizes. It is their spirit of sacrifice that has enabled them to get this benediction from Bhagavan.

From self-confidence to self-realization

A spiritual edifice is built on the foundation of self-confidence. The walls are made up of self-satisfaction. Self-sacrifice is the roof. Self-Realization is fulfillment in life.

Students! Fill your minds and hearts with these sacred spiritual truths and go out into the world to spread the spiritual message in every street and every alley.

The world today is in utter confusion. Unrest and fear stalk the world. To eliminate this disorder and fear, you have to instill devotion among the people.

Today, the world lacks righteousness and spirituality. People are immersed in materialism and worldliness. They are after power and pelf. This is utterly wrong. Money comes and goes. Morality comes and grows. You may carry on your vocational duties. But along with it, render social service. See the divine in the people whom you serve.

Even an agnostic occasionally invokes the name of God. For instance, on one occasion, Jawaharlal Nehru was visiting the Meenakshi Temple in Madurai. During the worship of the Goddess, Nehru noticed a large emerald adorning the idol. He asked about the value of the emerald. He was interested in the value of the gem. But the devotees in the sanctum were meditating on the divine form of the Goddess. They were concerned about Divinity. Nehru looked at the idol from a worldly point of view. When he was informed that the ornament was worth several lakhs, spontaneously he exclaimed: "My God!" What made him think of God? Because God is in everyone. When expressing surprise at something one exclaims: "Oh! My God!" In this manner, people give expression to the Divinity within them unconsciously.

A lesson to the Pandavas

Doubts about God may sometimes arise even among staunch believers. This may be illustrated from an incident in the Mahabharata. Once, while the Pandavas were in exile in the forest, Krishna visited them. Krishna was told that the five brothers took turns during the night to keep a vigil over the activities of evil spirits and demons. One night, an evil spirit appeared before the Pandava brothers, and they had great difficulty in fighting it. In view of this, Dharmaja, the eldest of the Pandavas, tried to dissuade Krishna from participating in sentry duty. Krishna, however, insisted on taking his share.

During that period no evil spirit appeared. Then came Arjuna's turn, and Krishna watched the scene from a distance. To Arjuna's surprise, no evil spirit appeared while Krishna was there. Krishna then explained to Arjuna that evil spirits were only a reflection of one's hatred and fear, and when one is free from these, no evil spirit would appear or do any harm. Krishna revealed that the Divine existed even in so-called evil spirits and that if a person gets rid of the evil qualities within him, the evil spirits can do no harm. One's anger assumes the form of a demon. If you develop love, everything you confront will have the form of love. This was the lesson Krishna taught the Pandavas.

Students should eschew bad qualities like anger, hatred, and envy. By manifesting love, they will enjoy bliss.

"Follow your dharma"

The essential message of the Gita is: Follow your dharma. Do your duty without expectation of its fruits. If you are a householder, perform your duties as a householder. Whatever your stage in life, act according to the duties appropriate to that stage. If everyone does his duty, there is nothing greater in life.

But there is one duty that is common to all stages: the duty dictated by the heart (hridaya-dharma). Fill your hearts with love. Through this you can accomplish anything. Start the day with Love, Fill the day with Love, End the day with Love - this is the way to God.

I am presenting a silver cup to each campus of the Institute. Accept it as my love offering to every student individually. Everyone should develop a sense of oneness with all. The world today suffers from divisiveness. Students should go out into the world and promote the sense of human unity. That will be the offering you can make to Me.

You are all my property. And I am yours. Let us share each other's love. That is the true path of devotion. Ritualistic worship is not the true mark of devotion. The essence of devotion is the feeling of identification with God.

During the recent Unity Cup Cricket Match, a cricketer of repute observed, "I don't do any work on my own. Whatever I do, I regard as Swami's work. Because I did Swami's work, my work was taken care of by Swami. I did not attend to my work. After coming here, I received a telegram to the effect: "Your task has been accomplished successfully." He then announced that, "while I attended to Swami's work, Swami carried out my work." Likewise, if you do Swami's work, your work will be taken care of by Me. Dedicate every action to the Divine. The response will be equally divine. This has been described as "divine vibration". That vibration will sustain and support your life.

Take up social service in the villages after you go back to your homes. That is the way to make use of your studies and put Swami's teachings into practice. Instill in the villages devotion to God. Practise what you preach. This is true service.

A mirror, though clean, may not reflect your image if there is no mercury coating behind it. So also the heart may be pure, but there should be a coating of love behind it to facilitate reflection of God.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

3. Buddha's gospel of good life

Date: 05 February 1998 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Chinese New Year

Embodiments of Divine Love!

Man today is acquiring various types of knowledge. Among these he is learning how to live and act like lions and other animals.

What is the meaning of knowledge (jnana)? It is not mere acquaintance with numerous books. Even the acquisition of information about all the objects in the animate and inanimate is not knowledge. True knowledge is awareness of the relationship between the individual and collective (samashti) and their oneness.

Men today do not recognize the nature their humanness. How can they recognize their inherent divinity?

It is only when man is aware of his humanness that he will be competent to recognize his divinity. How then, is man to reach humanness? What is the means? Buddha undertook various inquiries to discover the Divine and came to the conclusion that it is only through mastery over his senses he can achieve this. Man has to make the right use of his senses for sacred purposes to realize his divinity.

Samyag darsanam

Hence, Buddha declared that the first requisite is samyagdarsanam (Having the right vision). The implication of this statement is that, having been bestowed with the great gift of eyes, man should use them for seeing sacred objects and holy beings. But, on the contrary, by using his eyes to look at unsacred objects and evil persons, man fills himself with bad thoughts and becomes a prey to evil tendencies. What one sees influences the feelings in the heart. The state of the heart determines the nature of one's thoughts. The thoughts influence one's life.

Hence to lead a good life the first requisite is a pure vision. Man has to cultivate sacred outlook. As a result of looking at cruel, ugly, and wicked scenes man leads an animal existence. The very first inquiry one should make is to ascertain what is pure, edifying, and godly that he should see. Whatever he sees leaves its imprint on man. Few realize the effects of this.

Human life today is racked by anxiety, misery, unrest and troubles of various kinds. The root cause of all this is that man is witnessing what is repulsive, wicked and demeaning. For transforming one's life, the first requisite is a proper vision. The eye (netra) is comparable to a spiritual text (sastra) and one's vision (drishti) determines one's views of the cosmos (srishti). Hence to acquire the highest knowledge one has to purify the vision. This means one should avoid seeing what is obnoxious. One should strive to see only that which is sacred and pure. What man sees is like seeds sown in the heart. Evil scenes give rise to evil thoughts. Good scenes evoke good thoughts. When sacred scenes are implanted in the heart there will be no room for bad feelings or thoughts to grow in the heart.

This was the first lesson Buddha taught. Buddha wandered all over the country in search of spiritual peace and liberation. After many years of inquiry he came to the conclusion that the secret of spiritual wisdom was not to be got from scholars or by study. He realized that spiritual understanding could only come from mastery of the senses.

Samyag vachanam

From developing sacred vision, man should proceed to samyag vachanam (sacred speech). Buddha declared that only sacred thoughts could lead to sacred speech. Buddha declared that the tongue should not be used recklessly to utter whatever one thinks. The tongue has been given to speak the truth, to expatiate on what is sacred and pure. The tongue has not been given to man to pamper the palate with delicious sweets. It is not given for talking as one likes. It is not to be used for causing displeasure to others. Nor is it to be used for indulging in falsehood. The tongue has been given to man to speak the truth, to be sweet to others, to praise the Divine and enjoy the

bliss derived from such sacred speech.

There are people who devote their entire time to reading all kinds of books, without trying to put into practice what they learn from such reading. What is the use of such reading? Buddha spoke out against scholarship unrelated to the good life. He carried out a great deal of study and met many great men. He listened to many discourses. He realized that true knowledge could not be got by these means. He realized that a pure, unsullied consciousness confers the highest knowledge. True knowledge is derived from a pure inner consciousness (antahkarana). This year (1998) is dedicated to Peace. How is this Peace to be achieved? The first requisite is purification of one's vision. The second requisite is the cultivation of sacred feelings within, which will be conducive to purity in speech. Harmony will promote a climate of peace. The well being of society is bound up with the transformation of the individuals composing it. Righteous individuals alone can build a righteous community. A pure mind is essential for pure thoughts, pure vision and pure speech.

The country today has plenty of persons who talk a great deal and display book knowledge, but do not practice even a fraction of what they have read or speak about. It is such people who are responsible for the lamentable plight of the nation.

Samyag karma and samyag sadhana

Buddha emphasized goodness in action (samyag-karma). The mark of good action is harmony in thought, word, and deed. When there is no such harmony, the action belies what is said or thought.

Buddha went on to declare that good action is conducive to good spiritual progress (samyag-sadhana). Good deeds constitute genuine spirituality. Mere formal worship or ritualistic practices do not constitute spiritual striving. These religious practices are good in a way. But they do not constitute spiritual sadhana. True spirituality consists in the unity of thought, word and deed in all their purity and sacredness.

Buddha declared that when spiritual striving of this nature has been completed, there is samyag-jivanam (leading a pure life).

This is how the five organs of perception (panchendriyas) should be used to achieve the supreme goal of life. Good vision, good thoughts, good speech, good deeds and good spiritual endeavor are the prerequisites for a good life (samyagjivanam).

In this context, the meaning of spiritual striving should be properly understood. Essentially spiritual striving calls for the shedding of all bad qualities and the cultivation of good thoughts. Spiritual sadhana means cultivating good thoughts and undertaking good deeds.

The true meaning of dharma

To achieve happiness, man embarks on acquiring various kinds of knowledge and pursues various occupations. He seeks happiness through marriage and having children and building a mansion for his residence. But is he happy thereby? No.

In his last moments, Buddha summoned his stepbrother Ananda to impart to him his final message. Ananda was the son of Gautami (Buddha's stepmother). Placing his palm on the head of his younger brother, Buddha said: "My dear child! I came to the world to teach (the Truth). If anyone asks, 'Where is God?' the answer is: 'He is everywhere'. Truth is God. Speak the Truth. Do not harm anyone. Recognize that the highest dharma is nonviolence ahimsa)." What is dharma? Is it celibacy or the duties of a householder or a renunciant (sanyasi)? These are transient obligations, which have to be observed as incidental duties in the journey of life. The Supreme duty is refraining from causing harm to anyone. This truth is proclaimed in the scriptures in the exhortation: "Speak the truth. Speak what is pleasing (Sathyam bruyath; priyam bruyath.)" Thus, pleasing speech is declared as a supreme duty.

Buddha told Ananda that this truth was learnt by him from his own

experience. He said, "When I left the palace, my father (the King) was told that I was doing a great wrong in renouncing the family. My parents, kinsmen and others tried to put pressure on me to return to the ties of family life. These wrong efforts on their side made me more determined to pursue the spiritual path. In the quest for spiritual peace several ordeals have to be overcome. Today I have found the Truth about life. What is it? The sanctification of the five senses is the way to Truth. If the senses are polluted, of what avail are spiritual exercises? When the water in a tank is polluted, all taps will only give polluted water. Your heart is the tank. Your vision and thoughts are impure. Your speech is foul. When the heart is polluted in this manner, the senses are bound to be sullied."

Speak sweetly and never use harsh words

When the heart is filled with good thoughts and feelings, all that comes out of the senses your speech, your vision, your actions will all be pure. That was why Jayadeva exhorted the God-given tongue to use its sweetness to proclaim the glory of God by chanting the Lord's sweet names: Govinda, Damodara and Madhava. One should always speak sweetly and never use harsh words.

People today are immersed in worldly pursuits to secure transient pleasures but few are interested in spiritual pursuits, which will give them everlasting bliss. When people experience spiritual bliss (Atma-ananda) all other forms of happiness will automatically come. People immersed in mundane pursuits have no time for spiritual matters. The Gita exhorts mankind to turn away from the ephemeral attractions of the miseryladen world and to seek the Divine.

You must realize the greatness and preciousness of human life. You witnessed the lion-dance earlier. The external trappings were those of lions but the persons who performed the dance were young men. It is not the external form that matters but the human element behind it. Flaunting the human form without displaying human qualities is meaningless. You must cultivate human values such as good vision, sweet speech, good thoughts and good

actions, which constitute the good life. Only then you will be a total human being.

Good life leads to nirvana

After getting enlightenment under the Bodhi tree in Gaya, Buddha embarked upon his mission of preaching. Once two of his disciples were accompanying him. Buddha noticed that they were looking at some women who were bringing water from a river. Buddha chided them for their misconduct and expelled them from the Sangha. He said that while walking on the road the eyes should be concentrated on the road in front and should not go astray. I condemned the habit of young men to look at cinema posters on roadside walls while going on bicycles. Such actions are often the cause of serious accidents.

Buddha declared that the good life leads to liberation (nirvana). This is the sacred consummation for a good life. In this state, a man is free from desires and actions prompted by them.

Having taken human birth, all human beings should foster human values. In the Sathya Sai Organization, we have given the highest place to human values. It is only when human values are fostered that divine values can emerge.

Before his passing, Buddha taught his stepbrother, Ananda, the transience of worldly pleasures and the meaninglessness of a purely mundane existence.

When Ananda started weeping, noticing the imminent passing of Buddha, the Enlightened One asked him: "Why are you weeping?" Ananda said, "I am weeping because your passing is imminent." Buddha told him that he should not worry about what happens to the body that is perishable and full of infirmities. He exhorted Ananda not to bother about the body or the mind, but lead a life based on the dictates of the conscience. Giving this advice, Buddha breathed his last.

Bharat has been the birthplace of sacred beings

Many high-souled spiritual leaders like Buddha have shown mankind the path they should follow for reaching the highest goal of life. Bharat has been the unique birthplace of many such saints and sages. Bharat has been the land of men and women known for their purity and holiness. It is the birthplace of sacred beings like Harishchandra and others who adhered to the path of truth at any cost. These truths are valid even now.

Today, you celebrate the New Lunar Year. The year is described as Samvatsara in Sanskrit. This term is also one of the names of God. Hence the advent of the New Year should be hailed as the advent of the Divine.

Without recognizing this divine significance of the New Year, there is no purpose in celebrating it with lavish decorations and sumptuous feasts. It is not the feast that is important. It is the ideal that is to be pursued which is important. Today what is important is the quest for peace within, which can be got only by internal purity.

Human actions have been divided into five categories of which those prompted by the heart are the highest and others done with egoistic motives are inferior. Whatever is done should be done wholeheartedly so that it gets sanctified.

Maintain silence and speak as little as possible. Since January 1, I have been restricting My speech to a minimum, confining My words to what was necessary. Swami went on to say: I am restricting my talking with others even in the interview room. What is the reason? I want to set an example to others by practicing what I preach. My life is my message. I must show the way. Many do not understand my actions. But, when they do not understand, they should remain silent. But, instead they misinterpret my actions. That is a great sin.

From today, you must resolve to use your eyes properly, to see only the good. Why use binoculars to see distant objects? If your vision is impaired, do not

lament over it. Consider even blindness as a blessing. If your hearing gets worse, do not moan over it. How much of the noise of the world is worth hearing at all? What use is there in listening to the cacophony of mutual abuse? Welcome the fact that you are saved from listening to such gossip.

Whatever your disabilities, look upon them as gifts from God. All things will turn out to be for your own good.

Peace is to be found only in Prasanthi Nilayam

Devotees have gathered here from Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Taiwan and Japan. You may have come with many problems and worries. Leave them here and return to your places with your hearts filled with bliss. Leave all your bad thoughts and feelings and fill yourselves with the peace and joy of Prasanthi Nilayam. Coming here with restless minds, do not go back in the same state. Prasanthi (Supreme Peace) is very valuable for man. Today peace is not to be found anywhere in the world. You find only pieces (divisions) everywhere. Peace is to be found only here. Carry it with you. This is a place hallowed by the vibrations of numerous good devotees. Many noble souls have spent their lives here. Fill your hearts with their noble thoughts. Do not bother about what others may say. Develop self-confidence and proceed toward self-realization through self-sacrifice. Ignore incidental troubles, which are passing clouds. Think only about God. There is nothing more vital than that. Try to acquire Divine Love. Love is God. Live in Love. The best way to love God is to love all, serve all. All are embodiments of God. Foster love. Adhere to Truth. Follow Righteousness. Achieve Peace. This is the special benediction of Swami on this day on all. Wherever you may go, speak softly and sweetly. Thereby you will earn the esteem of society. This is the most valuable reward you have to secure this New Year.

The Gift Swami Wants

You have presented many things as 'gifts' to Bhagavan. This 'Tiger Map' is one of them. That is not the gift I want. Hand over to me your 'tigerly' qualities. That is the gift I would like. The tiger is a cruel animal. Rid yourself

of all cruel feelings and offer them to me. Lead the life of a useful, harmless, sacred cow. It gives nourishing milk in return for cheap grass.

Embodiments of Love! You have come here from long distances, undergoing many discomforts. Return with joy in your hearts and share your joy with the people in your places in an unselfish spirit. A life of selfless love will lead you to liberation.

Listening to your bhajans today gave immense joy to one and all. Community singing sets up vibrations that will cleanse the atmosphere.

4. From negative to positive

Date: 15 February 1998 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Students Hostel

Students, Teachers and Doctors!

The whole world is a stage and every individual is an actor. How should the actors conduct themselves? The primary goal of every actor should be to carry out their duty in the part assigned to them. He should set aside his individuality. How?

During the recent festival, the students enacted a play. One student played the role of a municipal chairman. In that role he had to behave as a municipal chairman and not exhibit his individual talents. These should be given a back seat. He should act his part well. However, who is the director of the cosmic drama? It is the Divine. Every human being is a manifestation of the Divine Will. He has taken birth as a human being to fulfill his duty. He has to manifest his humanness. Every individual has to play his role well and acquit himself worthily.

Marakam and Tharakam

In the drama of life, there is a mixture of good and bad. Humanness is present in this mixture. Of the two -the good and bad- one is known as marakam and the other is known as tharakam. Marakam implies that one acts on the basis that nothing belongs to him and that, whatever words he utters or whatever action he does, all belong to God and nothing is his own. He plays his role in this spirit, ascribing nothing to himself. Tharakam represents the attitude of the actor, who is conscious of the role he is playing and does not forget his individuality in his actions. He does not consider himself as merely acting a part but regards himself as the doer. The difference between the two is that while the former realizes the temporary nature of the part he is playing and is not attached to the things connected with the role, the other (tharakam) develops attachment to the role he plays and does not wish to part with things connected with the role. In the concept of marakam there is

no sense of possessiveness. But in tharakam, one is attached to what he considers as his.

Modern man suffers from the sense of possession. This is a negative attitude. He is obsessed with the idea of "my" and "mine". He attaches excessive importance to the body, forgetting the most precious Atmic principle that is within it which will give him enduring bliss. The reason for this attachment is the failure to use the senses properly and to become a slave of the desires prompted by the senses.

The eyes, the ears and other sense organs should be used only to perceive sacred things. They should not be used indiscriminately to enjoy whatever pleases them. This is the reason why Swami advises people not to see evil, speak evil, or hear what is evil, but to see what is good, hear what is sacred, and speak what is good. These may seem simple maxims, but they are full of profound significance. In this context, people should constantly discriminate between "negative" and "positive" actions. All bad and unwholesome actions are "negative" in character. They should be eschewed altogether.

Human birth is a God-given gift

Students should realize that what matters when they sing bhajans is not the tune or the conduct of the songs but the genuineness of the feeling with which they sing the bhajans. When their hearts are pure and full of deep devotion, the bhajans will be full of feeling and will appeal to the hearts of the listeners. What ensues from the heart is "positive", while what comes from the mind is often negative".

Human birth is a God-given gift which should be used with due care. It should be filled with righteous acts. Unfortunately, today men misuse all their God-given talents for unholy purposes. The mind should be filled with good thoughts, the heart should be filled with compassion, and the hands should be engaged in selfless service.

Man will be caught up in "negative" behavior as long as he identifies himself

with the body. The moment he considers himself the master of the senses, his actions will be "positive". Mastery of the senses leads to "liberation". Liberation is not something to be achieved in after-life. The striving for liberation must start early in life and proceed continuously. Another term for liberation is "emancipation". That is true freedom -freedom from bondage to the senses. This means that you must carry on all duties without attachment to the fruits thereof. Today, all actions are performed with attachment to the results. For instance, students pursue study of the bioscience with a view to become doctors. There is per se nothing wrong in this. But when they become doctors they should be primarily concerned about the welfare of their patients and not in their earnings.

Even in rendering social service, there is often an element of self-interest that vitiates the quality of your service. Instead of being a "positive" act of selfless love, the service becomes a "negative" act carrying the taint of self-interest. No permanent joy can be derived from such "negative" activities.

Students must begin sanctifying their actions from their days at school. They must cultivate good company as part of their education. This is the way to get near to God. The final stage is Sayujyam (becoming one with God).

Life is filled with bondages of various kinds -from hunger and poverty to ignorance and disease. To strive for freedom from these bondages is spiritual sadhana. It means giving up those actions that bind you.

The story of the king and the shepherd

It is not always easy to get the answers to spiritual questions. There is a story to illustrate this. Once there was a king in Kapila, who was putting questions to various scholars in his kingdom. He was not satisfied with their answers and so turned them away from his court. A shepherd who heard about this came to the king and said he was prepared to answer any questions put by the king. The king was surprised at his claim and said that if he failed to give a satisfactory answer he would be beheaded. The shepherd agreed to the condition. Then, he told the king that they should exchange places in keeping

with the new situation, in which the king would be the learner and the shepherd would be the teacher. The king transferred his robe to the shepherd and sat at his feet, while the shepherd put on the king's robe and sat on the throne. He then asked the king to put his questions. The king's first question was, "What does God do in this world?" The shepherd answered, "He makes a millionaire a pauper and a pauper a millionaire. Till now I was a poor man. Now I have been made a king with a seat on the throne. From being a king, you are now wearing a shepherd's clothing. This is what God has done." The king was fairly satisfied with the answer. His second question was: "Whom does God favor? Who is the recipient of His grace?" The shepherd pointed to a light and said, "The light from the lamp sends its rays in all directions. Likewise, God, who is embodiment of all effulgence, sees in all direction, and showers His grace on all. He does not see in one direction alone." The king was pleased with the answer.

While the shepherd was wondering what the king's third question would be, the king addressed him as "Swami!" and said: "Where is God?" The shepherd brought a cup of milk and asked the king, "Can you say in what part of the milk there is butter? In every molecule of the milk there is butter. Likewise, God is all-pervading. What is it that you have to do to see the butter in the milk? You have to make curd out of it, churn it and then the butter will rise to the top. Likewise, God, who is everywhere, has to be enshrined in the heart, turned into curd by good deeds and churned by sadhana. Then there will be direct experience of the Divine." The king was totally satisfied with the answers of the shepherd. He gave away half of his kingdom to the shepherd and declared that wisdom was to be found more among the common folk than among scholars. There is nothing great in mere scholarship as such. To give intelligent answers to questions out of wisdom gained from daily life is what matters.

Today, very few people understand the difference between the "positive" and "negative" aspects of life. Whatever attracts the mind is "negative". Desireless actions are "positive". The discharge of duties in a spirit of detachment is the basic obligation of everyone from a student to a scholar. Thereby you can manifest the divinity within you. But, if you cannot recognize

your humanness, how can you recognize your divinity? The first requisite is purity of heart and a mind free from all desires.

You may or may not believe it. Here is My body. It has a mind, intellect etc. exactly like that of any of you. But I am aware of the workings of the monkey mind. I have no desires in My mind. I do not let myself be caught by the wiles of the mind. It is natural for the mind to behave in that way. I do not get trapped by it. I am not attached to the body or the mind. I follow the conscience.

Here is the body of Mine. You may touch any part of it. You will receive positive vibrations from it. There is no trace of the negative vibrations anywhere in my body. No negative thoughts enter in my mind. Sometimes I may appear to speak harshly. But it is not for my sake, but for correcting others. Although seventy-two years have gone by, yet I entertain no desires. I have had no desires at any time.

The way my life is spent from moment to moment is remarkable. Every one of my actions is "positive" and not "negative". My whole body is "negative". But all my thoughts and actions are "positive". There is no disharmony between my thoughts and actions. In fact, this has been the case from the age of nine.

How Swami taught a lesson to the village officer

In this village (of Puttaparthi) there was a karnam (village officer) named Subbarao. He was the richest man in the village. He owned most of the lands here. All the villagers used to be afraid of him. Swami was a short lad at that time. The karnam was given to bad ways. Swami called all his young friends together, taught them various songs, and asked them to go round the village singing the songs. The boys told Baba, "Swami! The karnam may beat us up". Swami assured them, "He has no authority to touch any of you. No one can object to your singing the songs". Swami taught them how to sing the songs tunefully. The boys did not know the meaning of the song.

On the first day, when the boys sang the songs in front of the karnam's

house, the karnam went inside. On the second day, when the boys repeated their performance, the karnam went inside, brought some mangoes, distributed the fruits among the boys, and asked them not to sing the songs. He asked them: "Who taught you these songs?" They all shouted: "Raju. Raju taught us all the songs." One day the karnam invited Raju (the young Baba) to come to his house for tiffin (snack). Raju told him: "I don't want your tiffin". The karnam was furious that a young fellow should speak like that to him.

In those songs I was teaching what was appropriate to those times. The song condemned those who went after women of ill fame and warned that such persons would be shunned by society and forfeit the respect of everyone. The boys were afraid to sing the song. The strong words used in the song were necessary to teach a lesson to those who misbehaved. To correct people who were leading bad lives, I used to compose poems and write plays even from those early years. I am always in the habit of living up to what I preach. I do not preach what I do not practice. Whatever I do is of a "positive" character. I have no desires of any kind.

Students are My property

I have often declared that "students are my property". A student also said earlier: "Swami! we are your property." This is true. But there are properties of different kinds -those that are valuable and those that are not. As long as students consider themselves as my property, they should lead ideal lives. You should not become useless garbage. You should stand up as high mountains. It is for this purpose that I am training all of you. Many students are not coming up to my expectations. They are not understanding my message. Some day they will understand it. There is no trace of the negative in me. Everything is positive.

Pay heed to my advice. Talk as little as possible. Some students tell me that their parents want them to get married (after finishing their studies). I won't advise you not to get married. If you wish to marry, do so. But, I will not force anyone to marry against his will. Each one should consult his conscience and decide.

Do your duties to your family. Do not let your children do what you consider is wrong. In the Mahabharatha, Dhritarashtra failed to correct his eldest son, Duryodhana, and the result was disastrous for the entire Kaurava clan. Vidura reminded him that if only he had taken firm action to restrain Duryodhana, the family could have been saved.

5. The power of the Lord's name

Date: 25 February 1998 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Shivarathri

Whether He is described as Cosmic Consciousness (Chaithanya), Or the Indwelling Knower (Kshetrajna), Or the Supreme Wisdom (Jnana), Or the Ego, or the Supreme Lord (Easwara), Or Vishnu, or Brahma, Or the Primordial Energy, Or the Bliss Divine (Ananda), Or the Abode of the Divine (Parmapadam), Or as the Atma or as Sath-Chith-Ananda; All are various names and forms of the Supreme Self, which is nameless; The Cosmos is permeated by Hari, Nothing can be found in the Universe Without the Divine in it.

Embodiments of Love!

Every human being seeks to enjoy bliss. He aspires for a blissful life. Whether he is a scholar or an artist, a wielder of power or a man of status, he yearns for bliss. Every man strives from dawn to dusk for acquiring bliss.

Bharatiya culture and tradition have proclaimed the greatness of this bliss (ananda). But man is enveloped in two screens: the phenomenal and the spiritual. His vision is affected by the material outlook and the spiritual outlook. Unable to harmonize the two, man regards them as distinct from each other. The unity of these two represents the true Atmic principle.

Considering the material world of physical objects as the only, reality, man loses himself in the pursuit of material objects. But, if the truth about these material objects is fully explored, it will be found that they have no reality at all. They have only momentary and temporal reality. They do not have the stamp of permanent reality. They do not confer enduring bliss. To realize lasting bliss, man has to make the requisite effort.

The Quest for Bliss

Sath-Chith-Ananda (Being-Awareness-Bliss) pervades the entire universe. Every living being, from the ant onwards, is seeking this bliss, not man alone. For all living creatures, this bliss is the life-breath.

The scriptures have dealt with this problem of bliss in various ways. They have proclaimed Sath-Chith-Ananda as the primary principle.

The existence of the Universe as a fact is affirmed by numerous persons. But a blind man is not aware of its existence. However, hearing what others say about the world, he also believes in its existence. He is not aware of its existence from his own personal experience.

People today speak about Sath-Chith-Ananda as a reality after hearing about the statements in the Vedas, Puranas, and other scriptural texts. Such persons have no personal experience of Sath-Chith-Ananda. Even the scholars who expound this concept are merely relating what they have learnt from books, but have no direct experience of this bliss.

Every man should seek to know what Sath-Chith-Ananda means. Only then he will realize his own true self. Because of the delusion caused by the phenomenal world, man regards Sath-Chith-Ananda as distinct from himself. This feeling arises from his attachment to the body. Everyone should find out "Who am I?" When he has found the answer to this question, there will be no need for him to understand what is Sath-ChithAnanda.

As long as man identifies himself with the body and his physical attributes, he will be in quest of Sath-Chith-Ananda. When a man has discovered the true nature of the "I", he will not go after any other thing. He will realize that he is the embodiment of Sath-Chith-Ananda.

Every individual is an embodiment of Sath-Chith-Ananda. Sath God; Chith the Jiva (individual self). The unity of Sath and Chith is Ananda (Bliss).

Mind is the root of bodily afflictions

The human body is a prey to many ailments. Man regards all of them as bodily ailments. But not all of them are entirely related to the body. Purely bodily ailments can be treated by medicines. But most ailments in the world today have their origin in the mind. The aberrations of the mind set up reactions in the body and cause various diseases. The main cause of many human ailments is rooted in the mind.

The mind and the body are interrelated. The influence of the mind on the body is of a negative character. This negativity is antagonistic to the experience of bliss. Bad thoughts and bad feelings arise in the mind. At the same time, there are also good thoughts and good feelings. It is only when bad thoughts and feelings are weeded out that man can have good health. Many diseases have their origin in the thoughts that fill the mind. Bad thoughts cause indigestion, affect the heart, bring about variations in the blood pressure; worries are the cause of many mental diseases. Diabetes and pulmonary diseases are traceable to mental causes.

Different aspects of liberation

Every man is in search of liberation (mukti). For whom is this liberation sought? Is it for the body? Is it for the mind or the intellect or the senses? When these questions are examined, the answer is that at the outset, liberation has to be secured for the mind, the intellect and the senses. Man has to liberate himself first from the vagaries of the mind. Freedom from illness is one kind of liberation. Man loses peace of mind on account of various troubles. To get rid of this condition and secure peace of mind is another kind of liberation (mukti). Consuming food to get rid of the pangs of hunger is another kind of liberation. To be rid of the trials and tribulations of daily life is another aspect of liberation. All these types of liberation have to be secured while one is still alive. It is wrong to imagine that liberation is a state that is to be attained after death.

The various kinds of liberation to be secured today relate to the physical.

These troubles are bound to exist as long as one is attached to the body. All of them arise from the "negative" thoughts in man.

The liberation men should seek is peace of mind. If peace is got, all else can be got easily. How is peace to be got? By leading a godly life.

All forms of worship are of no avail if one's heart is full of "negative" feelings and one's mind is filled with "negative" thoughts. All actions performed by the different sense organs the eyes, the ears, the tongue etc. get polluted when the mind is filled with "negative" thoughts. The six evil qualities in man -lust, anger, greed, delusion, pride and envy are his wellentrenched enemies. To get rid of these wicked elements and to install good qualities in their place, the only means is the fostering of the love principle (prema-thatwa). When man's heart is filled with love, all that he does will be "positive". All good deeds come out of love. Sath-Chith-Ananda arises from love. Compassion and kindness are born out of love. All the sublime human values have their origin in love. When one is filled with love, he needs no other spiritual or ritualistic practices.

All good deeds come out of love

The Atmic principle is the basis for the body. All activities in life should be linked to the Atmic principle. Man should discard attachment to transient worldly pleasures and pursue what is eternal and everlasting.

When man constantly remembers that he is the embodiment of Sath-Chith-Ananda, in due course he will experience that bliss (Ananda). Man is covered by five sheaths: the Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnanamaya, and Anandamaya Kosas, The first is a gross sheath, and each following sheath is subtler than the preceding one. Man has to proceed from the gross to the subtlest sheath of bliss. The Annamaya sheath is the body. It is perishable, but as long as one lives, the body should be kept in good health. The duties relating to the physical have to be carried out. What keeps the body going are the vibrations from the vital sheath (Pranamaya kosa). These vibrations are controlled by radiation from the mind (Manomaya kosa). Beyond the mind is

the Vijnanamaya kosa, which accounts for "constant integrated awareness" in man. When this state is reached, man can proceed next to Ananda without much effort. Experience of bliss will be automatic.

It should be evident from this that humanness has been conferred on man so that he may ascend towards his divine destiny instead of wallowing in mundane pleasures and miseries. Thereby he will demonstrate his superiority over beasts and birds.

Holiness of Bharathiya festivals

All Bharathiya (Indian) festivals are designed to lead man toward God. They are intended to make people meditate on God. Unfortunately, today, instead of thinking about God, people indulge in feasts on holy days. Festivals should be devoted to contemplating on God and experiencing the Divine.

Today we are celebrating Sivarathri. Sivarathri means "Auspicious darkness". At least on this day one should chant Siva's name all through the night. At least on one day in a year chant the name of the Lord.

Devotees are expected to keep awake this night by chanting the sacred name of Siva. Keeping awake in any other way is purposeless. Spending the night reciting the Lord's name sanctifies one's life. In the Gita, the Sthithaprajna is described as one who keeps awake when others sleep and for whom the daytime when others are awake serves as night. The inner meaning of this is that the Sthithaprajna (the realized person who is in a state of constant integrated awareness) contemplates on God when others are oblivious to God.

The main thing about which all should be concerned today is how to get rid of the negative thoughts in their minds. The six cardinal enemies of man -the six basic vices- have found their abode in the hearts of human beings. There is no room in their hearts for love or kindness. The foremost task is to fill the hearts with love. Then their entire life will be transformed and every act will be suffused with love. This love is "positive" and man should strive to foster

the positive qualities. Being human, men should develop positive qualities like compassion and forbearance.

Today human life is wasted in the pursuit of sensuous desires. All of them are negative in nature. Instead, men should entertain positive desires, which are natural to human beings. Divinise every desire and every action.

Mundane pursuits, which have been with men over many lives, have to give way to divine pursuits at least in this life. Many do not realize the divine potencies that are in them. They have the capacity to do good or bad actions. By doing good acts they will experience bliss. Help ever, hurt never.

Bhagavan's Example for being always in Bliss

Everyone should strive to manifest the bliss that is natural to him by fostering his loving nature. Peace lies in that bliss. All of you should know one thing. Although I am now seventy-two years in the present body, I have never had any negative thoughts. Consequently I have had no ailments of any kind. I am always in a state of bliss. But, sometimes, to correct others I use harsh words. They are not "negative" words. They are filled with love. If you examine my heart, you will find it resemble a ball of iron. But from the worldly point of view, it will be soft as butter. No illness can affect my heart.

I am engaged continuously in work from the moment of waking, to the time of rest at night. I meet devotees, collect letters from them, give them interviews and confer joy in one way or other on one and all. Every official anywhere has a weekly holiday. But I have no holidays at all. I am always active, whether I am here or elsewhere. Can you point out anyone who has been continuously active for seventy-two years? I have not desired a day of rest at any time. I am always restful. How is this possible? Because I have no negative thoughts. I have no attachment to the body. This body exists for your sake. When you are attached to the body you need rest. Whatever I do or say, it is all for your sake, not for my sake.

The Lord seeks devotees' love

People have to lead their lives based on recognition of this truth. There is only one thing I seek from all of you. Fill your hearts with love. Offer that love to me. I don't ask anything from anyone. It is enough if you develop love and share it with others. It is only when you are happy that you can make others happy. What is happiness? It is union with God. By chanting the name of God you will experience happiness.

Good and sacred acts like worship, japa, and meditation are useful for sanctifying time. But they are not ends in themselves. They are tinged with worldliness. But what is needed is "positive" action, dedicated to the Divine. Then you will be free from disease. Only by having pure thoughts you can be hale and hearty.

Have no ill will toward anybody. I have no hatred for anyone. Hence no one hates me. All are love-filled beings for me. I desire that all should be blissful. It is because of this universal feeling in me that all are coming to me. If, on the contrary, I had been self-centered, would people from all parts of the world come here? I am utterly selfless from head to foot. There is no trace of selfishness in me. Any such feeling you may notice in me is only on your account and not for my sake. I have no desires except that everyone in all the worlds should be happy. All should become good. All should be loving and blissful. What more do I need?

Love and faith begets peace and bliss

Man deserves to enjoy peace and bliss, but does not make the necessary effort to get them. If he cultivates love and faith, he will acquire peace and bliss. Without these two, his effort is as fruitless as a letter that has neither a stamp nor the proper address.

With love and faith in Swami, you can accomplish any task you undertake. Observe three maxims: Love of God; Fear of Sin; Morality in Society. To develop love of God you have to see whether every act of yours pleases God or not. When you please God, you will have no fear of sin. When these two are

present, morality in society will follow naturally.

All the ills of the world today are due to absence of fear of sin and decline in love for God. Decline in respect for human values has undermined world peace.

When the Lord's name is chanted from the depths of the heart, it turns into the nectarine music of Krishna's flute, which charmed even the cows of Brindavan. The melody that flows from the devotee's heart confers ineffable bliss.

Love and faith are the cardinal principles for redeeming human life. My life is my message. I have love for all. I have affection even for those who commit wrongs and for those who dislike me. I have no ill will towards anyone because of my love for all. And therefore the whole world loves me. The root cause of my love is my esteem for all (Visvasam). The basis for the esteem is adherence to the path of Truth. Divinity is the basis for adherence to Truth. Thus this Divinity is the primal source of universal love. All should practice universal brotherhood. Out of fraternity will be born Divinity. Then, humanity will manifest its glory. Men will behave like ideal human beings.

The message of Sivarathri

Embodiments of Love!

Try to understand my doctrine of Love. I often address you as "embodiments of the Divine Self". You will be true embodiments of the Divine only when you develop divine love. The only being worthy of love in this world is God. All others are only objects of transient attachment. On this sacred Sivarathri day, develop love for the Divine and redeem your lives. Manifest the Divine within you. Continuously chant the Divine name. Do every act with love. That is the highest spiritual sadhana. The way of love will transform the world. Love is God. Truth is God, Peace is God. This is the message of Sivarathri. Understanding this, dedicate all actions to God and render selfless service to the people to redeem your lives.

6. The message of Sakkubai's devotion

Date: 26 February 1998 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Shivarathri

God created the Cosmos out of Truth; The Cosmos is sustained by Truth; Without the glory of Truth what can flourish? This is the cardinal truth, behold all ye! Truth is valid for all times past, present and future. This truth protects life and sustains it.

The inner significance of Truth (Sathyam) has to be properly understood. Sath+e+yam = Sathyam. Sath means life. E means food (annam). Yam means Surya (the Sun). Food is derived from the Sun. Food sustains life. For the preservation of life, food is essential. "Bhikshannam deharakshanartham The Lord offers the gift of food to protect the body)." When this basic truth is forgotten, food becomes scarce for the people. When food is scarce, life begins to decay. Hence, the entire survival of the world depends on the Sun. The significance of the term Sathya can be sought from another angle. sa, tha, ya are three syllables in it. When the word is read in the reverse order we have ya, tha, sa. This would mean that through the disciplines of yama, niyama and others, when thapas is performed, one can experience the manifestation of sathya (the embodiment of truth). This means that by the control of the senses (yama, niyama etc.) thapas (penance) has to be performed to realize Truth.

Thapas means the unity of the three gunas (qualities) satwa, rajas, and tamas. The absence of harmony among the three qualities results in tamas (the dullness of ignorance).

The integral unity of feelings in the heart, the words spoken by the mouth and the actions done by the hands represents the unity of the three active principles in man.

Pure feelings are the outcome of pure thoughts

Feelings are related to thoughts. Only when the thoughts are good can the feelings be pure and sacred. Pure results are the outcome of pure thoughts. Here is a story to illustrate this: Once Sakkubai complained to the Saint Namadeva that somebody was stealing the cow-dung cakes she was making everyday. Namadeva asked Sakkubai, "How do you identify the cow-dung cakes made by you?" She replied: "I always recite the name of the Lord whatever action I may be doing. The cow-dung cakes I prepare bear the trait of the name I chant". She ran up to her home and brought a dung-cake made by her. She placed it close to the ear of Namadeva. The dung-cake was chanting the name of God: "Ranga! Ranga! Panduranga!" Namadeva heard these words coming out continuously from the cake.

Namadeva wondered whether this was real. Even the great men of those days could develop doubts of this kind. Sakkubai was asked to prepare another dung-cake. She brought some dung and made it into a cake, while chanting the words, "Ranga! Ranga! Panduranga! Namadeva tested that cake by keeping it close to his ear. Once again he heard the words, "Ranga! Ranga! Panduranga!" issuing from the dung-cake. He realized that the power of the Lord's name was beyond all reckoning. Man's thoughts remain forever, outlasting his human existence.

Prior to this episode, Namadeva used to be known as Vamadeva. From that day, he started chanting the name of the Lord. Namadeva was the younger brother of Jnanadeva. Namadeva was ever blissful chanting the Lord's name.

By reciting the Lord's name any difficult task can be accomplished. One becomes what one thinks (Yad bhavam thad bhavathi). Hence people should see that their thoughts are pure and good. Human life is the expression of one's thoughts. When an inquiry is made into what is most important for man, the general answer is: life is most important. Some others may declare wealth is most important. But Sakkubai was not of this view. She declared that the most important thing for anyone is the name of the Lord. It is God's name that promotes the fame of a person.

The importance of thought waves

In this context, the importance of thoughts should be properly understood. Thoughts arising in the mind fill the atmosphere with waves of energy. Like radio waves, they are present everywhere. We are able to listen in Puttaparthi to a broadcast from Delhi. How did the radio waves reach here from Delhi? By entering the ether in space.

Likewise, thought waves are equally powerful and sacred. Hence our thoughts should be sublime and sacred. No evil ideas should affect our thoughts. Evil thoughts inevitably lead to evil actions. When cruel thoughts enter the mind, men behave like cruel animals. When, instead, there are good and loving thoughts in a man, they divinise the man and make him do good and sacred acts. Hence, every man's heart should be filled with love, compassion and kindness.

When bad thoughts fill the mind, even ostensibly good acts result in bad consequences. Hence, the primary requisite is to make one's thoughts good and holy. Unfortunately, today, because of the influence of the Kali Age, men's thoughts go astray and men lead bad lives. People should realize that there is no greater blessing than leading a pure life. By chanting the Lord's name men can cross an ocean of troubles. God's name is the boat for crossing the ocean of mundane existence.

In the term, sathyam, the yam refers to Surya. Surya, the sun, is the sustainer of life on earth. The sun is also the deity presiding over the vision. If your vision is sacred, your life will be sacred.

Among other meanings of Sathyam, one is Brahman. Truth is God. There is nothing in the world where Truth is not present. Today people are oblivious to the greatness of Truth. People lead a life based on falsehood. The result is that there is widespread starvation.

Chant the Lord's name

In ancient times, people led their lives based on the constant repetition of the Lord's name. The power of the Lord's name could be seen in the fact that even the cow-dung cakes made by Sakkubai, while reciting the Lord's name, chanted the name of Ranga.

Every person should remember and recite the Lord's name whatever action they may be engaged in. The Divine pervades the cosmos. Hence, whatever you may see or say or do, the Divine is present in it. But the Divine is subtle -not perceivable or graspable. You should not conclude from this that there is no God. Air is not visible or cannot be held. But can its existence be denied? Without air one cannot live for a moment. Air is only one of the five elements. All five elements are essential for life. They constitute the basic stuff of the universe. Their very existence proclaims the power of the Divine. How can the existence of God be denied by anyone? God does not mean any particular form. All forms are His.

Sath-Chith-Ananda is manifest in man as supreme bliss -the bliss Divine. This bliss is present in man as his spiritual essence. Man has no need to go after trivial pleasures when he has this eternal bliss within himself. He will experience this bliss when he gets rid of the attachment to the body born out of delusion and ignorance.

Krishna's response to Sakkuba's devotion

Sakkubai was one who had realized this truth and was in continuous contemplation of the Lord's name. Recognising the intensity of her devotion, Krishna assumed her form and sent her to Pandaripur. You can see the greatness of Bhagavan's love for the devotee. Assuming the devotee's form, the Lord performed all her domestic chores and enabled her to go to Pandaripur. God sees to it that the devotee is not exposed to calumny. He saw to it that no one pointed the finger of criticism at Sakkubai for her absence from the house. He himself assumed the form of Sakkubai and did all the household work. Sakkubai went to Pandaripuram and merged in the Lord there.

The power of faith is incalculable. With faith any difficult task can be carried out. This truth cannot be understood in worldly affairs.

It must be recognized that chanting the name of the Lord is highly sacred and efficacious. It serves to remove the impurities in a person. It promotes good and sacred thoughts. When the heart is filled with truth and love, only "positive" thoughts will arise.

There is no meaning in reciting the name of Rama or Krishna once in a year. How often do you take your meals for the sake of the body? Does not the mind require to be fed equally? Contemplation of God is the food for the mind. To feed the belly and starve the mind is like decorating the chariot but starving the horse. To keep the chariot of the body moving, it is necessary to feed the horse of the mind.

The body is taken care of openly in innumerable ways. The mind needs to be fed in private. No one can notice the chanting of the Lord's name. No one can rob one of the benefits it confers. Possessing this valuable capacity, man should not fail to make full use of it. You strive so much to earn wealth. Do you take the same trouble to experience God? Should you not spare sometime for thoughts of God?

Jnana and namasmarana

Walking on the road, a man may see a temple and make formal signs of worship. What are they worth? Worship should stem from the heart. Think of God in your mind and offer your worship in silence. Sakkubai had set an example to the world by her intense devotion to God. Even Namadeva became her disciple after seeing her exemplary devotion. He began chanting the Lord's name continually. He taught the people that reciting the Lord's name is the means to experience God.

Once, Namadeva and Jnanadeva were going through a forest. For Jnanadeva everything was a manifestation of Divine Wisdom (Jnanamayam). He believed that through knowledge anything could be achieved. As they were going

along they felt thirsty. They saw a derelict well. There was some water deep at the bottom of the well. Jnanadeva took the form of a bird, flew down to the bottom and drank the water to quench his thirst. Jnanadeva could assume any form because of his spiritual powers. Namadeva said, "I don't need to assume any form. My God is within me. I can secure His nearness without my going to Him." So saying, he sat under a tree and started reciting the Lord's name. The water in the well rose and overflowed so that Namadeva could quench his thirst easily.

The true devotee should be able to bring God near him, without his having to go in search of God. If he is filled with love for God, that love will attract God toward him.

Divine love is the most powerful magnet

The world is full of magnetic power. A flower that attracts you has that magnetic power. The attachment between husband and wife is a sign of magnetic power. Magnetic attraction is the basis of all human relationships. The honey in a flower is the magnet that attracts a bee to the flower.

Everything has some magnetic power that endows it with the power of attraction. Divine love is the most powerful magnet in the universe. The gopikas (cowherd maids) were intensely attracted to Krishna by the power of this love. They declared that they would be attracted to Krishna in whatever form He might choose to manifest Himself -as a flower or a tree or a mountain or the ocean. To merge in the Divine, you may assume any form or resort to any means. God assumes many forms according to the needs of the situation. He cannot be confined to any particular place. All forms and names are His. Hence, by whatever name or form the Lord may be worshipped, His reality is one and the same. Some refer to God as Easwara, who smears Himself with vibhuti (the sacred ash). But vibhuti does not mean ash alone. It applies to every glorious attribute of the Divine. It refers to every potency of God. Easwara means one who is the treasure house of all that is precious. Therefore, it is impossible to measure or define His attributes.

This infinite Divine can be realized only through love, which is all-powerful. The devotee's love for the Lord is like the love of a child for its mother. This love-bond is inextricable.

The lesson of Sivarathri is that devotees should foster good and sacred thoughts. They should be filled with godly thoughts. They should seek to become one with the Divine by reflecting on their inherent divinity. If you constantly chant the name of God, God realization will come in due course.

Whatever other things they may possess, men suffer from lack of peace and bliss. These two can be got only from God. It is for these two that men should pray to God and not for anything else, because God alone can give them. When these are secured, all other things will come of their own accord by the grace of God. People should yearn for God. All other desires are worthless.

7. The wise and the envious

Date: 18 March 1998 / Location: Brindavan

Students! You are the inheritors of Truth and Righteousness (Sathya and Dharma). Different persons are propagating these two principles in different ways. Truth and Righteousness are eternal. They remain unchanged through all the three categories of time -past, present, and future. It may be asked: What is the need to propagate ideals, which are ever-present and permanent? But the Lord declared in the Bhagavad Gita, "Whenever there is decline of dharma (righteousness) and a resurgence of adharma (unrighteousness) I incarnate Myself. Righteousness is imperishable. It is the practice of righteousness that declines not righteousness itself. It is like the sun being covered for a time by a cloud. The sun is not apparently visible. But it is always there and shines again when the cloud moves away. Truth is the sun. Its effulgence is righteousness. Truth and righteousness are inseparable. They go together. They are inseparable like matter and energy. The Sun of Truth illumines the world with the effulgence of Righteousness. It is the foremost duty of young people today to uphold Truth and Righteousness. Students ask today, "What is our duty?" Most of them feel that it is the job that makes the man (Udyogam Purushalakshanam). What then about the unemployed? Are they not men at all?

Righteousness is not related to gender. It is the manifestation of unity in thought, word, and deed. The same unity is the characteristic of Truth. Truth concerns utterance. Righteousness pertains to practice. Nowadays, precept prevails over practice. Practice is all-important. When righteousness is not practiced, it appears as if it has decayed. But Righteousness cannot decay or disappear.

The story of Akbar and Birbal

Today, students should consider it their primary duty to foster Truth and Righteousness. It is easy to talk about them, but putting them into practice is difficult. In this connection, I would relate a story about an episode during the

reign of Emperor Akbar in Delhi.

Akbar had a very wise minister named Birbal. Birbal could always give satisfactory replies to the questions of the Emperor. Seeing how much the Emperor relied on Birbal, other ministers and dignitaries in the court were envious of Birbal. The Commander-in-Chief of the army, who was one of this group, seized the opportunity of Birbal's absence from the durbar hall one day to tell the Emperor: "Your Majesty! Here we are so many of us with considerable experience. Please consult us also. Why do you ask Birbal for everything?" On another day, Akbar came to the audience hall and inquired about Birbal. The Commander-in-Chief said Birbal was away and informed the Emperor that he was ready to answer the Emperor's questions. All others also got up and said they were prepared to do so.

Akbar got up and put the first question to the assembled dignitaries. He warned them that their answer should satisfy him. The first question he put was: In this world, which is the best flower? The Commander-in-Chief replied that the rose was the best flower. Other ministers mentioned the names of jasmine, champak, and other flowers. The Emperor was not satisfied.

He then put a second question: Which milk is the best milk? Once again, there were a variety of answers, none of which satisfied the Emperor.

He then put the third question: What is the sweetest thing in the world? Many replied: jaggery (brown sugar). One said honey. Like that, there were varied replies.

The Emperor then passed on to the fourth question: Which leaf ranks highest among leaves? The assembled men gave different answers. Akbar was not satisfied.

By this time, Birbal had entered the hall. Akbar then put him the four questions.

Which is the best flower in the world?

Birbal: The flower of the cotton plant is the best. From the cotton flower, we have cotton, out of which yarn is made and clothes are woven. The cotton flower is therefore of lasting use to mankind. Other flowers are only of temporary value and are useless when their fragrance is gone.

Which is the best milk in the world?

Birbal said, the mother's breast milk is the best, because it nourishes the child.

What is the sweetest thing in the world?

Birbal replied, Sweet speech. Through sweet words you can transform any person and give great joy. Men throw stones when a crow caws. But they listen raptly to the sweet call of the cuckoo. Sweetness in speech is sweeter than anything else

Which is the best leaf in the world?

Birbal said: The betel leaf is the best, Your Majesty. Betel leaves are offered on all auspicious occasions like weddings. The betel leaf is considered sacred and auspicious. Other leaves like plantain leaves have no special value at all.

Everyone in the audience was amazed at Birbal's intelligent answers, which pleased the Emperor. Akbar told the gathering that none of their answers had satisfied him. Akbar expressed his appreciation of Birbal's replies. The courtiers realized why the Emperor valued so much the words of Birbal.

God is Omnipresent. So do not act differently when you are away from My Presence. Be always and everywhere conscious of the Presence. Be vigilant even while engaged in small tasks. Maintain silence in the recesses of the heart as well as outside.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

8. A new way of life

Date: 29 March 1998 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Ugadi

Embodiments of Love!

You cannot find in the entire cosmos any place or object in which God is not present. The Divine is present on the mountains. The Divine permeates the oceans. The Divine dwells in villages and cities. The Divine is omnipresent.

Only those who recognize this truth can redeem their lives; they alone can achieve the goal of human existence. The powers of the Divine are limitless. Every living being in the world is governed by some limitations. Birds, beasts, and insects are all taken care of by the Divine in respect of their essential needs like food and drink. Among all living beings, however, the life of human being is supreme, since it is governed by morality and good conduct. The Divine has placed some limitations on the physical powers of man but has set no limits on his mental powers. Man can achieve whatever he resolves to achieve. He can even realise God. This divine power is given only to human beings. Ignorant of his limitless divine potentialities, man suffers from various disabilities by considering himself as a human being. Man today is soaring in the sky like a bird and moving in the ocean like a fish. He has been able to land on the moon. But unfortunately he is not able to live like a true human being on earth. This is indeed a matter for shame.

The power of surrender

Man can accomplish anything if he surrenders to God. When he submits himself to the will of the Divine, there is no task he cannot accomplish.

Kuchela, a boyhood friend of Krishna, approached Krishna for help on the basis of his old friendship. How did Krishna help him? The Bhagavatha bears testimony to what Krishna did for Kuchela. The Ramayana tells the story of what Rama did for Sugriva after the latter became a friend of Rama and sought His help. Sugriva was able to regain his kingdom. What did Vibhishana

get after his constant remembrance of Rama and the ordeals he experienced in Lanka? Relieving him of his troubles, Rama crowned Vibhishana the ruler of Lanka.

Once a devotee totally surrenders to the Lord, the Divine goes to any extent to help the devotee. An insignificant little stick, by association with fire, burns brilliantly. A drop of water held in your palm evaporates in a trice. But when it is cast into the ocean, it becomes one with it. If man wants to achieve highest human potentialities, he has to achieve proximity to God. He has to merge in the Divine. Then he can manifest his true nature.

Not realizing the true nature of the Divine Principle, man wastes his time on rituals and religious practices of various kinds. God cannot be realized through such practices. It is only by loving God and getting close to Him that one can realize one's aspirations. Swami does not disapprove of sadhana (spiritual practices). They are good activities for using time sacredly. But without service to Godly persons, they are of no use for realizing freedom from the cycle of mundane existence.

The significance of devotees' offerings to the Lord

In the field of devotion, there is room for making certain offerings to God. God utilizes the acceptance of such offerings to reward the devotee a hundred-fold. Devotees should recognize the significance of such acceptance by the Divine.

For instance, the Lord asked Kuchela what he had brought for Him. The Lord as Vamana asked for three feet of land from Emperor Bali. In the Rama Avatar, He went to Sabari and asked her to appease His hunger. All that Sabari could offer to Rama were a few sweet berries collected from the jungle. In the Krishna Avatar, the Divine child went to the gopis (cowherd maids) saying He was hungry. All that they could offer Him was some watery buttermilk. During the difficult days of their exile in the forest, Krishna went to the Pandavas and asked Draupadi for food. That day, all the food had been consumed and barely a leaf remained in one of the vessels. Krishna was more

than satisfied with that one leaf and saved the Pandavas from the wrath of Durvasa, who had been sent by Duryodhana to subject the Pandavas to the ordeal of feeding Durvasa and his numerous disciples. When Krishna's appetite was satisfied, Durvasa and his disciples felt fully appeased and did not turn up at Pandavas' hermitage.

It is to shower His grace on the devotees that the Lord seeks small offerings from them. What does He need from any one when the whole cosmos is contained in Him?

It is the Lord who protects one and all in innumerable ways. There is a simple way to secure the grace of God. You must get near to God. Surrender yourself to Him. Become one with Him. Instead of following this easy path, man today immerses himself in petty desires and keeps away from God.

Sanjay Sahani and Ruchir Desai (faculty members who addressed the gathering earlier) spoke about God's love for the devotees. There is no trace of selfishness in it. But, because of their own selfish natures, they attribute selfishness even to God's love. This is merely a reflection of their own nature. God's love is not a reflected love. It is love pure and simple. A reflected love carries the taint of the original. That is not the case with the Divine love, which is pure and unsullied.

The story of pure and unselfish love

The nature of pure and unselfish love may be illustrated by the story of Laila and Majnu. Laila was the daughter of a very wealthy person. She fell in love with Majnu, but her parents did not approve of her marrying a poor young man like Majnu. Laila did not wish to displease her parents. She was a girl of noble character. She prayed to God to find out whether Majnu loved her. She sent two of her maids to Majnu to ask him whether he could offer his blood to save Laila from a grievous ailment. Majnu immediately cut an artery and sent a glassful of blood to Laila. Moreover, he sent word through the maids that he was prepared to give his entire life to save Laila. His only wish was that she should survive. When the maids conveyed this message to Laila she realized

how much Majnu loved her. She observed, "I was thinking only about my love for him. I did not realise how much he loved me." Devotees should realise that God also likes to test the depth and sincerity of the devotee's love. He seeks to find out whether the devotee is filled with love of God, how intense is that love and so on. He tests the devotee's love in various ways. One should not be content with making offerings to God. One should love God intensely. One should pine for Him. One should lose one's self in the love of God.

The ultimate sense of liberation

People aspire for liberation (mukti). They have no idea what constitutes liberation. Man seeks liberation from the ills of the body, the senses, the mind, the intellect, and the Antahkarana (internal motivator). All these are no doubt necessary.

But liberation in the ultimate sense consists in liberation from the cycle of birth and death. This means that one should redeem one's present life so that one is free from rebirth.

Most of the people's diseases today have their origin in the mind. Desires and worries are the cause of many ailments of the heart, the kidney etc. You can test the truth of this statement in a simple way. I have no diseases of any kind. I am hale and hearty. Lead a life of courage and you will be all right. The moment you start feeling your pulse out of suspicion that it is weak, you will find it weak. It is your mind that is the cause of the weakness of the pulse. Many diseases are allowed to grow entirely due to mental factors. Men should pray to God for freedom from rebirth so that they will not have bodies that are bound to be afflicted with diseases.

There is no need for rigorous spiritual exercises to secure freedom from rebirth. Pure love of God is enough. This is exemplified by the gopis (cowherd maids). Immersed always in the love of Krishna, they were always happy and contented.

We are today celebrating Yugadi, the beginning of yet another New Year.

Many new-year days have come and gone. Do you expect the New Year to bring you new happiness? Are you imagining what New Year portends for you? New years do not offer you prosperity and pleasure. This New Year day will be like any other day. Many people eagerly expect something to turn up on this day. This is utterly futile. The calendar merely tells you that a New Year has begun.

What we should be concerned about is not a New Year but a new way of life. We must seek to secure a new source of joy. But unfortunately we do not think about this. We speculate on what the new year signifies. We have to look to ourselves and not to the succession of years for changes in our lives. Think within yourself about your condition. Turn your thoughts to God. Then you will realize what you desire.

The way to surrender to God

No one tries to find out how to surrender to God. The whole world belongs to you. You must declare to God, "I am yours". This is the truth you have to understand. You must be ready to offer to God whatever He asks of you. What does God ask from you? First of all, He says, "Give up your desires." You must give them up immediately. He calls upon you not to immerse yourself in worldly pleasures. Cultivate love for all. That will redeem your life. That is the sacred path you have to follow. That is the essence of the four goals of life. People have no clear idea of what dharma, artha, kama, and moksha (the four goals) mean? They think that moksha (liberation) is something that you attain after death. But, in fact, liberation can be attained here and now. Moksha means moha-kshayam, the elimination of moha (attachment). People are not ready to give up attachment to wife, children, property, etc. You have a duty to protect your family. But you must not be immersed in concerns about them.

What is dharma? Not the obligations relating to the various stages in life or the various vocations. Dharma means harmony in thought, word, and deed. People equate charity with dharma. That is not correct. Dharma calls for sacrificing your bad thoughts, feelings, and actions.

Understand Swami's life and message

Embodiments of love! Realize that love is the most important quality in human life. It is not love for kith and kin that is precious. It is love for God that is most valuable.

Swami's life and message are not properly understood. Swami has no worldly desires. Whether you believe it or not, I am always "positive" from head to foot. There is nothing "negative" in me.

Devotees suggested to me that they should be allowed to organize "poor feeding" on Yugadi. Should this be done only on one day in a year? You must feed the poor on all days. You must have the broad outlook. With a broad heart you can do many superhuman things. Strive to get close to God and surrender your all to Him.

The name of the New Year is Bahudhanya. This name suggests that the year will witness an abundance of food grains. There may be an abundance of food grains. But are you consuming them properly? No. Are the food-grains distributed to the poor and the needy? No.

Our ancients gave the different years good names such as Prabhava, Vibhava, Sukla, and so on. [Swami went on reciting almost all the 60 names in quick succession]. Sometimes, the priests predict bad developments in a year. This is intended only to make the people undertake propitiatory ceremonies that will bring in income to the priests. Can the mere expenditure of money ward off evils? No. Your troubles will go when the heart is purified. Your sincere prayers will help to relieve your troubles. There must be a transformation in the hearts of the devotees. They should not continue to remain in the same rut for years. They must benefit from the grace of God's love.

Happiness is union with God

People talk about the new year but do not care to develop new feelings and new attitudes. They must develop new ideas and new enthusiasm. If they are all the time depressed, when will they learn to express the joy of good living? They must exude happiness. That is the mark of the Divine within. Happiness is union with God. God is eternal bliss. Get rid of your evil tendencies and fill your hearts with love of God. You will become one with God.

I am ready to give you all happiness. Are you prepared to receive what I wish to offer? Banish all worries. They are temporary like passing clouds. Do not allow any one -whether it is the father, the mother or the preceptor- to come between you and your duty to God. This is the lesson taught by Prahlada, Bharata, and Emperor Bali. Their allegiance to the Lord transcended all other obligations. God takes care of such devotees. Surrender yourselves to God and dedicate yourselves to the service of mankind. You have my blessings. Foster love and serve society.

9. Potency of Rama's name

Date: 05 April 1998 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Rama Navami

Sweeter than sugar, Tastier than the cream from curds, Growing in sweetness like honey, As the name is chanted, Verily it is nectar itself. Meditate, all ye, on the sacred name of Rama!

Embodiments of Love!

Rama is the friend of the universe. He is its protector. He is its patron saint. To comprehend the nature of such a unique ideal personality is not quite easy. It is easier to count the waves of the ocean than to describe the qualities of Rama.

Ramachandra is the Indweller in all beings. The cosmos is one vast mansion. Humanity is one family (or community). Only the person who recognizes this relationship between the cosmos and mankind can understand the Rama Principle. The earth lies at the feet of every human being. It is the same firmament that is above every person. All breathe the same air. The water that people drink is the same for all. Only those who recognize this unifying principle will seek to understand the Rama Principle.

Two kinds of dharma: pravritti and nivritti

The Vedas taught two kinds of dharma (codes of right conduct). One is termed pravritti and the other is termed nivritti. Pravritti (the outward path) is related to worldly activities. It prescribes the qualities needed for leading the life in the mundane world. Nivritti (the inward path) teaches knowledge of the Self (Atma-jnana). One who knows the difference between the two is dauntless.

Pravrithi indicates how any particular task should be performed. Nivrithi (the inward path) indicates in what state of mind the work should be done.

For example, when a person is hungry, pravriti tells him to eat food and appease his hunger. Nivrithi teaches what kind of food he should eat, what is good for his health and what is injurious, and how it should be consumed. Pravriti and nivrithi are thus related to what is external and what is internal.

All that you see, all that you hear, all that you think is related to the pravriti path. The pravriti path creates confusion in the mind, disturbs the intelligence, and prevents one from pursuing the right path. Pravriti tends to turn man away from God.

Life is a kind of struggle. You have to face conflict of opinions. But Ayodhya is a place free from strife and controversy. No enemy could enter it. The human heart is the symbol of Ayodhya. All conflicts and divisions arise in the mind. It is the mark of pravriti (the outward path) that it generates conflict and brings about alternatively union and separation. Because of this fact, man today is a prey of unrest and is bereft of peace. Ravana is an example of such a person who ruined his life in this way. He was perpetually following the pravriti path. Unable to conquer his desires he sacrificed his sons. Unable to subdue his desires (vanchalu), he ultimately ruined his entire clan (vamsa). With no control over his passions, he forfeited his kingdom itself.

Ravana's lesson to the world

In the final reckoning, this was the lesson Ravana gave to the world: "Oh people of the world! Failing to control your attachments like me, unable to limit your desires like me, do not ruin yourselves as I have done. Ultimately, I am also leaving the world. What remains in the world? Only infamy. All the renown goes to Rama. Therefore, strive to earn good reputation. Do not give room to ill-fame." That was the lesson Ravana taught. The Rama Principle destroys all sins and redeems life. Everyone should seek to realize the Rama Principle.

Rama moved about in the world as an ordinary human being. He exemplified the ideal life. Yet all considered him as an ordinary human being. But, do ordinary people live like Rama? Rama was one who, while appearing to lead the life of an ordinary man, led the life Divine. He demonstrated the ideal life of a spiritually realised person.

Today, the world needs the message of the Ramayana. Why? Because children do not heed the words of their parents. Parents do not set worthy examples to the children. Preceptors do not teach the right course of conduct to the disciples. The disciples do not offer the due respect to the teachers.

Today, businessmen, administrators, rulers, and citizens are all tarred by the same brush. The world is replete with discord. People have forgotten the great message of Rama. They have poisoned life at its source. They have forgotten the Divine, with the result that they are immersed in misery.

How do people address their prayers to God today? They pray for bodily comforts and mental peace. These desires are natural. But there is something unnatural about the way it is done. Prayers are offered to the image of the Lord of Serpents in stone! They pray, "Oh Lord of Serpents! Remove my troubles." But when the serpent appears before them as a live cobra, they use the stone idol to kill it.

Today this is the plight of the Divine. Who can determine what is the nature of Divinity? None can do it. The nature of the Divine can be determined only by the Divine and not by anybody else.

Thyagaraja recognized this truth in his song, "Oh Lord! How can anyone decide what you are?" Thyagaraja went on to derive the name "Rama" from the two letters Ra and Ma in the two mantras associated with Vishnu and Siva (The two mantras are: Namō Narayanaya and Namah Sivaya). The two mantras, without the syllables Ra and Ma, become meaningless. Ra and Ma are thus the life-giving letters in the two mantras.

Power of Rama's name

Rama's name is thus the life-giving essence of the two great mantras. The term "Rama" has another esoteric significance. It consists of three syllables: Ra + A + Ma. Ra signifies Agni (the Fire-god). A represents Surya (the Sun-god). Ma represents Chandra (the Moon-god). The combination of the three letters constitutes the Rama name. Ra, representing the Fire-god, burns away all sins, A, representing the Sun-god, dispels the darkness of ignorance. Ma, representing the Moon-god, cools one's temper and produces tranquility. The name Rama has the triple power of washing away one's sins, removing one's ignorance, and tranquilizing one's mind. How is the profound meaning of this sacred name to be imparted to mankind? This can be done only by the Divine coming in human form and demonstrating to mankind the power of the Divine. Rama's name signifies the harmony in thought, word and deed. Rama demonstrated this harmony by his thoughts, words, and deeds.

The Rama Principle embodies numerous powers and potencies. The Ramayana is not a sacred text to be used only for ritualistic reading (parayanam). The Rama Principle is all-pervading like the Cosmic Spirit. In olden times people used to say that their inner secrets are known only to the Indwelling Rama Spirit (Atma-Rama). The Self is called "Rama". Rama means "one who pleases". How can you give a specific form to one who pleases or delights?

The human destiny

In the Divine epic of the Ramayana, there is a special profound message. That message is: man must lead the life of a human being; men must seek oneness with the Divine. Man should harmonize the three qualities in him (satwa, rajas, tamas). In every human being, all the three natures -human, divine, and demonic- are present. But most men today ignore their humanness and divinity and foster only their demonic nature.

Man, in fact, should strive to manifest his divinity, and not display his weakness or his demonic qualities.

Rama chose to go to the forest to fulfill the pledge of his father, and thereby subjected himself to many difficulties. It may be asked: Did he go to the forest under any compulsion or out of his own resolve, or with a sense of dissatisfaction, or merely to comply with his father's pledge? No. Rama set out for the forest with the same sense of serenity and joy with which he looked forward to his coronation. Rama demonstrated the spirit of equanimity. He showed that pain or pleasure, profit or loss, victory or defeat, were the same to him. In human life, pleasure and pain, happiness and sorrow alternate all the time. It is not a good quality to welcome pleasure and turn away pain. You must welcome sorrow in the same joyous spirit in which you greet happiness. Happiness has no value unless there is also sorrow. That is why it is said, "Pleasure is not secured by pleasant measure." Pain is needed to secure pleasure. Rama demonstrated to the world the truth of this concept.

In every act, Rama set the example. In individual conduct, in the discharge of duties to the family, and in fulfilling the obligations to society Rama demonstrated the ideals to be followed.

All should begin with fulfilling the obligations of the individual. The duty of the individual is to manifest the divinity within him. As an individual, Rama revealed the divinity in him by his ideal conduct.

Brahma's benediction

When Valmiki completed his Ramayana, Brahma declared that his epic would last as long as the mountains stand and the rivers flow. The inner meaning of Brahma's benediction is that the Ramayana will be cherished as long as men (mountains) and women (rivers) exist on earth. The Ramayana will last as long as human society exists. People should acquire the capacity to comprehend the eternal truths embedded in the Ramayana. Ignoring the eternal truths of the Ramayana, Bharathiyas (Indians) are wasting their lives in the pursuit of worldly concerns.

We celebrate this day as the birthday of Rama. How are people celebrating

the day? They perform some special puja (worship). They adorn themselves with sacred marks. But, for doing these things should you wait for the birthday of Rama? No. Whatever your age, at all times and in all places, you must be engaged in thoughts of Rama.

Valmiki, after completing the composing of the Ramayana, summoned the sages in his ashram and asked them who was capable of propagating the immortal and sacred epic to every nook and corner of the world. The sages were nonplused. They declared, "Guruji, we are old men. We are at the end of our span of life. We are incapable of conveying the Ramayana to the length and breadth of the world." Valmiki was downcast. At that stage, the twins Lava and Kusa arrived on the scene. They told Valmiki, "Guruji, we have been listening to what all has been spoken here. We are prepared to convey the Ramayana to every place." The sage was immensely happy.

Be prepared for any sacrifice for the sake of the Divine

Lava and Kusa were princes of royal blood. They carried in their hands tambourines. They set out on the great task of propagating the Ramayana, chanting the slokas (verses) all the way. Are there any today who will undertake such a task? Many will fear being mocked by the public. Even persons who may wish to do bhajans in public are afraid of being jeered at. Devotees should be able to transcend such considerations. Why should anyone who is doing something holy be afraid of public ridicule?

People should be prepared for any sacrifice for the sake of the Divine. The joy to be derived from chanting the Lord's name is ineffable. Without the constant remembrance of God, there can be no experience of the Divine.

Whatever the name that may be chanted, when it is done wholeheartedly the fruits of it will be certain. Everything should be done with a pure heart.

Three mothers and Rama

The Ramayana story is replete with ideals. During my recent visit to Madras, I

spoke about the story of three mothers -Kausalya, Rama's mother; Anjanadevi, the mother of Anjaneya (Hanuman); and the mother of the sage Agasthya. When the three met, Kausalya asked Anjaneya's mother, "Mother! Who are you?" She replied: "What! Don't you know? My son Hanuman is well known to the whole world. Hanuman is present wherever Rama's name is uttered. Rama and Hanuman have inseparable attachment to each other. They are one soul in two bodies. I am the mother of that Hanuman. He leapt over the mighty ocean to Lanka." On hearing these words, Agasthya's mother observed, "Whatever your son did is not anything so great. Your son leapt over the ocean. My son drank the ocean in a gulp. I am the mother of Agasthya." Both then told Kausalya, "You are the mother of Rama, whose name enabled Hanuman to leap over the ocean and Agasthya to drink the waters of the ocean." As they were engaged in this conversation, Rama came there and remarked innocently, "How is it you mothers are waxing eloquent about me?" Though he was the incarnation of the Lord Narayana Himself, he moved about as if he was simple son. He told them: "Hanuman could cross the ocean because of his intense devotion. Agasthya could drink the ocean because of his intense penance. I was in no way responsible for their accomplishments. I am not so great as all that. I am an ordinary human being. The name given to me is the source of all power. I am only an instrument. It is my name that helps to accomplish everything. This name is filled with all potencies. This body of mine moves because of the power of the name. Therefore, regard me as only an instrument." After Rama left, Kausalya observed: "Mothers! My son speaks as if he is an ordinary being. But he is the reservoir of all knowledge and there is nothing he cannot accomplish." Kausalya, who had this opinion of Rama, felt differently when Rama came to tell her that he was about to leave for the forest to fulfill the pledge given by his father to Kaikeyi. The mother was full of joy at the prospect of the coronation of Rama. Rama told her, "Mother! I have come to give you some happy news. I am not only the Lord of Ayodhya; I am now the Lord of the whole jungle in the country. I am getting ready to reign over the forest." Kausalya could not understand the implications of Rama's statement. While she was wondering what it was all about, Lakshmana came there. Lakshmana always followed Rama like a shadow. Likewise Satrughna always accompanied Bharata. Lakshmana and Satrughna were the children of mother

Sumitra. But they were full of humility and attached themselves respectively to Rama and Bharata.

Rama's advice to Lakshmana

Lakshmana was greatly agitated as he entered. Addressing Rama, he said, "Brother! Your calmness is no doubt a great virtue. But not in affairs like this. The whole world is looking up to you. For the sake of one individual you are embarking on this undertaking. I cannot accept this. I shall destroy Dasaratha and Kaikeyi and crown you king this very moment." On hearing this, Rama said, "Lakshmana! Don't get agitated. Calm yourself. This calmness (santham) will protect you. It is your glory and greatness. Forbearance is the supreme virtue. It is the crowning quality of the sages. Therefore, calm yourself."

Kausalya and Sita

Lakshmana then related to Kausalya what had happened. Hearing the whole story, Kausalya collapsed on the spot. When she recovered consciousness, she declared, "Rama! I cannot live for a single moment without you. You are prepared to carry out your father's words. I cannot stand in your way. But I appeal to you to take me with you." Rama then told her, "To a wife, her husband is verily God himself. You cannot leave your husband in any circumstance. Your husband is everything for you. As long as he is alive, you cannot leave him. He is now plunged in sorrow over my impending departure. You cannot leave him. You must serve him and offer him solace." Sita came there soon after. She was no ordinary woman. Daughter of Emperor Janaka, she was known as "Vaidehi", a person with no attachment to the body. Listening to Rama's advice to his mother, Sita burst into laughter and remarked: "You teach one thing to your mother and the opposite to me. When I said I wanted to follow you, you tried to dissuade me. You advised me to devote myself to the service of your aged parents. But, when you met your mother, you asked her to treat the husband as God. Are you not then a God for me? Is there one rule for one woman and another for another woman? Moreover, you are called Ramachandra. Chandra means moon. I am the

moonlight for you. How can the moon be in the forest and the moonlight be in Ayodhya? The moonlight must be with the moon. Therefore, you must take me with you."

Rama's dilemma in destroying Rakshasas

Rama had to pacify the demand of the mother and the wife in the softest manner. After pacifying them, Rama set out for the forest. In his wanderings in the forest, seeing the demonic atrocities of the Rakshasas (Demons). Rama felt that he had been ostensibly sent in exile really to deal with these evil forces. "The Rakshasas are hindering the sacred activities of the ascetics. I must destroy the Rakshasas so that these sages will be left in peace to practice their austerities," thought Rama.

One problem arose in his mind in this context. In destroying the Rakshasas, is it proper to kill women? Rama had received the answer to this question from Viswamitra when, as a young lad, he had been taken by the sage to guard his yajna and he wanted to know whether it was right on his part to kill Thataki, a demoness. Viswamitra assured him that there was nothing wrong in killing a wicked person even if she happened to be a woman. To protect the pious, the righteous and the holy persons engaged in sacred activities there was nothing wrong in destroying even women.

When Rama asked the sage whether there had been any precedent in this respect, Viswamitra related the case of Prahlada's son Virochana, who killed the demoness Mantra who was committing many wicked deeds against the rishis (sages) and their families.

There is nothing wrong in repudiating one's mother, father, husband, or preceptor if they come between the devotee and God. When Kaikeyi came between him and his devotion to Rama, Bharata utterly denounced her. One must be prepared to sacrifice everything for God.

The Rama Principle is infinitely potent. The powers of the Divine are immeasurable. God comes down in human form to redeem mankind. Birds

and beasts act according to their natural instincts. Man alone tends to violate the laws of nature and act against the laws of dharma (right conduct). It is to teach and punish man who goes astray that the Divine comes in human form. He teaches the highest ideals and leads an ideal life to set an example.

Role of the Avatar

Embodiments of love!

God incarnates for the sake of redemption mankind and not for His own sake. He needs nothing. He has everything. He comes down to tell humanity its divine origin and to exhort men to return to God by following the Love Principle. Through love you can achieve anything. It is this message that has to be understood today: the role of the Avatar in leading mankind through love to a Godly life.

There is no use in observing Sri Rama's birthday once a year and being satisfied with a good feast. Every moment marks the Lord's advent, because human beings are being born continually. Every human being is an incarnation of the Divine. The Divine dwells in every being. Therefore, dedicate every moment to the thoughts of God. When you do this, in due course you experience the Divine. You will be free from delusions and you will be divinised. Man is born to merge in the grace of the Divine and not to immerse himself in mundane pleasures.

Let each one carry on his or her duties. Dharma protects its protector and destroys its destroyer. Strive to proceed from the human to the Divine.

Embodiment of love!

It is not possible to describe the boundless attributes of the Rama Principle. The name of Rama has been adored for aeons. Humanity has been in existence for many lakhs of years. Unfortunately, humanity is yet to realize its true nature. What is this nature? It is the Principle of Love. Human life should be suffused with love and rounded off with love. Life should be given up with

tears of joy and not tears of sorrow. This is a sacred day. Remembering its sacredness, you must all make your lives sublime.

No one can shake truth; no one can install untruth. No one can understand My mystery. The best you can do is get immersed in it. The mysterious, indescribable power has come within the reach of all. No one is born and allowed to live for the sake of others. Each has their own burden to carry and lay down.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

10. The path of Nirvana

Date: 14 April 1998 / Location: Kodaikanal / Occasion: Tamil New Year, Baisakhi, Vishu

There is no place without 'God, and there is no form without the Divine.

Whether one is in a forest or in a town, on a mountain top or in a valley, wherever one may be, one is not helpless.

Embodiments of Love!

Men today strive in various ways to acquire knowledge of the Self (Atma Jnana). But this is not true knowledge. It may well be called ignorance. Whatever one's scholarship or one's spiritual practices or one's quest for gurus, one cannot acquire spiritual wisdom without understanding one's true nature.

Men today cannot understand their humanness; how can they recognize their divinity? Only after comprehending his humanness can a man recognize his divinity. Recognizing this truth, Buddha embarked on his spiritual quest. He studied all the extant scriptures of different faiths. He met many holy men. He visited numerous holy shrines. All these exercises gave him no satisfaction. What was the reason? All external, physical and ephemeral activities are valueless.

Your vision must be pure and sacred

The first requisite is purity in the use of the five senses of perception given to man. Buddha declared that men should cultivate at the outset samyag-drishhti (the right vision). This means that the eyes should not be misused for looking at all sorts of things. Your vision must be pure and sacred. See no evil; see

what is good. A sacred vision is that which looks only at divine and sacred objects. Your vision must originate from the heart. Bad thoughts and bad feelings pollute the vision.

Man today has lost the fear of sin, the love of God and observance of social morality. This accounts for all the ills of society today.

Pure vision leads to pure thoughts. Pure thoughts result in pure actions. Purity in action is essential for human existence. Purity in thoughts and purity in speech must lead to purity in deeds. This is the triple purity hailed by the sages. When this purity is manifest, human life gets redeemed. The principle of "Help ever, hurt never" becomes the governing principle of daily life.

Pure vision naturally begets Purity in speech by the refinement of the heart. Pure words must come out of the depth of the heart, which is a fountain of compassion. Constant examination of the purity of one's vision, speech and action is a spiritual exercise. It is this that helps to refine the heart.

Once, Buddha had an encounter with Ananda, the son of his stepmother. Buddha had attained the state of Nirvana (SelfRealization). Watching Buddha in this state, Ananda burst into tears. Buddha was about to give up body. Ananda was in grief over the thought. "What will happen to us? What is our future?" Buddha summoned Ananda to come near him and said: "Ananda! This is not a time for grief. I am about to achieve Nirvana. You should also seek Nirvana. Looking at the dead, the living lament over death. But who are the dead? Death awaits the living in due course. Where there is birth, there is also death.

Only the Divine is free from birth and death. He is eternal, with no beginning, middle or end. He is the Eternal Witness.

Except for the Divine, birth and death are natural to all human beings. Why then do you weep? You also must strive to achieve liberation."

Sanctify the senses

Man today is ignoring the state of his heart. He abuses the five senses without regard to the consequences.

The result is he is a prey to all kinds of sufferings. If the five senses are used properly man will experience only what is good. All rituals and spiritual exercises are of no avail if the five senses are not used properly.

Moreover, men must seek what is permanent in life and not cling to what is transient and perishable. The body is impermanent. The Atma is eternal. People should realize the infinite divine potencies in man. The Divine is present in man as conscience, which is a spark of the Cosmic Conscience. The conscience transcends the five senses. When the senses are sanctified, the conscience manifests its divinity. It can then experience its oneness with the Universal Consciousness. This was the path pursued by Buddha. He began with control of the senses.. He was filled with pure and sacred feelings; with a pure heart, he achieved Nirvana. Purity of the heart is more important than all rituals and penances. Develop a vision that will broaden your heart and enable you to help others and not hurt them. Dedicate all actions to God. Thyaga (sacrifice) is real yoga (oneness with the Divine). To enjoy things (bhoga) without sharing with others is a disease (roga). The Vedas have declared that immortality can be attained only through sacrifice and not by any other means.

Good speech is as essential as good vision. Avoid all kinds of gossip. Keep your speech confined to what is godly and sacred. Engage yourself in service to others. Pay no attention to other people's defects and faults.

Listen to pure and sacred words. People misuse their ears listening to scandal and gossip. This evil tendency should be eliminated by listening to the glories of God. Such listening (sravanam) has been accorded a primary place among

the nine paths of devotion.

Purify your heart

What is it that you should observe on this New Year day? Many such days have come and gone. But how far has there been a transformation in the heart? Many years have come and gone. But your hearts remain unchanged. The first task is to purify the heart. You should not be content with celebrating the New Year as a festive occasion. To enjoy a feast you do not need a New Year. The New Year should be marked not by a feast but by the awakening of new and pure thoughts in the heart. Of what use is it to be concerned only about eating from dawn to dusk?

What is the purpose of life? It is not eating, sleeping and dying. You must control the senses and use them for sacred purposes. The power of the senses is derived from the Divine. The small human eye enables to look at stars billions of miles away. Where from is this power got? It is from the Divine within you. Hence, everyone should always think of God, whatever one may do. Then, one will be free from bad thoughts. Man must manifest his humanness by transcending the animal nature.

Realize your inherent divinity. Regard the whole world as your field of action. You have come as a pilgrim to this world of action. Ensure that your pilgrimage proceeds on right lines.

The most beneficial thing that can happen to a person is that he should draw God's love to himself. His love for God is of less importance, because it is an imperfect mixture of divine and worldly love. The most important action whereby to gain God's love is Rightousness.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

11. Man, truth, love, and God

Date: 04 April 1998 / Location: Kodaikanal

It is only from Truth that the entire creation has come out. There is nothing in the world without the basis of Truth. This is pure goodness (suddha sathwa)

Behold, ye people!

God is Sathya Swaroopa (Embodiment of Truth). You find that human nature is a combination of sathya (truth) and dharma (right conduct). When man is not able to comprehend his own human nature, how can he know the Divine? Everyone should, therefore, make efforts to know the human nature. It is nirmala, nischala, nisswartha (blemishless, unwavering, and unselfish).

God is in every human being residing in his spiritual heart which is on the right side of the body while the physical heart is on the left. It is only a single seat sofa, and not a double seated sofa or musical chair. So, God is close to everyone, being seated in the spiritual heart. When you realize this, you will have the feeling of blissful happiness. The heart is the seat of compassion, and God is embodiment of compassion. While so, man cannot have hatred toward any being at all. Man has to make efforts to progress on the path of Truth and Righteousness.

God has no consideration of caste, age, sex or nationality. Take the elements earth, water, fire, air and ether. Have these elements any distinction of caste or nationality? They are embodiments of the Divine. You should never misuse the elements or waste them.

Never separate God from you

Names and forms are many, but the Atmic Principle is one. You should understand this. This is the fundamental law of Nature. Though names and forms vary, there are some common features in all. Hunger is common to all, though the types of food are many. In a hospital, there are many different

types of patients. All are not given the same food. For instance, diabetics will not be given sugar or sweet preparations. The world is a hospital. Humanity is suffering from different diseases - physical, mental and psychological. Three-fourths of the diseases are only psychological. What is the treatment needed? It is only daiva chintana: filling the mind with the thought of God.

Never separate God from you. A man with dual mind is half-blind. You should practice the principle of oneness. There is only one God spoken of as many. Unity in diversity should be comprehended. Human quality should reflect Divinity. You should curb animal thoughts and breed Divine thoughts.

There are two types of persons. Those with animal and human qualities always show hatred, jealousy, greed, and anger. The other type with human and divine qualities will always be happy, peaceful and full of love. They will always adhere to Truth. Without such quality, spiritual pursuits will be of no avail. You should always say to yourself, "I am human, I am not animal."

Jealousy is contrary to human nature

Jealousy is rampant to a considerable extent amongst people today. This is the root cause of anger, hatred, and other evil qualities. If a person owns a car and travels in it, don't be jealous. Satisfy yourself that you have your legs to help you walk. If one is in a big house, don't get jealous. Be contented and happy with the dwelling place you have, though small. You should thus kill jealousy.

Jealousy is contrary to human nature. It is artificial and not pertaining to heart which is natural. Virtues and vices are reflections of your good and bad thoughts. Physical heart is on the left side while the spiritual heart is on the right. This will help you in the right direction. It is compassionate. But man breeds desires, which contaminate the heart. These should be checked and restrained to a limit. The body and all the sense organs have limitations, like the temperature, BP, capacity to see, hear etc. Veda says "Na sreyo niyamam vina (we should observe discipline in life.)" Limitations should be observed in everything. If you have enough minimum resources like food, shelter, and

raiment, you should be satisfied. To maintain bodily health and get enough energy for your day-to-day activities you should take food. You should not indulge in overeating causing indigestion. If you exceed limit in anything, it may lead to dangerous consequences.

If you realize that God is residing in your heart, you will not dare to indulge in bad activities at all. The evil qualities are only acquired and are not in you. You are the embodiment of only love and compassion. The bad influences are just like passing clouds that obstruct the vision of the sun. Though the vision is blocked the sun is always shining. When clouds clear you can see the sun in its full effulgence. Similarly, the veils of ignorance covering the heart must also be cleared. One should cultivate patience, which is not commonly done in the present day life. Haste makes waste; waste begets worry. So one should develop patience to avoid worry.

Our mind is compared to the moon; when thoughts arise, it is eclipsing the real nature just as the moon is eclipsed by the shadow of the earth. If you keep the heart pure of the malaise of evil qualities, you will have no worry at all. You should not allow wicked thoughts to stick to you. In a pond, along with lotus flowers that bloom, you have leeches also thriving, which suck your blood. Lotus cannot sustain without water. So also, human life cannot sustain without love. But you should not let the leeches of worry breed in your heart of love. You can travel in a boat on the surface of water but should not allow water to enter into the boat. You should not allow attachment to worldly objects enter into your boat of life.

All are embodiments of God

You are all embodiments of God. God is all-pervasive. You cannot classify some as divine and some others as not divine. All are reflections of the same Atma, which is common to all. This Atmic Principle is also Sun-principle and Truth Principle (Surya Thathwa and Sathya Thathwa). When one follows sathya, prema (love) will be the reflection.

When you walk on the road, your shadow may fall on bad patches like drains,

garbage, etc., but you are not affected by it. You should proceed unmindful of the path of the shadow. So also, you must follow your heart with good feelings unmindful of obstacles that may appear to come in the way. You should practice truth. You should be grateful to a person that came to your rescue in times of crisis. You should not forget the help done by others. There are two things that you should forget. Forget the harm done by others to you; otherwise you will be harboring vengeance to retaliate. Secondly, forget the help you did to others as that will make you expect reward from them and result in disappointment when it is not forthcoming. By observing these two norms, the purity of your heart will be maintained.

"I am Atma, You are Atma"

Adi Sankara said, "There is no mother, father, no relatives or friends. The only reality is "you". Therefore, be careful and awake to the Reality." You should not worry about the family, since these are passing clouds. Vyasa was a great sage who gave the eighteen Puranas, Ithihasa, and Brahma-Sutra. But when his son Suka left the house in pursuit of Brahmajnana, Vyasa ran after him shouting, "Oh son! Stop. Do not go away." Suka stopped and told his father, "I am not your son. You are not my father. I am Atma, you are Atma. Why are you under illusion?" So, you must gradually give up all attachments and turn only to God. Having love in your heart, when you put on the divine glasses everything will be divine!

You are filled with worries throughout your life. Birth is a worry, life itself is a worry, family, child, failure, sickness, old age, death, mystery are all worries. These are all imaginary and psychological.

You say, "My body, my mind, my hand, and my worry." Does this not mean that you are separate from worry? It is your own creation. You are only one. You are Atma, the Truth. Truth is God. There is only one God who is described in many ways. Everyone should realize this Truth by spiritual sadhana (spiritual exercise). This involves sacrifice. The Vedas declare that you can attain immortality, not by any means other than sacrifice. You have to develop the spirit of sacrifice. Thyaga (sacrifice) is yoga. Doing your duty

efficiently is yoga.

Throughout life you should go on doing your duty without aspiring for results. When you give to others, you should have the attitude you are not the giver and the other is not the receiver. It should be considered as an opportunity that is offered by the Divine.

Develop love. Follow truth and right conduct (sathya and dharma). You will shine as the Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswara. You should not feel that you have no powers. You should have self-confidence, which will lead to self satisfaction, which in turn encourages self-sacrifice, resulting in Selfrealization. You must ensure that your self-confidence is unshakable.

What is self-confidence? Self is Atma. This is conscience. Because of the senses, it is not realized. It should be associated with higher consciousness and not the consciousness that pertains to the senses. Man should try to realize the supreme heights of consciousness. Consciousness is uniformly present in all. It is "chaithanya". When people turn toward worldly objects, which are transient, they pursue the negative path. When they turn toward the Self, it is positive path.

Realise the human values

The human body is composed of the five elements, five sheaths, and five vital airs (pancha bhootas, pancha koshas, and pancha pranas). Man has also got five faculties: sathya (truth), dharma (righteousness), santhi (peace), prema (love), and ahimsa (nonviolence), which are termed human values. Having been born as a human, it is a pity that one does not realize these values. Anger, hatred, and lust are not human values at all. These are animal qualities unbecoming of a human being. With truthful thoughts one can become a good person. But one without thoughts becomes a sadhu (wise person). He will always be in peace. Thoughts are the root cause of asanthi (lack of peace).

First of the human values is sathya or truth. If this is absent, you lose one part

of human nature. If you don't follow dharma, you lose two parts. If you lose santhi, you lose three parts. And when you have no prema, you have lost the entire human nature and the body will be one with all limbs amputated.

Sathya, the first value, is like the head, and one who fails to follow truth will be a headless torso. Dharma is like the shoulder, and one without this will not be able to do anything, having become handicapped. He loses bhuja-balam. One without santhi is akin to a man without stomach. How can one take food, which is essential to provide energy for living, when there is no stomach? If you lose these three, the life is without love and becomes valueless. Love is essential for life. One without love is only a living corpse!

Spiritual heart is the seat of love

Nowadays, you find hatred rampant everywhere. There is no love. The seat of love is the spiritual heart, on the right of the body. Nobody bothers to recognize this. The absence of love leads to absence of unity. When there is no unity, there is no purity and without purity, divinity cannot be realised.

Now what people generally do is to breed enmity and narrow feelings of community. If there is love, the divisive feelings of community and enmity will not be there. Even when one greets another with "Hello", it is of low caliber and is only artificial and superficial, not coming from the heart. If you want to develop love, you must go on adding to your circle of friends, loving and serving all. It should be expansion and not contraction. It may extend to cover the entire humanity. "Ekatma Sarvabhoothantharatma (the one Atma is there in all beings)." This is the basis of the Brahma thathwa, (Principle of Divinity). When love is lost everything is lost in life.

Love in speech is Sathya.

Love in action is Dharma.

Love in thought is Santhi.

Love helps in the consummation

of these three values.

Embodiments of Love! You are struggling only to acquire ephemeral worldly attainments such as wealth, fame, status, and position.

To foster human values, you have to control your senses. Merely studying scriptures, undertaking pilgrimages, and meeting saints will not help you to achieve realization. Buddha did all these spiritual exercises could not achieve the goal. Finally, he learnt that one has to turn his vision within with the help of the eye of wisdom to attain nirvana.

Buddha proclaimed that the word "man" should be interpreted thus:

M stands for Maya, which has to be controlled and got over.

A stands for Atma (understand the Atmic Principle). N stands for Nirv"na (attain liberation).

When you get over the illusion of maya and understand Atma you get nirvana (liberation). Therefore, Buddha preached sense control and eradication of desires as of primary importance. He advocated good vision, good speech, good hearing, good action, and good thoughts as essential for human beings. Whatever sadhana (spiritual exercises) one may do, it will be wasteful if there is no sense-control. You should know the divinity that is immanent in everyone. Though many are aware of this truth, they do not follow this in practice. For example, though everyone knows that one should speak the truth, they tell lies to escape from a problem or to have success in business. If you tell a lie to escape from a temporary problem, later on you will have to face a bigger permanent problem. You should control this temptation of telling a lie to get over a temporary situation.

Take the example of Harischandra. He sacrificed his kingdom, wife, son, and everything and he himself served as a slave in a crematorium. When

Viswamitra gave an offer to Harischandra that he would give all his possessions if he told just one lie, Harischandra flatly refused to deviate from sathya even if it cost his life. That is why Lord Siva appeared before him and blessed him, giving him back his throne, reviving his dead son back to life, and restoring his wife, and making him rule the kingdom with renewed fame. Because of his extraordinary adherence to Truth, he is even now remembered as "Sathya Harischandra".

Do not be afraid to speak the truth

Nowadays, people resort to telling lies, fearing that they may get into trouble otherwise. Why should you fear to speak the truth? You have to fear only when you commit mistakes. Today, there is fear rampant everywhere. Life is fear-stricken! Practice sathya (truth) and dharma (right conduct). If you practice these, you need not fear. When you aren't able to utter the truth, you may desist from speaking and keep silent.

Once, a sage was doing penance in quest of Truth. One day, Lord Siva wanted to test this sage. He came in the guise of a hunter who was chasing a deer. The deer passed through the place where the sage was seated. A while later, the hunter approached the sage and asked him whether he had seen the deer that passed in that direction. The sage was in a dilemma. If he spoke the truth, the deer would be slain by the hunter. If he did not speak the truth, he will be infringing the code of conduct. So he prayed to the Lord to show him the correct path to save him in such a situation. Suddenly, vibration occurred in his mind and he told the hunter, "The eyes see something. But they can't speak. The tongue speaks but cannot see. Under these circumstances, what can I say?" Lord Siva appeared before him in his true form and blessed him with liberation.

So you should not utter untruth simply to escape a situation. If there is difficulty, be silent.

Conscience and consciousness

Conscience is limited as an adjunct of the body. How does this merge with Consciousness ? You have a balloon with air inside. If you go on blowing more and more air into it, the walls become thinner, and finally it bursts. Then the air inside merges with the air outside. This is merger of the limited air, finite with the infinite.

You go on expanding your love. Don't confine it to your own circle of kith and Kin. Then finally the merger with the infinite will occur. This is liberation.

Start the day with love, Fill the day with love, End the day with love, This is the way to God.

Just as sugar, which is sweet, when mixed with water, tea, coffee, or anything, imparts sweetness to the dish, prema (love) also is sweet (madhura) and will impart its sweetness to your words, actions, and thoughts. Love is the foundation, truth is the wall, santhi (peace) is the roof of your life's mansion. Truth based on love is the best dharma (righteousness). Love is there in everyone naturally. Instead of directing it toward your wife, children and relatives, direct it toward God. By this diversion, you will get whatever you want. The heart is given by God. Offer it to Him. You need not have any fear. Surrender your body to Him, since this is also a gift of God. Every action should be underlined by prema (love). Do seva (selfless service) with love. You must cultivate the feeling that you belong to God.

God is your old friend

You need not glorify God because that may keep you at a distance from God. God is not new. He was there before your birth and He will be there eternally. Where is the need to glorify Him? You must take Him as your old friend. When you acquire friendship newly with a person, you speak to him with respectful words. When he becomes an old friend you treat him with liberty and privilege. Consider God also as an old friend, so that you can enjoy the liberty and be free with Him.

Devotees think that they can please God by describing His glory. This is not

true. You can melt His heart only with love. Plant the seeds of love and let the water of good qualities flow on the dry land so that the seeds will sprout and be fed by rain of love and grow into a tree sheltering all.

Embodiments of Love! You are all basically embodiments of love only. There is no one in the world without love. One will love at least his own kith and kin and another may love money. Anyway, the basis is love, which is divine. You are a combination of love, peace, truth, and God. You are mutually related to one another through the bondage of love in spiritual path. You must uphold dharma by truth and Love.

A seed to sprout should be sown in earth or field. Sow the seed of love in the field of your heart.

It will grow as a tree and yield fruit of bliss.

Prema thathwa is Jnana thathwa and Dharma thathwa. Understand and practice it.

One of the principles of straight living is the practice of silence. For the voice of God can be heard in the region of your heart only when the tongue is stilled and the storm is stilled and the water is calm. There will no temptation for others to shout when you talk to them in whispers. Set the level of your tone yourself; as low as possible, as high as necessary to reach the outermost boundary of the circle you are addressing. Conserve sound, since it is the treasure of the element akasa (ether), an emanation from God Himself.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

12. Render service with divine awareness

Date: 18 April 1998 / Location: Kodaikanal

God shines with effulgence in the universe, And the universe shines in God.
This is the friendship between
The Creator and the creation.

The universe is the effect and God is the cause. No one can fully understand the relationship between the Creator and the creation. The whole world is a combination of cause and effect. The universe is a manifestation of Divinity. Viswam Vishnu Swaroopam (All animate and inanimate objects of the world are divine). Though the forms are multifarious, all are essentially divine. We are not able to understand divinity, because we are carried away by the external physical appearances. Because of unlimited desires, man is suffering from unnecessary anxiety and gets frustrated with disappointment due to unfulfilled desires.

Divinity is the mixing of positive and negative. The world is positive and man is negative. What the modern man wants is good results having done bad deeds. How can you get mangoes when you have sown the seed of lime? As the seed, so is the tree; as the tree, so is the fruit.

When a child is born there is no chain of gold or diamond or gems around the neck. But Brahma provides the invisible chain (kantha mala) of results of past actions - good and bad - though no one may be aware of this. Human quality has become rare amongst people now; and animal quality is predominant. Man is wasting the precious gift of human life in unworthy pursuits.

The basic alphabet is to know the human quality

Many people undertake spiritual sadhana (spiritual exercise) in order to realize divinity. If they don't understand human qualities, all these efforts become exercises in futility. Without learning the alphabet, how can one pick up the meaning and usage of words, phrases and sentences? Develop human values and unflinching faith in the Divine.

The basic alphabet is to know the human quality. Only after mastering this can you do other sadhanas. Even great saints, poets, and seers don't understand divinity and tread on the wrong path. They subject themselves to selfish pursuits and blame God when their aspirations are not fulfilled.

Even the great saint composer Thyagaraja, when he was once subjected to misery and suffering, doubted whether the sakthi (power of the Lord) had diminished. On reflection, he realized that the defect was only in his devotion and not in the power of the Lord, who had helped even a monkey to cross the ocean, the army of monkeys to build a bridge across the sea and Lakshmana to serve Rama for 14 years and Bharata to worship Rama's divine sandals (padukas).

People should understand that there is no pleasure without pain and pain is only an interval between two pleasures. Whenever you get a painful experience you should have the firm faith that it is the foreboding for something good that you will be enjoying in the near future.

Manickavasagar, a minister with the Pandyan King, was sent on a mission to buy horses but was so influenced by a saint that he turned his attention Godward, resulting in spending his time and money in renovating a Siva temple. When the king summoned him and put him in prison, Manickavasagar was not at all sorry but started composing poems on Lord Siva, which were appreciated by the Lord Himself. These are still shining as "Thiruvachakam", the most famous prayer to God sung even today in all Siva temples of Tamil Nadu.

When you spend your time thinking of God and chanting His name, you will never come to grief. Follow the dictum, "Sathyam vada, dharmam chara

(speak the truth, practice righteousness)." You are bound to have success always. Truth is common to all countries and all times. If you follow truth, which is God, you will invariably do only righteous work. Divine love will flow to such persons. This will ensure your doing sacred work. There cannot be love without dharma and dharma without love.

Follow the conscience

God is in your heart. Wherever you go and whatever you do, it is known to God even if you think none has noticed it. People start worrying about petty temporary things that are passing clouds and sometimes falter in faith and devotion. This is not correct. You should never give up devotion. Your good work will beget God's grace without fail. Sin or merit comes only from your own deeds, not from outside.

God is in you only in the form of conscience. Follow the conscience. Some do not do so because of bodily attachment. Gayathri mantra starts with "Om Bhur Bhuvah Suvaha." Bhur represents materialization - body. Bhuvah represents vibration or prana (life force). Suvaha represents radiation - Prajnana or Atma. All these three - radiation, vibration, and materialization - are in the human body itself. Prajnanam is constant integrated awareness. You are all Brahman.

From ancient times, this sacred Bharat (India) has been proclaiming to the world the universal prayer "Loka samasta sukhino bhavanthu (let the people all over the world be happy.)" Just as the same electric current passes through all electric gadgets of various types and sizes, so also Atma is common in all beings. Stars are many, sky is one; cows are of many colors, milk is one; jewels are many, gold is one; beings are many, breath is one; countries are many, earth is one. Therefore, comprehend the One in many, the unity in diversity.

You have only to do good deeds

Stop worrying. Discriminate between good and bad. Do not harm anyone.

Then you can have peace.

Follow the conscience. That is the Divine in you. You are endowed with the precious gift of body with the sense organs and limbs. It is given to you to discharge your duties in the world. You have only to do sathkarma (good deeds). You should do things that are acceptable to God and not to please humans. Sath means God. You should have the company of God or proximity to God. Chith is awareness. The combination of Sath and Chith gives Ananda - divine bliss.

Sath is sugar and Chith is water. If you mix them, the names of sugar and water go away and you get syrup. Sath is Atma and Chith is body (deha); both combine to make up the person. Sath is Sivam and Chith is Parvathi. So, the combination is Ardhanareeshwara (half male and half female). Every one of us is Ardhanareeshwara.

Fill up the tank of heart with love. This will flow through the taps of all sense organs and also the five pranas (vital airs). We refer to humanity as mankind. Does this not imply that as a human you should radiate kindness?

The essence of the Puranas

Sage Vyasa gave the essence of all eighteen Puranas as, "Paropakaraya punyaya, papaya Parapeedanam". In this, we generally take it that paropakara means helping others. Para means God, upa means near, kara means do, make efforts. The import is that you should make efforts to be near God. It is meritorious.

Papaya Parapeedanam means to see the many in One is sin. How can you avoid this? You have to see the One in many, or unity in diversity. This is the correct thing to do. That is to say: help ever, hurt never, perceiving Atma in all. If you are not able to do any help, sit down quietly and do no harm.

See Divinity in all and do sacred activities. Don't waste the elements or misuse them. Being bound to the world with attachment to worldly objects is

the negative approach. Make the positive approach: turning toward Divinity. The difference lies only in turning your mind. Turn to world, you get bound; turn to God, you get liberated.

God is without birth and death and is an eternal witness; you must strive hard to earn the love of God. One who receives the love of God will be earning the love of all. If you realise Love is God, you will not get attached to worldly things.

No one can take the wealth of the world with him when he dies. This is a truth we have seen throughout the history of mankind. Many great kings, emperors, saints and seers have left without taking anything. When you are born you don't bring anything with you.

Render service in divine awareness. In order to lead a fruitful and meaningful life, render service to mankind, which will take you nearer to God. In a football game, the six players on either side go on kicking the ball till it is sent to the goal. The goal of life consists of two posts: secular and spiritual. You must see that the ball does not go beyond the posts. It should be hit within the two posts. You are born as human with the goal that you should not be born again. You must live within the frames of secular and spiritual pursuits. Then only you will be attaining liberation.

The six bad qualities - lust, anger, greed, desire, pride, and jealousy - are on one side and good qualities - truth, right conduct, peace, love, nonviolence, and sacrifice - are on the other side. The game is between these two teams. Another lesson we learn from this game is that the football is kicked as long as it is inflated with air. If it is deflated, you take it in your hands.

You should say to yourself, "I am not man, I am divine; I am not body, I am Atma." The body is like a dustbin of all foul matter and flesh and bones. You are Chaithanya or "awareness". The instruments are negative and work through positive divinity. Tread along the divine path so that you can get peace. Let us experience peace and share it with others. Then we will be liberated, and the world will be happy.

13. Glory of womanhood

Date: 19 April 1998 / Location: Kodaikanal

In this country of Bharat was born Savitri, the woman of chastity,
Who could fight with Yama, the God of Death, and bring back to life her dead husband.

In this country of Bharat was born Chandramathi, the paragon of virtue,
Who suffered the terrible ordeals of her husband, Harischandra.

Sita, the devoted consort of Rama and the divine daughter of Mother Earth,
Who demonstrated her chastity by coming out of blazing fire unscathed, was born in this Bharat.

Damayanthi, also a woman of pristine purity and chastity,
who stood by her husband Nala Through thick and thin, was born in the sacred land of Bharat.

Embodiments of Love!

This Bharat is the land of sanctity and chastity, which has given birth to such great women of exceptional character, who lent glory to Bharat as a nation of heroic women.

From ancient times, the presiding deity of Gayathri mantra, Gayathri Devi, has been worshipped as the Mother of the Vedas, which are held as the most ancient and authoritative scriptures of wisdom. Gayathri mantra originated in this holy land. The glory of this mantra has spread all over the world.

The people of Bharat have worshipped Gayathri in several ways and have redeemed their lives. Gayathri has been worshipped in four forms: (1) Sathyavathi, (2) Angavathi, (3) Anyavathi, and (4) Nidhanavathi. All the four are equally sacred, and elicit limitless grace of the Divine.

The first one, Sathyavathi, signifies the existence of Atma in every being, just as butter is present in every drop of milk. It proclaims,

"Ekatma sarvabhutantaratma (One Atma is present in all beings)."

There is one *Sath* (truth), which is spoken of in many ways by the wise.

The second one is Angavathi, which signifies the five elements present in all beings and also the five senses of hearing, touch, vision, taste, and smell. There is nothing in this world that is not composed of the five elements. This Angavathi is *pancha bhuta swarupa* (the embodiment of the five basic elements).

The third one, Anyavathi, refers to the attributes of the different forms of the Divine. For example, Lord Siva is associated with trident, three eyes, etc. Vishnu is always described as having conch, discus, mace, and so on. We call him *Sankhachakragadapani*.

Ganapathi is identified by his elephant face and big belly. He is first to be worshipped in all rituals. Saraswathi is described as one with veena in hand, through which she is teaching the Divine sound principle as *Nadabrahma*. Thus Anyavathi signifies the different constituents of the forms of the Divine.

Nidhanavathi, the fourth, teaches the nine types of worship, namely, *sravanam* (hearing), *keerthanam* (singing the glory of God), *smaranam* (thinking of the names of God), *pada sevanam* (service), *vandanam* (prostration), *archanam* (worship), *dasyam* (servitude), *sakhyam* (friendship), and *atmanivedanam* (surrender).

The world is symbolised by these four forms of Gayathri. That is why it is described as Nature (*Prakriti*), a female form (*Sthri*). We refer to our native country as motherland.

The importance attached to women in Bharat

Bharat (India) has always accorded a high place to women as the upholders of all social virtues. The very fact that in mentioning the names of the divine couples like Vishnu and Lakshmi, Siva and Parvathi, the name of the consort is given the first place, as in Lakshmi Narayana, Uma Maheswara, shows what importance Bharatiyas (people of Bharat) attached to women.

People generally speak of women as the weaker sex. At last, now Bharatiyas recognize that women cannot be considered as weak. The woman in charge of the home plays the main role in bringing good name and fame to the home. Not only in respect of individual homes but also in the good name of the country and the world the woman plays the main role. From ancient times, woman has been accorded a high place in the society.

The scriptures have ascribed seven virtues to women as a class: *sathya* (truth), *prema* (love), *dharma* (righteousness), *santhi* (peace), *sahana* (tolerance), *ananda* (bliss), *svanubhuti* (spirituality). The woman at home has been held in high esteem as *Grihalakshmi*, the goddess of prosperity of the home. When her husband faces difficulties, the wife readily shares the burden and is prepared to do anything, to undergo any suffering or even sacrifice her life for the welfare of her husband and the family. It is the woman of the home who is behind the good reputation of the home. The woman is the embodiment of sacrifice. Though the male counterpart may also do sacrifice, it will be with a selfish tinge, while the woman's sacrifice is absolutely selfless. Therefore, we should be proud of our women.

High status of women in ancient India

If Bharatiya culture and morality have survived despite long periods of foreign rule, it is to no small measure due to the courage and fortitude of the nation's women. As the earlier speaker, Dr. Geetha Reddy, has pointed out, women shine as soldiers with the weapons of sathya and dharma. They will not normally tell lies. There may be occasions when a few of them may do so

unknowingly. But, by and large, they as a class uphold truth and righteous conduct. They follow the Vedic injunction,

Sathyam vada, dharmam chara (speak the truth and practice righteousness).

Once, King Janaka conducted a discussion regarding the most suitable person who should confer honour on him as a scholar. Even though there were great sages and highly learned scholars like Yajnavalkya in the assembly, he decided that Gargi was the fittest person from whom he should receive it.

This is an example to prove how women have been held in high esteem from ancient times by ordinary citizens and kings too. While women were held in high esteem in ancient times, in later years there was a decline in their status, and even ascetics denied proper recognition to them. For instance, when sage Mathanga wanted to admit the great woman devotee Sabari into his ashram, many of his disciples who were renunciants raised objection. But the noble Mathanga recognized the extraordinary merit of Sabari's chastity, sincere devotion, and dedication toward pursuit of liberation and admitted her to his ashram. She finally proved to the world how devoted she was to Rama and how she got liberated after worshipping Him true to the teachings of sage Mathanga.

Women's role in home and society

Because of the evil influence of modern education, people consider women as toys and tend to treat them as puppets. The women have very auspicious and noble qualities. But men consider them as cooks to be confined to the kitchen and the four walls of the house. What they forget is that women not only manage the affairs of the family but also look after the health and well-being of all the members of the household.

The Government has now started conferring the honorific titles of Padmashri, Padmabhushan, etc., on its chosen citizens. But women have had more respectable and valuable titles of *Grihalakshmi* (the goddess of prosperity of the home), *Dharmapathni* (devoted wife), *Ardhangi* (the better half), etc. They had these titles because of their good qualities and spirit of sacrifice.

Questions are raised like who will look after the home if women go to offices and who will teach her children if the mother goes to school to teach other children, and so on. Some say that though the woman goes to work to solve the financial problem, bigger problems may have to be confronted by her going to work. But, in the modern world, it is necessary for the women to share the burden of maintaining the family with their husbands, so the women should also pursue studies as much as possible and take up suitable jobs to share the burden of the family. It would smack of selfishness if the males prevent them from going to work for which they have acquired the requisite qualifications.

Women can control the whole world by themselves by virtue of their inherent qualities of love and spirit of sacrifice (*prema bhava* and *thyaga bhava*). Anger is alien to women, and it is more rampant in men. Though there may be instances when a woman may give vent to anger, such occasions are few and far between while in men the reverse is the case.

Savitri fought with the God of Death (Yama) and succeeded in getting her husband back to life. Can you find any instance in the scriptures or history where a husband was prepared to do sacrifice for his wife? If the wife is dead, he is ready to have a second marriage. Such unfair things are happening in the world in respect of women. That is why it was decided to celebrate not only 19 November but the 19th of every month as Mahila Day.

Women are heirs of our ancient culture

Women devotees in the Sai Movement are participating in large numbers enthusiastically in service activities such as helping the women of weaker sections to learn some useful trades like tailoring, etc., so that they can earn

some money for the family and also spend their time usefully. If such activities are taken up all over the country, the country will prosper. This sacred work is typical of the culture of our ancient country.

Women are the heirs of our ancient culture. Culture means refinement. Women are the torch-bearers of refinement and they are toiling for the emancipation of the nation.

Geetha Reddy spoke about the exploits of great women in the battlefield like Rani of Jhansi, who fought a terrific battle and gave up her life rather than surrendering to the foe when she was overpowered. She lived up to the teachings of the Vedas that only through sacrifice can one attain liberation. Even in this Kali Age, there may be some exceptional cases where women may not be following sathya and dharma. But mostly they live up to these ideals.

However, they are not encouraged to show their ability. Even in the family, they have to face obstacles and confrontations. If women are given due recognition and encouragement, they will shine with brilliance in all fields and will serve the house, country, and the entire world gloriously, contributing to the welfare of the entire humanity.

Women show dedication and sincerity in work

No doubt, there may be a few who may not be having good qualities characteristic of a woman. But in any class of society, this is inescapable. Take, for example, the orange fruit. In order to enjoy the juice you have to peel out the bitter portions of the outer skin and seeds. Even so, the fruit of human life has much bitter portions as outer skin. You have to remove this and weed out the seeds of bad qualities, so that you can taste the sweet juice inside.

If man follows the example of the woman to imbibe sacred and sacrificial qualities, the world will definitely improve. They say "Udhyogam purusha lakshanam (a man is known by his job)", as though only males can do jobs. It

is a misnomer. Women are also doing all types of jobs equal to men. In fact, women work more sincerely and with dedication.

Recently, Swami questioned a director of the Indian Telephone Industries when he came to see Swami about the percentage of women employed in the industry. He said 99% of the employees were women and added that women did ten times better work than men. They don't stop or step out until the allotted work is completed. They have the work culture better than men. Nowhere in any sacred text is it stated that women should only cook and not do work like men.

As a matter of fact, even man has to learn cooking and house-keeping to help his wife in times of need. Awareness is life. Awareness means total knowledge and not partial knowledge. This enthusiasm is full in women. Even men should make effort to learn everything.

Women have hidden power immanent in them. You have to encourage them to exhibit their talents. An army commander, who makes all sepoy in the army shiver before him, shivers before his wife when she confronts him after he reaches home. Similarly, the principal of an institution, before whom the students may shiver with fear, may himself feel shiver going down his spine when confronted by his wife for an explanation why he came late.

God makes no distinctions

Generally, the term Purusha is taken to mean only males, basing on physical form. It is not true. Purusha represents the Atma or Chaitanya in all, which is in the body from top to toe. *Purusharthas* (prime goals of life) are four, namely, dharma, artha, kama, and moksha (right conduct, wealth, desire, and liberation). This does not apply only to males. It is common to both males and females.

Actually, women follow the fundamental Dharma truly, while men act selfishly. One who realizes divinity is Purusha. Swadharma means Atmadharma, not the dharma pertaining to the body. This is explained in the

Bhagavad Gita. This was the ideal followed by the ancients.

Artha does not merely mean wealth or money. It means wealth of wisdom. Both men and women have the right to experience non-duality, which is real wisdom.

Kama is the desire not for worldly objects but for God.

Moksha (liberation) is the fourth objective of life. Desire for moksha is common to all, whether men or women. Moksha is moha kshaya or shedding of bodily attachment. Without following the senses or mind, if you follow conscience, you can progress toward moksha.

Women should be encouraged to play their roles

In order to teach the subtleties of the scriptural texts, and encourage women to play their role in society, 19th is fixed as Mahila Day. Dharma can be made to occupy its position in society and restored to its pristine glory only by women. But men also have equal right and they should participate in this mighty and sacred effort so that the country will prosper. Even if men don't actively participate, they should at least let the women do the work without interference.

Krishna said in the Gita,

"Ananyaschinthayantho mam ye janah paryupasathe (whoever worships me: to the exclusion of all others)," "thesham: nithyabhiyukthanam yogakshemam vahamyaham (I look after the welfare of such unwavering devotees)."

This is an assurance to one and all with no distinctions of any kind. Everyone should cultivate a similar sense of universality.

The Divine is omnipresent. Differences based on caste, creed, sex, or nationality have to be given up. God has no distinctions. You should also practice this principle of equality.

God is everywhere. You cannot restrict Him to your narrow limits as though He is confined only to the form contained in your small picture frame. It is a folly to think so. He has thousands of forms and names. When you are doing *Sahasranama archana* (worshipping the thousand names of the Lord) you mention each of the thousand names and offer a flower. All are offered to only that one picture and not to thousands of pictures. All may refer to one God only. You may say Allah, Jesus, Rama or Krishna and so on. But all refer to only one God. If you say the form you worship is the only God, you are limiting the Infinite to a narrow finite entity.

Give up all religious differences. T

here is only one religion, that of love.
There is only one caste, that of humanity.
There is only one language, that of the heart.

I spoke earlier of the four parts of Gayathri and five elements. All are divine. They have no caste or creed or any such differences.

If you realize the unity, you get purity and divinity. You are forgetting this and breed feelings of enmity and community. God has no such distinction of community, nationality or sex. In ancient times, they did not have such differences. Do not give room for any such feelings. God is one and everyone in this world has equal right to enjoy His Grace.

14. Going beyond the mind

Date: 20 April 1998 / Location: Kodaikanal

Discard bad company

Associate with good people,

Do always meritorious deeds, Discriminate between what is eternal and What is transient.

[Sanskrit sloka]

Embodiments of Love!

Today people are making efforts to know what happiness is and are inquiring only about the external objects of the world, but no one attempts to know himself. It is of no use knowing about everything in the world without knowing about oneself. The whole world is based only on "I". When you ask someone, whether a millionaire or a pauper, "Who are you?", the answer will invariably commence with "I", I am so and so will be the usual answer. On further questioning one may say, I am a doctor or I am a businessman. The doctor refers to the work he does and the businessman refers to his profession. If you ask the name, the reply may come as Ramayya or Krishnayya. These are names assigned to the body. These are all transient. These do not represent the real "you". You are a permanent entity.

Without understanding this truth, man is carried away by ephemeral things. He indulges only in selfish pursuits. He is of no use to the world. Everyone is born in society and brought up by society and is a limb of society. Only when one works for society can one be prosperous. Today everyone tries to live for himself without caring for the society.

Seek the source of bliss

You should not forget that self-confidence is the foundation of life. Just as you cannot build walls without foundation, you should lead a useful life based on self-confidence only. When this is firm, the superstructure of self-satisfaction and self-awareness may be raised, leading to self-realization or bliss, which is the goal of life. When man has forgotten the foundation, how can he expect happiness or peace?

Self is Atma. One must know this reality and discard attachment to the body, mind, and intellect. Atma is the master, recognize this and be the mastermind. Don't identify yourself with your instruments. All the organs or the instruments of the body are propelled by vibration, which originates from Atma. But for this, man can't survive.

It is a pity that man forgets this principle of Atma and is bereft of happiness. Men only pretend to be happy and smiling. But they are not really happy. God is the master of happiness, and unless you identify with the Divine, you cannot be happy.

When you think of God and pray to Him, you should not ask for trivial things. You should ask for a thing that is not in you and is in God. It is bliss that isn't in you, and God is the embodiment of bliss. So, you should pray only for this.

People call themselves devotees and pray for fulfillment of their petty desires. They are not true devotees. God is described as, Nithyanandam Paramasukhadam, Kevalam Jnanamurthim." So, you have to pray only for this bliss. If you inquire deeply, God is not away from you.

Good and bad experiences emanate from you only. As you sow, so you reap. All resultant effects arise only from the cause of your actions. One who understands this truth alone can understand the Divine Principle.

In spite of many efforts and sadhana (spiritual exercise), one is not able to attain realisation of divinity because the vision is not good. Buddha investigated into this very deeply and found out in the end that mind is the stumbling block for progress toward realisation and became "Amanaska", that

is, he eliminated the obstacles of the mind and attained Nirvana (liberation). He realized the Atma.

How to get rid of this mind? You can do this only by directing your attention to the intellect and start discriminating as to what is eternal and what is ephemeral.

You should be beyond feelings and desires

Discarding the pursuit of bookish knowledge, which is superficial, you must pursue discriminatory knowledge. In this pursuit, you should not discriminate for your own self interest. You should have fundamental discrimination for the welfare of all. This is broadmindedness and expansion of love. You should not have a narrow outlook, which is contraction of love. You say, "hello," while greeting a friend. It is not reflecting your love. You should be hollow inside, that is beyond feelings and desires. You should proceed beyond mind.

Buddha contemplated for six years before he could achieve this: "Buddhigrahyam Atheenathriyam." He went beyond the body, mind, and intellect to realise the Atma.

Today man is only acting as actors do in a cinema. Everything is only pretension, tantamount to hypocrisy. The term "manava", referring to "man", when analyzed gives the meaning that man is one who overcomes illusion (ma is maya; na is no; va is conduct). What is maya? it is to consider a nonexisting thing as existing.

When you walk, your shadow is following you. Every action has reaction, resound, and reflection. Even your feelings and thoughts are reflected in your behavior. As long as you are filled with thoughts, you cannot make any progress on the spiritual path.

As I have explained in an earlier talk, the term "man" itself has to be interpreted as M (Maya), A (Atma), N (Nirvana), that is, only when you overcome maya you can realize the Atma and attain nirvana (liberation). This

can be attained only by self-confidence, meaning confidence in the Atma and not in the instruments thereof.

Man is crestfallen because of his attachment to body

Today, man is beset with worries and appears crestfallen because of his attachment to body and worldly objects. He is devoting all his attention to his family, acquisition of wealth, and fame. If he just devotes a small fraction of this attention to God, he can get everything. Why don't you have this faith in the All-powerful Divine?

You are prepared to sacrifice for the sake of petty worldly things. If you do this for the sake of the Divine, you can get unlimited grace, by which you and your family and those for whom you care will have peace and happiness.

Bharatiyas (Indians) have always said their prayer for the happiness and welfare of the entire world. This is the correct prayer that you should make to God. You are also part of the world and you will also enjoy peace and happiness along with others.

Cultivate divine thoughts

The term Bharata has a very sacred significance. Bha represents self-effulgent light. One who strives for seeking the self-effulgent Atma is a Bharatiya. In music also, the term Bharata has a unique significance: Bha indicates bhavam (feeling), ra indicates ragam (tune), and ta indicates talam (beat). The combination of bhava, raga, and tala in harmony makes music pleasant to hear. Similarly, in all aspects such as moral, ethical, and spiritual, divine thoughts should be pervading. This is the characteristic of the Bharatiyas.

God is Sath-Chith-Ananda. With the Sath (eternal feeling), you should seek Chith (spiritual wisdom). Then you get Ananda (bliss). You can get Ananda only from Ananda and not from a state of depression.

You should worship the Lord with love, since love is God and God is love. This gives you real happiness. Today people pretend as if they love while their inner feeling is not filled with love. "Yad bhavam thath bhavathi. As your feelings, so will be the result." Now we find that feelings are different from expression.

You do not know when this body will cease to function - in childhood, boyhood, youth or old age. Death is certain. Though the body is like a garbage dump full of fecal matter, we have to maintain it in good condition because it is also the temple of God, who resides therein.

The body by itself cannot help you to cross the ocean of life. You have to surrender to the Lord. From dawn to dusk, one is engaged only in pursuit of ways and means to fill the belly. People waste their life in this way without making effort to have a vision of the Divine. They stand in queue for a long time to buy a ticket for a movie or for travel in bus, but they don't like to stand in the queue for darshan of the Divine, who can confer such great bliss on them as nothing else can. Take the example of trees, which bear sweet fruits for others but do not themselves take; cows, which give milk to others but do not taste even a drop; rivers, which provide copious supply of water for the people and animals and birds too but do not take even a bit of it themselves. Man is only enjoying everything himself and is not doing anything for the society at large. Dharma protects those who protect it but will destroy those who attempt to destroy it!

Knock at the correct door

Embodiments of Love!

You have got this precious human life as Divine gift. Do

not waste it by seeking worldly pleasures. Pray to God and serve God by serving humanity.

Adi Sankara was propagating advaita jnana (wisdom of nonduality) all

through famous Bhaja Govindam verses. He said mere scholarship will not come to one's rescue at the time of death. One has to pray and worship God in order to get released from the bondage of birth and death. Devotion based on Prema Thathwa (Principal of Love) is essential for the emancipation of every human being. Advaita (Nonduality) is to see unity in diversity. [Swami held a silver tumbler in His hand.] This is a silver tumbler. The silver in this will be retained even after it is melted and made into a plate. The forms vary but silver is constant.

The Primordial Principle of Supreme Power is one. You may go on giving examples like jewels are many, gold is one; flowers are many, pooja is one; and so on. Though you offer different types of flowers to God, He likes only one flower that can never fade, that is the flower of your heart (hridaya pushpam). Since hridaya is the altar of the Lord, this is what he relishes most. You need food, clothing, and shelter for living. But you should not forget that the basis for all these is the Divine. Think constantly of the Divine even when immersed in worldly work.

Pray to God with pure heart with a mind bereft of desires. Do not pray for the fulfillment of petty desires. Love God with a desireless heart. How did Sabari get the grace of Rama, who gave her liberation? How did Jatayu enjoy the privilege of dying on the lap of the Lord? They did not pray for petty things. Instead of asking for a particular type of jewel like aring or a chain, ask for gold. You can make any jewel out of it.

Pray for love of God and you will get love

Forgetting the declaration and assurance given by the Lord you behave contrary to His direction. God proclaimed,

Ask and it shall be given,

Search and you will find,

Knock and the door will be opened.

You are not asking the right source. You are asking the world and not God, the Creator of the world. How can you get a response? You are also not searching for the right thing. You are searching only for wealth and position, which are unworthy and transient. At what door are you knocking? The door of grief. How can you get ananda (bliss)? If you comply with the directions of the Divine correctly, you will get appropriate results. If you open the door of your heart and love God, you get what you need. Do not ask for any petty boon. Ask for God Himself. He can give you anything and everything you need. Pray for love of God. You will get love. Through Divine love you will have prosperity here and hereafter.

15. We are all One

Date: 21 April 1998 / Location: Kodaikanal

The company of good people will be very hard to get.
While you have a lot of wicked ones all around the world,
There are pebbles available in plenty,
But Precious Gems And Diamonds Are Extremely Rare To Get.

Embodiments of Love!

In this universe, there are lakhs of species of living beings, but the human is the noblest and the highest species. If man loses money, he can get it back; if he loses a friend he can get another; if he loses his wife, even then he can re-marry and have another wife; if he loses his share of land, he can get another, but he cannot get back the body once it is lost. Man does not realize the high value of precious human life and is misusing it in many ways.

You must realize that once a night is passed, it won't come back. Once the river merges in the ocean, it cannot come back. When you eat a fruit, you cannot get it back in its original form. Man does not know his own value. He has several capacities and faculties. The first gift that a man possesses is *mathi* (intellect). The second is *sthithi* (position). The third one is *paristhithi* (circumstance), and the fourth is *gathi* (destiny). These constitute his *sampathi* (possessions).

Maintain mental balance to act properly

All things that are happening to man depend on his destiny alone. The mind is based on our own conduct, and it shapes our destiny. Mathi should be sound. Everything else depends on sthithi and sampathi. When one understands this, one can know one's destiny. Everyone has to maintain mental balance to act

properly.

Suppose a person has a knife in hand. They can cut vegetables, cook food, and consume it to appease hunger. On the other hand, if the person cuts the throat of another person it will lead to disastrous consequences. You must know the proper method to use any material. You must be aware of the different types of *sakthi* (power) with which you are gifted.

Human life can be compared to a big clock containing three needles (since the clock has hour, minute, and second hands) representing years, months, and days. They are moving in perfect union, and they decide your life span.

In spite of having these three regulatory factors, man is not leading a good life. Thirty days make a month, and 12 months make one year. You must know how to pass every day in the best possible way without wasting precious time. You must also know that everything happens according to the Divine Will.

The Divine cannot be expected to act according to your thoughts or desires. God is fully aware of the needs of the family, country, and world at large and confers the requisite benefits at the appropriate time. Let us take an example of how one gift of nature proves beneficial to some people, while it is not so for some others. Suppose a marriage function is being celebrated in one house, the family prays for the rain to stop to facilitate them. At the same time, a neighbor who has cultivable land, which is dry, prays for the rain to continue to pour in torrents to facilitate his cultivation of the land. God is impartial and will not submit to a particular individual's needs. He weighs the needs of all and maintains a balance.

The common malaise of all humanity

Generally all people are suffering from an incurable disease. It may be to a lesser degree in some while more severe in others. The difference is only in the severity, but all are suffering from this. It cannot be cured even by expert medical treatment by experienced doctors. This disease is "ego".

Where is the need to be egotistic for an ordinary mortal? When you consider your position in comparison to the entire world you are just an infinitesimal speck. In the world map, India is a small country, and Tamil Nadu is a part of this. In Tamil Nadu, Kodaikanal can be spotted only as a tiny dot. In this, what is your position as an individual?

When you analyze in this manner, you will find you are one of no consequence at all. If you think you are so big, inflated with ego, it is only sheer ignorance. If one identifies themselves with divinity, there will be no room for ego. All are divine in this world, and you are also one of the several billions of people. When you realize this truth, where is the scope for ego? It is due to ignorance that one feels egoistic and faces lots of problems because of this.

Thoughts lead to *karma* (action) and create feelings, which contribute to *sheelam* (character). Character makes a man deserving to be termed really human. So, one must develop character by having sacred thoughts and good deeds. For this, the primary requisite is control of the mind, which is the source of thoughts.

World is the effect for which God is the cause

The term for thought in Sanskrit is *sankalpa*, which means it is arising from heart, the seat of God (Sam). *Salokhya*, *saroopya*, *sameepya* and *sayujya* are all related to this "Sam", which is synonymous with Sath. *Sath* is changeless Truth (*Saswatham*).

When thoughts are good and based on the Divine, the stithi or state of man will be good. Sampathi does not mean worldly or physical comforts. It comprises *sath vichar* and *sath sankalpa* (good inquiry and good thoughts). Such good thoughts based on the changeless Truth will come only from merits acquired in previous lives (*poorva punya*).

This human birth itself is attained after innumerable lives of lower species. Since this is so, why should you venture to commit sinful deeds? It is your bad vision of the external world that makes you commit sins. So, you should

develop *samyak drishti* (good vision). You should look upon the world as the manifestation of the Divine (*viswam Vishnu swaroopam*). The world is the effect for which cause is God.

The whole universe is a phenomenon of cause and effect. It is foolish to look only at the external world considering it as mere *jada* (matter). You must see the reality behind the entire creation. If you see with divine vision, everything will be divine.

Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagath

You see Anil Kumar wearing glasses (spectacles). They appear to be an obstacle to his eyes but they help him to see more clearly. Similarly, if you wear glasses of love, you will be able to see the Divine in everything, though they may appear to be obstructing like the spectacles.

The main life principle is *prema* (love), without which there will be no love between mother and child, between husband and wife, or between friends. Love elevates the individual from human level to divinity. Now, man limits his love to his own kith and kin and other possessions, thus making it narrow. It should be expanded to cover all fellow beings. If love occupies the single seated chair of heart, there will be no room for jealousy, hatred, and other such evil feelings.

The great queen Madalasa used to sing a lullaby to her children inspiring them to realize the Atma, which was their reality, and cast off attachment to body. Even while the children were in the cradle, she taught them *Atmajnana*. She sent her three children to the forest to learn scriptures when they came of age. By the time she was about to send her fourth son also, her husband intervened and prevented her from doing so, pleading that if he also was sent away there would be no heir to the throne.

She pleaded with her husband that she was only teaching them the Principle of Atma based on *Om*, the Primordial Sound, to make them aware of its greatness, which is hailed by people of all the seven worlds. She said she was singing not a lullaby of world, which was negative, but the Truth related to God, which is positive.

How to realise Divinity

You have to stick to *Daiwathwa* (Divine Consciousness) even while you are engaged in worldly activities. In spite of a lapse of millions of years, man is not yet able to understand his reality. How can he realise Divinity? If you develop human qualities, you can easily realise Divinity.

The Veda teaches,

"Sathyam vada, dharmam chara (speak the truth, adhere to righteousness)."

Now, people kill truth and ignore righteousness. *Santhi* (peace) and *prema* (love) are reduced to narrowest limits. All four - *sathya*, *dharmam*, *santhi*, and *prema* - must be put in unison for the world and humanity to thrive. If you study how these lights here are functioning, you will find that the current passes through the wire and illuminates the bulb. *Sathya* (truth) is the current, *dharmam* is the wire, and *santhi* is the bulb; when the current flows to the bulb it burns brightly. This light is *love* (prema). You will see that sathya, dharmam, and santhi together form the constituents for prema.

Food, water, and energy are the three aspects of God

In ancient days they used to say, before taking food, *annam Brahma* (food is God), *raso Vishnu* (water is God), and *sakthi Eswara* (energy is God). They used to offer such prayers on conceiving food, water, and energy as the three aspects of God - Brahma, Vishnu and Eswara.

The gross portion of the food nourishes the body (*kayam*); the subtle portion nourishes the mind (*manas*); and the more subtle portion nourishes the power of speech (*vak*). Thus, all three constituents mano, vak, kayam - mind, speech, body - are sustained by food. All these three combine to make the full personality of man.

Harmony in these three - thought, word, and deed - makes one a mahatma.

Disparity in these three makes a man *duratma* (wicked person).

Manasyekam vachasyekam Karmanyekam mahatmanam
Manasyanyam vachasyanyam Karmanyam duratmanam

In the latter, the current of sathya is absent, so it will not shine. When there is harmony, current will not fail. You have a main switch in a house, which controls all other switches. If it is put off, the lights will go off. In the body, the main switch is the heart; when one has love in the heart, all one's thoughts, words, and actions will shine brightly with love.

Therefore, you should fill the heart with love and share with others. When you fill the tank of heart with truth and righteousness, all limbs of the body and sense organs, functioning as taps, will radiate the same truth and righteousness.

Love is selfless and self is lovelessness.

Love gives and forgives; self gets and forgets.

When love underlies your activity, everything will be perfect.

Love is the essential basis for the spiritual path

Embodiments of Love!

Develop love in the main switch - the heart. That is real *sadhana* (spiritual discipline). This Prema Sakthi will achieve anything. Love is the essential basis for the spiritual path. The other sadhanas, like meditation, japa etc., are all good, but without love they are of no use.

What is meditation? It is required for every action - walking, talking, writing, reading, and even sleeping. You have to concentrate for everything.

Life is a race. The saying is, "slow and steady wins the race." This is quite apt for the race of life.

Haste makes waste and waste makes worry. So you should go slow and steady without faltering or wavering.

Whatever you do, and even when you talk to someone, consider it as doing God's work. If you practice this way, you can have peace.

Shreyohi jnanam abhyasath
Jnanath dhyanam vishishyate,
Dhyanath karmaphala thyagah
Thyagath santhir anatharam.

Lord Krishna says in the Gita that the sacrifice of the fruits of action is superior even to jnana and meditation. From sacrifice comes peace immediately.

People talk of yoga. Patanjali defined yoga as control of mind and senses. Water has the nature to flow down, while fire in a pit goes upward. Worldly desires are like water and pull you down. They are negative.

Brotherhood of man and Fatherhood of God

Positive wisdom is that of Atma, which is like fire. If you understand this truth, you will not be after worldly desires. The body is given to you to do karma (action) and realise God. By subjecting body to pain by fasting, etc., you cannot gain anything. You have to keep the body trim to realise the Divine.

You must practice the sadhana of unification of thought, word, and deed. If you achieve this with love in your heart, it itself is a good penance. Do everything as an offering to God and to please God. There is no greater worship than doing your duty with love, as an offering to God. God is infinite and vast. Do not limit Him into a small frame. Widen your vision. Make your love expand to cover the whole humanity. Realise all beings as divine. Then you realize all are one.

Go on adding "I plus you, I plus you," and it will become "We". Then go on adding "We plus W" - we are all one. All are children of God. This is brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God.

The Gita says: "All beings of the world are part of My Eternal Self." All beings are therefore eternal. All are manifestations of the Divine. Though forms are different, Atma is one. The *Prema Thathwa* (Principle of Love) should be developed. God is Trigunarahitha (Nithyanandam Paramasukhadam). Why attribute qualities to God? Love is the most essential nature of the Lord. It is not an attribute. Practice love in speech, feeling, and action. If everyone practiced love, there will be no agitation in the world. Hatred will be

eliminated.

16. Love of God with service to society

Date: 22 April 1998 / Location: Kodaikanal

Without charitable disposition

Not following the principles of righteous conduct, Devoid of compassion and love,

Man is ruining himself.

Embodiments of Love! In this wide world amongst the vast humanity, we find three types of people: pushti jivas, samashti jivas, and pravaha jivas.

The first type, pushti jivas, are those who, because of meritorious deeds in past lives enjoy the grace of the Divine, though they do not engage themselves now in auspicious rites, study of scriptures, contact with saints, undertaking pilgrimages, etc. The merit of past lives makes them always happy in the company of the Divine. They dance in delight, experiencing divine benediction. Just as you don't need firewood after the cooking is finished, these people don't need any spiritual sadhanas (spiritual exercises), since they have already attained the goal of all sadhanas. You may not find this type of person doing any spiritual exercises. Be they are leading a true life and experience Brahmananda, Nityananda, Advaitananda, and Paramananda. There is no need for such a person to undertake any spiritual pursuit.

The second type, samashti jivas, read a lot of scriptural texts and are keen on earning name and fame as scholars. Since they become proud of their scholarship, they do not make themselves fit to be recipients of divine grace. When they go on reading till the end of their lives, where is the time for practising the ideals? They may participate in seminars and meet noble souls, but they are far away from God's grace because they have no time to think of God and enshrine him in their hearts. This is the plight of this second type of

person, the samashti jivas.

Pravaha person has no chance of realising the Divine

The third type, classified as pravaha jivas, are always engaged in mundane activities in pursuit of physical comforts and worldly pleasures. They do not think of God and think that they are capable of achieving whatever they want. At least, wicked people think of God in difficult situations. The pravaha persons have no chance of realising the Divine at all. They are born again and again. They have no chance of liberation. Some may have good feelings latent in them. But they don't join satsang and don't adhere to good conduct and righteous action, though some may be conscious of the Divine residing in their heart. There is a small story to exemplify some exceptional cases of this type of person.

There was a family of wife and husband, of whom the wife was very devoted to God and was always in thought of the Divine. She worried that her husband never uttered the name of God, even once. She believed in the truth that uttering the name of God was the best way to get liberation and it was a boat to cross the ocean of life. She was praying to God, entreating Him to show mercy on her and make her husband utter God's name. She even questioned the Lord as to whether it was her misfortune to have such a husband, and as Compassionate One, could He not transform her husband into a devotee like her?

The same night when she was contemplating on such entreaties to God, she heard her husband suddenly utter, "Rama, Rama," in his sleep. Her joy knew no bounds when she heard her husband utter Rama's name, which he had never done before. She thought her prayer to God was answered.

She got up earlier than usual in the morning and decorated the entrance to her house with rangoli and arranged for Mangala Vadya to be played. When the husband got up, he was surprised to see the decorations and hear the auspicious music, and he was wondering whether it was a festival day. When he asked his wife the cause for these extraordinary arrangements made by

her, she said that all along he had never uttered God's name, but the previous night he said "Rama, Rama," in his sleep. So, she was profoundly happy and decided to celebrate this event in a befitting manner.

On hearing this, the husband got perplexed and exclaimed, "Have I let out the Lord enshrined in my heart so carefully all along? What a pity!" So saying, he breathed his last.

Start sadhana at an early age

In this way, pravaha persons may not be uttering God's name or doing external worship, but they may have the thought of God enshrined in their heart. Some among the modern youth are singing bhajans and participating in nagarsankirthan. Looking at this, some elders are questioning, "Why should these youth take up this sort of activity in this age? They should do this only after they retire from service, in their old age." This is totally wrong. Remembering God and chanting His name should be done without break always, at all places and in all situations - Sarvada Sarvakaleshu Sarvatra Harichinthanam. There is no restriction of time or place for chanting the divine name.

You cannot say when, where, and how the end will come and the mortal coil will have to be cast off. You will not be able to chant the name at that moment.

(Swami sang a song to convey that it was impossible to think of God when the messengers of death were tightening their noose around your neck, the body was taken out, and the wives and relatives were crying. Only the good deeds that you have done previously would come to your rescue. So, you should start doing meritorious deeds from the early part of your life.)

There was a priest in a temple who, by virtue of his long experience, used to hold the Arathi in one hand and ring the bell with the other hand. When he passed away, a new priest succeeded him. But this priest could not do both things simultaneously. If one hand was handling the bell to ring, the other

hand could not wave the Arthi. If Arthi was done properly, the bell could not be made to ring. This was due to lack of practice. So, the practice of chanting of God's name should be started from an early age.

Undertake love of God and service to society

You may be aware of the way a soldier in the army has to take training in all aspects before he can be fit to take part in active service at the front. Anyone joining the armed forces, whether a dhobi, cook, or sepoy, has to qualify compulsorily in two things. One is handling a rifle and the other is marching drill. Whatever may be one's avocation in the army, one should have to undergo these two parts of the training. Similarly, in the spiritual field, one should compulsorily undertake two things, namely, love of God and service to society. These are the two prime components of divine life. They help in the realisation of the Divine.

You have to take up the practice at an early age so that you can have the realisation before you leave the world. You do not know when the end will come. You should be prepared for it at all times. The photographer asks you to be ready when he snaps your picture, and he gives you time to ready yourself. But the divine cameraman will not give you any notice. You should always be ready to meet the situation.

If you engage yourself in bhajan and daivachintanam - keerthanam and smaranam - you will not be caught unawares. Suppose you have a master who has an Alsatian dog at the gate and he himself is at the first floor. There are two ways of reaching him. One way is to befriend the dog and enter the house; the other way is to call out to the master from the ground in a loud voice so that he will come out and allow you to come in by controlling the dog. Maya (illusion) is the dog. God is the master. You either control the maya or chant His name and sing His glory so that He will come down. You have to treasure Him in our heart, since the heart is His altar.

God is Hridayanivasa

Draupadi prayed to Krishna when she was humiliated in Duryodhana's court. She said, "Oh, Dwaraka Vasa, Brindavan Sanchara, help me!" She could not get a response, and she became tired. Finally, she pleaded in a faint voice, "Oh Hridayanivasa (Resident of my heart)! Will you not come to my rescue?" Immediately, Krishna saved her from her trouble.

On a later occasion, she asked Krishna why He took such a long time to respond when she was in distress and prayed to Him sincerely. Krishna responded, "You said, Dwaraka Vasa, Brindavan Sanchara, etc. I had to respect your words, so I had to go from your heart all the way to Dwaraka and Brindavan, which are so far away, and I don't have a plane to go fast. When you said, Hridayanivasa, where I am actually residing, I came to your help instantaneously.

So, everyone should install the Divine in the heart in full faith. It is not correct to think that He is only in a mosque, church, or temple. The seat of God is the devotee's heart. That is why the Gita says, "Pasyanapicha na pasyathi (though he sees, yet he is not conscious of God in the heart).

Everything you see outside is a reflection of the inner being. "Sarvathah Panipadam thath Sarvathokshi Siromukham." All feet, hands, eyes, heads are all His. What does this mean? It means that He is in every being.

God manifests according to your feeling

One devotee was asking God, "You say You are in me, above me, below me. How is that You are not protecting me?" God answers, "I am always in you, around you. Don't look for Me externally."

The devotee asked, "Are You behind me really?"

Replied the Lord, "My shadow is your body."

When the devotee turned around to see whether God be

hind, he could not see Him. He asked, "Are You speaking the truth? I don't find You." God replied, "When you turn back, I too have to turn back, So, you could not see Me. You have not understood the Truth." Suppose you stand before a chair; the chair is in front of you. If you turn around, the chair is at your back. God manifests according to your bhava (feeling). When you pray, "Can't you hear my prayers?", you visualise Him hearing with His ears. When you pray, "Can't You see my suffering?", you see only His eyes. When you pray, "Why don't you stay with me?", you hear His footsteps. You have to maintain perfect

silence.

Listen to the sound of "Om" from within

The ancient seers spent their time in listening to the voice of God, which is Pranava. Even now, you can experience this. Close your ears gently. You will hear the sound Om from within.

God proclaims, "Oh devotee, you are seeing with physical eyes and listening with physical ears. Be in utter silence. You can listen to the footsteps of God." Such holy paths have been shown by great devotees. One who doesn't understand this is in ignorance.

Surdas, a great devotee of Krsihna, once went after a woman and followed her to her home. Her husband chastised him, saying, "Why have you been given eyes? Is it for this unholy pursuit of another man's wife? Why don't you concentrate on God?" Immediately, Surdas got enlightened and pierced his eyes with thorns of a lime tree close by. He proceeded to Dwaraka to Krishna's temple. On his way, he was about to fall into a well. Krsihna came in the form of a cowherd boy and caught hold of his hand and asked him, "Where are you going?".

Surdas said, "I am going to Dwarka."

Krishna said, "I will show you the way and lead you."

Next day, they rested in a wayside hut. Krishna wanted to

go, but Surdas wouldn't leave him. Surdas put his hand over the boy while sleeping and asked the boy to put his hand on him. Sparshanam papanasam. Because of this divine touch, he was released from all his sins.

Then Krishna told Surdas, "I am Krishna, to whom you always pray. I played this drama to show you My form." He touched Surdas's eyes, and Surdas got back his sight, beheld the divine form, and got into blissful ecstasy. When Krishna asked him to retain his vision, Surdas said, "I have seen You; I don't want to see anything else with these eyes. I don't want my sight. Many people have eyes. Have they seen you? Many have ears; they are not fortunate to hear your melodious music. I want only jnanachaksus (eyes of knowledge).

Krishna kept His hand on the head of Surdas, and Surdas merged with the Divine.

No one can know when God will bless! You must consider everything as God's gift and take with pleasure. There was a king who cut his finger, and the minister said, "It is for good." The king got annoyed and ordered the minister to be sent to prison. The minister accepted it with a smile, saying, "It is also for my good." Later on, it was proved true because, when the king went alone to a forest for hunting, he was caught by tribals to be given for sacrifice. Because the king's body was not perfect, with a portion of a finger absent, he was saved. Later, the minister said that if he was not in prison, he would have accompanied the king and could have been sacrificed.

Whatever God does is for the good of the devotees. He is selfless. When you have the wish-fulfilling tree in your backyard, why do you go in search of fruits? Pure thoughts of love should flow from you to God. Then, love of God will flow to you. When you post a registered letter to another person, the proof of this letter having reached the addressee is the acknowledgement slip you get. The proof of sincerity of your love will be the flow of God's grace to you.

With intense longing for God's grace, you must wait patiently, chanting His name ceaselessly. You will surely perceive God's form manifesting before you.

17. Love and surrender

Date: 23 April 1998 / Location: Kodaikanal

The Vedas, sacred texts, and other scriptures cannot help man to cut off the curtain of illusion. While man is in front of the curtain, God is behind it. The cause is behind and the Effect is in front of the curtain.

Embodiments of Love!

From ancient times, Bharat (India) has treasured the spiritual wealth and spread the message of Loka samastha sukhino bhavanthu all over the world, praying that all people in the world should be happy. Today, man has attained considerable progress in science and technology, but moral values and righteous conduct are on the decline. He has become the slave of selfishness. Whatever one thinks, speaks, or does is based only on self-interest. Human quality has become rare among men, and animal quality is predominant.

Value of discipline

Human life is extremely sacred, and it is a matter of shame that man is not living up to his ideals. Man today lives as he likes without following any discipline. Discipline is needed in every aspect to maintain the right course of life: "Na sreyo niyamam vina." A river has two banks. Without the banks, the river may flow in all directions, flooding the fields and villages and causing untold hardship and disaster. If it has banks to regulate the course of flow, it will be useful for irrigation.

In the similar manner, the river of life has to be contained between the two banks of eight-lettered axioms. One is "Sraddhavan labhate jnanam" and the

other is "Samsayatma vinasayathi". Both declarations are made by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita. The first one means, "it is only by faith that one attains wisdom," and the second one means, "one who doubts will perish." As long as one has doubt, one cannot achieve anything. He who has no doubt and has full faith can achieve anything. The river of human life flowing between these two banks reaches the goal successfully.

A tree that needs water is provided water only at the root. Though the root cannot be visible to your eyes because it is buried under the earth, it is the basis for the tree to thrive. If the root is dry, the tree becomes dead. So, you have to safeguard the root.

Similarly, you have to safeguard the root of life, i.e. you need firm faith in the Self. Therefore, these two eight-lettered axioms are the essential needs of life. "Samsayatma vinasayathi" is comparable to the root, and "Sraddhavan labhate Jnanam" is comparable to the tree of life. You have branches, leaves, and components of a tree. The purpose of planting a sapling is to get fruit from the tree. The goal of human life is purna jnana (perfect knowledge). Total faith is needed to achieve this goal.

Three aspects of Divinity

One should expand the broad feelings of the heart to foster the tree of life to grow and retain its vitality. That is why ancient teachers used to pray, "Annam Brahma, Raso Vishnu, Vak Maheswara." This was the prayer chanted by the ancient seers before taking food. Food maintains the energy of the body by its essence getting distributed to all parts of the body.

To safeguard the functions of all the limbs and sense organs, the mind has to be in fine fettle. For this vak (speech) should be truthful and purposeful. Therefore, these three important requisites for human life, i.e. body, mind and speech (mano-vak-kyam) are treated as the three aspects of divinity Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara.

Vishnu is all pervasive; so also mind is all-pervasive. It is said "Manomoolam

idam jagath". Maheswara represents sabda or vak (sound). That is why God is described first as Sabda Brahmamayi, then Characharamayi, Jyothirmayi, Vangmayi, Nithyanandamayi, Parathparamayi, Mayamayi, and Srimayi. By expansion of love, we acquire all eight types of divinity. Everyone should realize the divinity within. Only then may they be considered to lead a true life.

The body is not just the physical one consisting of all the limbs and organs. God has gifted this body to man to discharge his dharmic duties. The mind creates the bhavam (feeling or thought), which is expressed through the tongue in words and done by the limbs in action. Human life is a combination of the functions of thought, speech, and action. The Divine is manifest in man, though many do not realize this. Can you limit the One, who created the universe, within a frame of picture?

When even demi-gods cannot understand Him, how can a mere mortal understand?

What name can you give the One,

who manifests in all names and forms?

What can you offer to the supreme power who has the universe as His stomach?

One whose effulgence is equal to crores of suns, what light can you use for illuminating Him?

The entire world is a combination of 'seer' and 'seen' We cannot worship such a supreme power in narrow ways. Even though He is so vast, you can still comprehend Him in the human heart just as you see the outside world in a small mirror. He is Hridayavasi. Who are you? Who is He? If you enquire, 'I', the inner self, is the seer and all this is the seen.

The entire world is a combination of seer and seen. Many people are sitting in

this Hall. 'I' am the seer. All the people are seen and My body itself is seen by Me. So, 'I' the seer is different from the body that is seen. 'I' is the eternal witness. Let us not be carried away by the 'seen'.

We must make efforts to perceive the 'seer'. We cannot do this with physical eyes. We have to develop the 'wisdom eye' (Jnana Chakshu) in order to see the 'seer'. It is only through inner vision that you can attain liberation and not by your physical vision. The Chaithanya (Awareness Principle) is prevalent all over the world. But we ignore the Chaithanya and visualize jada (inert).

To understand the truth of spirituality, you may take the example of the animals, which get sanctity and become objects of worship when they are associated with the Divine. The snake, when it is around the neck of Lord Siva, is worshipped by all. When it is encountered elsewhere, people do not hesitate to kill it. Similarly, the mouse, which is the vehicle of Vinayaka, is an object of worship when it is with Vinayaka, but when it is seen in your house, you trap it and try to do away with it. When we see the bull made of stone in a Siva temple, we worship it. But when we see a bull in daily life, we do not hesitate even to beat it. This teaches the lesson that when we are in the company of God, we are held in high esteem.

Develop strong faith that all forms are His

Sahasraseersha Purushaha sahasraksha sahasrapad (just as the limbs are a part of our body, we are all the limbs of the body of cosmic form). The cosmic form is of thousands of heads, feet, hands, and eyes. All forms are His. If we develop strong faith in this, we can understand divinity in its true spirit.

Is it possible to describe You with the limited human intellect? You are minuter than atom and mightier than the macrocosm. You are present in a subtle form in all the 84-lakh species.

You are pervading everywhere. Who can describe You?

There is no question of your searching for truth. It is everywhere and in

everyone. When you have light in your own house, where is the need for going to your neighbor to borrow a lamp? Develop the infinite light of love within yourself.

The light of life is shining with effulgence within you. In order to see a light, you do not need another light. In order to see the moon, you do not need a torch. Similarly, there is no need for any other light to realize the self-effulgent Atma within. The light of life is divinity. God says you are a fragment of His Eternal Self. Every individual is the spark of the Divine.

The three aspects of Saranagathi

Sachithanandam, who spoke earlier, mentioned about saranagathi (surrender). Surrender involves three entities: one is the person who surrenders the other the one to whom he surrenders, and the third is the act of surrender. If we analyze carefully in the spiritual sense, you have a person, mirror, and reflection. When you remove the mirror, the reflection is automatically gone. So, you find three minus one becomes one only. It is the person only that remains.

Similarly, prakriti (world) is the mirror, and jeeva (individual) is the reflection of the Divine. When prakriti, the mirror, is removed, what remains is only one, that is, the Divine. The individual is only a reflection. When your vision is towards prakriti (world), you have duality. When your vision is turned inward; you are One, that is, God and nothing else. Even Prakriti is the creation of God. When everything is divine, there is no second.

This divine is nothing but love, which is in all beings. Love is God, live in love. It has no beginning and no end. It is infinite; you cannot fragment it. All spiritual paths are paths of love. The goal is also love. It is that which always exists in this world. Never give up love at any time.

In earthly parlance, jealousy, pride, etc. are evil attributes. But if you see them all with love, you will never have hatred. There is no question of hatred when there is only one and not two. The current of Atma is flowing in all

beings as love; you have to develop the spirit of love and expand it.

You should not care about names and forms. See only the unity in the diverse forms and names. You will realize the Divine. Just as the bhramara (humming butterfly) injects the humming sound in the insect and turns it into its own form, you should concentrate on the Divine and become divine.

Significance of offering bilva leaf to Lord Siva

You are Brahma, Vishnu, Maheswara, as already said. Parents have given you the physical body and name. But the heart (spiritual) is given by God. No one else can give this. To have a compassionate heart is the attribute of human nature. It is giving and forgiving. It is not at all keen on getting anything.

Develop oneness with love. People do several types of sadhana (spiritual exercise) like turning the japamala (rosary beads) and meditation. While the body may be still, the mind goes about wandering all over! Even a little mosquito disturbs you and you strive to kill it while engaged in dhyana (meditation).

You should cast off the attachment to the body. Body is the temple of God. But God is the indweller. This truth you should never lose sight of. Nature is also a manifestation of God.

The ancients saw the truth that food is Brahma, mind is Vishnu, and vak (sound) is Maheswara. Man is a combination of these three. That is why when we pray to Siva we say we offer the three-fold body to Him just as we offer the bilva leaf with three parts. This is the principle of surrender (saranagathi).

Lakshmana is a superb example of the attitude of surrender. When Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana went to the forest and reached Chitrakoot, Rama told Lakshmana, "I am feeling tired and Sita is also tired. It is better we stay here for some time. So, I would like you to put up a cottage in which we can stay for a longer duration, if necessary for the whole period of 10 years. You can put up the cottage in any place of your choice." Hearing these words,

Lakshmana felt hurt and bent down his head with grief. Noting this, Sita asked Lakshmana, "Why are you perturbed, Lakshmana? Your brother did not speak anything harsh. Why do you feel so?" Lakshmana said, "Have I ever had any choice of my own? I left my mother; wife, and all comforts of life and accompanied you both to serve. I have surrendered myself to Rama. Where is the question of my choice? The command of Rama is what I want to carry out. While so, how can I withstand the impact of Rama asking me to put up the cottage at a place of my choice?" Rama realized the sacred feelings of Lakshmana and the true attitude of his surrender and pointed out the site himself.

Shun bad places haunted by bad people

Such an ardent devotee of Rama, with the attitude of complete surrender, once suddenly turned hostile and said, "Rama, I am leaving You and returning to Ayodhya. Why should I come with You? Only you were asked to go to forest. I shall go back to Ayodhya to join my wife and mother." Rama was surprised at this unexpected turn in the mind of Lakshmana and asked him to wait for a while. Walking away some distance, he halted under a tree for shelter. Then Lakshmana repented for his lapse and said, "I am sorry, I don't want to leave You and go. I do not know why I got such an unnatural attitude all of a sudden!" Rama said, "You were then in the region of Surpanakha, the demoness. So, your mind wavered. Now we have come out of her territory and you are normal." This is a lesson to show that even a great devotee like Lakshmana could be upset by traversing the region of a demonic person. Rama saw that Chitrakoot was the seat of rishis (sages) and so decided to stay there.

That is why you should shun bad company and bad places haunted by bad people. Discriminate between what is good and what is bad, that which gives permanent joy and which is transient. Do good deeds. If you surrender to the Atma and be constantly in touch with it, God will be with you, around you, above you and below you.

My mission is to raise the consciousness of man to a level at which he neither rejoices nor mourns over anything. In that supreme state, one is going through rebirth and death each moment, for these acts are on and the same, emerging from the formless into form and merging from the form into the formless. Then, there is no success or adversity, no joy or pain. When the devotee attains this Oneness, his journey toward Me ceases. For he will be with Me endlessly.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

18. Faith, love, and grace

Date: 25 April 1998 / Location: Kodaikanal

One may acquire scholarship in all forms of knowledge, and may win over others in any symposium,
One can fight with great valour in a battle and emerge victorious over his rivals,
One may enjoy all the comforts and convenience that the modern world provides,
One may count the stars in the sky or spell out the names of all species of living beings in the world,
One may master the eight-fold systems of knowledge, One can land on the moon.
But to control the senses, steady the mind and turn the vision inward, is well nigh impossible.

In the modern world, every person tries hard to attain peace. Peace cannot be attained spiritual percepts nor can it be got from market as a commodity. It cannot be acquired even by knowledge of the texts, or a high position in life. Peace can be attained only by God's grace.

Though man is eager to attain peace, he confronts many obstacles in the path. Those who travel by train may be well acquainted with the slogan, "Less luggage, more comfort, make travel a pleasure." Now, man is burdening himself with limitless desires. Because of this extra heavy luggage of desires, he finds it extremely difficult to carry on the journey of life. By such proliferation of desires, he loses his balance, moves far away from his goal, and even tends to go mad.

It is for this reason that I have been stressing the need for ceiling on desires. By limiting your desires, you can attain peace to a certain extent. You have to

exercise a check on your desires and make comforts to get the Grace of the Divine.

Observe equanimity at all times

In the modern world, praise and blame, exultation and humiliation, have become common. Man is elated by praise or gets frustrated by blame or criticism. To be elated by praise and distressed by blame reflects one's weakness. To maintain equanimity in pleasure and pain or praise and blame is a difficult proposition. It cannot be achieved by scholarship. To quote an example, sage Vyasa, who was the author of the eighteen great epics and the Ithihasas of Mahabharatha, and who codified the Vedas, was restless, and asked Narada for advice as to how to overcome this sort of restlessness. Narada told Vyasa, "You should not get depressed by blame nor get elated by praise. In all situations, equanimity has to be maintained." One may wonder how this is possible for mankind to maintain such equanimity.

You should ask who is the one that criticises and who is the one that is criticised. If you consider that it is the body that is criticized, then there is no need to worry because you know body is ephemeral and is bound to perish one day or the other. It is the container of foul material like urine, fecal matter, etc. Why should you get affected by this? You are not the body. If it is Atma that is criticized, the same Atma is present in both - the person who is criticising and the one that is criticised. So this means he is criticising himself!

Both praise and blame pertain only to the body. If you respond to it, that means you are accepting the contents thereof. If he does not receive it, it goes back to the sender. So also, you do not react to the abuse or criticism leveled by some one else against you. Then it goes back to him.

What you see is only your own reflection

The accusation or abuse one makes against you is only a reflection of his mind, which is filled with hatred. Krishna asked Duryodhana for help.

Duryodhana exclaimed, "How is it, Krishna, that you are asking for my help? It is only we who seek your help." But Krishna told him, "I want you to go round the whole kingdom and find out if there is any good person." Duryodhana set out on his journey and, after going round the kingdom, returned to Krishna's place and informed him, "Krishna! I did not find even a single good person anywhere. If at all there is any one with some good quality, it must be only myself." Krishna summoned Dharmaraja, the eldest son of Pandavas, and asked him to go round the kingdom and find out if there was any bad man. Dharmaraja returned after his survey of the kingdom and said, "Swami, I could not find even a single bad person. If at all there is any bad quality, it is in me only." This proves that what you see is only your own reflection. Since, Duryodhana was essentially filled with wicked qualities, he could see the reflection of his own qualities in all. The condition of the world you see is dependent only on your vision. That is why Buddha said, you should have *samyak dhrishti* (good vision).

Total faith is needed in obtaining Divine Grace

There are so many Vedantins and self-styled scholars who preach many precepts but do not practise them. There is a story of a pandit who mastered all scriptures and was preaching to people. He used to get milk from a milkmaid who came from a distant village. Because she was not punctual in delivering milk, one day the pandit asked her why she was coming at 8 a.m. one day and at 9 a.m. another day, and not regular, which resulted in his *puja* (worship) being delayed. She said she had to cross a small river enroute, for which she had to use a boat, and the boatman was giving priority to the more affluent customers, making her to wait for the second trip. She said this was the reason for her delay.

The pandit mocked her apparent ignorance, and said, "if only you chant the name of God, Om Namō Narayana, you do not need the boat at all, and the river will part and give way to you. Why do you not adopt this easy method?"

Because this *upadesh* (advice) was given by the learned pandit, she had full faith in his words and rehearsed God's name as she returned home. Next day,

she uttered the name of Narayana and got into the river and crossed without any difficulty, because it gave way. She repeated in the same manner every day, and was able to deliver milk in time to the pandit.

After a few days, the pandit questioned as to how she was able to come in time daily. She told him the fact that she was following the pandit's advice, and was able to cross the river uttering God's name.

The pandit himself had no belief, though he gave the advice to the milkmaid. He wanted to test the veracity of her statement and proceeded to the river bank next day. He chanted the name, but without full faith and got into the river folding up his dhothi (lower garment) lest it might get wet, and was drowned in the river. This is the fate of a person who preaches but lacks faith in his own preaching. The illiterate woman had no doubt at all and had total faith.

That is why the saying, "You can say a crore of things, but to practise is difficult." Ravikumar was telling about his father being cured, though he could not get rid of the illness even after 21 operations. The cure is due to the total faith of this family. In the drama in which Ravi acted, the blind man was approaching Jesus, praying Him to give him back his eyesight. Jesus asked, do you have faith that I can give you back the eye sight? He said, "Yes, I have full faith." Immediately, people have lost faith and belief, which are like the two eyes. Some have faith in God but no belief in His teachings. Total faith is needed for getting Divine Grace.

Dharma is one that cannot decline

Ashok Singhal spoke about the incarnation of an Avatar, when there is a decline of *dharma*. Dharma is one that cannot decline.

Krishna promised that He would protect the sadhus. Who are the sadhus? Those that are wearing ochre robes or those that hold Gita in their hands and preach are not sadhus. A sadhu is one who perceives unity in diversity. He will have unity of thought, word, and action. This is called education in human

values, which is E-H-V. In my opinion, it is 3 H-V. It is the unity of head, heart, and hand. It is the combination of thought, word, and deed, which is the trinity of humanity.

If you practise humanness, all obstacles will vanish from your path. You should make the positive and the negative combine to give an effective result. Divine current is positive; body is negative. Atma is positive and body is negative.

Body is the temple, and the indweller is God. If the temple is dilapidated, even if God is inside, people may not visit the temple. If the temple is very well kept and no idol inside, it is of no use. You must know well the relationship between positive and negative.

Peace is within; outside there are only pieces

Santhi (peace) is not in external objects. It is within. No one can give you this on a platter. It cannot be got by the teaching of a preceptor. It has to come from *hridaya*, that is, a compassionate heart. Peace is within; outside there are only pieces. Any amount of searching outside cannot give you peace.

Though Divinity pervades everywhere, only in some places is its effulgence explicit. Electric current flows through the wires. Though it flows through the wires, it is seen only through the bulbs or tubes that give light.

None can deny the existence of Divinity everywhere. For example, you stand in front of Me. My form is reflected in your eyes and your form is reflected in My eyes. If you know the unity of these two, there is no difference.

When you concentrate on Him you get His look in your eyes. If you want God to look at you, you must look at Him. People of *Bharat* (India) have lot of experiences of this type.

We cannot have a direct perception of the Lord within us; we can only

experience it. For this, you have to make efforts with full faith. If you have good thoughts, which are directed toward the Divine, you flourish well. If you entertain wicked thoughts, you become wicked. This is the truth that God teaches man. If you have good feelings within, the reflection will be good outside. You cannot get Peace from the external world. It has to come from within.

When desires become excessive, Atmic consciousness cannot be realised. You cultivate desire for tea, coffee, playing cards, visiting clubs, watching television, etc. You have to curb such desires. Try to reduce taking coffee, tea, and other useless and wasteful pursuits like playing cards, etc. You will find within two days that you have become more intelligent and happy. Because of such unnecessary desires, you become mad and slaves of habits; thereby forgetting your human nature.

The way to God is devotion and detachment

Mathi (good sense), *gathi* (goal), *stithi* (position), and *sampathi* (wealth) are the valuable possessions of *maya* (illusory energy), but they are all lost because of excessive desires harboured. The animal quality is predominant, and human values are absent. How can one attain peace with these drawbacks?

When sage Vyasa requested Narada to advise him as to how to get over his restlessness, Narada told him, "You have composed so many epics, but you have not progressed in the path of realisation. Compile Bhagavatham, describing the glory of God and the greatness of devotion."

Bhagavatham (Telugu pronunciation) has five letters: bha, ga, va, tha, mu. In this five-letter word, *bha* stands for *bhakti* (devotion), *ga* stands for *jnanam* (wisdom), *va* stands for *vairagya* (detachment), *tha* stands for *Thatwam* (sacred principle), and *mu* stands for *mukthi* (liberation).

The primary need for liberation is bhakti. It gives *shakti* (power, energy), and shakti leads to *rakthi*, which in turn leads to *virakthi*. Virakthi is the

gateway for mukthi (liberation). When you sow the seed of devotion, wisdom develops, which leads us to liberation. Vairagya is to shed raga (attachment). Bhagavatham shows the way to liberation through devotion and detachment.

The story of Prahlada occupies an important place in Bhagavatham. His father put him to all types of suffering, like rolling him from a hill, throwing him in the deep ocean, trampling by an elephant, throwing him in a snake pit, and so on. He chanted Hari's name constantly, and no harm could be done to him. His father, Hiranyakasipu, hated Hari and was annihilated by Hari.

In the Ramayana, Ravana abducted Sita in Rama's absence. He hated Rama. By hating God you cannot achieve anything. By loving God, you can get everything.

Prahlada's heart was filled with Hari's name. When Hiranyakasipu, his father, sent Chanda and Amarka to teach him what is opposed to Divine love, they could not make any impression on the boy, who maintained his chanting of the name of Hari without a break. Since he loved God and was filled with devotion, he had no trace of fear; nor did he shed a tear.

Faith is the basis for curing ailments

If you constantly chant God's name, you will get everything, namely, wealth, wisdom, health, bliss, etc. If you have total faith, God will bless you with everything you need. Ravi said he was given medicine. That was created by Bhagavan.

You may question as why Bhagavan builds hospitals when He can create medicines and cure the patients. It is because of the faith of the people in the treatment. Even if a nurse or doctor gives an injection of distilled water, patients are happy and get cured, because of their faith. So, the Hospital is intended for people who have faith in hospitals. Cure is based mostly on the faith of the patient.

God coming in human form is to facilitate people to have the proximity of the

Divine, so that He can transform them and give happiness. Only a human can confer solace to the humans. *Samepyam* (coming closer to God) helps in the final merger with the *Sayujyam* (Divine). Conversation with Bhagavan solves problems. His darshan helps in the annihilation of sins - *Papanasanam*.

Love is God; live in love

Man should have the three ideals:

Daiva preethi (love of God), papa bheeti (fear of sin) and sangha neethi (morality in society).

These ideals will help to uplift the individual, the family and the society. In this sacred land, sacred ideals are followed by several saints and seers. That is why, in spite of several challenges and obstacles, the cultural heritage of *Bharat* (India) is still maintained. It is mysterious, wonderful and immortal.

We have become slaves to the Western culture and have neglected our own highly-valued culture. The Westerners are now showing respect for our culture and are adopting the culture in large measure. It is their faith in Bharat's culture that has stimulated them to adopt this culture. *Bharathiyas* (Indians) should realise the merits of their own culture and stop neglecting it.

Our culture teaches that there is one religion, the religion of love, and one caste, the caste of humanity. Our culture is based on love, which is latent in everyone, whether theist or atheist or nationalist. There can be no one without love.

We commonly see how the cow licks the new born calf with so much tenderness that the calf gets up only after this maternal touch. It cleans the calf.

Cleanliness is Godliness. Purity should be developed, which encourages unity and leads to Divinity.

But you have only enmity and community; these are animal and demonic qualities.

Man must try to elevate himself to the Divine state and not descend to the animal and demonic states.

Sathyam vada; dharmam chara
Speak the truth; do righteous duty

is the Vedic injunction. It is easy to speak the truth. It is very difficult to tell a lie and sustain it. By speaking the truth, you are laying the foundation for the wall of dharma. You can have shanthi (peace) through this. Develop the principle of love. Love is God. Live in Love.

If you must bring the power from the powerhouse to your residence to illumine your place, you have to put up poles at regular intervals and connect the house to the power-house with cables. So too, if you must win the Grace of God, do sadhana (spiritual exercises) at regular timings and connect yourself with God by the cable of smarana (remembering the Lord).

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

19. Install Divinity in the heart

Date: 26 April 1998 / Location: Kodaikanal

In this world that you behold,
there is the infinite awareness pervading everywhere. It is the Atmic principle.

It is passing through the entire universe
just like a thread passes through the precious gems to keep them together
in the chain

"MAMAIVAMSO Jeevaloke Jeevabhoothas-sanathanah" declares Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita. Thus the ideal is set for the entire world that all beings are sparks of the Eternal Divinity. Without understanding the import of this great truth, many aspirants are suffering from anxieties and worries, bereft of self-confidence. Those who are sparks of Divinity have no reason to get into grief at all. The Divine has no worry or grief. He is Eternal Bliss Himself! How then can His sparks be subject to worries? It is only due to the non-realisation of their real nature that people get worried. They are carried away by the momentary and transient worldly comforts and ultimately plunge themselves into grief.

This is nothing but sheer animal quality. A compassionate heart is the natural feature of human being. Therefore, what is the use of reading the scriptural texts? What is the use of studying the Bhagavad Gita without making any effort to put the teachings into practise?

Smarana and Anusmarana

Arjuna asked Krishna, "Why are you putting us to this harrowing experience of fighting the battle, and why have you burdened us with family problems and

other difficulties, while we have been always following the righteous path and are devoted to You?" Krishna smilingly replied, "Oh Arjuna, you made me sit on your chariot as a charioteer. This chariot is after all susceptible to destruction. You have not made Me sit in your heart, which is the eternal chariot. That is mantra, whereas this physical chariot is yantra (machine). Yantra has no life, while mantra has the life force. You say that you think of Me. This is only smarana, and not anusmarana - smarana is time-bound, while anusmarana is constant contemplation, beyond time and space. If you do anusmarana, you will experience Divinity within." Krishna said, "Mam anusmara! Youdhya" Think of me even in the battle-field and fight. You will have no trouble at all.

Arjuna asked Krishna, "How can I constantly think of you? I have to perform my duties to my family and rule the kingdom." Krishna said, "No doubt, these are your rightful duties. You have to take care of your wife and children and discharge your responsibilities given by God. But when you do your duties thinking of Me, you will have no difficulties."

Desire is deadly, detachment is divine

There are two ways in which you do your duties. One is apeksha, that is being desirous of results, which is worldly. Nirapeksha is doing duty without any desire for the result. Apeksha is marakam (deadly bondage), Nirapeksha is tharakam (liberation).

Man is traveling in these two paths. Let us take an example. The principal of a college is transferred to another place. As long as he was the principal of the present college, he was in charge of all the furniture, equipment in laboratories and other appurtenances. He cannot take any of these things with him, since they belong to the Government.

But, when he vacates his dwelling place, which might be a rented house, he loads all the things in the lorry and takes them away to the new place. Even old chappals, broomsticks, and similar items he will not leave behind. While he delightfully leaves behind the equipment and things in the college, he

takes away all his belongings from the house. The sense of "mine" makes him collect all these.

What is associated with attachment is marakam and what the principal leaves behind without attachment is tharakam. He is only a temporary trustee and custodian for the safe upkeep of the college property.

Similarly one should do their duty in the world with detachment. If you go on doing with attachment to the object, you are acting under illusion. You must understand the principle of tharakam. Use the gifts of nature to the maximum, but all the while do not forget that it is only temporary and you cannot claim permanent ownership of any. Living in the mundane world, you should not become a slave of attachment, which will cause restlessness. All materials of creation belong to God. All beings are His belongings, as all are sparks of the Divine. With this attitude you have to discharge your duties.

God's gift is affluence; world's gift is poverty

Man is experiencing trouble because he is not contented with his lot. Thinking of the past and worrying about the future, man becomes restless.

God is the embodiment of love. Love can be attained only by love. Love knows no doubt at all. Divine love is selfless. Where there is selfishness, there is fear. Love has no fear. It does not expect any reward. Love is in all. Tread the divine path of love. You cannot experience this as long as your heart is filled with selfishness. Love of God always gives and never receives. Worldly love always receives and never gives. Spiritual love gives, and goes on giving. Worldly love never gives, but is only ready to receive with full of greed.

In my opinion, in the ephemeral world, it should not be a one-way traffic. You have to receive from God and give to the world. It is a pity that man never follows this. And always keen only to receive with no trace of giving. Hence man suffers. To receive from God is a true affluence. To get from the world is a symbol of poverty.

Buddha stated that the richest man in the world was not the one like his father, who was an emperor, but one who is contented with what he has. You have to check your desires and put a ceiling on them. One who has multiple desires is poor. Only by controlling desire you can reach the goal.

In the spiritual path, one may follow many ways. The state President, Krishnamurthy, mentioned about sravanam and keerthanam (listening and singing about God). Though these are different types of devotions, there are some stories pertaining to them that create doubts. We have so many names in the world. Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, Rama, and Krishna, and so on. No one has seen them in human form. This created some doubts in people from abroad. They are the qualities in every one. Vishnu represents the sathvic or pious quality; Brahma represents the rajasic or passionate quality; and Siva represents the thamasic or negative quality.

Silence is Easwara

Siva is present in everyone as ardhanareswara (half-male and half-female). He has his eyes opened partly. If the eyes open fully, it will cause the destruction of the world. If the eyes are closed, one gets sleep. So his eyes are half-open, concentrating on the tip of the nose. You find that most of the pictures show Easwara (another name for Siva) in a meditative pose, seated in padmasana (lotus posture), with his partly-opened eyes concentrating on the tip of the nose. This is the right type of posture in meditation.

Siva is described as the one with moon on His head, the river Ganga flowing through His ears, snakes being wound around His wrists as bangles, and so on. He is one who takes a form without human quality. He is in the form of a linga (eggshaped form of Siva). "Leeyathe gamyathe ithi lingam (Linga is one that takes you to the goal and liberates you)." Vishnu is the sustainer. Man meets with a lot of obstacles in the devotional path. He helps you to overcome these obstacles and takes you to the goal safely.

Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva are all-pervasive. They are everywhere. They transcend time and the gunas (qualities).

Vishnu has the shankha (conch), symbolizing sound, and the chakra (discus), symbolizing the wheel of time. Both sound and time come under the control of God. Sound comes from the navel. So, Brahma the primordial sound is depicted as born out of the navel of Vishnu. Silence is Easwara. That is why you generally see Siva seated in the posture of meditation. You must discern the unity of the three different aspects of God. Sound, time, and energy are all under the control of God. Siva is described as Trinethra, Trishula, and Trigunatheetha (beyond the three gunas, three eyed, and with a trident). These have inner significance.

Man has two eyes. But Siva is said to have three eyes. The significance is that man knows only past, present, whereas Easwara can see the past, present, and the future too. It does not mean that Siva has a third eye on his forehead. This is the artificial imagination of the people. God is one and but described in different ways. Jeeva, the individual being, and God are one. Daiva is Jeeva and Jeeva is Daiva.

As you think, so you become

When Swami says, "You are God," many people may feel perplexed. When you tell yourself "I am God," you will breed only good thoughts. You become what you think. Darwin thought of the form, which he propounded as evolution of man. Ratnakara (later hailed as Valmiki) thought of Rama and had Rama always in his heart. Prahlada constantly thought of Hari and had Hari's vision. When you think you are good and have good thoughts, you will not do bad deeds. You will think good, see good, and do good deeds. If you think you are separate from God, you can never merge. God is Atma within you. He is the conscience.

I often tell the students about four F's: Follow the master (Conscience), Face the Devil (that is, desire for money), Fight to the End, and Finish the Game. Finishing the game is mukthi (liberation). You have taken human birth and you have entered the sacred human life. You have to attain divinity in your life time. There is nothing more valuable than this. By making appropriate efforts, you can accomplish anything, and by contemplating on God you get

divine strength. Because of the monkey mind, you entertain doubts.

When Krishna was a child, once there was a heavy downpour. Krishna asked all the people to come under the Govardhan Hill, which he would lift and make a canopy of. Some people doubted how the small boy could lift a hill and did not want to come under His shelter. All those who doubted and did not come under the shelter died, while all those under Krishna's shelter survived duly protected by Him.

Avatar's pranks have an inner purpose

Balarama once complained to his mother, Yasodha, about Krishna, that he was eating mud. The intention of Balarama was to make known to the world the Divinity of Krishna. It should not be construed as an action taken by him to get Krishna punished.

Yasodha asked Krishna why he persisted in taking butter from other houses and went to the extent of eating mud, when she had so many delicious things at home for him. So saying, she gave a slap on Krishna's cheek. Krishna questioned his mother, "why are you punishing me, mother? Am I a fool, or a child to eat mud?" He asked her to look into his mouth, which he opened wide.

To her astonishment, she saw the whole universe in his mouth. She exclaimed, "Is it Vishnu Maya? Is it a dream? Am I Yasodha? What I saw was amazing. Was it true?" she realised Krishna was not an ordinary child.

On another occasion, when Krishna asked Balarama whether their mother was at home, Balarama retorted, "Is Yasodha your mother? No. She is fair. Nanda is fair, but you are dark in complexion." Krishna complained to Yasodha and enquired about this. She said, "What Balarama says is true. You are the son of Devaki. I have no male child at all." When God assumes human form, some people have to suffer. Without this, Divinity cannot be recognized. Sugarcane has to be crushed to get juice, and it has to be boiled and processed to get jaggery or sugar out of it. Sugar can be used in coffee or tea

or cool drinks or to make sweets of different types. When you consume it, you get joy.

Parents of Avatars also have undergone suffering. Devaki was lamenting that though she was the mother who gave birth to Krishna, Yasoda was enjoying His childhood pranks. Similarly, Kausalya, the mother of Rama, was also lamenting over the separation of Rama, who had to go to the forest for 14 years.

Why did Rama go to the forest? He wanted to demonstrate to the world that one has to follow the words of his father, however difficult it may be. The Avatar (incarnation) has to do so many things, which may not be liked by some.

Last night, showers came, and there were hailstones also in the rain. Though the hailstones may hurt people, they too contain only rain drops. They are not different. When you experience some troubles, you should take them as hailstones which contain the water of love of God. Whatever tests that God gives you, it is out of love only. It is wrong to worry about them, as they are gifts of God. You should remember always that you are a spark of the Divine. You should resist the apparent obstacles and accomplish your tasks.

Install Divinity in your heart

Each person likes some types of sweets. One may like laddu, another may like burfi, yet another jilebi. Whatever may be the name and form of the sweet, the common thing in all these is sugar. Similarly, each one may do sadhana (spiritual exercise) in his own way. You have no business to comment or criticize them. It is his or her choice. But all lead to the same goal.

You should approach everything with divine thoughts. We have a large number of devotees assembled here, many from different countries abroad. Their names and forms are different. Their languages and dialects may be different, but Divinity is common in all. You may choose the name and form of

Jesus, Easwara, Rama, Krishna, and so on. Whatever the name, God is one. "Om Ithyekaksharam Brahma (Brahman is the one letter word "Om")." You hear the harmonium being played in the bhajan. The sruthi is one. When you press the different reeds, you get the different sounds, sa, ri, ga, ma, pa, da, ni - the seven swaras. But the air that passes through the box and causes the sound is one. Install the Divinity in your heart. As Krishna told Arjuna, make God sit in your heart, the inner chariot. There He is Mantra Swarupa, the form of sacred sound, and not yantra, which has no life force. Mantra is life. God is Mantra Swarupa and Hrudayavasi (indweller in the heart). If you want to see God outside, your effort is an exercise in futility. Outward look is that of the animal. You should develop an inward vision. Then you can realise God.

"If you cannot oblige, speak obligingly"

When you converse with others, you should do so with respect. You should not use harsh words. "If you cannot oblige, speak obligingly," is the golden rule you should follow. When you salute others, it goes to God. When you criticise or abuse another person, that also goes to God. You must discourage and control the emergence of bad qualities. When you are in a bad or an angry mood, keep silent. Do not exchange words, which cause the anger to multiply. That is why we say, "Om Santhi, Santhi, Santhi" at the end of the bhajan. Why three times and not four times? It is to cover the three entities: body, mind, and Atma. You should have santhi (peace) in all the three levels.

Love is Selfless

If you do not keep your body healthy, you cannot have peace mentally. The ancient sages and maharishis have experienced the bliss of the Divine and gave us their wisdom, which they could achieve after penance without any break. They have said "Vedaham Etham Purusham Mahantham, Aditya Varnam Thamasah Parasthath." They have described what they actually experienced, and addressed the humanity thus: "We have seen God with the effulgence of one thousand suns, beyond the darkness of ignorance." Thamas (laziness, inertia) represents body and mind. Only if you go beyond the body and the mind can you experience the Divine. He is the conscience. That is

why I always advise you to follow the conscience. Body and mind are negative, while Atma is positive.

Prema is positive. This is the most essential thing. Without this, life is useless. Live in pure and selfless love. Love is selfless. Self is loveless. You get light as soon as you put on the switch. You realise the Divine, once you put on the switch of love positively.

When you recognise Divinity in everyone, that itself is the best sadhana (spiritual exercise). Modern spiritual preachers are not considering the welfare of the world. They seek their own welfare selfishly. Your prayer should be for the welfare of society.

What is the form of society? It has no special form. The form of its members constitutes the society. When you pray for the happiness of all, you are also part of it. If you pray for yourself, that is selfishness, and you cannot survive without society. If you purify your heart you can see the reflection of God therein, as you see your own reflection in a mirror.

There are three types of karma: past, present and future. Present karma must continue. It is like the carriage behind which is a trail of dust. If the carriage stops, the dust will settle on it. A doubt might be that the carriage cannot forever continue so as to be ahead of its dust. But the carriage need not always travel on a dusty road. It can get on the surfaced highway where there is no dust. The highway is equivalent to the grace of God.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

20. Love is the essence of divine life

Date: 28 April 1998 / Location: Kodaikanal

The entire humanity wants to enjoy a trouble free life With a high standard of living and prosperous life. But they do not have the desire of wisdom, Good behaviour, and devotion to God.

What more can I tell this august audience Of good seekers of Divinity!

Today, you see all over the world a variety of forms, material objects of various types and multifarious functions, and people in different conditions.

There is a proliferation of scientists and scholars engaged in research and experiment in several fields. There is nothing that is not subjected to investigation. The person, who investigates and comprehends all external objects and happenings, does not know anything about himself.

Winston Churchill once stated that man has conquered all but has not conquered himself. Man knows everything around him, but he does not know his own reality. What is the use of knowing all, if one does not know about himself? Having attained the sacred human life, if he does not sustain himself or maintain purity of the heart, his life becomes a waste.

If tigers and jackals enter the stable where cows are sheltered, what will happen? The human heart is a place where truth, love, and peace are reigning. If the jackal of hatred and the tiger of anger and jealousy enter this peaceful heart, what will happen to the pious cows of Love, Peace, and Truth? Man is deprived of his natural pious disposition of peace by the intrusion of wicked thoughts. The wicked qualities of jealousy, anger, and hatred are increasing amongst men. While so, how can you expect good qualities and

human values to be reflected in them?

If a person builds a house, he provides door to facilitate the entrance of his friends and relatives. He will not like the street dogs and monkeys to enter through these doors. The body is the temple of God. It has several doors. It is described as the city of nine gates - Navadwara Puri. Merely because there are so many entrances, you cannot allow all and sundry to enter inside. But man is allowing the evil qualities to enter, with the result, his natural good qualities are in peril. Love is the basic human quality.

Three categories of love

The love that a human being possesses can be classified into three categories. The first one is swartha or selfish love, the second one is anyonya, and the third is pavartha or supreme love.

The first category pertains to those who think only of their happiness, comfort, and pleasure, not in the least caring about others. The second category pertains to those who think of their own family and seek the welfare of those whom they consider as their own. The third category pertains to those who wish that everyone in the society should be happy. "Lokassamastha-sukhino-bhavanthu" is the prayer of this category of people. This is the supreme love.

The first category may be compared to the light in a single room, which will illumine only that room. The second one is comparable to moonlight, which helps you see things, but not very clearly. It gives scope for doubt. For example, you may see a rope and mistake it for a snake or a stump for a person in the not-so-bright-moon-light. The third category is like sunlight, which helps you to see everything clearly without any scope for doubt.

If you have a spiritual outlook, you will not have love restricted to yourself and your family alone. Anyonya love is love shown only to members of your family or relatives. In fact, all are your relatives, in the broader sense. If you follow the principle of Atma, you will consider all as yours since the same

Atma is effulgent in all beings. All are children of God, and everything happens as per the divine command or will.

God is the father of all; all are His children

For example, suppose an elderly person travels in a train with his children, he has the tickets for all of them, and he tells them not to get down anywhere in the middle of the journey but wait for him to get down, when they too can do so.

The children get attracted by the several eatables that are sold on the platform in some stations enroute, and have a strong desire to get down and buy them. But they restrain themselves from getting down, because they may be in trouble if the train starts and they are left behind since the tickets are not with them. The eldest of the children tells them, "As per father's command, we cannot get down as we like. The tickets are with the father, so we will be in trouble if we get down and are unable to re-enter before the train starts." God is the father of all. All are His children proceeding on the journey of life. God has told us, "Follow My command, and do not get down anywhere you like." The pity is, no one follows His commands in the world. God has the tickets. So we are facing problems. Those who travel by train would have seen goods wagons bearing a painted mark like, "Return 5-98." This indicates that the wagon should be returned to the workshop on the due date for attention. It is only the station master who knows this and takes action.

In the case of humanity, God is the Master who knows when each one has to return (it is not painted here as in the case of goods wagon). Only the master has to worry about it.

We start worrying about our return because of our weakness. God is the supreme authority, and everything happens according to His will. But man proudly says, "I have done it," and hence he is in trouble. You must realise that nothing happens without His Will.

Cultivate good thoughts; do not slacken your efforts

Those who believe in the Divine Will and carry on everything with the feeling that they are only instruments in His hands will find life happy, while those who do not believe will find life miserable. The former are punyatmas (people who earn merit) while the non-believers are to be deemed as apatmas (sinners). The merit or sin arises only out of our actions.

When wicked thoughts enter humans they become worse than wild animals. They will harm the soft heart, which is comparable to cows. You have to drive the wild animals of evil qualities out and safeguard the cow-like good nature that you are endowed with. There should be no delay in this. There is a saying that if there is long delay in consuming, even nectar becomes poison. The moment wicked thoughts enter you should chase them out and cultivate good thoughts, good sentiments and good feelings.

Sath is that which is changeless and is constant in all the periods of time - past, present, and future. You have to develop this sath. This is true sadhana (spiritual practice). In spiritual practice you should never allow evil thoughts to gain entry into your mind.

Suppose you are winding several meters of thread in a stick. As you continue to wind, the ball of thread becomes bigger and bigger. If you slacken in your action and let the thread slip from your hands, the whole thing will unwind and spread all over, making all the efforts a waste and compelling you to start the process all over again. Similarly, a little lapse in concentration in sadhana will thwart your effort. You should maintain equanimity at all times, whether you get pleasure or pain or profit or loss.

Thyaga is yoga

Man should practise devotion and sacrifice by which alone the country can prosper. Politics without sacrifice and devotion without love are practically useless. In order to be happy, one must pray for the happiness of all and should be prepared to sacrifice for the sake of society and the welfare of the

world. The spirit of sacrifice is absolutely essential for liberation. Thyaga is yoga, and yoga is also doing one's duty effectively. Pathanjali says that yoga is control of the, mind. One should know oneself first, before knowing about other things in the world.

Annie Beasant said, "People say every seeker is searching for God. It is wrong. God is all-pervasive. Where is the question of searching for that which is pervading everywhere? In fact, God is in search of a truly good devotee." Who is a good devotee? One with sadachar (good character), Sath-bhavana (good feelings) and sath-pravarthana (good action) can be termed as a good devotee. It does not mean that one who sings bhajan is good. Even a tape recorder, when the bhajan tape is played, repeats the bhajans. But it is lifeless and is only a mechanical reproduction. One who sings bhajan should do so with full heart. Every word should reflect love, since the heart is the seat of love. Atma is prema (love). It is Brahman. It is within you. The whole Cosmos is Brahman. Where is the question of searching for God?

Aspire to be good and not merely great

Last evening, I was telling the boys that they should aspire to be good people and not great men. If you are good, all will respect you. If you are great, only those who are selfish will seek your favours. If you are great, goodness may not be there.

Who is great and who is good? One who finds divine quality in every one is good. One who finds only human quality in the Divine is great. Ravana considered Rama, the Divine Incarnation, as human. He saw only the human form and not the Divinity embodied in the form. But Rama saw Narayana in all creatures. The mirror of prithivi (world) reflects the Divine in every being.

God has given the mirror of prithivi to humanity to correct themselves and perceive the reflection of Divine in all. But man keeps the mirror in front of another, and sees his reflection alone.

An innocent cowherd was sitting between two hillocks and played his flute

and heard his own echo. He could not understand this and complained to his mother that another man was imitating his musical notes. His, mother accompanied the boy next day and found the truth that it was only the echo of his own music that he heard.

Vision of the true Self

Sea is water, earth is mud, and the body is flesh. Everything is only reflection, resound, and reaction. This is the effect of nature. Body is prakriti (nature). You have to control it. If you control the body, senses, and the mind you will see the Atma (the true Self).

If you only see the body, you become bestial and demonic. If you see body, mind, and Atma, you become human. When you see only Atma, you become Divine. You have all these three entities in human life. Gradually, you should give up attachment to the body and mind, so that you can realise Atma, which is the goal of human life. You must have full faith that everything is Daiva Sankalpa (Divine Will).

You must resist all challenges and play the game of life and come victorious. :ife is a challenge, meet it; life is a game, play it; life is love, enjoy it; life is a dream, realise it.

Do not be discouraged by obstacles. Never give up your efforts, nor even slacken. If you get confused, the fuse of heart will go. You have doubt only when you do not know the truth. Once you know the truth that you are Atma, there is no room for doubt at all.

All truth is contained in the essence of Prema thathwa (Divine Love). It is the essence of all essences: It is Premasara. There is no room for doubt in this.

Through love, you can resist any challenge. Seeing good, hearing good, talking good, thinking good, and being good is the best way of realising Divinity. Strengthen your faith. One with doubt can never progress. No one with faith in God has ever come to ruin. You should consider that whatever

happens to you is for your own good and is a divine gift. If you have this full faith, there is no room for fear in your life.

There is a difference between the benefit of grace and the benefit of bhakthi, of devotion. A patient with a pain is given a sedative which dulls the pain. But grace is an operation that does entirely away with pain. Make no mistake; grace does entirely away with karma. It is like a medicine that is labeled, 'good until 1968'. If used in 1973, the medicine is entirely ineffective. The body is the medicine. God puts a date on the 'medicine'; so it is not effective.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

21. Love is God's fragrance

Date: 29 April 1998 / Location: Kodaikanal

From the time one gets up in the morning till one goes to bed in the night, one is struggling for one's livelihood and is spending time studying various types of books, forgetting the Divine. What happiness can one derive from such a life? Oh man, have you ever thought of this? Man also strives in different pursuits in order to get blissful happiness. Can one get bliss from objects of the outer world, or is it available in a particular place or region, or is it possible to get it from some persons? Nobody seems to have pondered over this. Bliss is present everywhere. What is the point in searching for it in a particular place or object or person.

God is immanent in all living creatures, all objects, and all places, without exception. This is very well-explained in the Bhagavad Gita. Einstein, the famous scientist, has given a new name "psychotronic" for this. He said, "How can I call God, who is omnipresent?" God is hidden from the physical eye in all beings, in all places as Cosmic energy. We are in constant search of God, within the limitation of a compact form. There is bliss, but it has no form. Love is there but it has no form. How do we experience that which has no form?

Love may not have form, but you can see this love expressed through a form, which exudes real love. Here we see a flower. Even without seeing the form, you are able to enjoy the fragrance of the flower. When we experience the fragrance, we can only surmise that the form of the fragrance is the flower.

Experience love, the fragrance of God

Ancient sages who experienced the fragrance of the Divine were searching for the form. Sages who had renounced everything made lot of sacrifices to search for the form of the divine fragrance, but they were unable to experience it. They enquired about this in forests and bushes. They could not find the source. Some have left it in the half-way stage, being satisfied with the fragrance that they had experienced.

One must not give up in any pursuit, once one is determined to take up the same. When you have asked for a certain thing, do not give up till it is achieved. When you have thought about a particular scheme of action, do not rest till it is completely carried out. This was the type of determination that the sages adhered to in achieving the objective to the extent that the Lord should at last get "disgusted" and grant their request. To go back from the pursuit undertaken is not the quality of a true devotee.

With such relentless determination, they were able to find out the flower from which the fragrance emanated. Thus, they experienced the fragrance of bliss. Some of the seekers could not experience the fragrance due to severe "cold". Those who could not experience the fragrance were termed atheists. Even though they had the nose they could not experience the fragrance of divine Bliss. They are unfortunate people.

But those who were able to experience this bliss exclaimed in ecstasy "Vedahametham Purusham Mahantham (We have realised the supreme personality of the Godhead)." How to realise this? In every human being, the bliss of Ananda is emanating from the hearts, just as fragrance comes out of a flower. The heart is complete and full. "That is Full, this is Full, and when you take out the Full from the Full, what remains is also Full," says Veda. What is the totality of Nature?

Perfection is total and divine

For example, you buy one kilogram of jaggery. From this you take a bit and put it in your mouth. This tastes sweet. Take some pieces and mix it in coffee or water, they become sweet. All the pieces are equally sweet. The balance left is also sweet. So the quality of sweetness is not reduced when you take bits out of the full piece of jaggery. Every bit is equally sweet.

Totality relates only to one quality. There was one expert artist by the name Anthony who used to make violins. He used to take one year to make one violin. One of his friends asked him how he could earn enough to take care of his wife and children if he took one year to make one violin. He said, "God is

the embodiment of totality. Therefore whatever we do should be totally perfect. On the selfish ground of carrying on a living, I cannot compromise on the quality of perfection. The only way to please God, who is the personification of perfection, is to stick to the principle of perfection in its totality, so that God will confer Bliss on us." This is how the artist taught his friend. Whatever little job we may undertake, we should do it with perfection. God is perfection. We are part of the Divine. We should also stick to this principle of perfection in its totality. Because of his scrupulous adherence to his principles, Anthony earned great fame and his violins are famous even today bearing the reputation as Anthony's Violin.

In order to experience Divinity, we should have totality, which is unity and not multiplicity. We are considering the one as many instead of unity in diversity. We only divide and do not make efforts towards unity.

All are one; be alike to everyone

The tailor has got the instruments of scissors and needle. What does he do with them? You give him a single piece of a two metre cloth and ask him to stitch a shirt. The tailor takes the scissors and cuts the cloth into several pieces like those for collar, arms, etc. The single piece of cloth is cut into bits. The tailor joins them all and stitches them into a shirt. It is the pair of scissors that he uses to cut the cloth into pieces. Then he uses the needle to stitch them together.

We divide the one God into many, like Rama, Krishna, Jesus, Allah, Zoraster. But with love, we should bring them together. We should say, "All are one, my dear son; Be alike to everyone." This is the saying of Jesus. When he was put to suffering, the disciples were feeling very sad. But they went on accusing the head priest and the priest community. The governor who placed that order was also criticised. To teach this principle of unity, Jesus said, "All are one. We should not criticise anybody or blame anybody." It is love that will not deride or hate anybody.

There is a gulf of difference between worldly love and divine love. Divine love

does not ask for anything. It is selfless. It is not mindful of praise or blame. Love is desireless and continuous; you will not find even a trace of selfishness.

Worldly love and divine love

Divine love always gives and never receives. Worldly love only receives and does not give. It is full of selfishness and expects a reward in return. Divine Love does not desire any return. Love is equal only to love. Nothing else can be equated to love. This unparalleled and incomparable Premathathwa (principle of love) is only divine love.

How is worldly love? You all know about it. Suppose, a boy gets married and few days after the event, they go for a walk in the park. He sees a thorn in the path. Immediately, out of his love for his newly wed wife he shouts, "thorn! thorn!" and pulls his wife away, lest she hurt her feet by stepping on the thorn. At that moment, out of the consideration for his wife as his life, he pulls her out of the risk of stepping over the thorn.

The same couple walks in another path six months later. The husband notices a thorn in the path. What does he do now? He warns her to watch her step and be careful. Some more months later, when a similar situation arises, the same person in an indignant tone asks his wife, "have you no eyes, can you not see the thorn?" Thus worldly love goes on diminishing in its magnitude as time passes. Divine love never diminishes but is constant and changeless under all circumstances, and after any number of years, even after several aeons and births.

The Lord's love is sweet love. His words are sweet. Everything about the Lord is madhuram (sweet). That is why the gopikas (cowherd maids) of those days, sang "Madhurathipathe! Akhilam dadhuram". They could not bear the pangs of separation from Krishna. They went round Brindavan asking even the flowers, Oh flowers! Did you see our beloved Krishna?" They were not mindful of the thought, whether a flower was capable of seeing Krishna. What does this mean? Even the flowers, leaves, branches, and plants will see the Lord,

who is all pervasive. But, Krishna was described as unique by the gopikas, who exclaimed, "He is dark in complexion, with eyes comparable to a lotus flower; by any chance, have you seen Him? He has a peacock feather on his head, Oh creepers! Is He hiding in the bushes?" "God is full." You cannot say, "He is only in this and not in that." You have to love all. You should not love with the motive of getting any fruit or reward. You should love for love's sake.

Gopika's love for Krishna

A newly wed bride came to her father-in-law's house in Gokulam (the village of cowherds). The tradition of that place in those days was that all the villagers should go to mother Yasoda's house and light their lamps every evening from the lamp in that house. This was because that was the house of the richest family of that village and because Lord Krishna was born in that house. He was God, in whom all Ashtaisvarya (the eight types of wealth) were enshrined. The villagers believed that, because the Lord of all wealth was there, by lighting their lamp from that hallowed house, they would also have the benefit of all wealth.

This view was not shared by the father-in-law and mother-in-law of the newly married girl. They complained that all the women were going after Krishna, who was in Yasoda's house. But this daughter-in-law was very eager to see the charming form of Krishna, which attracted all other young women of the village. In fact, she used to ponder over the infinite capacity of the Godincarnate and sing His glory as Shabdhabrahmamayi, Characharamayi, Jyothirmayi, Vangmayi, Nithyanandamayi, Parathparamayi, Mayamayi, Shreemayi (Supreme master of sound, master of movable and immovable things, one full of effulgence, one of good speech, full of eternal bliss, supreme power, creator of illusion and master of prosperity). She used to sing the glory of Lord Krishna in this way within herself, for fear lest her parents-in-law may reprimand her.

As God's Will would have it, one day, the mother-in-law had developed high temperature, so the daughter-in-law had necessarily to go to mother Yasoda's house to light the lamp. She was allowed by her mother-in-law only for that

day, as an exception.

Yasoda used to keep a lamp outside. So, she had to light the lamp and go away. She was feeling sad that though she came to that house where the Lord had incarnated, she could not have even a glance of Him because the door was closed. She was lost in contemplation as she was lighting the lamp and the flame even started burning her hand. When her dress also started catching fire, on sensing the smell of burning cloth, Yasoda rushed out of the house and asked the girl, "Are you mad? Are you not aware of your cloth getting burnt?" This daughter-in-law was smiling as though in bliss. She said that she was seeing the form of Krishna in the jyothi (flame). On hearing this, the other gopis (cowherd maids) who came to light the lamp started dancing in joy and ran through the streets. The lady's name was Suguna, and they sang that Suguna burnt her hand but was smiling in joy as she saw the form of Krishna in the jyothi.

The mother-in-law of Suguna heard this too. She got terribly annoyed and even beat her daughter-in-law. She was exclaiming, "Because I took ill, you had to be sent to Yasoda's house. You say that you saw Krishna there in the flame. How can we bear this haughtiness of yours?" So saying, she went on beating her daughter-in-law. But the latter never appeared to heed all this, and was in rapture. The gopikas started singing, "In spite of her mother-in-law beating her and her husband becoming angry, Suguna never bothered. Nor was she afraid of anything. She was enjoying as though the picture is printed on a paper. Nobody can separate them." In this way, the gopikas enjoyed the company of Krishna. Different people enjoy in different ways. But God is totally present in every heart.

God is in every creature as love

If you take a small vessel to fill water from the ocean, you can get only that much of water that that vessel can hold. If the vessel is bigger, it can hold a larger quantity of water. If you taste even a drop of water that is saline, whether the quantity of water is more or less, the quality is the same and total. Similarly, God is in the form of love in every one. The quality is the

same, though the quantity may vary. That is why the Upanishad declares, "That is Whole and this is Whole." The Pandavas and Kauravas started the battle of Mahabharatha. Vyasa came in a chariot to bring about a compromise and avoid a conflict, which would result in loss of lives. Vyasa composed several epics and codified the Vedas into four, though they were countless in number. With the view that the people cannot go through all the Vedas, he classified them into four namely, Rik, Yajur, Sama and Atharva Vedas.

Vyasa had knowledge of the language of the insects, birds, and animals. When he was going in the fast-moving chariot, he saw an insect moving fast across. He asked the insect why it was hurrying so fast. The insect replied that the chariot of Arjuna was approaching very fast and, before it approached, it had to reach safely its home where its family members were waiting. Vyasa realised that the attachment to wife and children was common not only for human beings but was for other beings as well, like the insect. Of all creatures, the human being is considered the best. Because we do not know the language of lower beings, we are not able to realise that insects, birds, and animals also have such feelings of attachment. Only then did Vyasa declare that God is in the form of hands, feet, eyes, ears, everywhere. Divinity is everywhere. But love of Divinity is selfless; this is spiritual, while worldly love is selfish and transient. We must change worldly love into spiritual love.

All are acts of God

Ruchir narrated a story. An emperor arranged a very big exhibition. He said anyone could pick any article one liked. What was this exhibition? In the world of exhibition, the exhibits range from insects to human beings. It is full of different objects and creatures. The vast humanity visits this exhibition and takes whatever it wants. They show preference and take costly things.

A woman entered this exhibition and saw sacred things, sacred wares, forests sacred to sages and saints, and all pertaining to the Will of God. "All are acts of God. God is the master of this world. I did not bring anything with me when I was born. Nor do I take anything when I depart from the world. We do not even leave behind the address." So saying, she walked empty-handed.

The king asked her why she was not taking anything. She said, "It is natural. I came empty-handed and I am returning empty-handed." The king asked her to take at least one article. She asked whether he was prepared to give anything. She said, "I want only you. When you become mine, the entire property in the exhibition belongs to me." Then God gave himself to her. She said, "This is the consummation of my birth." Out of all the time we spend on family, wealth, food, etc., if only we spent a fraction of that time in contemplating on God, our last journey would be very safe.

The gate of the God of Death is made very heavy material. In order to open the door we have to contemplate on the Lotusfeet of God.

Every human is Ardhanari

Who is the lady here? It is Prakriti. All are women! Simply because you wear pants and a shirt you do not become a Purusha (male). The one who wears a body is a sthri (woman). The awareness that pervades the body is called Purusha - it is chaithanya (consciousness). The body is jada (Inert). Man is a combination of both.

This combination of the awareness within, the Purusha or masculine aspect, and the inert body or feminine aspect is termed Ardhanareeswara (half-male and half-female). Not only Easwara but every human is an Ardhanari. So, human life is not a single entity but the combination of Prakriti and Paramatma, or the feminine and the masculine aspects.

In this drama of life, all are actors. Even Bhagavan is acting a role. The world is like a stage. God is the Director, and as per God's directions, all are acting. Simply because a person wears the dress of a male, he cannot be termed masculine.

Suppose the anniversary of a girl's college is being celebrated. They may enact a drama in which the girls may act the role of a king; minister, sepoy, watchman, etc. All the actors are girls. They have only taken the role of these males. The males should not pride themselves by saying "Udhyogam

purushalakshanam (to hold a job is the prerogative of males)." The Atmashakthi (Atmic energy) is common in all.

Now you find many women going for work, and there are many males who do not work. Dharma is the characteristic of human - male or female. Truth is the characteristic. Truth is his characteristic. Truth is God. Love is God. Live in Love.

Surrender to the Divine within

Divinity is total in everyone and everywhere. You cannot see Him with the physical eye, but you can visualise with the wisdom eye or inner vision. You have air, you cannot deny this, even though you cannot either see or catch hold of it. Similarly, god is in many forms.

When it is hot, you can experience coolness either by a hand fan or an electric fan. Air has not come from the fan. Whoever uses the fan gets the air. The intellect is the fan. If you turn it toward Atma, you get Atmananda (Atmic bliss). On the other hand, you turn it toward the body, you get temporary bodily pleasure, which is momentary.

The body cannot be depended upon to cross the ocean of life. It is perishable and transient. It is full of dirt and filth, flesh and bones. You have to surrender to the Divine within. Once you have Divinity to help you, there is nothing that you cannot achieve.

22. Greatness of mother's love

Date: 06 May 1998 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Easwaramma Day

No one brings any wealth with him from his mother's womb.
He carries nothing with him when he leaves the world.
Even a millionaire can eat only ordinary food and cannot subsist on a diet of gold.
One may wax arrogant over one's accumulated wealth, but nothing of it will accompany him,
And in the end the wealth may fall into the hands of thieves or go to the State.
Realise that the only thing that is permanent is the spirit.
What else can I convey to you?

From ancient times, it has been the practice in Bharat (India) to revere the mother as God. From the outset, the Vedas have declared, "Revere the mother as God, father as God, and preceptor as God. If they are gods, for what purpose are they gods? In the ordinary course of daily existence, they are gods for worldly purposes. For the human body, the mother, father, and preceptor are to be deemed as divine. But, for the pursuit of life, the Divine is the only God, There is another Sanskrit saying that hails God as mother, father, kinsman, friend, wealth, knowledge, and in fact the Supreme Lord of everything. This means that for the spiritual life, God is everything.

The mother and father are residents of the home. The preceptor dwells in his ashram. But God is the indweller of the heart.

Only God can reside in the heart. It is true that mother, father, and preceptor are divine, but they are not entitled to dwell in the heart. They have to be revered, adored, and made happy. God alone deserves to be worshipped.

God is nearer to man than his mother, Closer than even the father. To give up such God is a heinous sin. This is the truth proclaimed by Sai.

Importance of mother's blessings

It was part of the ancient tradition that when the son wished to set out for the battlefield to secure victory or go to the forest to perform penance, he would first go to his mother and seek her blessings. Dhruva, a six-year-old child, took his mother's blessings, set out to the forest to perform penance, and realized the vision of the Divine.

Arjuna prostrated before his mother to get her blessings prior to leaving for the battlefield. The mother told him, "May victory be yours." Duryodhana also went to his mother, prostrated before his mother, and sought her blessings for victory in the war. The mother told him, "Where there is dharma, there will be victory." This was Duryodhana's mother's blessing for her son. Duryodhana then went to his preceptor and sought his blessings. The preceptor said, "Where there is Krishna, there is dharma. Where there is dharma, there will be victory." Therefore, victory can be ensured only where dharma and the Divine are present, according to the mother and the preceptor.

Mother's blessing and divine grace are both necessary

In those days, what the mother declared proved prophetic. Whenever a mother conferred her blessings on her son, the Divine was present there to declare, "May it happen so." Besides the mother's blessing, divine grace is also necessary.

Hence, every son should make every effort to please his mother. Without keeping his mother pleased, the son cannot achieve anything in the world. The son should have those qualities that enable him to please his mother. At the same time, the son should also strive to win the Lord's grace. Without earning God's grace, the mother's blessings alone will be of no avail.

After the end of the Kurukshetra war, Krishna went to see Gandhari, the

mother of the Kauravas. Dhritrashtra, the father of the Kauravas, was also in deep sorrow. Gandhari spoke to Krishna in great anger and anguish, "Krishna, the Pandavas and Kauravas are sons of brothers. What is the reason for your animus against the Kauravas and your partiality for the Pandavas? You continually protected the Pandavas but you did not save even one of my hundred sons from death. Why this discrimination by you?" Krishna smiled at her and replied, "In your indignation and anger, you are using words recklessly. The fault is only yours. Although you had one hundred sons, have you seen any of them? How can children not at all seen by the mother hope to get the grace of God? The more one strives to give joy to the mother, the more the motherland will rejoice. The mother and the motherland go together.

When Pandavas were about to leave for battle, Kunti pronounced a special blessing on them proclaiming that victory would always be on the side of those who stood for dharma. She said that great warriors who went to fight with valour were blessed by their mothers with a protective amulet (raksha kavach). In the case of the Pandavas, Kunti declared that the benediction "Sri Rama Raksha" may serve as the amulet for them on the battlefield. This shows how important a mother's blessing is for the success and welfare of the children.

It is to demonstrate to the world the importance of reverence for the parents and the need to receive their blessings that Swami also makes it a point to visit the Samadhi of the parents of this body twice a year. In reality, Swami has no filial love for parents as such, but Swami adheres to this practice to serve as an example to the world.

Mother Easwaramma's presence

Now it is 30 years since the mother of this body passed away. But she is continuing to move about in her physical body around Swami. Three boys sleep in Swami's room. They have also witnessed her presence. I am telling this today because the life of ideal mothers has permanent significance.

In Prasanthi Nilayam, Swami takes breakfast after bhajan and proceeds to His place in Poornachandra Auditorium. Early in the morning one day, mother Easwamma was standing at the door in her usual form. I asked her, "Why did you come?" She said, "Swami, I have come here with a prayer to You. You are omnipresent and omniscient, but You have to control one thing!" "What is that?" Swami asked. She said, "Devotees and students offer handkerchiefs to You. But, heeding my prayer, please do not receive handkerchiefs from everybody. The times are not good. The handkerchief may be tainted with poisonous stuff. In the usual course, You use the handkerchief to wipe Your nose and mouth. So, You may receive handkerchief only from those on whom You have confidence and trust as good devotees. Do not accept from all and sundry."

Easwamma's advice to Swami

Mother's love lives on for all times, long after her passing away. Twice she appeared in the night. The boys sleeping in my room noticed her presence. Those boys had not seen her at any time. They wondered who the old lady could be. The key of the lift was in their hands and there was no staircase leading to the apartment. How did she manage to come here? When the boys asked this question, Swami woke up. I went near her and asked her why she had come again. She replied, "I cannot live without seeing You often. The moment I see You, I feel happy." After saying so, she gave me some piece of advice, "Swami, all persons describe themselves as devotees. But no one can tell who are real devotees and who are fake. Totally dedicated devotees will be ready to carry out anything You ask them to do, but there are others who come for their own selfinterest. By coming to You they get their desires fulfilled and forget You thereafter. In this matter, You should be very careful." Swami replied, "I shall take due care. There is no need for you to tell me." After hearing this, she laughed and left the room.

I am conveying to you this episode as direct testimony to the greatness of mother's love. She might have given up her body but she is always with Swami. She said, "I have performed many sacrifices for Your sake and have done many kinds of pujas. I realized the proof thereof. For 40 years I was with

You. My life has its fulfillment."

Kondama Raju's devotion

Kondama Raju was the grandfather of this body. He was also like my mother. He had two sons. The father of this body was Pedda Venkama Raju. His younger brother was Chinna Venkama Raju. Two sons of his deceased brother, Subba Raju and Venkatarama Raju, also lived with him.

When all four were together, the family was large and there was a desire to have division of property. At that time, this body was eight years old. Kondama Raju summoned the sons. They told him, "At this stage, you cannot live alone. So, you can stay with each of us by turn." He replied, "I don't want to stay with any one of you. You can take your share of the property. Leave Sathya with me. It is enough. If Sathya is with me, everything is with me." From then onward, Swami was staying with Kondama Raju. He was a great devotee and lived up to 116 years. Due to his deep devotion, he recognized the truth about Me. Swami was entering His ninth year. At that time there was no one near us. He closed the door. I was then preparing food. Swami knew the art of cooking well. People from the neighborhood used to come to our house to take food prepared by Swami.

While I was in the kitchen, Kondama Raju came uttering "Sathya, Sathya" and held both My hands. He said, "These are not hands. I consider them as Your feet. I have one wish to make to You. Before I pass away, You must pour water into my mouth at the last moment of my life." Swami gave him this promise.

After that, he lived for 19 years. He used to visit the new mandir (temple) after it was opened both morning and evening. Kondama Raju was in the habit of coming early in the morning. Swami used to sleep outside the mandir on the sand. Expecting His grandfather, Swami would cover Himself completely, including His face. I did not want him to know that I was awake. Assuming that Swami was asleep, the grandfather would touch Swami's feet and leave. He had an embarrassing feeling that others might have a mistaken

impression on seeing a 116 year old man touching the feet of a young boy. As soon as Kondama Raju left, Swami would get up.

Gopis (cowherd maids) used to sing a song, "O Krishna, can anybody wake up a person who is pretending to sleep? How can anyone open the eyes of a person who has deliberately closed his eyes?" Like that, I used to keep My eyes shut and pretend to be fast asleep. This was one of the leelas I used to perform.

Swami keeps up the promise given to Kondama Raju

The time for fulfilling the promise I had made to Kondama Raju was fast approaching. In those days, I used to drive the car myself. I was going to the city in Morris 200. Kondama Raju called Swami's mother Easwamma and said, "Come here. Swami is coming. He is coming for my sake. My last moment has come. Therefore, please bring a tumbler of drinking water." He then asked her to put a few tulsi leaves in the tumbler. He asked Swami to sit on the cot. He said, "Swami, the sky may come down but You will keep Your promise. The ocean may dry up but You will not go back on Your word. To fulfil the pledge You gave 30 years ago, You have now come." Swami broke into laughter.

Kondama Raju said, "Don't try to deceive me through Your laughter. Take this tumbler and drink a little of the water and pour the balance into my mouth." Then he related a story. "Dasaratha performed Puthrakameshti Yajna to get four sons. Lord Narayana Himself took birth as his son. Adisesha was born as Lakshmana. The conch and mace manifested as Bharata and Satrugna. Although he had four sons, no one was present to administer water to him at the time of his passing away. Swami, You have taken birth in my Ratnakara lineage in Apasthamba Sutra and Bhardwaja Gothra. All these are the signs of Divinity. This means that the Divine is born in my family. Now fulfil at least this prayer of mine. Do not refuse." Swami replied, "I have come for this very purpose." When I started to pour water into his mouth, he protested, saying, "You must first drink a little and then pour the remainder in my mouth." Swami drank a little and poured the rest in his mouth.

Kondama Raju then turned to his daughter-in-law and said, "Easwaramma, the fame and power of your son will spread all over the world. The whole world is changing. Lot of people from foreign countries will come. Be on the alert. Do not give room for the delusion that this is my son and my child. He belongs to all. Swami belongs to everyone. He is not related to one family only." He placed his hands on Swami's feet and breathed his last.

Even he keeps coming to me from time to time. He told me, "I have no further rebirth. By my association with You, my life has been redeemed. With Your Grace, I have become immortal." He used to come from time to time and warn me against what was happening in the mandir (temple). "No one can touch You, and there can be no danger to You from any quarter. Because of my past physical association with You, I am saying this. It is more a prayer to You." Even now, Kondama Raju and Easwaramma keep coming and talking to Me.

A divine comedy

In Prasanthi Nilayam, there was a devotee who had serious heart attack. Swami left the body to protect him and went out of His body at 2 a.m. and did not return to the body till 3 p.m. next day. The boys who were sleeping downstairs and those sleeping in Swami's room started crying. Along with them, Chiranjeevi Rao went and brought Dr. Alreja.

The doctor has great devotion to Swami. He has been in Prasanthi Nilayam for the past 40 years. He came and examined Swami's pulse. There was no pulse at all, no movement in the body. He started weeping. He remarked that there was no sign of life in the body.

Then Chiranjeevi Rao observed that it was not unusual for Swami to go out of His body now and then and that he had seen it. He told the six boys not to speak about it to anybody. The six boys were a good lot. These boys took M.B.A. degree in Swami's institute and had training in Delhi. They did not want to leave Swami. Despite Chiranjeevi Rao's appeal, the boys could not contain their grief.

At that moment, I got up with a smile and asked what the matter was. I asked them, "What is this drama you are enacting?" They replied, "Swami, who is playing this drama? Is it You or we?" There is a boy named Srinivas. He has passed Engineering and M.B.A. and is staying with Swami. He remarked, "It is not our drama, Swami, but it is Your drama." Then Swami said, "Many people are waiting outside. I must go out for darshan." From early morning till 3 p.m. in the afternoon I had not taken even a sip of water. They requested me to drink at least a cup of buttermilk or porridge. Swami said, "I am not used to it." Swami took His bath and went out. This kind of thing used to happen now and then. All the boys staying with Me know about it.

There are mothers who are worried when their children take to the spiritual path. They hardly realise that it is the fruit of many past lives that accounts for children taking to the spiritual path. Mothers should rejoice over such a development rather than worry about it.

Many parents desire that after the education of their children is over, they should get married, get a good job, and achieve a high position in life. Out of their love, they want their children to achieve greatness. Swami's love is not like that; Swami wants them to achieve goodness.

What is the difference between greatness and goodness? A good man sees divinity even in a human being. A great man sees the human even in God.

Ravana was a great man who had performed great penance. He was very powerful. But seeing Rama in human form, he considered him as a mere human being. On the other hand, Rama was different. He saw the Divine in all beings. That is the mark of goodness.

It is better to earn a reputation for goodness than be known as a great man. All that you find in a great man is only selfishness. But in a good man, you find total selflessness. Therefore, all of you should strive to become good men. Revere your parents. Give them joy. Show your gratitude to them.

Students' concern for Swami

Some students prefer to stay with Swami. The students know that at Kodaikanal Satyajit made a declaration in public even when his parents were present there, "I am coming out with my doubt in the open. You must all forgive me. All sorts of officers are coming to Swami. They seek fulfillment of desires and go back. Many business people also come to Swami. They also refer to Swami about their difficulties and go back after securing relief. People with ailments come to Swami and they leave after getting cured. We students have come to Swami. Many of them benefit from the free education given by Swami and leave the Institute. "Who is taking care of Swami? Nobody seems to be concerned about Swami's well being. Many times Swami falls down. Once, when Swami slipped and fell down, a pillar fell on Him. Swami did not care for it. The boys were very much worried in the night. It is necessary that someone should always be with Swami. Only when one or two people sit with Him does Swami take some little food. When He goes alone for lunch, He eats very little." My attitude is to eat whatever the students eat. I don't want to eat separately. Swami came to Brindavan from Puttaparthi and took the students to Kodaikanal. Swami used to eat only ragi and groundnut chutney. At Kodaikanal all were eating together. Swami also took His meals in their midst.

If I were to take ragi, boys may not like it. If I want them to eat ragi, they are not used to it. So Swami started eating rice food which students take. Swami likes only ragi; because He stopped taking ragi, He lost 6 kg in weight during 20 days stay at Kodaikanal.

In Puttaparthi, Satyajit was in the habit of taking My weight now and then. He used to plead to Swami to get on to the weighing machine. When Swami was in Puttaparthi He weighed 108 lbs. At Kodaikanal, when weight was taken, it showed reduction by 6 kilos. Swami weighed less than 100 lbs. Satyajit said that he was greatly worried.

I told him that he should not speak about this in public. Satyajit said, "I offer my entire life to Swami."

Swami said that he should not say such things in public. But Satyajit spoke with courage and boldness. At that time, Indulal Shah, Chairman of World Council and

others were present. All of them congratulated Satyajit on his speech. This is a point about which no one has cared for. Indulal Shah said, "Even though I am a member of Central Trust I have not thought over this point. This is a grievous lapse on our part. Hereafter, we will bear this in mind and act accordingly."

God as Mother

It is clear that each devotee has his own ideals and aspirations. But those who are imbued with a feeling of reverence for their mother will always have good feelings. One day Satyajit was concerned about surgery done for his mother's fractured leg. As far as I am concerned, all persons are good. But there is something special about this lad Satyajit. He used to take Swami's permission and massage her leg every day. He wanted to do this to relieve his mother of her pain.

At Brindavan, I was lying in bed. He came and started massaging My leg. I said, "I have no pain in My leg." He remarked, "Swami, if You have pain You won't speak about it. You keep moving about irrespective of the pain." Swami then observed, "I am used to this".

He said, "In massaging Swami's feet I am rendering service to my mother." He left for Puttaparthi and was staying in the hostel. He closed his eyes. He experienced that he was massaging Swami's feet. He observed, "With this experience, how can I be attached to the world?" Swami remarked to him, "Don't speak in that way. Be silent and carry on your duty." He passed his M.Sc. After that he joined the M.B.A. course. I told him, "You have already got a P.G. degree. Why do you want to join M.B.A.?" He replied, I can stay with You, Swami, for two more years. That is the reason." In this manner, each student has his own desires. There are any number of students imbued with such feelings. Those who develop taste of maternal love adore God as

mother. Many boys go out into the world and get caught up in worldly affairs because of their actions in previous lives. Students should feel, "Having discovered God, we do not need anything else. God will take care of mother, father, and everyone else." They should develop that firm conviction. Without that faith they can have no happiness.

At Puttaparthi, a Reddy from Nellore brought the film Pahlada and showed it to the students. The actors were small boys. The film showed that, while drinking poison, Pahlada was chanting the name of Narayana. His father had Pahlada thrown from a mountain top by two rakshasas (demons), Chanda and Amarkha. As he fell, he chanted the name of Narayana, and Narayana held Pahlada in His hands. The father wanted him to be bitten by serpents. As he chanted the name of Narayana, the serpent did not bite him. The father tried to get him crushed under the feet of an elephant. As Pahlada uttered the name of Narayana, even the elephant became Narayana and did him no harm.

All this was shown in the film; but Satyajit said, "I have experienced all this directly. I don't need to see a film. I only want Sai Narayana." It is only because of merit done in previous life that such experiences came to a person from childhood.

The other day, I asked him to participate in bhajans. He said he would sit under an Asoka Tree and participate in the bhajans. Swami does not impose His Will on anybody. He told Satyajit, "You may do what pleases you."

How Satyajit strictly adheres to Swami's ideals

In this manner, many students are imbued with noble feelings. Some students appear as supreme devotees as long as they are in the college, but the moment they leave the college, they go astray. Their speech and their actions are bad. Hence, I often tell them, as I did at Kodaikanal, "Cultivate good speech. Develop a good vision (samyag drishti). This leads to good thoughts. Good thoughts make a person listen to what is good. By listening to good thoughts one is impelled to perform good actions. Good actions lead to

liberation." Satyajit strictly adheres to Swami's ideals. He will not look at anybody. I asked him, "What is wrong if you see persons with good feelings or to see others." He replied, "I have no use for such good feelings or to see others. I want only feelings about Swami within me." Swami then said, "Please yourself."

Some students are like this. All the boys who came to Kodaikanal this year were exceptionally good boys. How lucky they are cannot be described. I took care of everyone, of all their needs. If there are more such boys, the world will improve vastly. It is only when individuals improve that society can improve. When society improves, the country improves. Improvements must start with individuals. The individual, the collective, and the world together constitute the Divine.

Offer your love to mother and enjoy life

Noble mothers give birth to noble sons. Mothers should also feel lucky to have noble sons. Kondama Raju used to tell his daughter-in-law, "Easwaramma, you have no idea of your great good fortune. You are not an ordinary woman. The Lord Himself is with you. What a lucky woman you are!" Easwaramma was the daughter-in-law of Kondama Raju. Has there been any instance of a father-in-law adoring his daughter-in-law? He used to say, "Easwaramma, your name has been vindicated. Easwara's mother is Easwaramma." This was the way they praised Easwaramma. Kondama Raju was one of those rare persons who could perceive the Truth. Those who cannot recognize the Truth will never be able to understand it. They are like a blind man who cannot see the sun even during the day. Those who are on the spiritual path and who have love for their mother can accomplish anything in the world. Many grown up men belittle the role of their mothers, saying that they might have done them some good in childhood. They feel proud about their job and position. But they forget to whom they owe their position.

Adi Sankara got the blessings of Mother Parvathi as a young boy of seven years while doing worship to the goddess in the absence of his father. After getting the blessings of the goddess, he achieved great distinction in

mastering all the Vedas and scriptures within a short period.

You have to offer your heart to God because He is the Indweller of heart, while father and mother are only dwellers in home. Respect your parents with the Divine in your heart. Tasting the sweetness of your mother's love, offer your love to her and enjoy life.

23. The essence of Buddha's teachings

Date: 11 May 1998 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Buddha Purnima

Firmament is the garment of the Divine, Stars are His eye, The melody of His laughter Fills the Universe. There are many non-believers in God who were ruined in life, but there are none who believed and failed in life.

Embodiments of Love! In ancient times, many spiritual aspirants went out in search of knowledge of the Self and studied scriptures and visited holy places to acquire experience of the Divine. But they could not get the wisdom they sought. Even though they recognized the distinction between the animate and the inanimate, they could not get spiritual illumination.

True enlightenment is attained by the awareness of the identity of the One and many (Vyakthi and Samashthi). In spite of the passage of time, man has not been able to recognize his reality. Knowledge of the Self cannot be got by the study of scriptures or from preceptors or by the grace of great men. Brahman cannot be seen in the external world. It should be experienced only in one's heart. It is a mark of ignorance to seek the Self in the outside world.

Seek the Self within

For 26 years Buddha sought the realization of the Self by studying scriptures, meeting sages and saints and listening to their teachings. He found that by these means he could not experience reality. He realized that the knowledge of the Self has to be gained through an inward search. He stopped the outward quest and gradually experienced knowledge of the Self from within. He then declared: Buddham Saranam Gachchami, Sangham Saranam Gachchami, Dharmam Saranam Gachchami.

Through his enlightenment, he discovered the importance of Dharma and wanted to make it the basis of society. Buddha realized that self-realization cannot be attained through penance or prayers or austerities. At the outset, Buddha emphasized the importance of developing good vision (samyag

drishti). Good vision leads to good thoughts, good speech and good action.

Next he laid stress on association with good people. The company of the good leads to good deeds. The four rules to be observed are: cultivate good company, avoid association with evil persons, do meritorious deeds always, and remember what is transient and what is eternal.

Good company does not mean merely association with good people. Sath refers to the Divine. What is required is to seek the company of God, who is the source of all bliss. When one's thoughts are centered on God, one's feelings, speech, and actions get sanctified - samyag bhavam, samyag sravanam and samyag kriya. This leads to the purity of the inner sense organs. Purity in thought, word, and deed is the requisite for experiencing the Divine. This triple purity is considered the essence of humanness.

Buddha recognised this Truth and experienced bliss. His mother Mayadevi had passed away nine days after his birth. After the death of his mother, Buddha was looked after by his stepmother Gautami. She fostered Buddha with boundless love. To perpetuate the name of his foster mother for the love she bestowed on him, he was called Gautama.

Buddha relied entirely on his own inner quest to experience his reality because he found that scriptural texts and preceptors were of no use.

Make your conscience your preceptor

There are many in the world who preach spirituality but none of them has any experience. What is the use of studying books without personal experience or practice. Each one should make his conscience his preceptor.

When the time of Nirvana was approaching, Buddha noticed that his step-brother Ananda was shedding tears. He beckoned Ananda and told him "Even till today, the world is not recognising the reality. There are thousands who experience sorrow at the sight of dying persons. But they make no effort to find out what experience is in store for the dead. I know the Truth about it. I

am merging in that Truth. To shed tears at this prospect is not justified.

"It seems to me that you are grieving over the exalted state that is impending for me. No human being should shed tears over the moment of death of any person. Tears are associated with the Divine and should be shed only for the sake of the Divine and not for trivial matters. You should shed tears of joy. Grief is not a proper state for man. Hence no tears of sorrow should be shed." Here is an illustration from our daily experience. While going in a bazar, if a person sees someone crying he asks him, "Why are you crying?" Other passersby also question him. If in the same bazar another person is going about in a jolly mood, no one goes to him to inquire the cause of his happiness.

Happiness is considered to be natural condition of man. He seeks it all the time. Sorrow is repugnant to man. It is a weakness of man to give room to grief. By falling prey to grief in many lives, man is perpetually plunged in sorrow.

For a person who has firm faith in God there will be no cause for sorrow. Those who give way to sorrow are persons who have not understood the Divine Principle. God is one. He appears to people in different names and forms. Failing to recognise that God is one, people suffer from many difficulties. They worship God as Allah, Buddha, Rama, Krishna, Jesus, etc. These names have been given after their advent in the world and these are not inherent in them. The names are of passing significance.

Happiness is union with God

All that is connected with body is temporary and transient. What men should seek is enduring bliss. Happiness is union with God.

Buddha prescribed five duties: good vision, good thoughts, listening to good things, good speech, and good actions. These five-fold duties constitute true sadhana (spiritual practice).

Man is misusing the talents given to him by the Divine. He is giving free vent to the six cardinal vices like lust, anger, and greed. They are not the gifts of the Divine. They have been fostered by the food people eat. They are animal qualities which have to be got rid of. People should speak the truth and avoid speaking what is unpleasant even if it is truth. The entire gamut of human life should be based on truth.

Bharatiya (Indian) culture has placed the foremost emphasis on "Speak the truth; act righteously." Speaking truth is a supreme virtue for all people, anywhere. In any circumstance one should adhere to truth. Truth is God incarnate. Righteousness should accompany one like a shadow. When you have truth and righteousness as your guiding stars you can achieve anything in life. All powers are inherent in these two virtues.

Man can realize bliss only when he turns his vision inward. Only proximity to God can confer happiness. It cannot be had elsewhere, from anyone else.

It is a mark of ignorance to expect that some other person will give you happiness. Buddha felt sad that people should be subject to such ignorance. He practiced many spiritual exercises and came to a certain decision. He decided to go to Gaya and experience bliss by his own way. He found the source of bliss within himself. He realised it could not be got from outside.

Every man's heart is the dwelling place of God. Hence everyone should take good care of it and cultivate it as the source of divine bliss.

Cultivate sacred feelings

Because Buddha's teachings were not properly propagated, Buddhism steadily declined in this country. All religions suffer a decline because those who profess them do not practice them in their daily lives. People should practice what they profess. People should live up to the truths in which they believe. People do not act upon the truths they have learnt.

Unfortunately, people today have only outward vision. The external vision is

characteristic of animals. You must sanctify your vision by turning it inward. Then you can get rid of animal qualities and divinise your life. Hence, develop godly feelings within you.

The divine dwells in the heart of everyone. You must enthrall those who entertain godly feelings. Such people should not be discouraged. Divine feelings arise in one only as a consequence of good deeds done in many lives. Only a sacred heart can experience the Divine. The pursuit of any object other than the Divine is a futile exercise - worldly possessions come and go, but divinity comes and grows.

The way to God

Embodiments of Love! You have all come from many distant parts of the world. You have come to experience the joy of participating in the Buddha Purnima celebrations. You need not have come all the way from your distant places. Buddhi represents the intellect. That intellect must be used properly. Then you will realize what is implied in Buddhism.

People talk about spiritual exercises and waste their lives. All these pursuits are waste of time. It is enough if you develop sacred feelings. The chief sadhana (spiritual exercise) consists of getting rid of bad thoughts and cultivating good qualities. Whatever pilgrim center you may visit, try to shed your bad tendencies. Develop good qualities instead.

People speak about nirvana. It is equated with moksha or liberation. You must aim at achieving this liberation. Nirvana means experiencing bliss in the last moments of your life. Man does not realize what it is that he should seek and what he should reject.

There are three things required to be done in life. You should try to do good to those that have done harm to you. You must forget the harm done by others and also the good you have done to others. So you should forget what needs to be forgotten and remember those things that require to be remembered. What are the things you have to remember? The good that

others have done to you. You must remember the good that has been done to you as something sacred. You must express your gratitude to them.

Make all your actions conform to righteousness (dharma). Whatever actions you do remembering God will get sanctified thereby.

See no evil; See what is good. Hear no evil; Hear what is good. Speak no evil; Speak what is good. Think no evil; Think what is good. Do no evil; Do what is good. This is the way to God.

This is the essence of Buddha's teachings. When you are indulging in evil pursuits through your senses, how can you get peace? Peace should come from hridaya (the spiritual heart) filled with compassion.

Embodiments of Love! The Divine dwells in each of us in the form of Love.

24. Quest for Truth

Date: 09 July 1998 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Guru Purnima

Neither by penance nor by bathing in sacred rivers,
Nor by study of scriptures nor by japa
Can the ocean of Samsara be crossed
Without serving godly men.
[Sanskrit sloka]

Embodiments of Love! Man adopts various means to achieve liberation (from the bondage of mundane existence). Penance is performed for whose sake? It is for one's own benefit and not for the good of others, nor even for the Supreme Self. In the performance of japa (recitation of the Lord's name), it must be noted that it is done for one's own satisfaction and not for the welfare of others. What should one do to secure redemption from the cycle of worldly existence? Chanting the Lord's name or performing sacrifices or doing other rituals will be of no avail. You have to render service to your fellow human beings.

Service is true worship

Seva (service) is the highest form of worship and the best penance. Seva is the most important form of reciting the Lord's name. Money that is lost can be earned again. Lost friends may be got back again. Even the loss of a wife can be made up by remarriage. But, if the present body is lost, it cannot be got back again. Hence, the body is highly sacred.

For what purpose should this sacred body be protected? The body has to be protected because verily it is the primary means of achieving dharma.

Human birth is a rare privilege. It is highly sacred and sublime. Having been

born as human beings, if men do not realize the preciousness of human life, what is the use of being born as human? Man is endowed with the gift of memory. Reflection is natural to him. The search for the meaning of life is an admirable quality. It is as a result of this search that man's creative faculties have resulted in great achievements in the fields of science and in other fields of knowledge.

But, owing to their failure to use the intellect properly and on account of misdirected search, people are lost in different kinds of inquiry. One person sees a tree. He sees only the branches and not the roots. Another sees the roots and not the branches. This is not the right way to find out the real truth about anything.

Real inquiry into the truth calls for an inquiry both into the nature of the branches and the nature of the roots and of the tree as a whole. The scientist looks only at the branches. But the student of the roots is a Vedantin. Whether one is a scientist or a Vedantin, the pursuit of truth calls for a study of the branches, the roots, and the tree integrally.

There is an illustration for this from the scriptures. The rakshasas (demons) and the devas (gods) churned the Ocean of Milk (to get nectar from it.) The first product to come of the churning was the dreadful poison, halahala. Not deterred by this outcome, they continued with the churning of the ocean. In the process, Lakshmi (the goddess of prosperity), marvelous beings like Airavatha, the divine elephant, and finally amritam (nectar) came out of the ocean. How could they secure all these? Because of their persistence in their efforts.

People today should turn their hearts toward the search for truth. The human heart is a symbol of the Ocean of Milk. If, in this ocean, the rope of wisdom is used for churning the heart, some disappointments and failures may occur. Without succumbing to these failures, if man continues his efforts, he will secure precious things like truth, righteousness, and justice. Qualities like forbearance and compassion will also emerge.

All arts originated from the search for truth

People should endeavor to cultivate qualities like tolerance, love, sympathy, righteousness, justice, and truth. People do not give any importance to this quest for truth. The search for truth is being directed toward worldly objects, which are ephemeral and worthless. Men should really dedicate themselves to the quest for the truth that is eternal. All arts have originated from the search for truth.

In this search for truth, though God may not be realised, there will be indications pointing to the Divine. How does this happen? For instance; one may point to the Pole Star (Dhruva Nakshatra) as the star that is seen above the branch of a tree. As a matter of fact, there is no connection between the branch of the tree and the Pole Star. The branch, however, indicates the direction in which the Pole Star is to be seen.

Likewise, all our directions, all the words we utter, all our behavior, all that we see are all related to the search for the truth. All of them testify to the existence of God. For instance, we look at the vast ocean. We feel happy on seeing its vastness. We see a high mountain. It arouses a feeling of joy. Looking at a densely wooded forest, your heart is gladdened. These are all signs of the discovery of truth. Though you do not see God in them, they indicate the presence of the Divine in them.

A big tree grows from a small seed. A chick comes out of an egg. One being is born from another. A flower gives fragrance. You get butter from milk. All these are facts discovered in the search for truth.

God is immanent in all objects

The whole cosmos functions on the basis of three types of activity. These are what we experience in our daily life. One is the act of creation. The second is sustenance of creation. The third is the dissolution of what is created. Creation, sustenance and dissolution are all happenings of everyday experience. We witness them everyday. All of them testify to the existence of

the Divine who is the embodiment of Truth.

Without realising basic truth, people are engaged in controversies about the whereabouts of God. It is easy to raise questions about God. But it is difficult to make the search for God. Why? God is the truth of all truths. He is present as truth even in untruth. He is bad in badness and good in goodness. He is the merit in the meritorious and the sin in the sinful.

It is in this context that the Gita declares that the Lord is present as the essence (rasa) in all things. God is the sweet essence in the syrup. There can be no syrup without sugar. Likewise God is immanent in all objects. He is like butter in milk, fragrance in a flower, the good element in every object. This is the significance of the scriptural dictum: "Rasovai Sah" (He is the essence of everything). God is immanent in everything in the cosmos like sugar in syrup. This is not visible to the eye. It has to be experienced.

Creation, sustenance, and dissolution go on according to the predetermined laws. The Vedas have described the master of these three activities as God. It is reaffirmed by the Upanishads. The Quran, the Bible, the Granth Saheb (of the Sikhs) - all these have described how the presence of God can be inferred from various indications.

There is nothing in the cosmos that is not subject to these three processes. None can deny this truth. A philosopher or a scientist, an engineer or a doctor, or anyone else has to accept this fact. The master of this process is called God.

What does GOD signify? G stands for generation (or creation). O stands for organization:(sustaining the creation). D stands for destruction (or dissolution). All these three aspects can be noticed when we examine any object. All three processes take place according to the will of the Divine. The entire cosmos is encompassed by these three processes.

Happiness is consummation of suffering

How is one to realise this truth? All impulses of man arise from the heart. When the heart is kept pure, all our thoughts, words, and actions become sweet. When the heart is dedicated to right purposes, all our actions become righteous and our life gets redeemed. All that is good or bad in us emanates from the heart. Good and bad are seldom separate from each other. They are inseparable. Happiness is not a separate state. It is the consummation of suffering.

The oneness of the Divine subsumes everything. Humanness is the means to realise this oneness. The scriptures have declared that the same Divine Spirit dwells in all beings.

The human body is encased in five sheaths: annamaya kosa (the sheath of food or physical sheath), pranamaya kosa (the vital sheath), manomaya kosa (the mental sheath), vijnanamaya kosa (the sheath of wisdom), and anandamaya kosa (the sheath of bliss).

Among the five sheaths, vijnanamaya kosa (the sheath of wisdom) is present only in man and not in other beings. Man should realize the preciousness of this gift of wisdom sheath. It should not be misused. Man is endowed with so many noble and estimable qualities that he should not be treated as a being of no account.

Forgetting all his immense potentialities and treating the physical as most important, man is leading a meaningless life.

It is not the physical (annamaya kosa) that is really important. As long as life is based on the physical alone, man can have no peace.

Science and spirituality

The sage Narada, who was proficient in 64 branches of knowledge, suffered from lack of peace, so he went to Sanat Kumara. He appealed to him, "Swami! Dispel my ignorance and teach me the way to attain peace." Sanat Kumara said, "Narada! There is no field of knowledge in which you are not

proficient. You know all the methods prescribed by the Vedas, the Upanishads, and other Sastras (spiritual texts). But all this knowledge has not conferred any happiness on you. All this knowledge is concerned with the phenomenal world, which is transient in its character. You cannot secure peace till you gain knowledge of the Eternal." The same truth is declared by scientists when they say that where science ends spirituality begins.

Science is concerned with all the phenomena in nature. It furnishes what is required for the physical body. It is doubtless essential to take care of the body. But the body should not be deemed as the sole truth. However, one should devote all efforts to its maintenance and comfort. All achievements are dependent on the body. Even the Divine can be realised through the body. But the body is not yourself. It is only an instrument for realising God. Moreover, the Supreme Atmic Principle (Paramatma) is immanent in it.

Love is man's most divine quality

There are many vital things to be achieved in the world. For all of them, the primary basis is love. What could be accomplished by love and goodwill was demonstrated by one of the Prime Ministers of the U.K., William Gladstone, during the reign of Queen Victoria. He was described by his biographer as a noble man, who discharged his duties with love and with a spirit of sacrifice.

Man has many sacred qualities, like love and sacrifice, but he does not put them into practice wholeheartedly. There is divinity in every man. Without recognising this divinity, man is wasting his life on mundane pleasures. Man is the most valuable creation in the world. All things, however precious, derive their value from man.

In man, the most divine quality is love. Love is God. Live in love. Cultivate love for all. This vast world calls for largehearted love. Then humanness will become manifest. Troubles and difficulties are incidental to human existence. But they will pass in due course. What are permanent are the values we cherish.

In the world, every country has its own ideals and aspirations. Every country should adhere to its dharma, its traditional values. When a country disregards its ideals, it goes down as a nation.

Bharatiya culture is rooted in divinity

The culture of Bharat (India) is a glorious one. It has survived the vicissitudes of five thousand years in its history. A huge banyan tree is sustained by the fact that its roots go deep down into the earth to preserve it. In many countries, their ancient culture has vanished long ago. But only Bharatiya (Indian) culture has survived from the distant past to the present day. What is the reason? The divine roots of that culture have gone down to the core of the earth and established themselves firmly. It is that divinity which is sustaining this culture.

The culture of Bharat should not be considered merely as a catalogue of ideals. It is a perennial source of inspiration and example. In spite of other changes, it has remained the same. The perennial message of this culture is not properly recognised.

Despite the remarkable progress in science, peace is eluding the advanced countries. What happiness can there be when there is no peace? Churchill once observed that man had achieved many victories but had not conquered his senses. Prahlada conveyed the same lesson to his father. If a man has no control over his mind, what is the use of all other conquests?

Control of the mind is the first requisite. It can be achieved only by pursuing the spiritual path and not by any other means. What is the significance of the Guru Purnima, which we are celebrating today? People consider a person who imparts knowledge as a preceptor. But most of them are mere teachers, not preceptors (gurus). There is only one guru, and He is God.

Many who describe themselves as gurus collect contributions from their disciples on this day. The letter Gu signifies one who transcends all attributes. Ru signifies one who has no form. Only God can be regarded as one who is

beyond attributes and forms. In another sense, the term guru means one who dispels ignorance. Most so-called gurus are engaged in worldly activities. In the Kali Age, even spirituality has become a kind of business!

People should understand the distinction between worldly love and spiritual love. Worldly love is based on the desire to receive. Divine love yearns to give. God's love goes on giving. This is the true mark of divinity. It is a sign of purity. Spirituality is opposed to the ways of the world. Worldly activities cannot always be avoided. But if whatever is done is made an offering to please God, it gets sanctified. Whatever you achieve, treat it as a gift from God. You will then realize your true humanness.

True humanness consists in the unity of good conduct, good thoughts and good speech. Never depart from truth. Let love flow freely from your heart.

Mind's role in health and disease

At a recent meeting in Bangalore, a devotee said, "I am constantly bathing in the river of life flowing in Bangalore." But where is this river of life to be found in Bangalore? He indicated that he considered the drainage water in the city as lifegiving river. It flows on forever and is never dry. It is no wonder that people bathing in such "life-giving" rivers are full of diseases.

What are the causes of the maladies afflicting people today? Impure air, polluted water, adulterated foodstuffs, etc. Nor is that all. Even the minds are polluted. These mental ailments are the cause of man's degradation. Most of the diseases are caused by aberrations of the mind. Ninety per cent of the diseases are psychological. Constant thinking about one's health is also the cause of many diseases. A heart specialist, who was constantly examining heart patients, was worried about this own heart. Ultimately he died of heart attack. Another doctor, who specialized in treating digestion disorders, ultimately died of gastric troubles by worrying about his own digestion!

The mind has thus a vital role in one's health or illness. That was why the sages declared, "The mind is the cause of men's bondage or liberation." When

the mind is directed toward sacred things, everything in a one's life becomes sacred. In such a state, all that you think, see or hear becomes pure and sacred.

The heart is like a lock with the mind as the key. Turn the key toward God, you develop detachment. Turn the mind toward the world, you get attachment. Our minds should not be immersed in mundane concerns. Deem everything in the world as divine.

True yearning for God is essential to experience Him

Once Vivekananda went to Swami Ramakrishna Paramahansa and asked him, "Have you seen God?"

"Yes," said Ramakrishna.

"In what form?" asked Vivekananda.

Ramakrishna replied, "I am seeing him just as I am seeing

you."

"Why, then, am I unable to see Him?"

Ramakrishna explained that if he yearned for God with the

same intensity with which he was yearning for many other things, he would be able to experience God. Ramakrishna said that people shed tears for relations, wealth, and many other things, but how many shed tears for God? Ramakrishna advised Vivekananda to yearn for God with all his heart and soul. God is then bound to manifest Himself to him.

If we are keen to experience the Divine, we must devote ourselves to the Divine. People go through various troubles for the sake of wealth, relations, position, and power. If they were to devote a small fraction of that time to

thoughts of God, they would experience freedom from the fear of death. If you think only of world, how can you get peace and bliss?

Love the Lord who resides in your heart

Concentrate on the love of God. Although one's mother, father, and preceptor are to be adored as divine beings, they are not God. God should be worshipped as mother, father, preceptor, kinsman, and friend. Father, mother, and preceptor dwell in their respective abodes. But God dwells in your heart. Love the Lord who resides in your heart. All other objects of love are impermanent. What is the use of education if you have not learnt to worship God?

What does the worship of God mean? Practices like meditation, japa and penance are all tainted by selfishness. True worship of God consists in seeking union with God by realising one's own divinity. With every breath, man proclaims that he and the Divine are one in the mantra So-Ham, expressed through inhalation and exhalation.

Men must recognize that the body becomes a sacred shrine (kshetra) because the indweller is God (Kshetrajna). To know that God is the indweller will free a person from all bad qualities. Egoism is the worst enemy of man. Possessiveness (mamakara) is another evil trait. Both these should be banished, since they are at the root of all vices. When the two evil traits go, man becomes divinised.

By developing love, one sees the Divine in all beings. It is like wearing coloured glasses. If you see the world through the glasses of love, you will see love everywhere. The glasses and the vision must be in harmony. Only with the eye of love can you use the glasses of love to see the loveliness of the world. There is no greater spiritual path than the path of love. It is through love that such noble qualities as kindness, compassion and sympathy are fostered. Embodiments of Love! You are carrying on a variety of spiritual exercises (sadhanas). God does not seek your sadhanas. Nor does He seek your devotion. He seeks only your love.

Difference between a devotee and a servant of God

A short while ago, K.R. Prasad, a Member of the Sathya Sai Central Trust, came to Me. In the course of our talk he asked Me, "What is the difference between a bhakta (devotee) and a dasa (servant of the Lord)?" I told him, "Dasa is one who seeks to serve the Lord using his body for the purpose. Bhakta is one who is always thinking about God wherever he may be. The devotee is one who 'always and at all times contemplates on God' "Sarvada Sarvakaleshu Sarvatra Hari Chintanam (Dasa is always thinking of service to God)." Sankaracharya had five disciples. One of them was purehearted. The other disciples were keenly studying the Sastras, the Upanishads, and other texts. They were also learning logic and grammar. One day, Sankaracharya was teaching these disciples the principles of logic.

One of them was primarily concerned with service to the guru; he regarded himself as a dasa of the guru. He was engaged in gathering clothes of the guru after the morning ablutions, taking them to the Ganga, washing them, drying them, and bringing them back to the ashram. Thus he was totally involved in attending to the personal needs of the guru. He kept the guru's clothes clean, chanting all the while the name of the guru.

Once, on his way back from the other bank of the river, he did not realize that the Ganga was in spate. As he was crossing the river, it rose up to the level of his neck. He looked around, but had no fear whether he would be washed away by the swelling waters. His only worry was how to take the clothes to the guru even at the cost of his life. Placing the clothes on his head and chanting the word, "guruji! guruji", he continued wading through the river. Because of his intense devotion to his guru, at every step he took there was a lotus-shaped stone on which he could place his foot.

He thereby earned the appellation "Padmapada". Sankaracharya called him and imparted his teachings to him. He told Padmapada: "Service to the guru is a great virtue. You have adored the guru as God. Guru represents the Divine Trinity and is the Supreme Self."

God alone is the real Guru

Today, the scriptural saying that the Guru is Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswara should be understood not in the literal sense but in the sense that God alone is the real guru. Sankara taught Padmapada that individual preceptors should not be worshipped as gods. Then, he imparted to Padmapada the sacred truth.

The other four disciples used to treat Padmapada previously as an ignoramus. After receiving the teachings from Sankaracharya, Padmapada could repeat the entire Vedic texts at one stroke. He became a good exponent of Vedanta, better than many scholars.

One day Sankaracharya summoned Padmapada and asked him to whom he was preaching and what message he was giving to them. Padmapada burst into a hymn in praise of Siva and said that Sankara was the inspiration for all his teachings and all his discourses were an offering to Sankara. Who is Sankara? Sankara is one who is free from sankas (doubts).

No one should have any doubts about God. The doubting man can achieve nothing. With total faith and total love, you can accomplish anything.

It should be realized that proficiency in fields like music, literature, and the arts is secured by the grace of the Divine. All fine arts are gifts from God. Nothing can be claimed as one's own achievement. The recipient of God's grace will lack nothing. He will have no troubles, and he will commit no wrongs because he has surrendered to God. The person who considers God as his all becomes one with God (himself). Hence, direct your minds toward God.

25. True education fosters human values

Date: 10 August 1998 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: University Auditorium

Daivadheenam Jagathsarvam Sathyadheenamtu Daivatham That Sathyam
Uthamadheenam Uthamo Paradevatha

The whole world is under the control of God;

God is subject to truth.

Truth is subject to noble souls.

Such noble people are the embodiments of Divinity.

Students! Embodiments of Love! Teachers and promoters of education! Today, people have not understood Divinity, have not understood the meaning of God, and are wasting their bodies, their time, and all precious things in life. Human values do not depend on education alone. They depend more on culture. What do you mean by culture? Culture means giving up one's bad conduct, bad behaviour, bad deeds and cultivating good thinking, fostering good sentiments that lead to good actions.

The state of the whole world depends on human activity. When the actions of the people are noble, the country is equally noble. The people's behaviour and conduct depend on their thoughts. Thoughts depend on the mind. Good thoughts are the basis of human values.

Good thoughts yield goodness

Because human values are not practised, the world is in a mess. The head and the heart are two important organs in every human being. Thoughts that arise in the head are worldly and fickle. They are influenced by external activities. Reading, writing, eating, and earning are all outward activities. They are the products of the head.

All sacred feelings arise from the heart. Sacred qualities like compassion, love, sympathy, forbearance, and truth emanate from the heart. They are all called inward qualities. The world is nothing but a combination of external and internal tendencies. Just as a sapling grows into a huge tree giving you flowers and fruits, likewise, thoughts that are sacred lead to actions that yield fruits of all goodness.

Man is combination of three entities: the body, the mind, and the Atma (spirit). First comes the body. It is the instrument of action. The mind thinks. The conscience is the Atma, or spirit that exists as consciousness. So, human life is a combination of these three aspects: action, thinking, and consciousness.

If the body functions independently without consulting the mind and the spirit, the activity will be animal activity. If the mind acts independently without coordinating with the body and the spirit, the activity is likely to be demonic. If the spirit acts independently, the actions will transcend the body and the mind. The true mark of a human being is goodness. Goodness is not a product of academic education. Can bookish knowledge be called true education? Without spiritual knowledge and wisdom, can a person be called educated?

Every student must cultivate human values

Education must inculcate respect for human values like truth, righteousness, love, and peace. Education is for life. Life is for man. Man is there for society. Society is meant for spirituality. The spirituality is there for the nation. The nation is part of the world, and the world is for peace.

Today everyone wants peace. In fact you can attain and acquire peace only out of human values. For peace and happiness, human values are most important. Bereft of human values, man can never be in peace.

Without understanding this principle, man tries to acquire education. Man today considers that receiving information is education. It is not information

that confers human values. Modern education makes a man machine, a computer. Greatness lies in becoming not a computer but a composer. You have to acquire education to make your life ideal.

Modern education tends to make men selfish. There should be a limit even for selfishness. Every student must necessarily cultivate human values. The Government, by establishing educational institutions in every village and street, thinks that the education in the country has progressed.

What are the qualities of education? Virtues, good intellect, adherence to truth, devotion, discipline, and duty are essential qualities. Education must teach these values. Students have to learn these things.

What is the progress in modern education? In fact, students try to ruin those who are responsible for their food. They harm those who help them. They make fun of those who teach them. This is the progress in 'modern' education. Students have to foster obedience, humility, and human values and attain Divinity. This is true education. Modern students do not understand what true education is. As a result, society is polluted. Truth and other human qualities have been distorted and perverted altogether. Sanctity and sacred quality of human nature is fast disappearing. The practise of righteousness, compassion are viewed as bad practices. Do you call this 'progress' in education? No. you should express human values by practicing righteousness and cultivating compassion.

The true meaning of education

With good education, you will have culture, When you have culture, that is true life. If you have good education, you will be happy. When you are happy, you will be peaceful. When you have good education,

You will be in good company.

When you are in good company,

You will have good qualities.

When you have good education,

Your life will find fulfillment.

Thereby, you can attain liberation.

[Poem]

Students should adhere to the twin ideals of sathya and dharma (truth and righteousness). In this world, there is nothing greater than truth. You should become embodiments of truth. In your daily life you should follow the path of truth and realise the Divine.

You have to water a sapling to get fruit and seeds. Love, which is natural to human beings, should be watered with faith to sustain it. We should make an effort to attain peace in the true sense of the word. The peace that we get today is momentary. We cannot call it peace anyway.

The history of Bharat is one long saga of sacrifice

In the modern world, Bharat stands for all that is sacred. Since, ancient times, it has been a model and an ideal for the rest of the world. There is Truth in the air of Bharat. There is dharma in the dust of Bharat. There is love in the sands of Bharat. And there is compassion in the water of Bharat.

Forbearance is the core of Bharatiya (Indian) culture. In order to enjoy and experience these values, even foreigners have decided to come and settle down in Bharat. In ancient times, Bharatiyas were determined to follow the principle of sacrifice. They were dedicated to righteousness and truth.

Having been born in the sacred land of Bharat, you should not forget this important aspect. If you go through the history of this sacred land, you will certainly understand that Bharat never tried to invade or conquer any

country. They had to resist foreign invaders. Bharatias stand for selflessness. They were never selfish at any point of time. Bharatias never coveted the lands of others. The history of Bharat is one long saga of sacrifice.

Emperor Harischandra was prepared to give up everything for the sake of Truth. Emperor Sibi sacrificed his own flesh and blood to save a dove. Bharat has given birth to men and women who stood for sacrifice. Modern students are trying to change this land of sacrifice, from a land of spiritual practices into a land of pleasure seekers. But all pleasure is transient. You should seek the bliss that is enduring by realizing your inherent Divinity.

Yesterday, an American boy came to Swami. Bhagavan asked him, "How old are you?"

The boy said, "Seven years."

Swami asked him: "How do you know?" He said, "My mother and father told me." Swami said, "It is only one that has become seven. One plus one plus one... comes to seven." Without one there cannot be seven. All numbers come out of one. Truth is one; scholars call it by many names. Names and forms differ, but Divinity is one and the same in all. First, have faith in yourself. Without self-confidence, you cannot have faith in yourself. Then how can you have faith in others? Let this visvasa (faith) become your svasa (life-breath). Let our education become true education. Education that is not practised is bookish knowledge.

You should have love for your country also. Rama Said, "Motherland is greater than heaven itself." That spirit of patriotism is very important.

When you ask God for help, He is right beside you with hands held out to help you. All you need is the discrimination to pray to God and the wisdom to remember Him.

- *Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

26. Truth and love shape dharma

Date: 14 August 1998 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

God is the embodiment of love.

If you don't understand even a fraction of that love in this world, how do you expect to realize truth and fulfill your ambitions?

Embodiments of Divine Love! Peace, friendship, servitude, sweetness, affection - these are all synonyms of the basic principle of love. The more a man develops love, the more blissful he will be. Man aspires to be blissful. Man always wants to be happy. What is the reason? Man is born out of this bliss. He lives in bliss. He ends in bliss. This bliss is divine. Though this divine quality is latent in him, man searches for it outside. Bliss does not have a separate existence .

Man strains himself thinking that he would be happy by learning. He makes every effort to take up a job, to be happy. Thinking that he would find happiness in it, he struggles hard to occupy exalted positions. He thinks that he would be happy by becoming a householder. In spite of all these efforts, he is far from this happiness.

Of all the attributes and names of God, Sat-Chit-Ananda is the most precious. To attain such a bliss, one has to follow this path of Sat-Chit-Ananda. Sat is the truth that remains the same in all the three worlds and in all the three periods of time. In order to know this truth, one has to tread along this path only. Chit means total awareness. Out of this total awareness, you can attain Divinity. Where these three principles, Sat-ChitAnanda, exist, there is supreme bliss, Brahmananda.

Why does God incarnate?

Man undertakes many spiritual pursuits to attain this bliss (Divinity). But they all give him temporary satisfaction, not lasting bliss. They are all worldly

pursuits. Once you give up these external paths and take to the inward path, you attain bliss. Those who want this eternal, supreme, non-dual bliss should follow this path of Sat and Chit.

In order to reach this blissful state, one has to follow the path of truth. Truth is God. Truth is all pervasive. Truth is beyond time and space and all reckoning. Once you follow this truth, naturally you can attain God, who is the embodiment of truth. This is what Veda means, when it says, "Uddhareth Atmanatmanam. (You should work for your own emancipation)." You should know your truth. Investigate your own heart. There lies real bliss.

All physical paths confer temporary satisfaction.

Man has four primary objectives in life. They are dharma (righteousness), artha (wealth), kama (desire), and moksha (liberation). These four objectives give us worldly comforts and bring peace and enjoyment in our life. However, there is a fifth objective of life called Supreme Love. It is the principle of love that makes you love God intensely. The one who understands and follows this sacred text of love will attain liberation.

What is liberation? Mukti (liberation) is that which would put an end to external pursuits.

What is to be offered to God? This body, which is the temple of God, should be offered to God. This is called Pindarpanam. This body is Pindamu; offering this to God is liberation. It means only that all actions that we do with this body should be offered to God. This is the fifth objective of human life, i.e. the sacred ideal of love. To teach this sacred rule of love, to pass on the sacred love, to propagate this love, to make people drink the nectar of love, the formless God descends from Goloka to Bhuloka in a human form.

We have to offer our total love to God

The day of descent of God on earth is celebrated as the birthday of God. Why does He incarnate? God descends on earth to make humanity drink the

nectar of love and enjoy the sweetness of Divinity. One who drinks this sweet nectar forgets himself and identifies himself with God and enjoys the blissful state thereafter. "Shariramadyam khalu dharma sadhanam, the body is gifted to perform sacred actions.

We have to discharge our duties and sacrifice the fruits of our actions. We have to cultivate the principle of thyaga (sacrifice) and be far off from bhoga (worldly pleasures). God is the embodiment of thyaga. The bliss that you get out of sacrifice is truly divine. Those who want to enjoy the blissful state of God must give up body attachment and turn inward.

We should not spend all our time for our bodily pleasures. We do need to safeguard our body. What for is the body given? It is given to serve God.

What we need is good character

The body is bound to perish at some point of time. Just for the sake of this fleeting body, we should not waste our time and energy. What we need is good character. The modern student tries to acquire only physical strength, friendship, and wealth. But all these things are not important. Character is important. Without character, physical strength, friendship, and wealth are of no use. It does not matter even if wealth or friendship is lost, but you should keep up your character.

In the ancient days, Bharathiyas (Indians) believed, "If wealth is lost, nothing is lost, if health is lost, something is lost, if character is lost, everything is lost." But due to the effect of Kali Age, people now say, "if character is lost, nothing is lost, if health is lost, something is lost, if wealth is lost, everything is lost." This is the modern trend. This is not the path that we have to adopt.

The previous speaker, Prof. Chatterjee, narrated the incident of Krishna lifting the Govardhanagiri, in order to protect the gopalas and gopikas (cowherd lads and maids) from the torrential rain. When Krishna told them to come and take shelter under the mountain, which He had lifted with His small finger, the people were afraid to do so. They doubted His Divinity, thinking Him to be

only a small boy. Human beings form their opinion based on the physical frame and physical strength. It is only the Divine that goes by the character and not by the physical strength.

We have to make an effort to know the difference between God's love and human love. God always gives and gives and never receives anything in return, but man always receives and is never prepared to give.

In every activity, we have to inquire the principle of truth. One who recognizes the truth will always live in bliss. Love is truth, love is life, and love is the goal. Love is second to none; love equals love alone. Only through the path of love can you reach the embodiment of love, which is God. It is not physical or worldly love. It is not "pravritti [rema]", which is external, but it is the "nivritti prema", which is eternal and Divine.

It is not a mistake to criticise God out of love

You can win God's love either by criticism or praise. When Dharmaja was offering first respects to Krishna in the open court, Sisupala started criticizing Krishna in many ways. Dharmaja could not bear this. As he was listening to this uncharitable criticism, he could see the life principle of Sisupala merging in Krishna. This made Dharmaja much more unhappy and dissatisfied. He started wondering how the life principle of a person like Sisupala could merge in the Lord.

Dharmaja requested Narada, who was by his side, to explain how such a thing could happen. Narada said, "O king! criticism or praise relate only to the body, not to the spirit. Moreover, Sisupala criticized Krishna only out of love and not hatred; since he knew that the more he criticized, the sooner he could merge in Him. There is no mistake if you criticize God out of love. Even such a criticism is a kind of praise." Kamsa, having come to know that he would die at the hands of Krishna, decided to kill Krishna and Balarama. Immediately, he called Akrura and commanded him to go and fetch Balarama and Krishna saying, "O Akrura, you are a good friend and devotee of Krishna, if you go, they will surely condescend to your request." Since he could not

disobey the command of the king, Akrura went and met Yashoda and Nanda and told them that Kamsa was performing a yagna and wanted Krishna and Balarama to attend it. But Yashoda and Nanda were not in favor of their children going to Kamsa's palace.

The gopikas' love for Krishna

The gopikas (cowherd maids), having heard of this, surrounded Nanda's house and said that Krishna should not go to Mathura, because He was their life and they could not live without Him. They raised objections in several ways.

Krishna is the very form of mystery and wonder. He did not utter a word, since he knew that gopikas would not be convinced so easily. So he sat in the chariot and made it disappear with his divine power. Until He reached the banks of Yamuna, no one could see the chariot. Since the gopikas found themselves helpless, they returned to Brindavan. The gopikas had this intense love for Krishna, so they could see this love pervading all over.

Whenever the hearts of human beings become barren, because of unrighteousness and lovelessness, in order to sow the seeds of love and in order to propagate the principle of love, God incarnates. The main mission of God is to develop the principle of love in mankind. Only when we get intoxicated and forget ourselves drinking the nectar of divine love can we find the path to liberation.

In order to experience Sat-Chit-Ananda, we should tread along the path of truth. We should have total understanding of the Self; then we will enjoy the manifestation of God Himself. God is not present in a foreign land, He is present in your body.

Krishna once questioned the gopikas around Him, "Who is the true victor?" One of them said, "One who emerges victorious in the battlefield is the true victor." A few said, "One who can face all the difficulties and troubles with steadfastness and courage is the true victor." In this manner, each gave

different answers.

Krishna smilingly said, "Gopalas, whatever you mentioned are temporary in nature. None of them can be termed as a true victor. True success lies in controlling one's senses. Then one will be a victor. One has to control the senses. The senses belong to the body. Make this body a temple of God.

It is impossible to understand God

No one can describe God. The gopikas sang, "O Krishna, can we understand You? You are smaller than an atom, mightier than the biggest. You are present in all 84 lakhs of species always. Right from the atom to the entire cosmos, You are present everywhere." It is impossible to understand God. We have to understand Him as the embodiment of love and recognise Him as the embodiment of truth. We should see that we follow the twin principles of truth and love. Then we will be able to control our senses. We cannot control our senses by any spiritual pursuits or physical exercises. All these are temporary. Only through the principles of love and truth is it possible to gain control over the senses. The combination of truth and love would shape into dharma. Therefore, speak the truth and follow dharma. Once we awaken truth within us, we can see God.

Ego and attachment are the cause for all misery. In order to give up these two, develop love. Under any circumstances, we should not give up love. Only through love can you develop faith. Love is God, live in love.

The gopikas prayed to Krishna thus,

In order to sow the seeds of love in our barren hearts

In order to see that there will be downpour of rain of love, So that the rivers of love would flow continuously, O Krishna! Please play on Your Divine Flute. Earth, seeds, rain, river, trees, fruits, all are filled

with love.

Offer your body to God

Having taken this human form, which is full of love, how is that we have lost it? Because we make use of our love in the worldly sense. When does it become true love? Only when we offer our body to God. This is true offering. Many people offer different things to God, but a true devotee offers himself to God.

Emperor Bali offered himself to God, and he did not have rebirth. We should consider this body as the flower, which has to be offered at the lotus feet of God. Therefore, human life gifted to you has to be spent in doing good actions and ultimately offered to God.

Brahmins think that the word, Pindarpanam is connected with the obituary rites. But, that is not so; offering our body to God is the true Pindarpanam. This is true offering that gives us liberation. Once the body is offered to God, there is no attachment (moha). Once attachment is gone, that is liberation - Moha kshayam is moksham. Those, who know this truth and conduct themselves accordingly, can enjoy bliss. Until we reach that sacred exalted state, we have to protect our body. We have to discharge our responsibilities.

Bharatias (Indians), since ancient times, have given top priority to sacrifice. They give utmost importance to dharma. They held the quality of renunciation in the highest regard, and they welcomed truth. Since ancient times, the hearts of Bharatias are full of compassion.

I have told students many a times about Max Muller. He was also called "Moksha Muller", because of his noble qualities. Though he was a foreigner, his love for Bharat was beyond all limits. He wanted to leave his mortal coil in this sacred land. Many of his friends questioned him as to what was so special about Bharat. He told them, "The air of Bharat has truth in it. There is dharma in the dust of Bharat. There is love in the mud of Bharat. In the Ganga, there is sacrifice. There is no other country as sacred as Bharat. That which is not present in Bharat is not present anywhere else in the world." Even though

born in Bharat and called Bharatiyas, we are not able to recognize the greatness of Bharat. We have to put in great effort in order to know the sanctity and greatness of Bharat.

Significance of Krishna's pranks

One day, Balarama brought a few cowherd boys with him and started complaining to mother Yashoda. "O mother, Krishna is always so hungry! He eats at home as well as outside like a glutton. Why should he eat mud? Today, he started eating mud." Yashoda felt sad and was furious. She caught hold of Krishna's hand and asked, "Krishna, am I not serving you enough food? Are you not eating enough butter in the neighborhood? Why have you started eating mud?" Krishna started explaining. "O mother, to eat mud am I a child or a madcap?" Though Krishna was only 5 years old at that time, by telling His mother that He was not a child or a madcap, He meant to indicate indirectly that He was the mighty Great One. Thus, Krishna conveyed many inner secrets.

No one can understand Krishna's leelas in depth. They have some external implications and inner significance. But, today, very few people know the inner reality. People are full of doubts. Mother Yashoda saw all the worlds in Krishna's mouth, but she herself doubted. What was the main reason? It was the feeling that Krishna was her son. It is physical attachment that causes doubts.

One should attach oneself to Atma. When Atma merges in Atma, everything becomes unified. This Atmic relationship is spirituality. The body relationship is physical. Therefore, it was Krishna who clarified all the doubts, demonstrated, manifested Divinity in everybody.

Though all incarnations are Divine, Krishna Avatara was special in this sense that He spent all his time smiling and smiling, full of love. At no point in time was He angry. He was always smiling. This is the main quality of God. God has no trace of ego or pride or jealousy whatsoever.

Such sacred qualities are present only in Sai Avatar again. In no other incarnation was this noticed. Though Divinity is uniform in all the incarnations, each Avatar expressed Himself on the basis of the prevalent circumstances. So, you should develop full faith in God. Just as you have faith in yourself, have faith in God. Faith in yourself, faith in God - this is the secret of greatness. You are God, and God is you only. Why do you give scope to doubts? In fact, these doubts will ruin you. So, give up all these doubts. Develop love, follow the path of truth, and experience the Divinity. This is true sadhana (spiritual practice), this is true spirituality.

27. Glory of Vinayaka

Date: 25 August 1998 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Ganesh Chaturthi

Conquering conceit, one becomes endearing;
Conquering anger, one is free from regrets;
Conquering desire, one becomes prosperous;
Conquering greed, one becomes happy.

Embodiments of Divine Love!

As long as a man is conceited and egotistic, no one will like him. Even his wedded wife and his own children, though they may appear to respect him externally, will not be happy with an arrogant man. As long as a man is filled with ego, he is unlikely to be really happy. Therefore, at the very outset, a man should get rid of his *ahamkara* (ego).

"Krodham hithva na sochathi
(As long as a man is filled with anger, he cannot experience joy)."

He is bound to be miserable. Only when man subdues anger will he be able to experience happiness. As long as one is filled with insatiable desires, one cannot feel really wealthy. The moment man gives up desires, all riches will come to him. As long as man is greedy, he will be a stranger to happiness. When man gives up greed, he will feel endowed with all riches.

The atom and the Atma

The whole cosmos is based on the atom. Whether an object is microcosmic or as vast as the cosmos, it is based on Atmic power. Few can realise fully the

power of the atom.

The atom is constituted of energy in all its forms. The words you speak, the objects you see, the sounds you hear, the activities you undertake - all are based on the power of the atom. Every moment of every being is based on atomic power. All experience is derived from the energy of the atom.

It has taken scientists thousands of years to discover this truth. But it was recognised by the child Prahlada a long time ago. He declared emphatically, "Do not doubt that He (the Lord) is at one place and not at another. You can find him wherever you look for Him." Prahlada did not conduct any experiments or explorations in space. To those pure of heart, the truth reveals itself spontaneously.

"Subtler than the subtlest and vaster than the cosmos, the *Atma* (spirit) is the atom and the atom is the Atma." This truth was recognised by the child Prahlada as a student. When this truth is recognized, the whole cosmos will be seen as permeated by the Divine, as a manifestation of the Divine.

In every object there is the power of the atom. You cannot find any object or any place in which the atom is not present. All objects are composed of atoms. All forms of energy are manifestations of the atom. The whole earth is made up of atoms.

In this world, every human being is a kind of small generator of electricity. The magnetic power in him becomes electrical energy. It is because of this energy that man is able to walk, see, hear, and do many other things. The heart in every man is like a radio station. The energy in every being is based on atomic power. There are light waves. These generate magnetic energy. Recognising the connection between matter and energy, Einstein affirmed their convertibility.

These findings of the scientists confirm the Vedantic view that the *Brahman* (the Divine) permeates the whole cosmos. Only the terms used are different. The scientists declare that the cosmos is constituted of atoms. The Vedantins

declare that the cosmos is *Brahmamayam* (permeated by the Divine). What the scientists and the sages declare is the one truth, called by different names.

Ganapathi is the lord of intellect and wisdom

Take the word "Ganapathi". Ga represents buddhi (the intellect). Na signifies jnana (wisdom). Ganapathi is the pathi (lord) of the intellect and wisdom. To worship the intellect and wisdom is one form of worship of Ganapathi.

Ganapathi represents the combination of much energy. Because of this, the name Ganapathi is appropriate for him. Nor is that all. He is the lord of all the *Ganas* (celestial hosts). Hence, he is hailed as Ganapathi.

He is called by another name, Vinayaka. There is no master above him; he is the master of all.

Another name for him is Vigneswara. This name means that he is the lord of every form of *aiswarya* (wealth). He is the embodiment of all forms of wealth.

When we explore the inner meanings of all the attributes associated with his name, we find that he possesses all powers. They include the all-pervading cosmic vibrations, the power that is latent in all animate and inanimate objects, and the effulgence of the all-pervading Light. He is the energy that animates every being. There is electro-magnetic energy in every body. Nature is the embodiment of the same energy. This energy may assume different forms, but its essential character is one and the same. A lighted bulb, a fan that is revolving, and many other things working through electrical power depend on the same kind of current. The energy may manifest itself in the form of light, heat, or magnetic energy, but it proclaims the power of the Divine, which is the source of all energy.

In all human beings, humanness is present equally

The electro-magnetic energy in man expresses itself in the form of radiation. It is also called reflection of the "Inner being". The power of sight, hearing, speech, digestion, and movement of the limbs is derived from this energy. Water also contains this energy. In fact, the entire cosmos is permeated by this divine energy.

On the basis of this, Vedanta declares,

"Sarvam khalu idam Brahma (verily, all this is Brahman)."

Recognising this, the Vedas declared,

"Sarvam Vishnumayam jagath (The cosmos is permeated by the Divine)."

Hence, there is no room for making any distinction between Ganapathi, Vishnu, Siva, Sakthi, or man.

In all human beings, humanness is present equally. It manifests itself externally in various forms. This is only the external manifestation of nature, not its internal essence. The inner aspect is present in all beings in a subtle formless substance. That is atomic energy. Several means were employed for harnessing this energy for various purposes.

On this auspicious day of Vinayaka Chaturthi, what is it that we offer to Vinayaka? All offerings to Vinayaka are free from the use of oil in their preparation. Boiled rice is made into balls, which are filled with thil seeds and jaggery (a form of sugar). They are then mixed with rice flour and cooked. In the offering, there is no trace of any cooking oil. Hence, the offerings are called oilless edibles.

What is the significance of such preparations? It is found that oilless edibles are easily digestible. The thil seeds serve to keep down the bad effect of phlegm, bile, and wind in the body. The jaggery in the preparation is conducive to improvement of vision. All these preparations are intended to promote health and are not designed to propitiate the Divine. The energy derived from these edibles is conducive to the promotion of longevity.

Vinayaka is known for his high intelligence. The very sight of his figure gives joy to many. The form itself is extraordinary. He has a big belly, beautiful tusk, penetrating eyes, handsome ears - all these are harmoniously balances to produce an attractive form.

The reason for endowing the deity with an elephant's head

What, it may be asked, is the reason for endowing the deity with an elephant's head? The elephant is well known for its high intelligence. Among animals, it has a prodigious size. No other animal is cast in such a big mould. The elephant's foot encompasses the footprint of the lion, esteemed as the lord of the animal kingdom. In the jungle, hunters follow the footprints of the lion to trace it to its lair. But if an elephant has walked over those footprints, they are totally erased.

Moreover, the elephant is the pathfinder for human beings. In a forest covered with dense bushes, humans cannot easily find their way. But once an elephant has gone through the jungle, its trail becomes a path for others to follow.

All these traits of the elephant show that in the journey of life, one can find one's way if one has the intelligence of the elephant. Because he is endowed with the form of an elephant, Ganapathi is associated with the quality of intelligence.

Primacy of Vinayaka

Once, Parvathi and Parameswara, parents of Ganapathi and Subramanya,

wanted to test their intelligence. They summoned the two sons and told them to go around the world to find out which of the two would do it quicker. The elder of the two, Ganapathi, did not stir from his place. The younger son, Subramanya, mounted his peacock and set out on a round-the-world trip. With a great deal of effort, he completed the trip and was approaching his parents. Seeing him from a distance, Ganapathi circumambulated his parents and claimed himself to be the winner.

The mother, Parvathi, told Ganapathi, "Ganapathi! Here is your brother, who has gone around the world. And you have not stirred from this place. You made no effort at all. How can you claim that you have gone around the world? How can I regard you as the winner?"

Ganesha replied, "Mother! The cosmos is the combination of matter and energy - the unity of father and mother. When I go around You, I have gone around the world itself, since You are the parents of the cosmos. There is no place where You two are not present. I see Your omnipresence. By circumambulating both of You, I can claim to have gone around the cosmos."

The moment He heard these words, Easwara was astonished at the high intelligence of His son. Ganesha had recognised the truth about His divine parents. Easwara said, "Vinayaka! You are an exemplary son for one and all. Let the world worship you first before they offer worship to me. I am not as intelligent as you are. We are your parents, but not more intelligent than you." Easwara declared, "I have many attributes, but not your intelligence. Hence, before offering worship to Me, let all people worship you. This is the boon I confer on you."

Easwara is a parent who conferred such an honour of a higher status than His own on His son. Hence, Ganapathi represents no commonplace principle. He is the embodiment of all potencies. He is the abode of every kind of intelligence. The Saraswathi (goddess of wisdom) dwells in His belly. Nothing untoward can happen wherever He is present.

Ganapathi occupies the position of one who is the source of all prosperity.

Moreover, when He is invoked before any undertaking, there will be no impediments to its completion.

Today, every kind of people - the wealthy, the wise, the scholars, and the common people - worship Ganapathi. Students, with a view to securing the grace of the goddess of wisdom and ensuring that there is no hindrance to their studies, place their books before the idol Ganapathi and worship Him.

Bharat and Bharati

The name of our nation, Bharat, is derived from that of Saraswathi, the goddess of all knowledge and wisdom. Some people wrongly attribute the name Bharat as one derived from the name of Bharatha, the brother of Rama. This is not so.

Among the names mentioned in the hymns in praise of Saraswathi is Bharati. With reference to music, the word bharati is significant. Good music has to combine *bhava* (feeling, represented by the letter bha), *raga* (tune, ra), and *thala* (rhythm, thi). The feeling, tune, and rhythm have to be combined to produce good music.

Every music concert begins with a song in adoration of Ganapathi, like "Vathapi Ganapathim Bhaje!" This shows that by worshipping Ganapathi, proficiency in any sphere is achieved.

Ganapathi is not only the lord of various activities but is the presiding deity for all auspicious functions. He can make even inauspicious occasions auspicious. He is always engaged in conferring boons on all. He is the river of prosperity and intelligence. With the grace of Ganapathi, any desire can be realised.

How to pray?

In praying to Ganapathi, you should not ask for trivial things like passing examinations or getting jobs. You should pray only, "Oh Vighneswara! Please

see that there are no obstacles in what I want to accomplish. I am worshipping you for this purpose." Today, few people understand the true spirit of the Ganapathi Thathwa (Principle). They are concerned with the outer forms and ignore the inner esoteric meaning.

This applies to the way many festivals are celebrated. The birthday of Rama is celebrated without understanding the qualities represented by Rama. To be real devotees of Rama, people should cultivate His qualities. To be a true devotee of Krishna, you must be ever in bliss, like Krishna. **If you want to be a devotee of Sai, you must be full of love.**

Love all, serve all.

Sometimes, Swami may appear as if He is not showing His love. This is only an external appearance for the moment. Pots, however different they may appear, are essentially made of clay, and all golden ornaments are essentially gold in substance. Similarly, all actions of Swami are essentially filled with love. You must cultivate this kind of feeling. You must love God with full faith.

The Ganapathi Principle is pregnant with meaning. His story itself is unique. In the Bhagavatha, Pothana declares that the stories of the lord are extraordinary; they are sacred for all the three worlds; they confer all blessings on the listeners and are constantly contemplated upon by saints and sages. This applies to all deities.

Every aspect of the Divine is a mystery. Whatever the Lord says is full of significance. It is pregnant with sacred meaning.

Obey the Lord

Sainath, a member of the university faculty, who had spoken earlier, said that when someone wanted to leave, Swami told him, "Wait!" But he was in a

hurry, bought his ticket, and left Prasanthi Nilayam.

However, he had to wait for a long time there, and even then he could not get what he wanted. If instead he had waited here, it would have been better for him.

After waiting a long time, he came back. Swami told him, "Ayya! When I told you not to go, why did you go?" There is latent meaning in whatever I say. Some persons tend to treat my words lightly.

Here, people are seated in rows. I move between them. As I move along, various people address various appeals to Me for this or that. Swami tells them, "Wait. Wait. Please sit down." They assume that this means that they should go on sitting and waiting until everyone else has left.

I merely ask them to sit down when they get up from their places. "Wait, wait, don't be hasty," is all that I mean. Instead of understanding this properly, they take it to mean that they are asked to wait after all have left. They continue to sit even after the volunteers ask them to leave.

This is utter foolishness. They should understand words in their proper context and behave appropriately. They must understand the context of time, place, and circumstance and behave in the correct manner.

Devotees worship Vinayaka in different ways. They address the deity, describing his white robe, his moon-like complexion, his four arms, and his ever-smiling face and pray for the removal of all obstacles. Some misguided non-believers interpret the same hymn in a perverse manner. The true devotee sees the Divine in everything. Ramadas sang about the Lord of Bhadrachala, "Oh Rama! You are everywhere in the universe." The power of the Divine permeates every atom in the cosmos. How is this to be recognised? The Divine is effulgent. Devotees envisage the Divine in different ways and express their adoration in various forms.

Abhimanyu (son of Arjuna) knew how to make his way through the Padhma

Vyuha (a military formation). But he did not know how to get out of it. The path to God lies through love. With love, you can go anywhere.

Love is God. Live in love.

Start the day with love,
fill the day with love,
spend the day with love, and
end the day with love.
This is the way to God.

Love begets love

How is love to be fostered? Only through love can you foster love. There is no other way. For a plant to grow, you have to use manure and water. Students should realise that to foster love of God, they have to apply the manure of faith and water of love. Only thus can the plant of devotion grow.

Never forget God. God alone is everlasting. That is the only Truth. Your parents will pass away some time or other, but God will remain forever. God is eternal.

Always adore God. In addition, love your parents and all others. Your love for God should be steady and unwavering. That love is God. It is the very form of Ganapathi. That love is present in all beings.

You are all manifestations of the Divine. Consider yourselves as divine. There is nothing wrong in that. In terms of the body, you are a human being, but spiritually, you are divine. Lead your life with the awareness,

"Aham Brahmasmi (I am divine)."

We must think of God every moment of our lives

Rama once invited Hanuman to come near him and asked, "In what manner do you worship me?" Hanuman replied, "Swami, from the viewpoint of the body, I am Your servant and You are my Lord. Mentally, I consider that I am a spark of Your Divinity. But in terms of the Atma, you are I are one. We are not two at all. Both of us are one."

People worship the Divine in three ways. But ultimately they have to realise the third stage. Bodies are different but the Atma (the Self) is one only. This is why the sages declared,

"Ekam Sath, viprah bahudha vadanthi
(the Absolute is One, but the wise call it by different names)."

People look upon the Vighneswara festival as some routine affair. But Vighneswara embodies all the forms and all the powers of all the deities. It is not enough to worship Ganesha once a year. We must worship Him always.

We must think of God every moment of our lives. It is in that spirit that everyone is enjoined to offer all actions as designed to please the Divine. Do what you please. Go anywhere you like. But do everything with the feeling that it is to please the Divine. Whatever you do, do it with the feeling that you are doing it for the pleasure of the Divine. Thereby, you will accomplish all your desires. You will experience bliss. See the Divine in everything

28. Subjugate your ego

Date: 04 September 1998 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Onam

Sarva Roopa Dharam Santham Sarva Nama Dharam Sivam Satchidanandam
Advaitam Sathyam Sivam Sundaram (Sanskrit sloka)

Ellarukkum Enndey Aseervadangal (My Blessings to all)!

Embodiments of Love! In this world, you will not find peace and happiness anywhere. Though man is himself the embodiment of peace and love, man is not able to experience them. Even though he has these sacred qualities in him, he is not able to understand this truth and is carried away by delusions. As a result, he is subjected to endless troubles. In order to experience Divinity and to find peace and happiness, you do not need to search elsewhere. In order to have a vision of your True Self, you need to understand your true identity. What is that which conceals the Truth from man? It is only the Mind. The clouds that originate from the rays of the Sun cover the Sun Himself. When a strong wind blows, the clouds get scattered, and then you can see the Sun. Just as the clouds cover the Sun, likewise the mind covers the Atma from which it has originated.

Embodiments of Love! No other creature has the divine power present in man. But he is not able to comprehend such divine power latent in him. What is the way to know this? Once you develop friendship with God, you will realise all your powers. The Gita describes God as Suhruth, which means one who is totally selfless, one who does not expect anything in return, one who does not harm anybody, and one who is the embodiment of Love. Man usually expects rewards for the help he renders. But God is the only One who considers the welfare of humanity as His happiness and does not have any expectations whatsoever.

Desires are limitless

Bad qualities like hatred, anger, and desire are responsible for restlessness. The worst enemy of mankind is desire. According to the Gita, desire always remains an enemy to mankind. So, one should keep desire under control. Desires are capable of ruining not only mankind, but also gods like Indra and Chandra. One can never satisfy one's desires.

Vedanta has compared desire to fire and to the ocean. Fire will never be satisfied, whatever may be the quantity of firewood you put into it. The Gita has given the epithet *analam* to the fire, which means that it can never be satisfied and keeps asking for more and more. Similar is the case with the ocean. It keeps accepting any number of rivers that merge in it, and yet it remains the same. Ocean and fire have no trace of satisfaction. Therefore, limitless desires are compared to these two. The whole world is like a book; read it well. Nature is the best teacher. There are lots of things in this world to be known. You cannot find God by going through a book or by undertaking spiritual sadhana. By constantly reading books, one becomes a book himself! All that is contained in *pusthaka* (book) is stored in the *masthaka* (head).

Reading books will only increase your doubts. The more intelligent you are, the more you get doubts. Developing compassion is the real sadhana. Only when you lead lives full of compassion, you will be able to see God, the embodiment of compassion.

Only through 'eye of love' can we visualise world peace

Embodiments of Love! Since ancient times, Bharat (India) has been standing for the peace and security of the entire world, spreading the message of spirituality. You should work for the peace and prosperity of the country. Whatever work you undertake, do it for the welfare of the society. Universal peace depends on the peace of society, which in turn depends on the peace of the individual. So the individual, society, and the universe are interrelated and interdependent. But, today man is bothered about himself and not society.

Today, people who talk of peace but actually cause restlessness in society are on the increase. Though they are endowed with intelligence, they act in a perverted manner. In what way can we help such people? The only way is to open their "eye of love (prema netram)", Only through the "eye of love" we can visualise world peace. Without working for the welfare of society, how can you attain world peace? It is impossible.

All wealth and prosperity cannot confer true happiness. People say America is a land of prosperity. What is the use of all affluence? They do not have peace of mind. Bharathiyas (Indians) are the embodiments of peace. They may not have such comforts, but they have love for God.

Of the time one spends on children, friends, and worldly pleasures, Acquiring wealth, power, name, and fame, If only a fraction is spent contemplating

on the Lotus Feet of the Lord,

One can even escape the mighty doors of hell,

the abode of Yama

[Sanskrit Poem]

Only devotion can make your free from misery

In ancient times, the kings ruled over their kingdoms in a righteous manner. The very name of Emperor Bali instills fear in the minds of people, but Bali was the very embodiment of compassion. He was an ardent devotee of Lord Vishnu, and he upheld the principles of righteousness. God loved him, since he had these three sacred qualities. It is enough if you have Vishnu bhakthi (devotion to Lord Vishnu). Only devotion can make you free from misery.

Prahlada always chanted the name of Hari.

Narayana Bhaja Narayan

Narayana Bhaja Narayan, Narayan Thanu Mana Ranjana, Bhava Bhay Bhanjana, Asura Nikhandana Narayan In spite of being pushed down from mountains, drowned in the oceans, trampled by the wild elephants, bitten by poisonous snakes, he repeated Narayana's name. Only the name of Narayana helped him to overcome all these troubles. Only devotion will make you forget all your problems and experience Bliss. Even Sakkubai, the great devotee of Lord Panduranga, continuously chanted the name of Ranga in order to overcome the troubles caused by her husband and mother-in-law. Gora Kumbhar forgot all his worries singing the name of the Lord. Such is the power of the Divine name.

God is the only Saviour

What man needs today is Bliss. Duhka nivritthi, ananda prapthi (alleviation of misery and attainment of bliss) should be the sole aim of man. For this man has to make friendship with God.

In this world, you may have many friends. But all of them can only say, "Hello, How are you, goodbye," nothing more! God is not like that. He is always with you, in you, around you, above you, and below you. Since man is distancing himself from God, who is the True and Eternal friend, he is subject to sorrow. Today, man is after money and power and does not think of God. How long do money and power last? They come and go. That's what Sankaracharya said, "Ma kuru dhana Jana yavvana garvam, harathi nimeshat, kalah sarvam," which means that money, power, and position are momentary and will not last long.

Bhaja Govindam, Bhaja Govindam, Govindarn Bhaja Moodha Mathey,
Samprapthe Sannihithe Kale,

Nahi, Nahi Rakshathi Dhukrun Karane

"Your studies will not come to your rescue in the end, so chant the name of Govinda," said Adi Shankara. God is the only refuge, and only He can come to

your rescue in the end. So develop faith in God. He is the only Savior.

All the world that you see with your naked eyes is only apparent Truth. All that you see is pravritti, (external) but there is a basis for this. That is called nivritti (internal). The unseen roots are the basis for the tree, which is seen. For buildings, foundation is the basis. Today, you are bothered about only the building (body), and not the foundation. The body is the Temple of God, but what is the nature of this body?.

It is full of dirt and diseases.

It cannot cross the ocean of Samsara. So, O mind, never think that this

body is permanent.

Surrender yourself at the Lotus Feet of the Lord.

How long will this body remain? "The body is like a water bubble; the mind is like a mad monkey; so do not follow the body; do not follow the mind; follow the conscience." This is the principle of Atma. But man follows the body and the mind, leaving the conscience. No doubt, for the earthly sojourn, the body and the mind are necessary, but you should not give undue importance to them.

Give up moha to get moksha

Emperor Bali did undertake all the sacred activities, but he had in him two bad qualities, ego and possessiveness (ahamkaram and abhimanam). Even Arjuna had these feelings during the Mahabharatha war. He began his address to Krishna uttering the syllable Sva, which means Svartha, Svajana (I and My people). This is called moha (attachment). As long as man does not give up this moha, he will not get moksha (liberation). All your education and jobs will not follow you at the end. All these are passing clouds. That is why

the Gita said, "Anithyam, Asukham Lokam, Idam Prapya, Bhajasva mam (Since the world is temporary and full of misery, think of God continuously)." Keeping God, who is eternal, in your heart, you should lead your lives in this temporary world.

Once, Bali performed a yajna (sacrifice) by name Sarvajit. Vamana also attended the yajna. Emperor Bali welcomed him and paid his respects. Till then, Vamana did not ask for anything. In fact, he was planning how to subdue the ego of Emperor Bali. In this world, for any work, people plan in advance. But God's plan is not an ordinary one. God always thinks of the future and plans accordingly.

Vamana went to Emperor Bali and asked for three footsteps of land. But his preceptor, Sukracharya, warned him against giving what Vamana asked for, since he knew who Vamana was and the purpose for which He had come. Bali said, "Guruji, the hand of the giver is always on the top and the receiver's is at the bottom. When God Himself comes to me and asks for something, His hand will be below that of mine. That is enough for me."

Ego is a bad quality for a devotee

Even there, we find a trace of the ego. What is the inner meaning of the inhalation and exhalation processes, i.e. SoHam? So means That (God); Ham means I. The sum and substance of this is that we have to take God into us (So inhalation) and leave out ahamkaram, i.e. ego (Ham exhalation). This is called Hamsa Gayathri. This inhalation and exhalation process goes on continuously for 21,600 times in a day in us. This means that you welcome God into you and drive out ego from you that many times. As long there is ego in you, you will never be happy.

No doubt, Emperor Bali was a great devotee, but he was also egotistic. Ego is a bad quality for a devotee. Only through love, peace, humility, and courage can you overcome ego.

God came down in order to destroy the ego of Bali and distribute Love to the

entire world. Bali was granted a boon that he should be allowed to come and visit his people on this day, every year. That day is celebrated as Onam. Be it an emperor or an innocent person, one can attain God only through Love.

Follow your conscience

Many lights are glowing in this hall. Some people are listening, some are dozing. The light is unaffected by all these. It is a witness. Similarly, in the broad day light, some do good, and some do bad. The Sun remains unaffected by your deeds.

Your bad actions can never harm God. Your good actions will never make Him happy either. Be it good or bad, you will have to reap the fruits of your actions. God is Jyothirmayudu (Embodiment of Light). So, He has nothing to do with your good or bad. He is just a witness. He is present in everybody as conscience. That is why I keep telling, Follow the Master, Face the devil, Fight to the end Finish the game.

Who is your Master? Here, Conscience is your Master. So, follow your Conscience till the end of your life. Never give up in the middle. Once you have Love in your heart, you can accomplish anything. You should not have hatred toward anybody. You should love even those who hate you. As a result, there will be transformation in their hridaya. Hri + daya = hridaya, which means the heart should be full of compassion.

Humanity is also called Mankind. So man should have compassion in his heart. But, today there is no compassion, only fashion exists. As long as fashion is there, compassion does not find a place, because hridaya is a single chair; not a double sofa, nor a musical chair.

"Life is a game, play it." The difficulties, the pleasures and pains, the profits and losses, come and go like passing clouds. The very name of the world is jagath, which means that which comes and goes. In this world, only God is permanent; everything else is transitory. But we go by this changing world, forgetting God. As a result of which, we suffer.

God is closer to you than even your own mother

Embodiments of Love! God is not separate from you. He is in you. But, you are distancing Him from yourself. Out of the fire comes the ash, but it covers the fire itself. Once you blow the ash away, you can see the fire. Similarly, there is the fire of Divinity in you, but it is covered by the ash of worldly desires.

In order to see God, you do not need to undertake any spiritual practices. All that you have to do is to get rid of ignorance. God is closer to you than even your own mother. You are distancing yourself from such Divinity. That is ignorance. In order to get rid of this ignorance, you should develop Love.

You are God. This is the teaching of all religions. Christ initially said that, "I am the Messenger of God." There is always a distance between Messenger and his Master. After some time, Christ said that, "I am the Son of God." Here the relationship with God has increased. After a few more years, Christ said, "I and My Father are One." Then comes the Holy Ghost. This is what Bharathiyas (Indians) described as dvaita (dualism), vishistadvaita (qualified non-dualism), advaita (non-dualism) and the state of Turiya.

Even in Zoroastrianism, it is said, "I am in the Light, the Light is in Me, and finally I am the light." You should know the Truth that you are God. You are a human being in form, but truly, you are God. You are not the body, the mind, the senses, the intellect; you are You only. When I say that this is My handkerchief, that means, the kerchief is separate from me. Similarly, when you say, this is my body, the body is separate from you.

Then who are you? The body, mind, and senses are your instruments. You are the Master, so master the mind and be a Mastermind. Understand this Truth and conduct yourself accordingly. Then you will not suffer at all. In times of difficulties, you should think of God more and more, like Prahlada. You should love God more and more. Love has no limits. No one can describe Love. Love is God, live in Love. You are the embodiment of Love. Yet, you suffer because

of your attachment to the body.

Mind is like a horse and the body is like a chariot

What is this body? This body is temporary and is bound to perish at any time. Death can come at any point of time, be it in childhood, or in youth, or in old age. Why do you attach so much importance to such a body? As long you are alive, you have to maintain your body in good shape. The body is like a chariot meant for traveling. The mind is like a horse. Man today keeps the horse behind the chariot. As a result, he is traveling in the reverse direction. The horse should always be in front of the chariot, which means we have to give primary importance to the mind and next to the body. But, today, people all the time feed only their body and not the mind. With the result the horse is becoming weaker and the chariot heavier.

How can a weak horse pull a heavy chariot? Just as you feed your body thrice a day, your mind also should be fed likewise. Prayer, meditation, or chanting of the names of God is the breakfast for your mind.

The Gayathri Mantra says, Om Bhur Bhuvah Suvah.... Bhur means 'materialisation (body),' Bhuvah means "vibration (life force), Suvah means 'radiation (prajnanam)". All these three are present in us. The same teaching is given to small children at the time of Upanayanam (Thread ceremony). Such sacred teachings are being forgotten today.

In ancient times, all these were put into practice; now practice is replaced by fashion. Only through practice can one get happiness. What we need is practical science and not platform speeches. All the platform speeches are out of bookish knowledge, which is of no use to us. We need to have practical knowledge. Devotion bereft of practice is useless.

Embodiments of Love! In a family of three persons, if there is no unity among them, there will be unrest. Similarly, if there is no unity in our thought, word, and deed, we will be totally restless. So, we should harmonise these three. Let it be any name, constantly chant that name. Always have the feeling that

I am God, I am God. Then you become God. As you think, so you become. This is what is called Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavathi (the knower of God becomes God himself).

Practice of sacrifice and forgiveness

All have devotion, all are sincere, but there is no sacrifice. "Bali" means sacrifice. Emperor Bali could attain Divinity through his devotion and sacrifice. Bharat (India) is the birth place of people of great sacrifice, like Emperor Bali and Emperor Sibi.

A pigeon sought the refuge of Emperor Sibi on being chased by an eagle. Sibi granted refuge to the pigeon. The eagle argued that the pigeon was its prey. Then Sibi said, "O eagle! I will give you the flesh of my body equal to the weight of this pigeon," and he started chopping his own flesh. He made such a great sacrifice for the sake of a small pigeon.

Such emperors are many in number in Bharat. We should follow the ideals of such noble souls. Since ancient times, Bharat has been the center for all spiritual wealth spreading the gospel of peace, happiness, and security to the rest of the world.

The mind is nothing but a bundle of desires. If you separate threads, cloth disappears. Similarly, if you remove desires one by one, the mind ceases to exist. In ancient times, this was referred to as thyaga (sacrifice). Today, many people talk of thyaga but in fact are immersed in bhoga'(pleasures), which

has to cultivate thyaga and love for God.

Start the day with Love Fill the day with Love Spend the day with Love End the day with Love This is the way to God.

Have full faith in your religion

Embodiments of Love! Emperor Bali served the people of Kerala and

sacrificed everything, including his body. That is why he has attained such an exalted position, not possible for others. The devotion of the people of Kerala is unparalleled.

At one time, Kerala was considered to be a Communist state, but people have been going to the Padmanabha Swamy Temple then and now in large numbers. They get up early in the morning, have their bath, apply sandal paste on their foreheads, and offer their prayers. There is no change in their devotion. Parties may come and go, but the 'Hridaya party' (Party of the Spiritual Heart) is permanent.

A Muslim should become a true Muslim; a Christian should become a true Christian, and a Hindu should become a true Hindu. You should have full faith in your religion and lead an ideal life. That is true bhakthi (devotion), true mukthi (liberation).

To attain mukthi, practice the following principles. Forget all the harm done to you by others and the help you have done to others. Then you will have peace in your heart. If someone has done harm to you, do not be revengeful. If someone has hurt your feelings, in order to alleviate your suffering, the best way is to forget and forgive. Forgiveness is very important. It is Truth, it is dharma, it is Veda, it is nonviolence, it is happiness, it is heaven itself. This forgiveness is everything in all the worlds. So cultivate this sacred quality of forgiveness. This is possible only by developing Love for God.

A lock opens when the key is turned to the right, and it closes when the key is turned to the left. Thus, the same key performs both locking and unlocking functions. In man, the heart is the lock, and the mind is the key. When the mind is turned Godward, the heart develops detachment. When the mind is turned toward the world, the heart developed attachment.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba



29. Knowledge without practice is meaningless

Date: 11 September 1998 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Speech is the cause of prosperity Speech secures friends and kinsmen Speech brings about bondage.

Speech can also lead to certain death.

Embodiments of Love!

The power of speech gifted to mankind is very important and majestic. It gives him all the wealth. So, we should talk sweetly and softly in an acceptable manner. Only such sweet talk will give us all the affluence and prosperity. Words can win many friends and relations and even kingdoms. We may have a few relations, but with our sweet talk, we can develop good relationship with the entire world. Sacred talk will give us all the education and elevate us to exalted positions. But we should also know that words spoken with bad thoughts and bad feelings will not only lead you to bondage but also put you to death. Both good and bad are present in the words we utter. For the one with sweet words, the universe itself becomes the mansion. He will feel the caste of humanity prevailing everywhere. So, words form the basis to make you feel humanity as one caste and the universe as the mansion. To attain Divinity, one has to take to the spiritual path. Good words coupled with humility will take you to higher levels

Divinity within and without

The whole world is one, though you may find multiplicity. In this world of plurality, there is the underlying principle of unity. Of all the numbers 1,2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, the most important number is 1. All the other numbers are mere modifications of number 1. $1+1$ becomes 2. $9-1$ becomes 8. Thus 1 forms the basis for all the numbers. This is the unity in multiplicity, This unity is the Truth.

Vedas say: "Om ithyekaksharam Brahma," - the syllable OM is Brahman. Divinity is not separate from OM. Out of this unity, the world has emerged. But you do not understand this Truth and take to different paths, with aspirations and ambitions.

In fact, there is no difference between the world and Divinity. Just as different limbs form a complete human body, in the same way, human beings are like the limbs of society. Society forms the limb of the entire humanity, humanity forms a limb of Nature and Nature is a limb of Divine. Therefore, humanity, society and Nature are all the limbs of the Divine.

"Sarvatah Pani Padam, Tath Sarvathokshi Shirornukham Sarvatah Sruthimalloke Sarvama Iruthya Thistathi." All forms belong to the one and the same Divinity. Veda has also declared that there is Divinity within and outside (Anthar Bahischa Tath Sarvavyapya Narayana Sthithaha).

The grain is Divine, the husk is Nature. This is the relationship between the Divine and the world, The Gita says, "Marnaivamsho Jeevaloke Jeevabhoothah Sanathanaha," which means all are the sparks of the Divine.

In the modern world, every individual wants something or other. Do you think a person loves an object for the sake of the object? No, he loves it for his own sake. Similarly, a person loves another for his own happiness. So, in this world whatever man does is for his own sake.

There are very few individuals who see unity in diversity. But there are plenty who see diversity in unity. Only the lives of those who see unity in diversity are sanctified. In order to understand this underlying principle of unity, you need a guru (preceptor). In modern times, we call them teachers.

Teaching is the noblest profession

Today, some people say that one takes to the teaching profession when one has no other alternative. It is a mistaken view. The teaching profession is the noblest of all. The teacher has got all the capacity to mould the careers of the

students committed to his care.

Bala Gangadhar Tilak struggled hard for the freedom of this country. One day, a friend of Tilak questioned him, "Tilak, you have been working hard for our independence. After independence what post would you like to take up? Will you be the Prime Minister or hold some other portfolio?" Tilak smilingly replied that he would never give up the sacred teaching profession for a ministerial post. He said that, being a teacher, he could train a number of students as ideal leaders of this country. He considered the teaching profession as the noblest.

What qualities are required for a person who has taken up such a noble profession? A teacher should have sacred feelings and undertake sacred actions. He should never entertain bad habits. What is the reason? It is quite natural for the students to follow their teacher. A teacher is one who shapes the future of students. So, a teacher should never indulge in bad habits like smoking, drinking, and eating non-vegetarian food. Students observe the habits of their teachers. If the teacher himself indulges in these bad habits, he will not have the right to advise his students to leave these vices. Not merely this, a teacher should never utter a lie and should never resort to stealing.

A teacher should speak words born out of sacred feelings. Virtues, good intellect, truth, devotion, discipline, duty - these are the attributes expected of a teacher. Only then will the students be able to emulate him. We cannot estimate the contribution of a teacher to society, it is he who can build the society or ruin it. A teacher carries with him many responsibilities. He should have a good mind to discharge these responsibilities.

Depend only on God

You all know that fifty years ago, the young and the old of this country struggled hard for independence, giving up all their properties and belongings. What do you mean by "independence"? It means that you do not depend on others. Do you find such a situation today? It is fifty years since this country attained independence. Though fifty years have passed after

independence, we continue to depend on others. We have taken loans from many countries. When you are indebted to many countries, how can you say you are independent? If you are truly independent, you should never depend on others.

If you are in need of money, does it mean that you should take loans from others? No. You have to reduce your expenditure, pomp, and show. Only then you can save money.

But Bharathiyas (Indians) have not understood their present position and continue to take loans. Gradually this will lead to a position wherein you have to struggle for independence for the second time. During British rule, we suffered a lot and ultimately attained independence. But if we continue to take loans, we will be again under the control of others. So, we should not resort to taking loans.

Never be a slave

Students today should be totally independent. They should inquire into the true meaning of the word swachcha (independence). Swa + ichcha = swachcha. Swa means Atma. So, the Will of the Self is called swachcha. Therefore, following the conscience is true swachcha.

But students today do not understand the true meaning of this term and roam about in the streets and behave, as they like, in the name of swachcha. Students should exercise control over their movement, speech, and life. Only then can they work for the progress of this world. Right from the tender age, students should strive to attain swachcha in the true sense of the term. That why I always say "Start early, Drive slowly, Reach safely." You do not need to follow anyone else; follow your conscience. That is swachcha. You should never be a slave.

There is a small story to illustrate this: When the King of Darapur expired, his young son was coronated. Being so young, the prince was immersed in many doubts. He went on, thinking how to run the administration. He was not able

to know who was good and who was bad. He did not know whom to approach for guidance. He thought that he should keep up the reputation of his father and grandfather.

One day, sitting in the palace, he noticed groups of people moving across the royal street. He inquired as to where they were all heading. He was told that they were going to listen to the discourse of a noble soul. He too joined them, incognito. He thought he could get his doubts cleared by the saint. He sat in the congregation and heard all the sacred teachings. He was extremely happy. People returned to their homes at the end of the discourse, but, the king remained there. As the saint also got up to go, his shawl got entangled to a nail of his chair. As a result, the shawl got torn. Immediately, the saint brought a needle and thread and was trying to get the thread into the eye of the needle.

The king, in disguise, was watching all this. He said, "Swamiji, you are trying to stitch an old shawl, please leave it aside and accept the new shawl that I have brought with me." The saint said, "I don't want a new shawl. If you really want to help me, help me put this thread through the eye of this needle." The king did accordingly. Then the saint stitched his own shawl, turned to the king and said, "Listen to me. I don't like to depend on others. I want to lead an independent life. Man should never be dependent on others. We should depend only on God." With these words, all the doubts of the king were cleared. He realised that God is the basis of all, and only through selfconfidence could he achieve what he wanted. He went to his palace and began following the dictates of his conscience. He did not consult anybody or seek advice from others. He became more independent. He developed an attitude to distinguish between the ephemeral and the permanent.

Practice what you learn

The saint had also told the king, "You may be a man of wisdom, but if you don't practice, you will be like a donkey carrying dirty clothes." You should not become like that. Try to practice at least one or two good principles in life. Not merely that, we should help others to put into practice what little they

know.

Education that is not put into practice, becomes unsacred. What is the use of receiving degrees if they are not helpful to society. Serve society, and share your knowledge with others.

The best way to love God is to Love All and Serve All."

What is the use of receiving degrees if you sit idle at home and keep applying for jobs without serving society? Many graduates only apply without any reply! What is the use of leading such a life? At least, till you get a job, serve society. Go to the villages and serve the needy. In fact, one who serves (kinkara) is greater than the leader (Sankara).

Having known the Truth, What is the use if you do not follow it? Ravana had 10 heads, which symbolize 6 Sastras (spiritual texts), and 4 Vedas. He was a master of 64 types of knowledge. He built the city of Lanka in gold. In terms of learning, he was on par with Rama. But what is the use of all his learning? He became a slave to his senses. Because he could not control his desires he not only ruined himself but also his entire clan. The Lanka was completely reduced to ashes.

Ultimately Ravana repented in the end, he said, "Though I was the master of all knowledge, I did not put them into practice. O people, do not get spoilt like me. Though I had all the wealth, I could not enjoy anything because of excessive desires."

Every person has the three gunas in them

Of the three brothers Ravana, Vibhishana, and Kumbhakarna, Ravana symbolized rajo guna (passionate quality), Vibhishana symbolized satwa guna (serene, pure quality), and Kumbhakarna was the embodiment of tamo guna (lethargic, dull quality). Every man has these three attributes in him. They originate out of the human mind.

Kumbhakarna, who stood for tamasic quality, spent his entire life eating and sleeping. Ravana, who symbolized rajo guna was responsible for the destruction of the Rakshasa clan. It was only the satwic Vibhishana who could get the grace of Rama. So, man should not give room for rajasic and tamasic qualities in him. Ravana constantly worshipped Easwara (God). It is not enough if you worship God, you should put His words into practice. You should give up all wicked qualities.

When Ravana was about to breath his last, Rama summoned Lakshmana and told him, "The one of great penance and wisdom is going to die. Go and listen to his last words." Obeying the command of his brother, Lakshmana went close to Ravana and listened to his words carefully. Ravana said, "I achieved whatever I wanted, but only three of my wishes remain unfulfilled. I wanted to convert the salt water of the sea surrounding Lanka into sweet water. I wanted to make those who suffer in hell enjoy the comforts of heaven. I wanted to connect hell and heaven with a ladder. But, I went on postponing them and ultimately could not accomplish them." Lakshmana returned to Rama and told the last words of Ravana. Rama smiled and said, "Lakshmana, what is the use of repenting in the end? The moment he wanted to do good, he should have done so immediately."

Purvathapam and paschathapam

Some people think twice before they undertake any action. That is called purvathapam. There is another category of people who act in haste and repent for their mistakes at the end. That is pashchathapam. It was Arjuna who had this purvathapam. Before the commencement of war, he said, "Krishna, how can I bear the sight of my kith and kin being slain in the war. My head is reeling, I don't want to be here. Let us go home." Valmiki described Ravana as wicked and Rama as noble. What is the difference between these two? Rama sacrificed everything and became an ideal to everybody. The blissful state he had at the time of getting ready for coronation was very much the same when he was asked to go on an exile. That is the spirit of equanimity at times of pleasure and pain.

Rama put into practice the education he received, whereas Ravana merely accumulated knowledge without practicing it. Ravana could not digest all that he learnt. As a result suffered from "indigestion". Greatness lies in putting into practice, not in learning.

Students! Whatever you believe to be good, do put into practice. Both teachers and students play an important role in laying the royal road for the future, if you spend your time in acquiring knowledge, without having faith in God, your life will be useless. Neither penance nor japa (soft repetition of the Name) can take you across the ocean of samsara. You should serve the good people.

Talk less, work more

You should not waste your time. "Asthiram yavvanarn dhanam, dharmam keerthi, dvayam sthiram (Youth and money are temporary; truth and good name are permanent and eternal)." So, we should uphold Truth and Goodness.

There is no God other than Truth. Truth is the same in all the three periods of time. What is the difference between Truth and Fact? You may put on a coat today and wear a different dress tomorrow. This is not Truth, it is only a fact, because it is subject to change. But Truth always remains the same.

The Gita refers to Truth as Ritham. So, Truth is not reporting what you see, hear, and experience. What you see and hear is worldly truth. It is not Truth in the strict sense of the word. It is only external truth (pravritthi sathyam). But the inward Truth (nivritthi sathyam) remains the same in the past, present, and the future.

Students!

See that the words that you speak are sacred. "You cannot always oblige, but you can always speak obligingly." That is enough. Try to speak sweetly and softly. I have told you many times, "Talk less, work more." The one who talks

excessively cannot work. The one who works will not talk. What is the reason for you not remembering all that you read? It is excessive talk. By talking less, your memory power will increase. Not merely this, your Atmic power will also improve.

Whatever you hear, try to recapitulate, then put into practice. Sravanam, mananam, nidhidhyasanam (listening, recapitulating, and practicing). These three are very essential. Sravanam can be compared to cooking in the kitchen. Mananam can be compared to bringing the food to the dining hall and serving it. Nidhidhyasanam can be compared to the eating process. When all these three are unified, you will have health and happiness.

So, if you want to lead a life of contentment, recapitulate and practice whatever you have studied. Today, we find bookish knowledge everywhere, which is nothing but superficial knowledge. This superficial knowledge is of no use, You should be thorough in practical knowledge.

See that you do not have a questionable character

Teachers, Embodiments of Love!

In order to shape your students into ideal citizens, you should lead ideal lives. Students are the future leaders of this country.

How will you bring about transformation in students? First, let there be transformation in you, then try for transformation among students. If you tell your students not to smoke without yourself giving up smoking, will they listen to you? No. See that you do not have a questionable character. Only then you will be a good teacher in the strict sense of the term.

You should have very good habits. You should speak softly and use sweet words. You should talk to students with love and encourage them, You should groom the students into ideal citizens.

Students should not crave city life. They should live in their own villages and

try to develop them. Today, the culture of Bharat (Ancient India) is found only in villages. We should sustain it.

But students run after urban life, leaving behind their villages. What do they do in cities? They lead a life full of vices. In cities, you do not find fear of sin and love for God. Once you have love for God, then there will be fear of sin. Naturally, there will be morality in society. So, first develop Love for God. With this Love for God, you can achieve anything in life.

Know that the safety of the country is important

Great leaders like Winston Churchill and Kennedy first served in the Army and worked for the welfare of their countries before they occupied exalted positions. When it comes to serving your country, you should be ready to take up any task. You should know that the safety of the country is important. "Janani janma bhoomishcha swargadapi gareeyasi (Mother and motherland are greater than the Heaven itself.)" After the death of Ravana, Vibhisbana fell at the feet of Rama and said, "Swami, I never aspired to be the King of Lanka. I only wanted my brother to give up his bad qualities. I pray to you to take over the Kingdom of Lanka." All the rakshasas also came and prayed to Rama that he should become King of Lanka.

Lakshmana also supported them saying, "O brother, Bharatha is already ruling over Ayodhya. Even if you return to Ayodhya, you may not be crowned as the King. So, I request you to take over this kingdom and transform all the rakshasas. Lanka is full of golden mansions. Where else can you find such a beautiful place? I will be very happy if you rule over this Kingdom. Rama lovingly took Lakshmana close to him and said, "Lakshmana, how could you get such a silly desire? Just because your mother is ugly, can you call any other beautiful woman as your mother? Even though my country is poor compared to Lanka, I still consider it as my mother. Lanka may be full of gold, but I don't want it." Students should develop this kind of love and faith toward their country. The teachers should inculcate such spirit of patriotism in students. You should declare wholeheartedly with a sense of pride that this is my country, this is My mother tongue.

But modern students do not have such a type of national feeling. The moment they receive their Engineering and MBBS degrees, they start applying for passport and visa. This is not the right attitude.

Unity is the greatest wealth

Students! The sacred feelings that emerge out of your heart should be exported, and you should import all the good that is outside. You do not need any passport or visa to do this! You should know the truth that everything is within you. You do not need to crave anyone, not even for God, because you are all the sparks of the Divine. You have got divine qualities and divine powers. Without the divine power in you, you would not be able to study and secure good marks in your subjects.

So, everything is within you. You are the Embodiment of Peace, Love, and Ananda. You are the Embodiment of God. Have full faith in this Truth.

When you lead your life with full faith in God, you will never be put to difficulties. "Life is a Challenge, Meet it; Life is Love, Enjoy it; Life is Energy, Skill it and do not kill it." When you skill this energy, there will be perfect balance in whatever you do. Once you have this balance, you will have Insight. Due to the absence of insight, you develop Outlook. Whatever you see outside, is from within. So develop inner view.

Students! Having learnt all these sacred qualities here, you should join hands and work together for the welfare of society. There is no higher wealth than unity. Unity should be the aim of your life. Only through practice can you achieve this. If all 95 crore people of this land of Bharath (India) developed this sacred quality, "I and You are One," you can very well imagine the sacred heights you could achieve.

Treat everyone with brotherly love. The mother beats the child when it commits a mistake. Later, she fondles the child with love and affection. She beats the child for its own good in such a way that the sound is more but the pain is less. Similarly, if anyone commits a mistake, punish him. Only the

sound should be heard, but he should not feel the pinch of it.

God does the same, the punishment given by God is only for protection. The doctor removes the ulcer from the stomach by cutting it open with a knife. Just because he uses a knife, can you call him a wicked person? No. He does it for your own good. Similarly, God punishes you only out of Love. Love lives by giving and forgiving; self lives by getting and forgetting.

So, there should not be even a trace of selfishness in you. Do anything with Love, the result will certainly be good. Love is God, Live in Love. Talk to your friends with love. Help them in times of need.

Have unflinching faith in Me; I shall take care

I will give you an example from my life. When this body was in Uravakonda, studying 6th class, there used to be the E.S.L.C. exams. We three students, Suresh and Ramesh on either side and Myself in the middle, used to sit on the same bench. They were dullards. At the time of examinations, they approached Me for help. They said, "Sathya, we cannot study without you. Some way or the other, you should help us in the examinations." I will never say No to anyone. I said, "I will certainly help." I told them the questions that would appear in the next day's examination and taught them the answers. too.

E.S.L.C. was a public examination. My examination Register No. was 6, whereas the numbers of Suresh and Rarhesh were 60 and 600. You can imagine it yourself, how far our chairs were placed from each other. It was not possible for them to copy. They said that they would not take the exam. Then I told them, "Having studied the entire year, it is not proper on your part to skip the exam. You must appear for the examination, whatever may be the outcome. Have unflinching faith in me; I shall take care." Though it is not supposed to be done, there is nothing wrong, when you are doing it for a good cause.

The duration of the examination was 2 hours. The stationeries were supplied

by the teachers. I completed My answer paper in just 5 minutes. Then I took some more papers from the invigilator and wrote the answers in Ramesh's handwriting. After completing it, I took another set of papers and wrote the answers in Suresh's handwriting. I also wrote their names on the answer sheets and kept them with Me. I had already told them not to get up before I got up from My chair.

At the end of two hours, when the final ball was given, the examiners started asking the students to surrender the answer sheets. All the students got up, and I silently went and placed all the three answer papers on the table. All of us came out of the examination hall. Nobody raised any objection. After 10 days, when the results were announced, only we three got first class. The teachers were surprised at how Ramesh and Suresh also got first class. They questioned them in the class, "How could you write well?" The boys said, "we wrote then, but now we don't remember."

There are none who got ruined with faith in God

There was no scope for any doubt. They could not have copied from Me, since we were seated far from each other. All three answer papers were in our own handwritings. Then where was the scope for doubt? I told them, "I never let down those who have reposed their full faith in Me. There are a number of people who ruined themselves for want of faith. But there are none who got ruined with faith in God. There may be ups and downs in between, but finally they emerge victorious.

Due to many changes that took place at Uravakonda, I stopped attending school. All the teachers and the students started coming to the residence to see Me. I gave them whatever they liked. The owners of the house could not bear all this and sent a telegram to the parents, asking them to come and take Me. I boarded the bus to Puttaparthi. All the boys also wanted to come to Puttaparthi. I told them that it was not possible to reach Puttaparthi by bus, because there were no proper roads. The buses could reach only up to Dharmavaram or Penukonda. There were no roads to Puttaparthi 60 years back. So I told them not to come.

When I was in the school I used to lead the prayer. Everyday from the dais, I would sing a song emphasising the unity of all religions. Everyone, including the teachers, would join in chorus blissfully. When I left the School, there was none to lead the prayer. There was a Muslim student by name Abdul Gaffur. He had a good voice and could sing well. That day he was asked to lead the prayer. The moment he was on the stage, he remembered Me and started crying loudly. Then all cried and the prayer was canceled.

When I came to Puttaparthi, Ramesh and Suresh could not bear the separation from Me. One should not do like this, but Ramesh went on crying, "Raju, you have left us, you have left us, I cannot live without you," and fell into a well and died.

The second boy went on repeating, "Raju, Raju, Raju" and ultimately turned mad. He was taken to a hospital in Bangalore. His father came to Me and prayed, "Swami, he is your classmate and my only son. Please come and give him darshan at least once." I went to Bangalore and saw him in a mental hospital. The boy was continuously repeating "Raju, Raju," and was not looking at anyone. I went up to him and said, "Suresh, I am Raju, I have come for you, look at Me." Hearing this, he lifted his head, saw Me, and closed his eyes permanently.

The same Ramesh and Suresh were born as Jack and Jill. When I was in Patha Mandir (Old Mandir), these two puppies were with Me. It was I who christened them. One used to sleep near My feet and the other near My head. They used to bark at any person at sight. They were always with Me.

One day, the Rani of Mysore came to Me. Since there were no proper roads to Puttaparthi, she alighted from the car at Karnatakapalli and walked the rest of the distance. The driver had his dinner in Puttaparthi and was returning to Karnatakapalli. I called Jack and asked him to accompany the driver and show him the way. Jack walked in the front, and the driver followed. The driver was surprised as to how a dog could show him the way. Then I said, it was not DOG, that was showing him the way, but the inner being GOD.

Next morning, the driver started the car, not knowing that Jack was sleeping under it. The wheel of the car ran over the back of Jack and its backbone broke. Jack dragged his body, across the river, all the while wailing. A washerman by name Subbanna, a respected person in the village, noticed Jack and came running to Me. He said, "Swami, Jack is coming, wailing in pain." I came out; Jack came close to me crying loudly, fell at My feet and breathed his last. After three days, Jill also died. The Brindavan (tulasi plant) that you find behind the Patha Mandir is the Samadhi of these two dogs.

We should give and take only Love

Ramesh and Suresh had very noble feelings. One day, in school, the drill master said that all the boys should join the Scouts. I am telling you the Truth. I did not have even a single paisa with me. That was the position then. I could not ask for money at home, since their condition was also poor. If one has 10 rupees, one was considered very rich in those days. If one had 100 rupees, he was equal to a millionaire!

The drill teacher said that we should get a khaki shirt, khaki knickers (shorts), a belt, a whistle, and a pair of boots. How could I get this? I was in Kamalapuram, at that time.

Knowing that I did not have money with Me, Ramesh asked his father to get him two pairs of khaki dress stitched. We were all of the same height then. He packed a pair of knickers, a shirt, and a pair of socks and wrote on it, "Raju, if you don't accept it, I will commit suicide. You are My life. You must accept this. Our friendship must develop this way." I removed that paper and put another, and wrote on it, "If our friendship is to develop, there should be no giving and taking. We should give and take only Love. There should be no material transaction. So I will not accept this." The boy felt very sad.

I used to compose excellent poetry in those days. I speak in simple language to make the translator's job easy. Otherwise, I can speak in a lofty style. There was a businessman by name, Kotte Subbanna. He had brought a new medicine, by name, Balabhaskara for sale. He requested Me to compose a

song on the efficacy of that medicine, which, he said, would serve as a good advertisement, so that it would be sold well. I composed a beautiful song. Hearing that song, he lost himself in ecstasy and got some sweets prepared at home and brought them for Me. The medicine was sold in large quantities because of the advertisement. He was overjoyed and bought two shirts and two knickers for Me. I said to him, "Are you paying the price for the song I composed? I will not accept this." He cried, and said that he would not take them home. Then I told him that he could as well give them to some beggars on the street.

Right from that tender age, I never received anything from others. I only give and give and give, I never receive. But only for one thing, I stretch My hand and that is pure Love. Love is also not your property. Love is God's property. So, I am asking you for My own property. You are misusing the Love given to you, therefore you are suffering. You have to surrender your Love to God in order to be happy, Thus, as a student, I always helped others and made everybody happy. Being Sai students, you should also make others happy. Never make anybody suffer. Help Ever, Hurt Never. Develop this quality.

There are other things that students should take care of. Some students get the homework done by their brothers or sisters. This amounts to cheating their teacher. This is not correct. Students should do homework themselves. They should develop good qualities. Good qualities will become God qualities.

During the British rule, children were addressed as "God boys". Later on, due to the effect of Macaulay's system of education, "God boy" became "Good boy". After some time, "Good boy" became "Good-bye". Later on, even "Good" was removed, and only "Bye-bye" remained. "God boy" has come down to the level of "Bye-bye" due to the effect of modern education. You should remain as "God boys" and "Good boys" and never come down to the level of "Bye-bye". You should set an ideal through your education and conduct.

I might have caused you lot of inconvenience by speaking for such a long time. Now, you may go back to Muddenahalli and Alike, discharge your duties,

and attain success in your endeavors. I visit Muddenahalli now and then, but it is almost 12 years, since I last visited Alike. Now I will certainly go to Alike. I will also take some of the College boys with Me. From Puttaparthi, I will go straight to Mangalore. I will make you all happy there. Be always happy, happy, happy.

30. Worship of God as energy principle

Date: 25 September 1998 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Truth is your true mother and Wisdom the true father, Dharma is the true brother and Compassion the true friend; The true wife is Peace and the true son Forgiveness

These six are in fact the true relations of man.

[Sanskrit sloka]

Embodiments of Love! In this world, every individual has a mother. The entire humanity has also one mother, and we should try to know her. This mother is Truth. Those who follow this mother will never face any problems in life.

This mother, Truth, remains the same in all periods of time and in all three worlds, and this mother transcends all the three attributes - satwa (purity, serenity), rajas (passion), and tamas (dullness, inertia). The physical mother may die or go to some other place, but this divine mother, Truth, remains one and the same beyond time and space and to every individual. It is therefore necessary that every person follow this noble, divine mother (Truth).

True relatives of man

Who is father? Wisdom is the true father. Wisdom is not ephemeral, mundane, physical, secular knowledge. Advaita darshanam jnanam (Wisdom confers the experience of nonduality). So, Truth and Wisdom are the true mother and father of man.

Dharma is the brother. Dharma may vary depending upon time, country, religion, and tradition. However, dharma is loved by the entire humanity irrespective of caste, creed, nationality, and religion. This brother is the very embodiment of love. On this basis, the Vedas gave utmost importance to Truth and Righteousness. In the great epic Ramayana, Lakshmana personified

the Principle of dharma. When he fainted in the battlefield, Rama lamented, saying that he could get a consort like Sita and a mother like Kausalya, but not a brother like Lakshmana. Rama said that His divinity blossomed because He had a brother like Lakshmana.

Compassion is the true friend. In this world, a friend today may become an enemy tomorrow. But there is no greater friend than Compassion.

Peace is the wife. Peace is the previous jewel of saints, and it is the royal path in the spiritual field.

Forgiveness is the son. There is no greater quality than Forgiveness. It encompasses all the good qualities, like Truth, Righteousness, and Nonviolence, and it is the essence of all the Vedas.

Therefore, for every individual, the true relations are Truth, Wisdom, Righteousness, Compassion, Peace, and Forgiveness. The whole world is full of agitation and disturbance because of lack of these sacred qualities. Embodiments of Love! You should always remember your true mother and father. You cannot exist without them. The whole creation has emerged from Truth and merges back into it. There is no place where Truth does not exist. It is the good fortune of human beings to have this eternal Truth as their mother. But, today, humanity does not follow such a sacred mother.

Worship of Devi as divine mother

You worship Devi (goddess) in these nice days of Devi Navaratri. You consider Devi as your divine Mother. This Devi is called Sathya Swaroopini, which means she is the embodiment of Truth. So, worshiping Truth amounts to worshiping Devi. If you understand and follow this truth, you will be successful in every field.

The Vedas also proclaim this Principle of Truth. There are many in this world who chant the Vedas. Many have gone through the sacred texts. But they do not seem to follow the right path. In fact, only when we tread the right path

will we know the true meaning of the Vedas and the sacred texts.

Since ancient times, the sages and saints undertook many spiritual practices in their quest for Truth. They were determined not to give up till they had the vision of Truth. Ultimately, they declared to the world that they had seen God, who is all brilliance, is full of effulgence, and is beyond the darkness of ignorance. They also declared that God is not far off in a distance land but is present in the human body.

The saints had the vision of God, who is chin maya (full of effulgence) in the body, which is mrinmaya (made of clay). So, we should not underrate the human body and use it for mean and worldly pleasures.

The body is the temple of God. This body may be compared to an iron chest. Just as the precious jewels are kept in the iron chest, so also God is present in the human body. So, the body has to be maintained and made proper use of. for the sake of the precious jewel, the Atma. You get jewels only from the earth. Similarly, you have to search for the jewel of the Atma only in the body, which is made of clay.

Let us investigate what comes in the way of experiencing the Atmic Principle. Ego and attachment stand as obstacles in our path. Only when you give up your ego and attachment will you have purity of heart, which in turn will lead you to the experience of Supreme Wisdom.

The more you develop attachment, the more restless you become. Ego is much more dangerous. It has become an incurable disease in human beings. So, you have to keep ego and attachment under control and engage yourself in the quest of Atmic bliss.

Forms and manifestations of Shakti

During Navaratri (sacred nine days), people go through the sacred texts such as Devi Bagavatha, Ramayana, and Mahabharata. People also worship the deities Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswathi. Goddess Gayathri has three aspects.

They are: Gayathri, Savatri, and Saraswathi. Gayathri is the presiding deity of our senses. Savitri is the presiding deity of the life principle. Saraswathi is the presiding deity of speech. All these three are within the same Principle of Truth.

Gayathri Mantra begins with "Om Bhur Buvah Suvah." Bhur means materialisation (body), bhuvah means vibration (life principle), and suvah means Atma (radiation).

Dr. Venkatraman, the previous speaker, said that matter could be converted into energy and vice versa. From a scientist's point of view, that is true. But in My view, matter and energy do not exist separately. Matter is energy, and energy is matter. These two are inseparable and interrelated. In fact, there is no matter in this world; wherever you see, you find only energy. During these nine days, Goddess Shakti (the Energy Principle) is worshiped. Truth, Righteousness, Peace, and Forgiveness are all expressions of the Principle of Shakti. Truth is the primal cause. There is nothing other than this. All faculties of energy are present in this Truth. So, consider Truth as your mother and follow it.

The Vedas proclaim, "Sathyam vada; dharmam chara," which means: speak the truth and follow righteousness. Unfortunately, people today do not follow this. On the contrary, they follow asathya and adharma. (untruth and anti-dharma) This is the cause of all suffering.

The ancients gave utmost priority to Truth and Righteousness. Before undertaking any work, they enquired whether it was right or wrong. They followed the dictates of their conscience. But today, such an attitude is lacking.

The quest for Truth

Many people say that they are in search of Divinity. Once you follow the path of Truth, you will find Divinity everywhere. A small example.

The same eyes see the mother, daughter, wife, and sister. Here, you need to enquire as to what kind of feeling you should have toward each. This is the quest for Truth. Mother should be viewed with reverence and respect. Daughter should be considered as part of your own being. In this way, you should enquire and understand the Truth.

If you just go by the direct evidence of what you see, you will never know the Truth. All that you see is bound to perish. There are many things that cannot be perceived by the naked eye. On the spiritual path, everyone wants pratyaksha pramanam (direct evidence). But direct evidence cannot constitute the entire Truth.

For example, you see a person who is five feet five inches tall, weighing forty-five kilograms, and fair complexioned. All these can be seen by the naked eye. But you cannot go merely by these physical qualities. You should also take into consideration the unseen qualities, such as love, compassion, anger, etc. It is utter foolishness to go by the physical form, which is direct evidence.

It is not possible to see the direct manifestation of God. Truth is everywhere. Dharma is everywhere. God, who is the embodiment of Truth and Righteousness, is everywhere. So, you should practice Truth and Righteousness and enjoy the bliss.

How to know the Atmic Principle

For everything, conscience is the witness. If you do not follow the conscience, everything becomes unsacred. The Atma is the eternal witness, and that is conscience. The Atma is everywhere. It is in every individual and every creature. It has no form. It is attributeless, eternal, ancient, unsullied, and immortal. Who can understand such an Atmic Principle? You speak of Truth and consider whatever you see and hear as Truth, but all this is limited to the senses. The Atma is beyond senses.

Then how to know the Atmic Principle? You do not need to search for this elsewhere. Turn your vision inward.

The Vedas said, "Pashyannapi na pashuathi moodho (he is a fool who sees yet does not see)." All that you see is divine, but you mistake it for nature. The one with Atmic vision will see the entire nature as divine. But, if you have the worldly view, you can see only the world.

"Vishvam Vishnumayam (Vishnu pervades the entire universe)". Names and forms may vary, but the Atma is uniform in all. To understand this unity, you have to turn your vision inward. There is no separate path to know God other than knowing one's own Self. There is no human being that has no hunger for food. Similarly, you should also have hunger for God. Some people may call it madness; that is their madness. Each has their faith, conviction, and experience. No one has the right to criticise others.

Expand your Love

It is only the body that has birth and death; the Atma has no birth and death. It has no beginning and no end. It is the allpervading eternal Brahma.

Whos is Brahma? He is not the one with four heads as described in books. Brahma is vastness. You find only Brahma wherever you see. This expansion of love is God. The feeling of "my body" is contraction of love, which is death. So, you should expand you love. Your love should not be limited to your family and relations.

In mathematics, $1+1+1+1$ becomes 4. The number increases or decreases depending on whether 1 is added or subtracted. But in spiritual mathematics, $Atma + Atma + Atma$ results again in Atma. It does not increase or decrease.

The first name of Atma is "I" The Vedas declare, "Aham Brahmasmi (I am Brahman)." This "I" is the first name of God. It is possible to know this "I" only by following the path of Truth.

In this world, only Truth exists; there is no falsehood. If you find falsehood, the mistake lies in your drishti (vision) and not in the srishti (creation). If you put on blue glasses, the world appears blue in colour; if you put on red glasses,

you will find only redness all around. The defect lies with the colour of the glasses, but not with the world.

The very principle of creation is Divinity. "Sarvam khalvidham Brahma," so revere everyone as Brahman. Love everyone as Brahman. Then there will be no scope for hatred or enmity. What is the reason for all the agitation in the world? It is lack of equanimity. Only through equanimity can you develop love.

Embodiments of Love! In these seven days of yajna, we have seven modes of worship. We call it Sapthaham (sevenday event). What is the significance of having a Sapthaham? This number seven is very significant in numerology. In music, we have saptha swaras (seven notes). There are seven oceans, seven rishis (sages), seven colours, and seven worlds. They are all within us. There is nothing beyond you.

It is foolishness to think that God is separate from you and to search for Him outside. You are God. But since you identify yourself with the body, you are not able to understand this Truth. Body is like a ater bubble, and the mind is like a mad monkey. Why do you rely on these two? Follow your conscience. Only then will you have self-satisfaction.

Only sacred qualities should emerge out of Hridaya

Atma symbolises hridaya (spiritual heart). God dwells in hridaya. Hridaya is the centre of Love and Peace. Only sacred qualities should emerge out of hridaya. But instead, animal qualities like anger, hatred, and jealousy emerge, and you become a beast and not a human. Such a heart is a dwelling place for animals, not God. If you conduct yourself with peace, love, and compassion, you are God. The Navaratri worship was started in order to foster sacred qualities within us.

You would have heard the name of Dasaratha. Who is he? He is not the king of Ayodhya. Dasaratha refers to one who has control over the human body, which has five senses of perception and five senses of action. The master of

these ten senses is Dasaratha. This body is a chariot, and Dasaratha is the master of this chariot.

Dasaratha had three wives. They signify satwic (serene, pure), rajasic (passionate), and tamasic (dull, lethargic) qualities. He had four sons. They signify the four objectives of life: dharma, artha, kama, and moksha. What is the capital of Dasaratha's kingdom? Ayodhya, which means it is a place that no one can get into. It signifies Hridaya, which no wicked qualities can enter.

Your happiness is heaven and your misery is hell

The entire universe is within you. The mountains may appear smooth from a distance, but once you go near, you will know the truth. It is the distance that lends enchantment. As long as you think that Kailas, Vaikunta, and Swarga are at a distant place, you will be crazy about them. Actually, all of them are in your hridaya. Your happiness is heaven and your misery is hell. The concept of heaven and hell was introduced in order to see that you do only good. Heaven and hell are not separate; they are in your mind.

What is the cause of misery? Your own actions. Buddha did penance for six long years. One day, he opened his eyes and said that he had caught hold of the thief. Who is the thief? It is the mind. He realised that mind was the root cause of all suffering. If you control your mind, you will never suffer.

Churchill said, "Man has conquered everything, but he has not conquered himself." Man is trying to know everything without understanding his true Self. Know Thyself, then you will know everything. This is what the Upanishads said: "try to know and experience that by which everything is known and experienced." That is Atmic bliss, which is eternal and supreme. True happiness lies in union with God. If you are with the world, you will never get happiness.

The human heart can be compared to Ksheera Sagara (Ocean of Milk), but today it has become Kshara Sagara (Ocean of Salinity). Lord Vishnu dwells in the Ocean of Milk, which means that He resides in our heart. But if we make

our heart into a Kshara Sagara, then whales and sharks (bad qualities) will enter. Human heart should be pure; only then can Lord Vishnu reside in it. If you understand God, you will not search for Him outside. God is within you, in you, above you, below you, around you. There is no one nearer than God. God is nearer than your physical mother. So, worship God as your mother, who is the embodiment of Truth.

Experience and enjoy the banquet of Bliss

I begin My discourse with a sloka (verse) or a poem and conclude it with a bhajan (devotional song). Do you know what they are? The first sloka or poem is like a plate, the discourse can be compared to the various delicious items that are served on the plate, and the bhajan at the end is like a plate covering the delicious items. Do not treat this as a mandu (medicine), thereby taking only a little of it. Treat this as a vindu (banquet) and partake of the delicious items that I serve to the maximum extent. Experience and enjoy this banquet.

Students! Embodiments of Love! You have to learn many things in daily life. First, know the mistakes in your life and try to correct them. Love is essential to become a complete human being. If you follow the path of Love, everything becomes Love.

31. Know your true identity

Date: 26 September 1998 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

One may master all forms of knowledge,
One may vanquish one's adversaries in debate,
One may fight with valour and courage in the battlefield, One may be an emperor reigning over vast kingdoms, One may offer cows and gold as an act of charity,
One may count the countless stars in the sky,
One may tell the names of different

living creatures on the earth,
One may be an expert in eight forms of yoga,
One may reach even the moon,
But it is impossible to control the body, mind and senses. Turn the vision inward and
Achieve the supreme state of equanimity of the mind.

Embodiments of Love!

In this world, for man to accomplish any task, *ichcha shakthi* (will power), *jnana shakthi* (power of discrimination), and *kriya shakthi* (power of action) are essential. Ichcha shakthi refers to the determination to undertake a task. Jnana shakthi refers to the ways and means to be adopted to fulfil the task undertaken. It is not enough if you have ichcha shakthi and jnana shakthi; you need to have kriya shakthi too.

If you want to weave cloth, you need to have cotton. The cotton has to be made into thread, which in turn has to be woven. This relates to kriya shakthi. An enquiry into the type of equipment needed to do this relates to jnana

shakthi. Man has got all these three potencies in him, but that is not enough. He needs to bring them together.

Primordial cause of Creation

Here is a small example. Suppose you have flowers, thread, and a needle; can you have a garland? Should not there be someone to make a garland out of them? You have a container for oil, a wick, and a lamp. But will this alone produce light? No. There must be someone to light the wick. You have gold, gems and precious stones; can you have jewels out of them? No. A goldsmith is needed to make them.

Here, you have two types of causes: One is *upadana karana* (primary cause) and the other is *nimitta karana* (instrumental cause). A goldsmith makes ornaments using gold, but who is the one who has created gold? He is God. So, God is upadana karana and the goldsmith is nimitta karana.

Without the primordial principle, upadana karana (God), nimitta karana is useless. God, the upadana karana, is the creator of this world. Man, the nimitta karana, is trying to experience and enjoy this creation. But man forgets the upadana karana (God) and thinks that he is the doer and prides himself on his achievements.

Without the primordial basis, man cannot achieve anything. Students of science are aware of this. Two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen are combined to make water. Scientists pride themselves on this achievement and ignore God, who is the creator of hydrogen and oxygen.

In this modern age, man is carried away by the sense of doership, forgetting the Principle of *Mooladhara* (primordial basis). The potter makes pots, but without clay and water, he cannot do so. The potter is only an instrument, and hence he is the nimitta karana. God, who has created clay and water, is the upadana karana.

Bharathiyas (Indians) believe that there are eighty-four lakh species in this

world. These can be classified into four categories: (1) *andaja* (born out of eggs), (2) *pindaja* (born out of womb), (3) *swedaja* (born out of sweat), and (4) *utbhija* (born out of earth). There are twenty-one lakh species under each of these categories. They make a total of eighty-four lakh species.

Beings are many, but the living principle is uniform in all of them. There are innumerable waves in the ocean, each looking different from the other. Waves may vary in form, but ocean is the basis for all of them. Likewise, all eighty-four lakh species have emerged from the ocean of *Sath-chith-ananda* (Being-awareness-bliss). All have their origin in Sath-chith-ananda.

Man is essentially divine

What is Sath-chith-ananda? Sath is Being, that which is changeless and eternally present. Chith means total Awareness. Sath is like sugar; Chith is like water. When water and sugar are mixed, you have neither sugar nor water, but syrup. Similarly, the combination of Sath and Chith results in Ananda (Bliss).

In all living creatures, you find this Sath-chith-ananda. But man is not able to understand his true identity, which is Sath-chith-anandam and is in search of happiness outside. It is like searching for his own self outside. How can he find his own self outside? He has to look within.

In the waking state, there are four aspects: *kala* (time), *karma* (action), *karana* (reason), and *karthavya* (duty). Suppose you have decided to go to Bangalore by car to participate in a programme. You start at 5 a.m. and reach Bangalore at 8 a.m. Here *kala* is 3 hours, *karma* is traveling by car, *karana* is the programme, and *karthavya* is participating in it. All four aspects are present in the waking state.

Now consider that at 10 o'clock in the night you had a dream. In the dream, you went to Bangalore and participated in a programme. When did you start? How did you travel? When did you reach? What was the reason? You do not know. This only means that the above four aspects do not exist in the

dreaming state. In the *sushupthi* (deep sleep state), there is no time, no reason, no duty, and nothing that you do; you only experience bliss.

Man is changeless in all three periods of time

In the waking state, you undertake different tasks with your body. In the dreaming state, you create everything, including your own self. In deep sleep, you enjoy bliss. You are one and the same in all the three states. On this basis, it can be said that man is changeless in all the three periods of time and experiences bliss directly or indirectly. He experiences oneness in all the three periods of time. When once he understands this spirit of oneness, there will be no scope for differences and conflicts. As long as you identify yourself with the body, you find only multiplicity.

Once, Adi Sankara went to Kasi and prayed to Lord Viswanath thus, "O Lord! I have come here to redeem myself of the three sins I have committed." He had not harmed anyone; nor did he steal anything. Then why did he call himself a sinner? He explained the first sin in the following words. "It was I who declared,

'Yatho Vacho Nivartante Aprapya Manasa Sah.'

Though I know that you are beyond the ken of thought and word, I tried to describe you in a string of words: Isha, Gireesha, Naresha, Paresha. I have committed the sin of not practising what I preached. This is my first sin.

"Though I declared that God is everywhere, I have come all the way to Kasi to have Your darshan, as if You are present only in Kasi. I have committed the sin of saying one thing and doing another. This is my second sin.

"It was I who said,

'Na punyam, na papam, na sukham, na dukham,'
which means there is no sin, no merit, no joy, and no sorrow.

Yet, I am praying for the atonement of my sins. This is the third sin I have committed."

The significance of Sankara's statement is that the disharmony of thought, word, and deed is in itself a sin.

"Manasyanyath vachasyanyath karmanyanyath duratmanam,"
the evil one is he who does not observe the unity of thought, word, and deed.

"Manasyekam vachasyekam karmanyekam mahatmanam,"
he is the noble one who has achieved the unity of thought, word, and deed.

Lord's name, the only Saviour

Every action of Sankara is a teaching to humanity. When he was returning from Kasi, he found a person who was trying to memorise Panini's grammatical formula by constantly repeating, "Dukrun karane, dukrun karane." Sankara decided to give him a teaching. He went and asked him what benefit he would get by repeating Panini's grammar. That man said that he could become a great pandit, join the court of the king, and earn lots of money and lead a happy life. When Sankara asked him, what would happen to him after death, he said he did not know. Sankara told him, "O foolish man, understand that the body, money, and power are temporary. Attain eternal bliss, which you can enjoy even after your death." Sankara sang the following verse:

Bhaja Govindam Bhaja Govindam Govindam Bhaja Mooda Mathe.
Samprapthe Sannihite Kale Nahi Nahi Rakshathi Dukrun Karane.

O foolish man, chant the name of the Lord. When the hour of death approaches,
It is only the Lord who can save you, and not your grammar.

Though Sankara had no personal gain, he strove hard for the emancipation of humanity.

Engage yourself in sacred actions

Not only Sankara, Krishna too did the same. In the Bhagavad Gita, He declared, Na me parthasthi karthavyam trishu lokeshu kinchana, nanavapthamavapthavyam varthayevacha karmani. I don't have to do anything in these three worlds, nor do I gain anything. But yet, in order to teach humanity, I constantly engage Myself in action from dawn to dusk, so that people follow My ideal and sanctify their lives.

Only through action man can redeem himself.

Karmanyeva-adhikaraste maphaleshu kadachana
(you have the right to action, not to the results thereof).

Karmanubandheeni manushyaloke
(humanity is bound by action. No one can spend their time without being involved in action).

When I ask some of the foreigners, what they are doing, they say they are doing nothing. They think action is related to involving in some kind of job or

business. In fact, our inhalation and exhalation process is also a kind of action. Even the movement of eyelids is action. Day in and day out, the body is engaged in some kind of activity or the other. The noblest way is to engage the body in sacred actions such as *sravanam* (listening to the Lord's stories), *kirtanam* (singing His glories), *smaranam* (remembrance), *Pada sevanam* (service to the Lotus Feet), *archanam* (worship), *vandanam* (salutation), *dasyam* (servitude), *sakhyam* (friendship), *Atmanivedanam* (offering oneself to the Lord, i.e. self-surrender).

You should understand that whatever *sadhana* (spiritual exercise) you do, be it japa, tapa, yoga, dhyana, or bhajan, it is for your own satisfaction. God does not need them. Some people think they worship for God's sake; it is a mistaken view. Whatever man does is for his own sake and to meet his selfish ends.

Vision of the True Self

As you inhale, you make the sound so, and when you exhale, you utter the sound ham. Together Soham means, "I am That," which means you are God. When you go on repeating, Soham, Soham, where is the need for any sadhana?

Where is God? How to see Him? These questions of seeing and experiencing God have been there since ancient times. In fact, you have to take to the spiritual path in order to know your true identity i.e. Divinity. He who knows his true identity is a true aspirant. Without realising this truth, all spiritual sadhana will be a waste of time.

Sariramadyam khalu dharma sadhanam
(body is gifted to undertake righteous actions).

What is our dharma? Love is our dharma. Truth is our dharma. Peace

is our dharma. We should follow our dharma.

The quality of sugar is sweetness. If it is not sweet, then it is not sugar. Similarly, Love is your natural quality. Without Love, you cannot be called a human being. There is love in you, but you are limiting it to your family, friends, and relations. However, remember that your relations will come with you only up to the burial ground. It is only God, who is with you always, even after your death.

Janthunam narajanma durlabham
(human life is the rarest).

Such a sacred and noble life should not be wasted. Having taken birth as a human being, you should set an ideal.

A dancer always keeps the rhythm in her mind, while dancing. Similarly, you should always remember your innate divinity in whatever you do. *Maya* (illusion) is like a *narthaki* (dancer) always trying to distract you. In order to control this 'nar-tha-ki', you have to reverse the order of the letters and do 'kir-tha-na' i.e. singing the Lord's name Harernama,

Harernama Harernamaiva Kevalam, Kalau Nasthyeva Nasthyeva Nasthyeva
Gathiranyatha.

In this Age of Kali, the Lord's name is the only refuge.

Many people aspire for *Sakshathkaram* (vision of the true Self). Westerners say that they want liberation. But they do not know what it really means. If you want to see your Self, give up body attachment and develop attachment toward the Self. Only then you will have Sakshathkaram.

At birth, you cry, 'koham, koham,' which means 'who am I? Who am I?' You should not die with the same question on your lips. When you die, you should be able to assert cheerfully, 'Soham,' meaning 'I am God.' Finding out the answer for the question, 'Who am I?' is true liberation.

Today, you have endless worries such as birth, death, old age, losses, failures, family life, etc. All these are of your own making. They arise because of your attachment and delusion. God does not give them. Who is the giver and who is the receiver, when you are God yourself.

Along as you have *bhrama* (delusion), you cannot attain *Brahma* (God). Just as ash covers the fire, likewise maya conceals your true identity. Fire is seen when ash is blown away. Similarly, you can have the vision of the Self, when you give up body attachment.

Divinity through unity

Vedanta says,

Ekam sath viprah babudha vadanthi
(Truth is one, but scholars refer to it by many names).

The same water has different names in different languages. Similarly, God is one, but He is worshipped in many forms and names.

'I' is the first name of God. Right from the pauper to a millionaire each one uses the letter 'I' while introducing themselves. This 'I' is your true identity. The single letter 'I' refers to the Atma, while the three-lettered 'eye' refers to the body. The body has three attributes; whereas, the Atma has none. Atma is Supreme Bliss. It is the eternal witness and beyond all descriptions.

Ekatma Sarvabhoothantharatma

(it is the same Divinity that is present in all beings.)

Embodiments of Love!

Try to enjoy and experience the love that is in you. If someone says there is no God, tell him, "Maybe your God does not exist for you, but my God exists for me. You have no right to question the existence of my God." You have to argue with conviction. Such an argument will silence the person.

Each one is mad in their own way. The world itself is like a mental hospital. There are some who derive delight in self-praise. There are some that beat and accuse others. But the madness for God is the noblest. God sees to it that you give up madness for the world and become mad for Him. Only a fortunate few will be blessed with this madness for God. If only the entire humanity developed this madness for God, the world would be rid of disturbances and peace would prevail.

Do not imbibe negative feelings

Students! Embodiments of Love!

After every bhajan session, you are praying for the peace of the world (Loka samastha sukhino bhavanthu). You find only 'pieces,' but no peace in this world. In fact, if you develop love and tolerance toward fellow beings, there will be no need to pray for peace; the world will automatically become an abode of peace.

Develop love in you and share it with at least ten persons in a day. There are ninety-five crore people in this land of Bharath (India). If each one goes on sharing his love with others, then all will be one. Out of this unity, you will attain Divinity. Where there is mistake, there is fear; where there is love, there is no fear.

Why fear when I am near and dear?

You should have full faith in Divinity. Many devotees come here, but how many are firm and steady in their faith? All the worldly desires are negative in nature. The negative feelings stand in the way of attaining the positive. So, do not imbibe negative feelings. Develop positive feelings and think of God with unwavering faith.

32. Obey God's commands

Date: 27 September 1998 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Just as dogs bark at the mighty elephant, Some people may heckle noble souls. Neither the elephant nor the noble souls Suffer any loss on this account.

Due to the effect of the Kali Age, we come across many such situations. On hearing the melodious singing of cuckoo birds, crows out of jealousy start cawing at them. But that does not deter cuckoos from singing. In the same way, seeing the swans, cranes make fun of them. But the swans are least affected. Similarly, one who has realised his true identity will be neither elated by praise nor depressed by blame.

Human life is the gift of God. If only you make proper use of this gift, your life as a human being will find fulfilment. Human beings can be classified into three types: (1) adham (low and mean), (2) madhyam (average), and (3) uttham (noble). The human body can be compared to a sacred vessel. Uttham is one who makes proper use of this vessel gifted by God. Adham is one who uses the body for unsacred purposes without understanding its value. Madhyam is one who makes use of the body both for sacred and unsacred purposes.

What is the use of having a cosy bed, a soft pillow, and a ceiling fan if one does not get proper sleep? Likewise, man, in spite of being endowed with a heart like a bed, a mind like a soft pillow, and an intellect like a ceiling fan, does not enjoy peace and happiness. Then what for are these - the heart, the mind and the intellect?

Life devoid of peace and happiness is no life at all

We describe the heart as pure and unsullied. We also attribute the quality of all-pervasiveness to the mind (Mano moolam idam jagath). We describe the intellect as the transcendental principle (atheendriyam). God has gifted these instruments to man so that he can enjoy peace and happiness. In spite of these valuable instruments, man does not have peace and happiness. We say that human life is the rarest and most precious (Nara janma durlabham), but does your conduct deserve such a description? You are not making proper use of the mind and the intellect and not keeping the heart pure. As a result, you do not experience peace and happiness. Life devoid of peace and happiness is no life at all.

Great men say that in order to enjoy peace and happiness in life, you need to develop a sense of detachment. Detachment does not mean leading a life of seclusion in a forest, leaving family and property.

Students should understand the true spirit of the word. 'renunciation'. You should realise that this gross world is inert. Consider the subtle aspect of this world as illusion and the causal aspect as only a reflection. Only when you understand the gross, subtle, and causal aspects of the world can you have renunciation. But man believes this gross world as real, forgetting the Primal Cause, God.

Make an effort to know the value of human life

These three aspects that constitute the apparent world will delude you. You should understand the Primal Cause, the Atmic Principle. Only then can you experience bliss and peace. You should make an effort to know the value of human life. Human being is called Nara. What is the meaning of Nara? It means the embodiment of the Self, the Atma.

The gopikas (cowherd maids) used to pray thus: "Kleem krishnaya, govindaya, gopijanavallabhaya swaha." Kleem means the earth. Krishnaya means water. Govindaya means fire. Gopijanavallabhaya refers to air. Swaha refers to ether (akasa). There is no life or place in this world without these

five elements. They are present everywhere. This is how the gopikas described Krishna as all-pervasive.

God, who is in the form of five elements, is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient. So, the main duty of mankind is to make proper use of these five elements. Misuse of these five elements amounts to misuse of Divinity.

Man considers his body as everything and spends his entire life in the pursuit of bodily comforts and conveniences. Body is bound to perish. Though a 100-year life span is stipulated, you cannot take it for granted. Death can occur either in boyhood or in youth or in old age. Nobody can say when one would die.

Then why should you take such great pains for the sake of your body, which is like a water bubble? Having taken a human birth, you should lead an ideal life and make everyone happy. You should not give undue importance to the body; treat it only as an instrument.

Mind is like a fan. Only when you turn the fan in your direction can you enjoy the breeze. Similarly, only when you turn your mind toward God can you experience the breeze of bliss. But if you turn your mind toward the world and say that you are not able to experience bliss, only you are to be blamed. You have to turn your mind toward God, not the body. All the actions that you do for bodily comforts are useless.

The heart is always filled with peace, love, and bliss

You cannot find peace outside; it is within your heart. So, search within. The heart is always filled with peace, love, and bliss. It is the basis for all sacred qualities such as compassion, love, tolerance, etc. All that emanates out of your heart is sacred. Body is the root cause of all six evil qualities (desire, anger, greed, pride, attachment and jealousy). So, do not be attached to the body.

Human life is very sacred and highly valuable. The mind, the intellect, and the

senses are mere instruments. But you are not making an effort to know this. You are only trying to understand the nature of the instruments, but not the Atmic Principle, which is the primordial basis of life. Your life will be sanctified only when you understand the Atmic Principle.

People undertake many spiritual practices in order to sanctify their lives, but without purity of heart all these will be of no use. First, purify your heart. Do not give scope for wicked feelings such as desire, anger, and greed. In the spiritual path, these three are the worst enemies.

In the Ramayana, Ravana is a symbol of lust and desire. Ravana was one who did great penance and received boons from the Lord. He had mastered all sixty-four types of knowledge. Such a mighty and great person like Ravana succumbed to desire and ultimately ruined his life.

In the Bhagavatha, Hiranyakasipu symbolises anger. He was a great scientist. He had control over the five elements. Modern scientists are able to reach the moon, but Hiranyakasipu attempted to reach the sun. He even tried to stop the rotation of the earth. Such a great scientist was ruined due to his anger.

The one with anger will never be successful. He ruins his property and loses his respect. He will commit sinful deeds and
Will be rejected by one and all.

In the Mahabharata, Duryodhana stands for greed.

In order to kill a miser,
There is no need to harm him physically. Just ask him for money, and
He will 'die' immediately!

Duryodhana as such a miser. What could he achieve ultimately? Therefore, for a spiritual aspirant, desire, anger, and greed are his worst enemies. The merit acquired through several years of spiritual practice will be ruined in a moment of fury. One should therefore control all these three.

Only he who obeys God's commands is redeemed

In this world, there may be at least one good person out of every ten persons. Out of every ten good persons, there may be at least one who has love for God. Out of every ten persons who have love for God, there may be at least one who wants to attain Divinity. Out of every ten persons who want to attain Divinity, there may be at least one who is ever ready to obey God's commands. Only he who obeys God's commands is redeemed. There is no point in undertaking spiritual practices without obeying God's commands.

Today, everyone wants happiness without understanding what it means. True happiness lies in being desireless. Desire is the cause of misery. A rich man may have no dearth of money, food, and other material comforts, but still he may lack peace and happiness. Material objects may provide physical comforts, but not mental peace. Money may give reputation, but not respect. There may be a number of servants, but they are not friends. All of them serve only out of compulsion, not out of love.

There is only one true friend, who is always with you, in you and around you. He is God. As long as there is water in the tank, thousands of frogs gather. But once the tank is dry, not a single frog will be seen around. Likewise, as long as you are rich and in a position of authority, everyone acts like a friend. But once you lose your position and money, your so-called friends will desert you, without even caring to say good-bye.

Hearts bereft of love are like barren lands

In this world, nothing is permanent. Only the principle of love in your heart is

permanent. Only love can win people's hearts. If you have love within, the whole world will be with you. Why do so many people from so many countries gather here? There is something here that is not there in your country, in your village, and in your family. That is the all-encompassing love. Only through love can you establish intimate relationship with each other. Hearts bereft of love are like barren lands. There should be love in the field of the human heart. Gopikas prayed to Krishna thus:

O Krishna, play on your flute

So that the seeds of Love germinate In the barren fields of our hearts and
Make the rain of love and

The rivers of love flow incessantly.

[Telugu Song]

Love always gives and never receives. Such selfless Love is only with God. You have gathered here to experience that Love. No one has sent you any invitation. It is only Love that has brought you here. What is that I am giving you? When I just ask you, "When did you come?" you become ecstatic. There is so much sweetness even in the words that I utter. You too should learn to speak softly and sweetly. "You cannot always oblige, but you can always speak obligingly." Harsh words are like atom bombs. When someone visits your house, even if you do not give anything to eat, at least talk to him sweetly and softly. It can even appease their hunger. Instead, if you speak harshly, that will not only increase their hunger but also dishearten them.

Charity is the true ornament for the hand. Truth is the true ornament for the throat. Listening to sacred texts is

the true ornament for the ears.

Why need any other ornaments?

[Sanskrit sloka]

You should not have the feeling that only your country should be happy. You should pray for the welfare of the entire world - Loka samastha sukhino bhavanthu. Let everybody and every country be happy. Only when you have such broad feelings will you be respected. No one will respect you if your behaviour and words are not proper.

Do not waste a precious human life

Students! Try to understand what human life is. The Upanishads declare that human life is most valuable. It is not easy to understand the divine quality immanent in man. All forms and all powers are in man. Man thinks that gold and diamond are most valuable, but actually it is man who endows value to them. "Men are more valuable than all the wealth of the world." So, do not waste such a precious human life.

Ancient sages like Vasishtha worked very hard in order to sanctify their lives. Why did Vasishtha join the court of Dasaratha? One day Vasishtha himself explained this to Dasaratha in the following words: "O king, I have come to you not because you are wealthy and powerful but because Lord Narayana Himself will be born as your son. I want to sanctify my life in His company." Vasishtha always used to think of divinity. So, he had the appellation Brahmarishi.

Viswamitra was called only a rajarishi because he was full of rajasic qualities. In spite of repeated efforts, Viswamitra could not get the appellation that Vasishtha could get. So, he developed hatred toward Vasishtha. Due to this hatred, Viswamitra lost all his powers.

You all know that Durvasa, one of the great rishis (sages), also had the bad quality of anger in him. Even if you were to search with a 'torchlight', you would not find even an iota of love in him. What is the use of being a maharishi (great sage) when there is no trace of love or peace? Only one with sweet words and with sacred actions can be called a true maharishi.

If you protect the values, they will in turn protect you

Bharat (India) could progress in ancient times because of saints and noble souls. In spite of repeated foreign invasions, this country could not be destabilised because of the greatness of its spiritual power. In order to preserve and sustain the strong spiritual foundation laid by the saints and noble souls, we have to foster human values such as Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love, and Nonviolence. If you protect these values, they will in turn protect you. "Dharmayeva hatho hanthi, dharmo rakshati rakshitah (If you protect dharma, dharma will protect you)." Similarly, if you destroy dharma, dharma will destroy you.

Love is your true form. Only through love you can achieve anything. There is no need to search for God and no need to undertake any spiritual practice. "Love is God, Live in Love." Without spending a penny and without even crossing your doorstep, you can attain liberation. How? It is only through love. So, develop love.

Embodiments of Love! Do not have hatred toward anybody. Start loving even those that abuse you. It is only through love that you can bring transformation in them. By loving them more and more, you can get relieved of the pain inflicted by their harsh words.

Harsh words are like sharp arrows that pierce deep into the heart. There is no medicine in this world that can cure you of the pain inflicted by harsh words. When you are shot with the arrows of harsh words, in reply speak sweetly, softly with love. It is the best medicine. It gives quick relief. Any incurable disease can be cured with love.

Love is beyond description

What is the cause of disease? It is mental tension, which is man's own making. Tension gives rise to temper, and the two together ruin man. If you want to fill a cup with milk, which is already filled with water, what do you

have to do? You have to pour out the water and then fill it with milk. In the same way, remove all wicked thoughts and wicked feelings from your heart and then fill it with love.

Start the day with Love. Fill the day with Love. Spend the day with Love. End the day with Love. This is the way to God.

You can develop Love in you by sharing it with others. Love never diminishes. It is nectarine and eternal. Once Narada asked Narayana if there was anything sweeter than nectar. Narayana replied, "Love is sweeter than nectar." You may even get fed up with drinking nectar, but that is not the case with Love. The more you taste it, the more you ask for it.

First remove all dirt (bad qualities) in you. As soon as the calf is born, the cow removes all dirt from its body by licking it repeatedly and then feeds it. When a pashu (animal) has got so much Love for its young one, then you can very well imagine the Love of Pashupathi (God) for His creation. Love cannot be expressed in words. Narada said "Anir vachaneeyam prema," which means: Love cannot be described in words.

Love is the principle of God

People think that Narada is fond of creating differences (kalahapriya), but it is a mistaken view. Yes, he was a 'kalahapriya' in his early days, but later on he realised his mistake, did severe penance, and rectified himself. He ultimately became a great teacher. It was Narada who brought nara (man) and Narayana (God) together. He worked for attainment of bliss and total removal of grief. He said, "The Atma, the Spirit, is God." It is Narayana who makes you forget your body attachments and gets you intoxicated with the love of God.

Love is the principle of God. Having got this Love in you, why should you suffer? Why do you have problems? In fact, you have no difficulties and no anxieties. There is only bliss. But how can you experience bliss? You have to follow the path of Love.

Just by repeating the names of the dishes, your hunger will not be appeased. You have to use your hands and mouth to fill your stomach. In the same way, you have to speak sweet words and do sacred actions. Through these, you will enjoy the sweetness of life and you will be blissful.

All are the children of immortality. You are all the embodiments of ananda (bliss). The Upanishads say that man is "ananda pipasi" (seeker of bliss). Since he has emerged from bliss, he wants to return to his source. Just as fish, born out of water, always wants to get into water, so also man, born out of bliss, always craves for bliss wherever he is and whatever he does. Until he returns to his source, man has no rest at all.

Man is always restless because he cannot find bliss in this world. That is why the Gita said, "Anithyam Asukham Lokam, Imam Prapya Bhajasva Mam (having got this joyless and transient human life, constantly worship Me)." You may engage yourself in your daily activities; there is no need to give up your jobs and business, but keep your mind on God always. Only then you will have peace and happiness. After tasting honey, can you say it is bitter? You have actually not experienced bliss. Once you experience divine bliss, your mind will never crave for worldly pleasures.

So, try to experience this bliss, which is within you. Bliss is your source, bliss is your breath and bliss is your life. And it is there with God. Be successful, attain Divinity and enjoy divine bliss.

33. Entire universe is within you

Date: 28 September 1998 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Even a millionaire has to be content with ordinary food. He cannot live on a diet of gold.

When time is not favourable,

a stick may turn into a snake,

While, when it is favourable, dust may turn into gold. The wheel of time can turn a scholar into a fool

And a fool into a saint.

A wealthy man may become a plaything

of adversity at some time.

Whatever your efforts may be,

You cannot get what you are not destined to get. O man, don't be over ambitious,

Lead instead a noble life

making proper use of the intellect.

Embodiments of Love! In this vast world, among all living creatures, human life is the noblest. One is born as a human being as a result of meritorious deeds done in past lives. Just as a small gramophone plate contains many songs, poems, and dialogues, likewise the human heart contains the entire universe in a subtle form. You can neither see the script of the dialogues and songs by keeping the gramophone plate close to your eyes nor hear the

sound by keeping it close to your ears. Only by playing it will you be able to hear the music and the dialogues that are in it.

Human being is the Embodiment of Cosmic Principle

The human heart, which can be compared to a gramophone plate, contains in it all the traits of past lives. The reaction, resound, and reflection of all that you have seen, heard, and experienced are contained in it. The vast oceans, the mighty mountains, and all the different places that you visited are imprinted on your heart. In short, the entire universe is imprinted on the human heart. So, it can be said that human being is Viswavirataswarupa (Embodiment of Cosmic Principle). But man, not being able to realise this truth, considers himself low, and is affected by pleasure and pain, good and bad.

Wherefrom has this universe originated? The Sruthis (the Vedas) have given a proper answer to this. The universe has originated from where the 'I' principle has originated. That is Hridaya. The Sruthis declare that Hridaya is the origin of the 'I' principle. This 'I' is all-pervasive. Everyone uses this letter 'I' while introducing the self.

There is no place or person without this 'I' principle. Even the birds and beasts have got this 'I' principle, though they are not able to express it. Wherever 'I' is, there is Hridaya. Hridaya is not limited to body alone, it is all-pervasive. 'I' is the name of the Atma. So, in everybody, the Atma is present in the form of 'I.' It is associated with buddhi (intellect).

The five aspects of buddhi

Right from an illiterate person to a scholar, everyone defines buddhi as the power to discriminate between the transient and the permanent. This is not the correct definition. People use it only in the worldly sense. In fact, buddhi has five aspects. They are: sraddha, ratham, sathyam, yogam, and mahatthatwam.

Sraddha has two powers: one is interest and the other is steadfastness.

Rutham refers to unity of thought, word, and deed. Rutham expressed in the form of words becomes Sathyam (Truth). Yogam refers Yoga chitta vritti nirodha (controlling the aberrations of the mind). The fifth aspect, mahatthatwam, is that which is sacred and divine. When buddhi has all these five aspects, is it not an understatement to define buddhi as that which only discriminates between the transient and the permanent.

Today, many people talk of manas (mind) and buddhi (intellect) without understanding their true meaning. They think that the mind is only a combination of thoughts, but even the actions are associated with it. When the mind and the intellect unite, humanness reaches a state of freedom, which is referred to as moksha (liberation).

It is a mistake to undertake any spiritual practice to control the mind. The nature of the mind is mysterious. It is unsteady and associated with ego. Who can control such a mind? So, never try to control the mind. Follow the intellect, then the mind naturally submits itself. The master of the mind is the intellect. The master of the intellect is the Atma. The Atma has no master. So, master the mind and be a mastermind.

Search for Truth is search for God, because Truth is God. So, worship Truth, follow Truth, and practice Truth. People may deny God, but none can deny Truth. You cannot fragment Truth by saying, this is Pakistani Truth, this is American Truth, this is Indian Truth, and so on. Truth is uniform for people of all nations and all religions in all periods of time.

Truth is one, so God is one. But people worship God in different forms. This is bhranthy (delusion). As long as there is bhranthy in you, you cannot attain Brahma. This bhranthy is the cause for all your sufferings. So, first and foremost, give up bhranthy.

Go closer to God and love Him wholeheartedly

It is a mistake to consider that God is separate from you. Once you realise

that you are one with God, you can never be separated. For example, when a pot full of water is emptied in the ocean, the water of the pot becomes one with the ocean. You cannot separate them. Similarly, once you unify your love with God, you become one with God.

How to unify? When fire and coal are placed apart, they remain as they are. Only when both are brought close to each other, does fire enter coal. If fanning is also done, coal gets transformed into fire. Likewise go closer to God and love Him wholeheartedly. Going close to God can be compared to coal coming in contact with fire (nearness), and loving Him wholeheartedly can be compared to fanning (dearness). Such nearness and dearness to God will ultimately make you one with God. This is what Vedanta declared: "Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavathi (the knower of Brahman becomes one with Brahman)." The human body contains all the three worlds: Devaloka (head), Naraloka (throat) and Nagaloka (heart). The head is referred to as Devaloka (heaven) because it has got all five senses of perception, which recognise shabda (sound), sparsha (touch), rupa (form), rasa (taste), and gandha (smell).

The body is made of five elements and is bound to perish,
But the Indweller is immortal.
The Indweller has no birth,
no death, and no bondage.
Truly speaking, that Indweller is God Himself.

[Telugu poem]

God is present in the form of five elements

Such a sacred body, the temple of God, is being misused. Yesterday I told you that the world is made of five elements. Human body is also made of five elements. God is present in the form of five elements all over the world. The Vedas declare: Antarbahischa Tath Sarvavyapya Narayana Sthitha,

which means Divinity is present in you, with you, above you, below you, and around you.

Every human being has five sheaths: annamaya kosha (gross sheath), pranamaya kosha (life sheath), manomaya kosha (mental sheath), vijnanamaya kosha (wisdom sheath), and anandamaya kosha (bliss sheath). In order to acquire wisdom, you do not need to go through sacred texts or hear the teachings of elders. The sacred sheath of wisdom itself is present in you. Once you experience the sheath of wisdom, you will experience the sheath of bliss. Just as the water bubble is born out of water, sustained in it and ultimately merges in water; so also human being is born out of bliss, sustained in bliss, and ultimately merges in bliss. But, being unaware of this, you are wasting your time, money, and energy in search of bliss.

Truly speaking, man is wasting a lot of time in worldly pursuits. But he does not spend even a moment to know his Self. "Who am I? What for am I born? What am I doing?"

Man does not put these questions to himself. Instead, he questions others, "Who are you? Where do you come from? What are you doing?" He has got the inquisitiveness to know about others, but not about himself.

What is the purpose of life? It is not khana, peena, sona, mama (eating, drinking, sleeping, dying). The body is gifted in order to follow dharma. Your dharma is to know your own Self. Consider everyone as divine and the whole world as the mansion of God. Offer all your actions to God. Let every word that you utter be a mantra and every step you take be Pradakshina (circumambulating God).

Instead of leading such a sacred life, man is wasting his time and energy in amassing wealth. Due to excessive desires, his life becomes a big zero.

Zero gains value when number one (hero) precedes it. As the number of zeroes increases, the value also increases if number one precedes them. Similarly, if you keep God (Hero) in view, all the zeroes such as your body, mind, and senses also gain value.

Hero becomes zero if he forgets God. The world is zero, human life is zero, the sky is zero, the sun is zero, and the moon is zero. All these zeroes have got value only because of the Hero i.e. God.

By serving others, you are serving only yourself

Embodiments of Love!

Take to service, but do not think that you are serving others. You are serving only yourself. Similarly, all the spiritual practices such as japa, tapa, dhyana, and bhajan are for your own satisfaction. God does not need them.

God wants only one thing, that you know your Self. Only then you will know God. Confidence in self and confidence in God - this is the secret of greatness. Prahlada had total faith in Narayana, while Hiranyakasipu had faith in the body. God will always protect the one with strong faith, like Prahlada.

Today, man visits temples and pilgrimage centres in search of peace, but peace is not found in pilgrimage centres. Peace is not found outside, it is within you. You are the embodiment of peace, truth and love. So search within, tread along the path of love. Only then you will be peaceful.

Through love, you can achieve anything. God is Love, live in Love. Without love, you cannot be successful. Love helps you to know your Self. In order to experience love, you do not need to approach anybody; nor do you need to exert yourself. Turn your vision inward.

Less luggage, more comfort make travel a pleasure

Krishna said, "Mamaivamso jeevaloke jeevabhutha sanathana" (human beings are the sparks of My Divinity). Serve anybody; it amounts to serving God. The best way to love God is to love all and serve all. If you lead such a

life, all your actions will be pleasing unto God.

Embodiments of Love!

You need food. Clothing, shelter, and some money to purchase medicines if you were to fall sick. That is why I said in the beginning, "O man! Never be over-ambitious, lead instead a noble life by making proper use of the intellect." Happiness lies in contentment. Dissatisfaction will lead to misery.

In order to experience peace, keep your desires under control. Misery is the birthplace of all desires. In this journey of life, desires can be compared to luggage. "Less luggage, more comfort make travel a pleasure." So, reduce your desires. This is called Vairagya (renunciation).

As the desire for the world decreases, the desire for God increases. This is what the Vedas declare: "Na karmana na prajaya dhanena thyagenaike amruthathwamanusu (Neither by actions nor by progeny nor by wealth but only by sacrifice can one attain immortality)."

Offer all your actions to God, consider all as children of God, treat money as God's gift and make proper use of it. As long as there is no sacrifice in you, you will have only anruthathwa (falsehood). Only sacrifice will give you amruthathwa (immortality).

Experience happiness through divine love

What is the way to immortality? Removal of immorality is the only way to immortality. Without getting rid of wicked qualities such as lust, anger, greed, and jealousy, how do you expect to attain immortality? When the tumbler is already filled with water, you cannot fill it with anything else.

Similarly, when the head is filled with evil qualities, good qualities have no place in it. You have filled the vessel of your heart with all types of worries. Then how do you expect to be happy?

Vyasa gave the essence of all the eighteen Puranas in one sentence: Help Ever, Hurt Never. Only then you can be s happy. If it is not possible to help, at least do not harm anybody under any circumstances You should serve wholeheartedly, not for name and fame.

Today, man is leading a worldly life, devoid of all ideals. Instead of trying to know his true identity, he is wasting his time on useless pursuits.

He knows the route to America, but not to Kasi. He knows a lot about Botany,
But not the use of the Tulsi plant.

What is the use of leading such a life? I Develop daya (compassion) in your hridaya (heart). Today, there is only fashion, but no compassion. What is the meaning of mankind? Man should have kindness. The one without kindness is not a man, but a demon. The proper study of mankind is man. There should be harmony in thought, word, and deed. Whatever originates from the heart should be expressed in words, and the words in turn should be put into action. Once, a devotee prayed thus: "O Bhagavan, people send many applications to you expressing their desires. How do you find time to go through all this? When do You reply? We get a headache even if we read two letters. But You read so many letters and send so many replies, and yet, You remain happy and cheerful in spite of your busy schedule. This itself is a sign of Divinity." I am doing all this not for My happiness, but for your happiness. Many people greet Me 'Happy Birthday'. I am always happy. You do not need to greet Me thus. Give happiness to those who are not happy.

Happiness cannot be experienced through spiritual practices. It can be experienced only through Divine Love. You will never fail in your life if you have love for God. As the previous speaker said, there are people who have failed for lack of faith, but people with strong faith will never fail. Man is suffering because he lacks faith.

In order to experience bliss, you need to develop love. Love is like a rose and lust is like a thorn. Cut the rose without touching the thorn and offer it to God. You should offer yourself to God. That is surrender. Love within you should be merged with the Divine Love. There lies the bliss.

Think of God from early age

In the Ramayana, Vali and Sugriva suffered because they lacked unity. In the same way Ravana, Kumbhakarna, and Vibhishana also suffered due to lack of unity. Though the Pandavas had difference of opinion among them, they stood united. Therefore, their the name and fame have spread far and wide. With unity you can achieve anything.

There are 95 crore people in India. If there is unity among them, this country can be transformed into a very heaven itself. But there is no unity, no purity. Only enmity exists. Heart is like a single chair, not a musical chair or double seated sofa. So, let Love be seated in that chair, then bad qualities have no place in it. Modern devotion has become artificial. People say something and do quite the opposite. There is no harmony in their words and actions. This is not proper. It amounts to cheating themselves.

You can have happiness only from difficulties

Each one has to face their own destiny. So, you should be ready to face difficulties. There can be no pleasure without pain. Do not feel dejected on seeing a dark night. Think of the moonlight that can be seen on the following night. Without dark night, there cannot be full moon night. There is happiness in sorrow too. You cannot have happiness out of happiness. You can have happiness only from difficulties.

Though you are the embodiment of love, you have to do sadhana (spiritual practices) and seva (selfless service) necessarily till you realise your true identity. Some people say, "Swami, why do we need to be devoted at a young age? We can as well think of God after retirement." When the messengers of death come to seize your life, when your relatives make arrangements to

keep your body outside, and when your wife and children cry bitterly, is it possible to remember God at that moment? So, right from an early age, you should think of God. That is why I say, "Start early, drive slowly and reach safely." Embodiments of Love! Fight against bad thoughts and bad deeds. Run away from bad company and join good company. Develop good thoughts, good feelings, undertake good actions and attain Divinity.

34. Bhagavan's assurance to devotees

Date: 29 September 1998 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Punar Vittam Punar Mithram Punar Bharya Punar Yashaha, Yavath Sarvam
Punar Labhyam Na Sareeram Punah Punah.

If man loses money, he can get it back;

If his friend leaves him, he can get another; If he loses his wife, even then he can remarry

and have another wife;

If he loses his share of land, he can procure another. He can regain all these things,

But he cannot get back the body once it is lost.

Embodiments of Divine Love! Therefore, we should consider that for all spiritual pursuits and for all types of endeavours in life, the body is the main instrument. Of all the living beings in this world, human life is the rarest, noblest, and most sacred. It is a great fortune to have this vesture of human body. However, in this human body there is mind, which is mysterious. Everyone is aware of the presence of the mind in the human body. But no one knows the vagaries of the mind. Though it does not have feet to move, it can travel faster than air and light. It has no death, has no fixed life span, and always remains youthful. You may be born again and again, but the same mind follows. Once you understand the nature of the mind, you will be able to understand your true Self.

The whole world is a mansion, and the entire humanity is one family. There is no multiplicity. We live under the same sky, tread the same earth, breathe the same air, and drink the same water. So, it is foolishness to develop diversity in this underlying principle of unity.

Whatever work you do, do it with sacred feeling

What is the sadhana (spiritual practice) to be undertaken? You should purify your body, mind, and speech. How to purify the body? It is not enough if it is cleaned with soap and water, which amounts to only external cleanliness. It has to be cleaned with good thoughts, good words, good deeds, which is very essential on the inward path. Whatever work you do, do it with sacred feelings. Divert the body from all unsacred activities, and use it only for good purposes.

In what way can you purify the mind? You can purify the mind through sense control. Use the ten senses for sacred purposes.

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.

In order to purify the senses, you should make use of them in a sacred way. Purity of the senses is purity of the mind. The mind is the master of the senses. If the mind is to be pure, the senses have also to be pure.

How can you purify your speech? You can purify your speech by speaking truth, following dharma and cultivating love and peace.

Atma, aham, mind, and speech belong to the same family

The moment the human body is born, Aham (I) also follows it. The Atma is the origin of Aham; so, Aham is the son of the Atma. From Aham the mind is born; so, the mind is the grandson of the Atma. And from mind speech originates, so speech is the great-grandson of the Atma. In short, the Atma, Aham, mind, and speech belong to the same family. So, you should have the conviction that the "I" principle in you is the dear son of God, the mind is the grandson of

and the speech is the great grandson. Once you understand that your Aham, mind, and speech belong to the divine family and act accordingly, your life will be sanctified.

Man finds it very difficult to have control over the senses. Due to the effect of modern education and high intelligence, man has become a slave of his senses. Unable to control his mind, man is leading a life of fear and delusion. From where does this fear arise? Where there is mistake, there is fear.

What is the mistake made by man? He has forgotten that the 'I' principle in him is the son of God. He has forgotten that his mind is the grandson of God. And he has forgotten that his speech is the great-grandson of God. Since he has forgotten his relationship with God, man is fear-stricken and gripped in anxiety.

Due to the advancement in the field of science and technology, human values are lost and the mind has become polluted. On the one hand, science has progressed, but on the other hand, the sanctity of the senses has regressed. Man is happy seeing advancement in science and technology but has not realised how far he has moved away from Divinity.

"You should understand My ideal"

Man's life has become highly artificial. There is no trace of love in his thoughts and in his relationship with others. Even the relationship between mother and son has become artificial. Nowadays, when one finds a son talking to his mother, one finds only artificial exchange of words, but not true love.

Students are leading an artificial life, without sense control. Even animals have sense control to some extent, but not the modern students. This is due to the progress in modern education. I do not say that education should not make progress. I Myself have established a University. I say only that along with education, students should imbibe human values and develop good character.

Can you call mere bookish knowledge education? Can you call all those who can read and write educated? Can you call all those who have degrees to their names educated? If education were to be only for a living, do you not find birds and beasts living?

Education is for life and not for earning a living. The objective of human life can be realised when you try to know the purpose of life. You should not be content with bookish knowledge and superficial knowledge; you should have practical knowledge. To have practical knowledge, enquire within.

You should understand My ideal. Once I say that you are Mine, I will never forsake you. You may forget Me, but I will never forget you. You may develop hatred toward Me, but I do not have any hatred toward you. In this world, I have no enemies, and I have no dislike toward anybody. I always uphold My promise. I always go forward to protect; never do I retract.

But, some may question that even after Swami accepts them as His, why do they have problems? Why should they suffer? This is not My mistake. I always keep My promise. They suffer because they forget their promise and lose their sacredness. I never go back on My word. I never make anyone suffer. Till the last moment, I will be with you, in you, below you, above you, and around you.

Many are not making an effort to understand this truth. They do not enquire into the reason for their suffering. Their wavering mind and their ingratitude are responsible for this.

The previous speaker, Ravi, said, God is nearer to you than your mother. Though I shower much more love than their own mothers, some people do not show their gratitude. I do not look forward to your gratitude. But, when I do My duty, you also have to discharge your duty at your level.

God will never make anyone suffer

Some people blame God for their suffering, ignoring their own defects. They

argue that God does not keep His word. But God will never go back on His promise. Man does not understand this truth. Being fully immersed in physical and worldly feelings, he blames God for his suffering. God will never make anyone suffer at any point of time. But each has to face the consequences of their own actions.

Every action has a reaction. It may take place immediately or in a few hours or in a few days or in a few months or in a few years or in a few births. For example, when your finger is cut with a blade, it starts bleeding immediately. If you fall from a staircase, you may suffer a fracture immediately. In both the cases, the reactions are instant. The food that you eat takes a minimum of two hours to get digested. For a seed to grow into a tree and yield fruit, it may take a few years.

Good or bad, you cannot escape the consequences of your actions. Then you may question, why should one pray to God? One should pray to God not for the alleviation of suffering, but for peace of mind. Once you have peace of mind, all your problems will vanish.

You can even escape the consequences of your actions if you have God's grace. After the expiration date, the medicine loses its potency; similarly, once you acquire God's grace, the consequences of your actions will have no effect on you. In order to make the consequences of your actions 'expire,' prayer is essential. You have to pray wholeheartedly.

Your heart is the seat of God. So, think of God, who is installed in your heart. You cannot expect happiness in the outside world. Bliss is not in the material world; it is within you. So, when you search within, you will find bliss.

Take God into you and drive out ego

Embodiments of Love!

Never blame God for your difficulties. Come what may, pray to Him. That is your duty. As long as you have the feeling that you are separate from God,

you have to pray. Once you realise that you are one with Him, you need not pray.

Your breathing process teaches you a lesson. When you inhale you make the sound So, and when you exhale you make the sound Ham. This process goes on 21,600 times a day. So refers to Divinity and Ham to ego, which means you have to take God in and drive ego out. This is an important principle of life.

We have to understand what we should receive and what we should reject. We breathe in oxygen and breathe out carbon dioxide. Divinity is like oxygen, which supports our life, and ego is like carbon dioxide, which is a very bad quality. It has to be driven out..

In your daily life, knowingly or unknowingly, you commit some mistakes. You are only keeping the physical body clean, but you are not making any effort to know how to purify your mind and speech. You are treating bad as good and good as bad. We should make efforts to know what is good and what is bad.

All service rendered to others for the welfare of society is good. You are a member of society. So, your welfare depends on the welfare of society. The country will prosper if society is good. Individual prayer, family prayer, and community prayer - all the three are very essential.

Your love should be as big as an ocean

The Vedas have declared, "Loka samastha sukhino bhavantu (May the whole world be happy)!" Since ancient times, Bharat has propagated spiritual discipline to other countries, ensuring peace and security for the entire humanity. You should have such broad feelings. Your love should be as vast as an ocean.

When Jesus was being crucified, people around were weeping. At that moment, an ethereal voice declared, "All are one, My dear son! Be alike to

everyone." The same thing is taught by the culture of Bharat wishing the welfare of entire humanity. Unfortunately, with the passage of time, selfishness and self-interest have become rampant.

According to Bharatiya (Indian) culture, Uttarayana is considered to be very sacred. The great warrior Bhishma, lying on a bed of arrows, waited for 56 days for the advent of Uttarayana to give up his mortal coil. During Uttarayana, the sun travels toward the north. What does this signify? In the north, we have Himachala (Himalaya mountains), which are said to be the dwelling place of Eswara. When Eswara is all-pervasive, how can we limit him to Himachala? What is the significance of this statement?

The word Himachala is made up of two words: Hima + Achala. Hima means snow, which is white and pure. Achala is that which is firm and unshakeable. What is the place to which this description applies? It is the pure heart, where Eswara is installed.

It is said, "Eswara sarva bhoothanam (Eswara is the indweller of all beings)." So, in order to see God, you do not need to go anywhere; just turn your vision inward. We cannot call an unsteady and impure heart as Himachala. Only the heart that is pure, peaceful, sacred, unpolluted, and unwavering can be called Himachala. So, when you turn inward, you are in Himachala.

Parents must teach their wards to pray to God every day

There is no trace of spiritual thinking among modern students. When the parents and teachers themselves have not realised the importance of spirituality, how can we blame the students? First the parents must teach their wards to pray to God everyday. But modern parents themselves do not pray to God. As soon as they return from the office, they go to the club and spend their time in drinking and playing cards. Naturally, children follow in their footsteps.

In some houses, parents quarrel in front of their children, which is an unhealthy practice. If there is any difference of opinion between parents, they

should resolve it in the absence of their children. Children cannot concentrate on their studies if they are disturbed by family problems. So, parents should never discuss them in front of their children. They should instead teach them all good things and show them good ways of life. There are a few parents who set a bad example to their children by speaking untruth. For example, if some unwanted person makes a phone call, they instruct their children to tell him that they are not available. Thus, they teach their children how to tell lies.

Some children are like pure gold as long as they are here. But, when they go home for vacation, their minds get polluted. But some students remain the same. Some return much before their vacation ends in order to spend time with Swami. Their innate tendencies acquired as a result of deeds done in past lives shape their behaviour.

Only God is permanent

Students! Embodiments of Love! You should try to know what Divinity is. In this age of science, some say that there is no God. But there is God in all periods of time. There is no other matter. "Yath drishyam tannashyam (Whatever is seen is bound to perish.)" Only God is permanent.

Time is most precious in human life. Misuse of time is evil. Time is God, so don't waste time. I feel very sad when I find you wasting time. I always say, "My life is My message." I never waste even a moment. You think that after supper Swami goes and sleeps. But, actually I do not know what sleep is. I never sleep. As you know, I collect letters from you. I see some of them immediately. I spend time in a most sacred way.

But I do not require anything. I do not need anything in all the three worlds. I do not need anything for Myself. Still, I am engaged in activity from dawn to dusk in order to set an ideal. From top to toe, there is no trace of selfishness in Me. Believe it or not, I always give but never receive. I ask for only one thing, and that is pure love. I am ready to give My life for those who offer their pure love.

You cannot understand My work. Only men of sacrifice can understand this. I am always engaged in activity. I do something or the other. Even while resting I am working. I have to take rest for others' sake. Otherwise, they too would not take rest. To give them rest, I take rest. What is My rest? Doing devotees' work is My rest.

The previous speaker, Narasimhamurthy, spoke about this incident. On day, all of a sudden, I left this body. Gangadhar Shetty and Narasimhamurthy were surprised at this. Only these two were there inside since it was not possible for others to come in. I told them that there was a widow who always thought of Swami. She had two children. After the death of her husband, she took up a small job to maintain her family. The loss of her husband and her inability to run the family made her depressed. Since the money was not sufficient, she took a part-time job. But every moment she used to chant Sairam, Sairam, Sairam ... wholeheartedly. In such a situation, she suffered a heart attack. In fact, she was to die.

So, I took the heart attack on Myself. For seven days, I did not come down. I took upon Myself all her suffering and pain and made her healthy. After three days, she sent a telegram, "Swami, You came and protected me and my children." She did not know that I had taken her disease on Myself. After a week, she came here with her children.

Do not limit spirituality to Bharat

I am ready to do anything for the sake of those who have total faith and pure love. But it is very difficult to find such devotees. However, there are a few of them. If there are no noble people, how is that you find goodness in this world? There are many sacred people in this country as well as in this world.

Do not limit spirituality to Bharat; it is present all over the world. Truly speaking, it is more in foreign countries than in Bharat. Indians do not know much about the Brahma Sutras, the Upanishads, and the Bhagavad Gita. But, many foreigners have learnt the Bhagavad Gita by heart.

In Italy, there is a devotee who has learnt the Brahma Sutras by heart. She can chant Rudram. In Italy, she constructed a building named 'Mother Sai,' spread over 25 acres of land. Having full faith that one day Swami would certainly visit that place, she also built a spacious hall like the Poornachandra Auditorium, so that public meetings could be held there. She has also constructed some rooms to accommodate the students that follow Swami.

Do you know how clearly and with perfect accent our primary school children from foreign countries chant the Vedas? This is the result of being in good company. If the company is good, the children's future will also be good. Tell me your company, I shall tell you what you are. As your company, so you become. So, wherever you go, join good company.

Let your heart and mind be purified. Speak always the truth in a palatable and acceptable way. This is the spiritual path that you have to adopt. People may wonder why one should do meditation and bhajans. They are all good actions meant to spend the time in a sacred way, but God is not interested in them.

What should you do to make God happy? You should involve your body in good deeds, fill the mind with good thoughts, and speak sweetly and softly. Only these actions please God. Bharatiyas (Indians) refer to this as "Trikanashuddhi (purity of thought, word, and deeds)." With sacred feelings, students should undertake sacred actions and lead an ideal life. This is what I teach the students in particular.

Fill your hearts with Divinity

The students who study here should transform thousands of students outside. It is not enough if you merely preach; first, practice what you preach. Only then will your study in this Institute find fulfillment.

We do not receive even a naya paisa from you. Education is offered free. How can you express your gratitude to this Institute? Share with others all that you have learnt here. This is true gratitude. Do your jobs, and take care of your

parents. Fill your hearts with Divinity.

When there is pure water in the tank, you get the same water out of the taps. Your heart is like a tank. All the senses are like taps. So, fill your heart with love and experience love. I expect and bless the students to take to this path of love and to lead an ideal life. Thus, I bring My discourse to a close.

No water will come in the tap if the pipe is not connected with the regular supply system. Have you connected your act of service with the reservoir of love in your heart? Are you doing it with good consciousness, or is it merely a superficial ceremonial routine act for pride and publicity? Diagnose and rectify. No worship can succeed unless the heart is pure and the senses are mastered.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

35. Power of divine love

Date: 30 September 1998 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Nirguno nishkriyo nithya nirvikalpo niranjana Nirvikaro nirakaro sarva mukthaihi labhyaha [Sanskrit verse] Attributeless, unattached to actions, eternal, beyond all thoughts, ever pure, unsullied and form

less (Brahman) is accessible to all liberated souls.

There is one principle that is attributeless, formless, eternal, and beyond thought, word, and deed. That is the principle of Love. The Upanishads call this Love the Atma. How can man understand this Love, which is attributeless and formless? This Love is not an intellectual exercise; nor is it a psychological phenomenon, or a reflection in the dreaming state. It is the life principle of all living creatures. Noble souls propagated this principle of Love in various ways. Many elders, youngsters, scholars lecture on this principle of Love and sing its glory. But, no poetry, no composition, no language can describe Love. "Yatho vacho nivarthanthe aprapya manasa saha (It cannot be described by speech and It is beyond the reach of the mind)." So, it is beyond human comprehension and narration. Love has no form; it can be seen only in practice.

All are sparks of the Divine

If one were to ask what the form of Love is, it can be said Love is God. Who is God? Where is God? What is His form? How to search Him? This has been the continuous enquiry since ancient times. But, none can describe Divinity. The Vedas said: "Vedahametham Purusham Mahantham Adityavarnam Thamasa Parasthath (Divinity shines with the brilliance of a thousand suns and is beyond the darkness of ignorance)." Divinity is beyond human understanding and expression.

How can one recognise Divinity, which is the embodiment of Love? In this world, love assumes various forms as expressed by mother, father, brother,

wife, friends, and relations. In this worldly love, you find selfishness and self-interest. But Divine Love is absolutely selfless.

Just as God loves all, you should also make efforts to love all, because in the Bhagavad Gita, the Lord says, "Mamaivamso Jeevaloke Jeevabhutha Sanathana (the eternal Atma in all beings is a part of My Being)." So, as He loves you, you should also love all and make all happy. But, today, one does not find such love between human beings.

Divine Love does not expect anything in return. In order to cultivate such divine Love, man should have the faith that he is the spark of the Divine and He should understand that the same God is present in all. Once he understands and develops faith in this truth, he can love everybody. Today, one does not find such love; it means only that man has no faith in the statement of God that "all are sparks of the Divine." Just as a Mariner's compass always points toward the north, likewise under all circumstances Love is directed toward God. Time, space, and individuals do not affect Love. Love is the true sign of Divinity. Understanding Love amounts to understanding Divinity.

None can decide the form of God.

When you enter a cinema theatre, you find a white screen. Merely watching the screen does not satisfy you. Once the show commences, you find different scenes projected on the screen. Without the screen, can you see the picture? No. But, when the picture is projected, though the screen exists, it is not seen; it merges itself with the picture. The screen exists all the time - before, during, and after the show.

The Vedas declare: "Anther bahischa Thath sarva vyapya Narayana sthithahs (That all-pervasive God is present within and without)." As the screen is to the picture, so is the Atma to the creation. The screen of Atma present within and around all beings and is the primordial basis for the entire creation. Therefore, it is said, "Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagat (Divinity pervades everywhere)." Divinity is present in the "picture", around the "picture".

The Atma has no definite name and form

So, who can know the form of such a Divinity? On the screen of Love, you find the picture of the universe. This Love is present in the name of Atma in all beings. What form can you attribute to the Love present in you? It is not possible. How can a person who does not understand his true nature understand God? So, first and foremost, one should make efforts to understand one's own Self.

The Atma has no definite name and form. "Ek Prabhu Ke Anek Nam (the one Lord has many names)." The Atma is the fundamental principle, which is pure, immutable, and unsullied. It forms the basis of the entire universe. Without the basis of the Atma, the universe cannot exist. The Vedas declare: "Pashyannapi na pashyathi moodho (He is a fool who sees yet does not recognise the truth)." The same principle of Atma is reflected in all beings. God is the basis of the entire universe. It appears rather strange when we enquire where God is. God is in the forest and also in the mansion. He is present in your heart and also in your speech. He is present everywhere. So, never make an attempt to investigate Divinity. Instead have faith in God, follow Him, worship Him, and experience bliss.

Atma is the reality

In order to experience Divinity, understand this example. The very nature of mother is love. Mother has a form, but love has no form. Mother herself is the form of love.

Due to the presence of the Atmic Principle, you are able to see its reflection in the form of the world. The whole world is nothing but reflection, reaction, and resound. The Atma is the only reality. But man has forgotten the reality and is seeing only the reflection. You cannot have reaction without action; you cannot have resound without sound.

Though the Sound is everywhere, you are not able to see it. Though the

Reality is everywhere, you are not able to see it. How will you be able to see it? With unflinching faith and selfless love, think of God continuously. God will certainly manifest before you.

Today, man chants the name of God and desires to see Him. But since he lacks steady faith, he is not able to experience Divinity. Man has become blind having lost the two eyes of faith. Faith is most important.

Self-confidence is the foundation on which one can build the walls of self-satisfaction. On the walls of self-satisfaction, one can lay the roof of self-sacrifice. Under the roof of self-sacrifice, one can lead a life of self-realisation. You cannot have walls without foundation and roof without walls. So, self-confidence, the foundation, is very important.

Today, man pretends to have love, but he does not know what it is. Our Vice Chancellor described Swami's love as that of a thousand mothers. But how can one who cannot understand the love of one mother understand the love of a thousand mothers? So, first and foremost try to understand and experience the love of your physical mother. This is the significance of Mother worship in Navaratri.

Cultural principle of the Heart is one and the same

The culture of the heart is the main standard of life. What is this culture? It is the divine feeling that originates in the heart. All the materials and powers of the world are present in your heart. Men vary in name and form, but the cultural principle of the heart is one and the same.

God resides in this divine heart. What is His form? The Vedas describe Him as formless, attributeless, ancient, and eternal. No one can attribute a name to God. Had anyone existed before God, he would have named Him. But none existed before God. Creation itself did not exist.

For crores of years, there existed only darkness. At that time, the sun and the moon did not exist and there was no living creature. Then it rained heavily for

lakhs and lakhs of years, which led to the formation of oceans. From the oceans, rivers originated. Then there was light in the world with the creation of the sun and the moon. Human habitation came into existence only after this entire process, which took many crores of years. Then how do you expect man to understand Divinity?

First and foremost, man has to kill the tamasic (slothful) quality in him. Though water has no colour, it appears red when poured into a red bottle. Similarly, the Atmic Principle, which is pure and unsullied, appears 'red' in a person with rajasic (passionate) quality, 'dark' in a person with tamasic quality and 'bright' in the heart of a person with satwic (pure, serene) quality. In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna said He created four varnas - Chaturvarnamaya Srusti. But people make the mistake of equating them with these four castes: Brahmin, kshatriya (warrior), vaisya (businessman), and sudra (labourer). Here varna refers to the colour and not the caste. The Russians are redcomplexioned, the British are white-complexioned, the Japanese are yellow-complexioned and the Africans are darkcomplexioned. The remaining colours are only combinations of these four colours.

In His creation, God has given humans a special place

Students chant a prayer and offer food to God before they partake of it. How do they pray?

Brahmarpanam Brahmahavir Brahmagnou Brahmanahutham Brahmaivathena Ganthavyam Brahmakarma Samadhina They think they are offering the food to Brahman. But, where is Brahman? He is within. He gives immediate response: Aham Vaishvanarobhoothwa Praninam Dehamasrithaha Pranapana Samayukthah Pachamyannam Chathurvidham What does this mean? It means that Brahman, who is present in the form of vaishvanara (digestive fire) in you, digests the food that you eat. Who is responsible for your blood circulation? Who makes your heart beat for 24 hours a day? It is all God's creation. None can understand this. In His creation, God has given human beings a special place. He has endowed them with buddhi (intellect). The Vedas call it Prajnanam (constant integrated awareness) and declare

"Prajnana Brahma (Brahman is Constant Integrated Awareness)."

Buddhi is greater than medha shakti

Once, King Vikramaditya convened a meeting of scholars. He asked them which was greater, buddhi (intellect) or medha shakti (intelligence)? The scholars came to a conclusion that buddhi was greater than medha shakti. They said medha shakti was only worldly intelligence, which was temporary; whereas buddhi consisted of five aspects: sraddha, sathyam, rutham, yogam, and mahatatwam. All the worldly achievements are based on medha shakti, but not on buddhi. Buddhi is transcendental and beyond all senses. It relates to nivritti (inward path), whereas medha shakti relates to pravritti (outward path).

The principle of Love is the most important of all. Love is Atma, Love is Wisdom, Love is Truth, Love is Righteousness, Love is Peace, and Love is Nonviolence. Where there is Love, untruth and violence and restlessness find no place.

Human heart is a single chair, not a double-seated sofa or a musical chair. So, once you fill your heart with Love, wicked feelings have no place in it. Everything is contained in Love. Love is the life principle.

But man has forgotten this principle of Love and is ruining his life in worldly love. The love between the mother and child is vatsalya (affection); the love between wife and husband is moha (attachment). It is only the divine Love that is true love in the strict sense of the term. Love applies to God only, none else.

Prachethasa (Valmiki) composed the Ramayana consisting of hundred crore slokas (verses). Devatas (gods), rakshasas (demons) and manavas (human beings) came to know that whoever read the Ramayana and followed it would be liberated. Immediately they approached Brahma and requested him for a share of the Ramayana.

Brahma divided the Ramayana into three parts consisting of 33,33,33,333 slokas each and distributed among them. One sloka remained consisting of 32 letters. Brahma divided these letters into three parts consisting of ten letters each and distributed to them. Ultimately, two letters remained. These are the two letters of the holy names of God: Rama, Krishna, Hari, Shiva, Sai, and Baba, which were given equally to them. For all these names, the primordial principle Love.

Human society is bound by action

Only through Love can world peace be achieved and nonviolence can be practiced. Buddha said that nonviolence is the supreme dharma. He did penance for six years. He approached elders and listened to their teachings, but he could not get any benefit out of them. Ultimately, he enquired within and found out the Truth. He said samyak drishti (right vision) led to samyak bhavam (right feelings), which in turn led to samyak vak (right speech). Right speech led to samyak karma (right action).

Spiritual sadhana does not mean doing meditation or japa. Undertaking sacred actions is true sadhana. Krishna has said, "Karmanyevadikarasthe maphaleshu kadachana (You have got right to action but not to the fruits)." Human society is bound by action. So, undertake good actions.

Today, man does not make any effort to know why the body is gifted. The body is gifted not just for "loading" and "unloading". Food is required to keep the body fit to undertake sacred actions. As the food, so is the head. As the head, so is God. So, partake of sacred food, undertake sacred actions, and join good company. To the extent possible, render service to society.

Have good feelings in your heart, speak good words, and do good actions. This is called trikaranasuddhi (unity of thought, word, and deed). Understand that this is the purpose of human life. Sarvakarma Bhagavath Preeyartham (Whatever actions you undertake, do them to please God). Divinity pervades everything, right from an ant to Brahman, but man does not realise this and misuses his body. Body is the gift of God. To misuse it is a great sin. Sin and

merit are not present in a foreign land; they are attached to your actions. Good actions yield good results and bad actions yield bad results. Therefore, make proper use of the body, mind, and intellect, which are gifts of God.

If you have devotion, God Himself will confer bliss

What is sadhana (spiritual exercise)? Service is true sadhana. Serve society. Treat everyone as your brother and sister. Only through selfless service will your life be redeemed. Consider service unto others as service to God. Unfortunately, today man takes to service expecting something in return. He has become money-minded.

Excessive wealth makes one egotistic. Ego leads to bad qualities. Excessive desires make one suffer. As the desires increase, misery also increases. "Asamtruptho dwijo nashtaha (a discontented man suffers both ways)." He is not happy with what he has and feels unhappy over what he has not got. Be content with what you have. Experience bliss and share it with others. If you have devotion, God Himself will confer bliss.

As our Vice Chancellor said, when Hanuman was to go to Lanka in search of Sita, Sugriva, Jambavantha and others doubted that he could cross the ocean.

Hanuman smilingly replied that because Rama Himself had commanded him to cross the ocean, He would also grant him the strength to do so. He leaped across the ocean chanting the name of Rama and reached Lanka.

Having been commanded by Rama, he never doubted whether he would accomplish the task. Once God commands you to do something, He will certainly grant the necessary skill and strength. So, act according to the command of God; without a trace of doubt, you will certainly be successful.

Happiness lies in union with God

Today, since science is progressing, doubts are also increasing in the human mind. The more intelligent you are, the more doubts you have. So, do not

aspire for more intelligence (medha shakti). Make proper use of the intellect God has given you. Then you will be happy in life.

Happiness lies in union with God. God is the embodiment of bliss, which is eternal, unsullied, pure and non-dual. It is most unfortunate for you to forget God. Never give up Sai. Make the best use of the chance given. Once you lose the opportunity to serve the Lotus Feet of Paratheesha, you will not get it back. Sai grants you devotion, strength, and liberation.

Do not ruin yourself by listening to others. Do not believe anybody; believe your conscience and follow it. Once you follow your conscience, you will attain consciousness, the Atma. Develop self-confidence, worship God, attain Divinity, and be an ideal to the rest of the world. That is the essence of education.

The man who studies and studies without discrimination fails to understand himself. A mean-minded man can never give up his meanness in spite of his vast learning. Why should one waste one's life in the pursuit of useless learning? Better is to acquire such wisdom that confers immortality.

Worldly education leads to argumentation, but not to total knowledge. It is all a waste of time. It is a sign of ignorance. So, never argue with anybody. "Vade, vade varjathe vairam (arguments will lead only to enmity)." Today, what we need is unity, purity, and divinity.

The name of God should spread everywhere

Embodiments of Love! For the last seven days, you are a witness to this holy yajna. Why is it conducted? It is for the welfare of the world. The name of God should spread everywhere. For example, Delhi is far away from here, but when you tune your radio to a particular wavelength, you can hear the songs that are being broadcast in the Delhi station. This is possible because of the presence of electric waves in the atmosphere.

All over the world there are electric waves and magnetic waves. So, the effect

of mantras chanted during the yajna will spread all over the world and purify the atmosphere. Once the mantras enter the air that you breathe in, you will develop sacred feelings, because there is also a mantra in you.

The body is yantra, hridaya is , and the breath is mantra (Soham). Soham means, "I am God." There is no greater mantra than this. Therefore, chant this sacred mantra, lead an ideal life, and make the world an abode of peace.

In this train of society, youth are the long-journey passengers. Since the youth have a long way to go, they should work for world peace. Teach the principle of Divinity to others. Instil Divine feelings even in hardhearted people. Sow the seed of the holy name of God in every heart. Then the world will become verily the heaven.

Your happiness is heaven; your grief is hell. So, be happy and serve everybody. Do not have the narrow feeling that only Bharat (India) should be prosperous; pray for the prosperity of the entire world because all are your brothers and sisters. Have such broad feelings and sacred thoughts. Only then will the dictum Lokas samastha sukhino bhavanthu be realised and will everyone be happy. Share this immortal principle with everybody. The Upanishads address you as the sons of immortality - Srunvanthu viswe amruthasya putraha (listen O children of immortality). You should lead your life befitting your name, like saint Thyagaraja. Thyagaraja said, Nidhi chala sukhama, Easwar Sannidhi chala sukhama, nijamuga thelupumu manasa (O mind, tell me, is it money or proximity to the Divine that confers happiness?) He rejected the money sent by the king, saying Rama was his only wealth. Thyagaraja means one with sacrifice. So, his action befitted his name. There is no heaven beyond sacrifice.

Embodiments of Love! Do not have excessive desire for wealth. Lead a life of sacrifice. Lead a peaceful life.

36. Develop steadfast faith in God

Date: 01 October 1998 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara, Vijayadasami

Daivadeenam Jagathsarvam Sathyadheenamthu Daivatham
Thath Sathyam Uttammadheenam Uttamo Paradevatha
The whole world is governed by God, and God is governed by Truth;
Truth is in the hands of noble souls, and the noble souls are verily divine.

Embodiments of Love!

Since ancient times our country of Bharat has been spreading the infinite spiritual knowledge to every country all over the world. Bharat believes that for the peace and security of the entire world, spirituality is most essential. *Bharathiyas* (Indians), with all the sincerity and devotion, have made efforts to establish stability and peace in the world. But, with the passage of time, due to the effect of Kali Age, people have lost faith in the Self and have reposed faith in this transient and ephemeral world. Today, man does not even have faith in the Self of birds and beasts. When a small bird rests on a thin branch of a tree, the branch starts tossing up and down. But the bird is not fearstricken because it depends on its wings, not on the branch on which it rests. Bird has total reliance on its wings, but not man in his Self; he suffers as a result.

In spite of the fact that man goes through sacred texts and listens to discourses, he has not developed faith in the Self. He nods his head as he listens to the discourses with the feeling of having understood and benefited by them, but does not have the faith to put them into practice.

Every man should develop faith in the Self

There is no scope for any doubt in a man with Faith in the Self. He is

unperturbed by the vicissitudes of life. Since ancient times, the culture of Bharat has had Self-confidence as the basis. But with the commencement of the modern age, Self-confidence is on the decline. Every man should develop faith in the Self . One can attain the blissful state only through Self-confidence.

Today is Vijaya Dasami. This is the *samapthi* (conclusion) of the sacred Navaratri festival. Samapthi is that which confers *prapthi* (deservedness) in every possible way. This also happens to be the day on which Shirdi Baba left his mortal coil. Having left His mortal coil on this day, Shirdi Baba reincarnated here after 8 years. This is an ample testimony to the existence of Divinity in humanity.

If man does not know his own Self, what is the use of knowing the rest? He reads the newspaper everyday in order to be aware of the happenings around the world. He makes efforts to know what is happening in every country, but he does not put in any effort to know his own Self. He keeps questioning whoever he comes across, "Who are you? Where do you come from?" but he does not put these questions to himself. There is no point in undertaking any spiritual practice without Self-enquiry.

Food habits: main cause for lack of purity of heart

Food and habits play a vital role in fostering human values.

As the food, so is the head. As the head, so is God.

You should understand the connection between food, head, and God. Today we find many unhealthy changes in the food and habits of man. This is the main cause for the lack of purity of Heart.

After the Pandavas emerged victorious in the battle against Kauravas, Krishna

took them to Bhishmacharya, who was lying on a bed of arrows, for his counsel and blessings. Bhishma began expounding to them all aspects of dharma. This teaching of Bhishma is called Shanthi Parva in Mahabharatha.

When all the Pandavas were listening to their grandsire with all sincerity and devotion, Draupadi suddenly burst into laughter. One should be aware of the fact that Draupadi was one of noble virtues and sense of discrimination. She was one who practiced the cultural values of Bharat. But all the Pandava brothers were very much upset by her unaccountable levity and considered it an insult to the venerable Bhishma. Bhima and Arjuna became very furious, and Dharmaja bent his head in shame.

But Bhishma knew the reason for Draupadi's laughter. He called her close and said, "My dear child, the people of this world are like crows and will misinterpret your laughter in varied ways. Without trying to know the truth, they will misunderstand and misinterpret. So explain the reason for such a behavior and thereby remove the misapprehension of your husbands."

She replied, "Revered grandsire! You should have taught these lessons of dharma to the evil-minded Kauravas. But instead you are teaching now to my husbands, who are virtuous, righteous, and selfless. This appeared to me both ironical and futile. Hence I could not refrain from laughing."

Bhishma said, "Draupadi, I can understand your feelings, but as I have been living in the company of Kauravas, my blood and mind have become polluted as a result of consuming food from such wicked persons. Knowing fully well that the Kauravas have been on the wrong side, I have not corrected them. But, as good luck would have it, Arjuna's arrows have drained away all that impure blood from me in the last 56 days. As a result the good thoughts and good feelings that were lying buried deep in me are coming out." It has been bad company that had affected Bhishma's mind. This fact is very well expressed by the statement, "Tell me your company, and I shall tell you what you are." As the company, so you think and so you become.

Everyone must make an effort to dispel bad thoughts

Every teaching has to be passed on, keeping in view of the time, space, and circumstances. Though Krishna and Arjuna moved together for 64 years before the Kurukshetra war, never did Krishna mention anything about Bhagavad Gita to Arjuna. It was only before the war that Krishna gave the teaching to Arjuna. For everything there is an appropriate time.

You might have gone through many sacred texts and heard many sacred teachings. You may also have had the darshan of sacred people. What is the use? Due to the effect of unsacred food and bad company, all your good thoughts are subdued. Good thoughts can express themselves only when you get rid of bad thoughts. Everyone must make an effort to dispel bad thoughts.

Consider this example, you have built a house with a main door and many windows for proper ventilation. Just because there is an entrance, you will not allow all the street dogs and pigs into your house. You open the door only for your family, friends, and relatives. Likewise, the mind is the main door and senses are like windows to the body, which is the temple of God.

Deho devalaya proktho jeevo Devah Sanathanaha

(The body has been described as a temple and the indweller as the Eternal Divine).

You have to enquire as to who is to be permitted into this temple and who is not to be permitted. But today, no one makes this enquiry. As a result all types of wicked feelings and wicked thoughts are permitted to enter the mind.

Have limited connections and contacts

Nasreyo niyamam vina
(for everything, discipline is essential).

You should not develop friendship with everyone. You should enquire whether the person is good or not. However, do not hate anybody (*Adhveshta sarvabhoothanam*). At the same time, do not cross your limits in your dealings with others. Have limited connections and contacts.

What is the use of being born as a human being if you do not foster human values such as sathya, dharma, santhi, prema, and ahimsa? Vedas say

Sathyam vada; dharmam chara
(Speak truth and follow righteousness.)

Peace is like a precious jewel to mankind. Saint Thyagaraja said,

Shanthamu leka soukhyamu ledu
(Without peace, there is no happiness in this world).

For all the human values, Love is the basis.

Today, human beings are human in form but not human in practice. In some places, one finds people exhibiting human values outwardly without practicing them whole-heartedly. Human values are not meant for *pradarshana* (exhibition) but are meant for *nidarshana* (example). Human values should be reflected in all your thoughts, words, and deeds. But today, there is only selfishness and self-interest in whatever man thinks, speaks, and does. Due to selfishness and self-interest, human values are totally lost. A small example, here you find many bulbs glowing. It is not enough you have

only bulbs, you also need to have wires and current. When the current flows through the wires and enters the bulbs, they start glowing. Likewise, in order to experience the light of Love, the current of Truth has to pass through the wires of dharma and enter the bulb of Peace.

Atma, Aham, mind, and speech

As I have already told you, Atma is the origin of Aham, Aham is the origin of mind, and mind is the origin of speech. So, Aham is the son of Atma, mind is the grandson of Atma, and speech is the great grandson of Atma.

First and foremost you should remember that Atma, Aham, mind, and speech belong to the same family. So, Aham, mind, and speech should be filled with the feelings of Atma. Only when there is a total unification of Aham, mind, and speech with Atma will you become a total human being. When Atma is the underlying principle in Aham, mind, and speech, then there is no scope for any mistake. But today there is no Atmic feeling in man's thought, word, and deed. This is the cause of all suffering.

You should develop the spirit of nationalism and practice ancient Bharat (Indian) culture. The culture of Bharat speaks of unity in diversity.

Countries are many, but earth is one;
Stars are many, but sky is one;
Jewels are many, but gold is one;
Cows are many, but milk is one.

This is the spirit of unity that the culture of Bharat has propagated since ancient times. You should give up the worldly feelings and worldly thoughts and develop full faith in the principle of unity.

Partake only of sacred food

Embodiments of Love!

On this sacred day of Vijaya Dasami, take an oath to give up vices such as smoking, drinking, and partaking of non-vegetarian food. Many do not realise the evil effects of these bad habits. If a smoker blows air on a white handkerchief, he will find yellow spots on it. This is a sign of disease. Smoking leads to cancer. Drinking is a demonic quality. It makes you intoxicated and makes you forget yourself.

Consuming non-vegetarian food is also a bad quality. When human body itself is made of flesh, where is the need to consume the flesh of birds and animals? You should partake of only sacred food. Only then you will have sacred feelings. For sacred thoughts and sacred deeds, sacred food is essential. A noble soul like Bhishma himself suffered on account of unsacred food. As a consequence, he had to lie on a bed of arrows for 56 days.

In order to have sacred feelings, apart from partaking of sacred food, you also need to have sacred vision. Do not cast bad looks on anybody. Do not speak ill of others. Do not hear anything that is bad. Do not entertain bad thoughts. Do not indulge in bad deeds. Do not hurt anybody. More than this, there is nothing else that one needs to do to improve one's own Self.

Human life is highly sacred.

Janthoonam narajanma durlabham
(human birth is the rarest of all).

But today, some people kill fellow human beings without compassion. That is a demonic quality, not a human quality. Having taken human birth, you should not become a demon. In your old age, when your vision is blurred, you cannot see properly; when your body becomes weak and decrepit, when

everyone calls you old monkey, what is the use of repenting then? Undertake good actions from this moment. Vyasa conveyed the essence of 18 Puranas in two sentences.

Ashtadasa Puraneshu Vyasasya Vachanadvayam
Paropakara Punyaya Papaya Parapedanam
which means "Help ever, Hurt never."

Do not hurt even an insect, because there is God in every creature. Based on this Saint Thyagaraja composed a song in which he says, "O Rama, you are present in an ant and in Brahma."

Do not blame God at times of difficulties

Even such a great devotee like Thyagaraja began blaming Rama in times of difficulties. He said, "O Rama, don't you have the power to protect me, or do I lack devotion? Each and every hair of my body is filled with your name. I am thinking only of you all the time. So, certainly there is devotion in me. But you don't have the power." Immediately he sat in meditation and enquired within. He realised his mistake.

Then he composed a song in which he said, "O Rama, your power is so great and mighty, otherwise how could a monkey like Hanuman cross the ocean? Would Lakshmana, who is Adishesha himself, worship You? Would Lakshmi Devi, the Goddess of Wealth, Herself serve You? Would the most intelligent Bharatha obey your command? Out of my foolishness I started blaming You, forgetting Your Divinity. Please forgive me."

When Jesus was being crucified, he cried out to God, "O God, Why do You punish me like this?" Immediately he realized the Truth and said, "O God, let your Will prevail. It is You who has created me, sustained me, and protected me. I will not act against Your Will. It was a mistake on my part to blame you."

When he recognized his mistake, an ethereal voice said, "All are one my dear son, be alike to everyone."

Once you recognise your mistake, Divinity manifests. Man today does not recognise his mistakes; instead he looks for mistakes in others. Do not be bothered about others faults; search for your own faults and rectify them. Only then will your life be sanctified.

Whatever you do, do it with Love

Embodiments of Love!

Most importantly, you should develop Love. It contains all the other human values, such as *sathya*, *dharma*, and *shanthi* (truth, right conduct, and peace). Whatever you do, do it with Love. Your Heart is like a big tank, and the senses are like taps. Fill the Heart with the water of Love. Only then you can experience Love through all the senses.

Today, you talk of human value, but you do not seem to practice them. That makes Me very sad. You have been listening to many of My teachings; can you not practice at least one? Instead of teaching others, teach yourself and put into practice. What is the use of reading Vedas and sacred texts without practicing them? Will you be cured of your disease by merely repeating the names of the medicines? Will merely repeating the names of delicious items appease your hunger? Likewise, mere repetition of the name of the Lord is not enough. You should engage yourself in His work.

When Vibhishana met Hanuman, he said, "O Hanuman, how lucky you are? In spite of you being a monkey by birth, Rama has kept you in His company, but I have not been blessed with such an opportunity, though I chant His name constantly." Hanuman replied, "O Vibhishana, mere repetition of the Lord's name is not enough; you should participate in His work. Only then can you be a recipient of His grace."

As soon as Vibhishana heard these words, he crossed the ocean and fell at

Rama's feet, seeking His refuge. In this respect we can say that Vibhishana is greater than Bhishma. Vibhishana tried to put his brothers on the right path but ultimately left them, since they did not pay heed to his good counsels; whereas, Bhishma did not even make an attempt to counsel the Kauravas and continued to live with them, being fully aware of their evil designs.

When Vibhishana sought Rama's refuge, Sugriva, Jambavantha opposed, saying, "Swami, you should never believe these *rakshasas* (demons). There must be some ulterior motive behind this act of Vibhishana. So ask him to return to Lanka." Rama replied, "Once someone says, 'I am yours,' whoever he may be, I will take care of him. So I will not reject Vibhishana." This is a testimony to God's Love.

Once you say "I am yours," live up to it with strong faith. Thereafter, God will take care of you at all places and under all circumstances. I expect and bless you so that you develop strong faith, give up vices, join good company, entertain sacred feelings, and attain Divinity.

37. Offer yourself to God

Date: **11 October 1998** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam** / Occasion: **Sixth Anniversary of Paduka Pratishtha Mahostav**

In order to deserve God's grace, Your faith should grow.

When you do not have faith, You cannot offer yourself.

For human progress, mental strength and purity of heart are essential. It is only mental strength and purity of heart that make the human divine. Mind is the basis for the existence of mankind. Thoughts are responsible for the existence of mind. Human behavior, whether good or bad, is based on the thoughts. The human life is the result of thought process.

When a small pebble is thrown into a lake, the ripples spread all over the lake. Likewise, the 'ripples' that arise in the lake of mind when a pebble of thought is thrown into it spread to all the senses. When the 'ripple' that arises out of good thought spreads to your mouth, you speak only good words. If it is a bad thought, you utter only bad words. Similarly, whatever you see, hear, or do depends on the thoughts you entertain. So, the good or bad of a human being is based on thoughts.

God is not pleased by contemplation alone

Today, man aspires for God and contemplates on Him constantly, but mere aspiration and contemplation are not enough to experience God. God is not pleased by contemplation alone; one has to totally offer oneself to experience Him. Once you offer yourself completely to God, you and He become one.

What are the spiritual pursuits to be followed to become one with God? When fire and coal are placed apart, they remain as they are. Only when they are brought together and fanned can coal get transformed into fire. Likewise, go closer to God and love Him whole-heartedly. Such nearness and dearness to God will ultimately make you one with God.

This is what Vedanta declared, "Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavathi (the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman)." The food eaten gets digested and its essence is supplied to all parts of the body. This means that the food partaken becomes one with the body. Similarly, you have to offer yourself completely to God. Only then can you become one with him. All your thoughts should become divine.

Jiva is Nara and God is Narayana. Both should become one. Nara means Atmic principle. So, you are human only in form, but your nature is divine. It is only the Atma that moves about from top to toe. Whatever that is thought, said, or done is due only to the presence of Atma. That is why Krishna has said, "Mamaivamso Jivaloke Jivabhutha Sanathana (You are eternal sparks of Myself)." You are the reflection of God.

The purpose of the spiritual pursuits lies in the unification of man and God. Mere worshipping of padukas, chanting the name of God, or contemplating on His form are not sufficient to bring about this unification. These correspond to the outward path (pravritti marga). You should take to the inward path (nivritti marga). Only then can you understand the principle of unity.

Significance of five faces of Gayathri

This morning, Sastriji, while explaining the significance of Gayathri Mantra, described Gayathri as Pancha Mukhi (deity with five faces). What are the five faces? The first face is the primal sound Aum. Bhur Bhuvah Suvah is the second face. Tat Savitur Varenyam is the third face. Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi is the fourth face. Dhi Yo Yonah Prachodayat' is the fifth face.

Who is Gayathri? "Gayathri Chandasam Matha (Gayathri is the mother of the Vedas)." Gayathri has three names: Gayathri, Savitri, and Saraswathi. "Gayantham Trayate Iti Gayathri (Gayathri redeems the chanter of the mantra)." Gayathri is the master of the senses. Savitri is the master of Prana (Life Force). Saraswathi is the presiding deity of speech (Vak Devata Swaroopini). You have to unify your senses, life principle, and your speech and offer yourself to God.

You should also understand the meaning of Bhur Bhuvah Suvaha. You are under the impression that they refer to the three worlds - Bhuloka, Bhuvarloka, and Suvarloka. These three worlds are present in you and in every living creature. Bhur refers to the body, made up of five elements (materialisation). The same five elements constitute the entire world. Bhuvah refers to the prana sakthi (vibration), which makes the body move. However it is the presence of Prajnanam, i.e. suvaha (radiation), that enables the prana sakthi to animate the body.

It is on this account that the Vedas have declared "Prajnanam Brahma (Constant Integrated Awareness is Brahman)." This Constant Integrated Awareness is present in man. Man has also the five elements in him. The five elements constitute the world. What is the primordial basis for these elements? That is the primordial sound Omkara. On this basis, the gopikas (cowherd maids) prayed thus: "Kleem Krishnaya, Govindaya, Gopijanavallabhaya Swaha!" Kleem means the earth. Krishnaya means water. Govindaya means fire, Gopijanavallabhaya refers to air. Swaha refers to ether (akasa). Krishna's name encompasses the five elements.

These five elements permeate the whole universe. In fact, these five elements form the basis of life for the entire universe. These are essentially divine. That is why earth is referred to as Bhoodevi, water as Gangadevi, fire as Agnideva, and air as Vayudeva.

Surrender with pure heart

There is no need to search for God elsewhere. He dwells in your heart. That is why He is called Hridayavasi (indweller of the heart). If someone were to ask you, "Where do you come from?" you may say that you are coming from a hotel or from your house. But actually you come from none of these places. You come from Hridaya. It is this Hridaya that is your dwelling place. Then where is the question of coming and going? Similarly, God neither comes nor goes. He is present all over, all the time.

But, in order to confer grace on a devotee, He may manifest Himself. Just

because God has appeared to a devotee in America does not mean that God has traveled all the way to America. He is present in America too. It is the devotion that makes God manifest Himself. Divinity neither comes nor goes. It is present everywhere. "Viswam Vishnuswaroopam," "Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma." There is no place where there is no God. All names and forms are His. You should not have the feeling that God is the master and you are His servant. The individual (nara) and the Divine (Narayana) are one. You should take to the spiritual path in order to understand this principle of unity. Right from birth to death, if you are immersed in duality, when will you experience the bliss of non-duality? A man with a dual mind is half blind. So you should make every effort to experience oneness.

In the morning, Punditji, while doing abhisheka to the padukas with milk, curds, and honey, explained the significance of these offerings. All these spiritual pursuits are meant for the purification of Heart. "Chittasya Suddhaye Karmaha (all actions are aimed at the purification of heart)." Purity alone is not enough to experience Divinity. With purity of heart, you should offer yourself to God. You would not offer a faded flower to God. Likewise, the heart, which may be compared to a flower, should be fresh and devoid of impurities before it is offered to God. There is an ocean of difference between archana (worship) and arpitham (total surrender). It is not archana, but it is arpitham that is most essential.

True meaning of sathsanga

What is the meaning of sathsanga (good company)? Sath is the name of Divinity. It is changeless in all the periods of time. It is eternal and is present in you. You have to understand this eternal principle. In order to do so, you have to be in communion with Sath.

As Punditji has said in the morning, milk is very happy in the company of water. The combination of water and milk can be termed sathsanga. That is ideal friendship.

When the milk is boiled on a stove, the water gets evaporated. The milk,

unable to bear the separation from water, tries to jump into the fire. The moment you sprinkle some water on the boiling milk, it gets pacified. The milk is happy on being united with its friend.

The same relationship exists between nara (individual) and Narayana (God). God is very happy when the individual joins His company. But God feels very sad when the individual diverts his attention from Him and gets immersed in worldly pleasures. Once the individual surrenders completely to God, He is happy again. Due to the effects of Kali age, the individual separates himself from God. The individual may not feel sad, but God feels sad because His friend, the individual, is parting ways with Him.

Whatever God says or does is for your own good

God is the only permanent friend in this world. All the worldly friends can only say, "Hello, How are you?" and "Good-bye," nothing more. God does not say "Hello, How are you?" and "Good-bye." As long as you are in His company, you will be happy and He is also happy. But when there is separation from His devotee, though he may not express it, He feels sad. Why is the individual going along the wrong path? Why is he forgetting the truth? Why is he distancing himself from Divinity? Why is he losing his purity? Thinking so, God feels sad. Even this is for the devotee's sake, not for His sake. Whatever God says or does is for your own good.

Lakshmana is a superb example of the attitude of surrender. When Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana went to the forest and reached Chitrakoota mountain, Rama told Lakshmana to put up a hermitage in a place of his choice.

Hearing these words, Lakshmana felt hurt and bent his head down with grief. Noting this, Sita asked Lakshmana, "Why are you perturbed, Lakshmana? Your brother did not speak anything harsh. Why do you feel so sad?" Lakshmana said, "O Mother, have I ever had any choice of my own? The likes of Rama are mine. I have surrendered myself to Rama. The command of Rama is what I want to carry out. While so, how can I withstand the impact of Rama asking me to put up the hermitage at a place of my choice? Does it not

amount to separation from Rama?" That is the intensity of the feelings of a true devotee toward the Lord. Your thoughts should always be centered on God. The world is like a passing cloud. But the relation between you and God is permanent and eternal.

Understand your relationship with God

Gayathri Mantra consists of three parts. One is praise, the second is prayer and the third is meditation. The first nine words of Gayathri Mantra (Om, Bhur, Bhuvaha, Suvaha, Tat, Savitur, Varenyam, Bhargo, Devasya) correspond to the description (praise) of Gayathri. Dheemahi pertains to meditation. "Dhiyoyonah Prachodayat" is the prayer to God to confer the steady and pure intellect.

The Divine is first praised and meditated upon. Then an appeal is made to the Divine to awaken and strengthen the intellect (buddhi). So, first and foremost, you should extol God. But in what way? You should extol Him with a feeling of intimacy. The son will never shower lavish praises on his father when he asks for a new dress. Instead he demands rightfully. A devotee has a similar right to demand from God.

Hridaya is the son of Atma. From hridaya, mind is born. So, mind is the grandson of Atma. And, from mind, speech originates. So, speech is the great grandson of Atma. In short, your hridaya, mind, and speech belong to the divine family and have got a share in the divine property. Therefore, your hridaya, mind, and speech should be in constant communion with God. On this basis, Jesus said, "I am the messenger of God" from the physical point of view. From the psychological point of view, he said, "I am the son of God." And with the feeling of oneness of Atma, he said, "I and my father are one." From a physical point of view you may consider yourself different from God. In the mental realm you should feel that you are the spark of the Divine. But from the Atmic point of view, you should realise that you are not different from God. You have to make every effort to realize this unity. You should not distance yourself from Divinity basing on body attachment. Without understanding your relationship with God, all your spiritual practices will be of

no use. But once you understand this principle of unity, wherever you are, you are one with God.

Develop attachment with the Atma

The body relationship is only physical and worldly. It has nothing to do with spirituality. The master of the house is addressed in different ways by his family members. Son calls him father, daughter-in-law calls him uncle, and grandson calls him grandfather, on the basis of body relationships. You should never go by body attachment.

The body is full of dirt and diseases. It cannot cross the ocean of samsara. O mind, never think that body is permanent; surrender to the feet of God. Do not get yourself bound by body attachment. Develop attachment with the Atma.

In order to do so, engage yourself in sacred actions such as sravanam (listening to the Lord's stories), kirtanam (singing His glories), smaranam (remembrance), Padasevanam (service to the Lotus Feet), archanam (worship), vandanam (salutation), dasyam (servitude), sakhyam (friendship), Atmanivedanam (offering oneself to the Lord i.e. self-surrender).

Friendship is the stepping stone to self-surrender. So, you should develop friendship with God and be a recipient of His love. You undertake many spiritual pursuits to obtain this love. In fact, you do not need to undertake any spiritual practices. It is enough if you remember the relationship between you and God.

Divinity is one but is responsible for the three-fold cosmic process. These three aspects of God can be seen in the English word GOD. G represents Generation (Srishti), O represents Organization (Sthithi) and D -represents Destruction (Layam). God has all the three aspects in Him. Seeing the same God in all the beings is the true spirit of non-dualism.

The greatest and the noblest path is that of devotion

You know that it was Adi Sankaracharya who propagated the principle of non-dualism. All the compositions of Sankara speaks of non-dualism. But, toward the end, Sankara himself entered the path of devotion. He sang the following verse.

Bhaja Govindam Bhaja Govindam Govindam Bhaja Mooda Mathe, Samprapthe Sannihite Kale Nahi, Nahi Rakshathi Dukrun Karane.

O foolish man, chant the name of the Lord. When the hour of death arrives, only the Lord can save you, not your grammar.

Even the one of wisdom becomes a devotee at one point of time. The greatest and noblest path is the path of devotion. The word bhakthi (devotion) is derived from the root word bhaj, which means total surrender. Offering total love is bhakthi. Worship and other rituals are only physical and worldly activities. You have to enter nivritti (inward path) from this pravritti (outward path).

When you learn the English language, you start with the alphabet. Then you join letters to make words. Then you join words to form sentences. The atheists say, God is no where. When the letter w is moved from where to no, it becomes God is now here. The aim of learning the language is to make sentences out of it. Similarly, the aim of worship and rituals is to understand the principle of unity. You start with one name and one form and ultimately realise that everything is one. It is the goal of spiritual sadhana. It is the essence of spiritual sadhana.

Surrender brings limitless Bliss

Worship of Padukas, observance of rituals, and celebrations of festivals are all different paths leading to the principle of oneness. All these rituals are essential till you realise that God is one. But you should not spend your whole lifetime in these rituals.

At birth, you cry "Koham? Koham?" which means "Who am I?, Who am I?" You should not die with the same question on your lips. Before you die you should be able to say "Soham, I am God." From dualism you should enter qualified non-dualism, and from there you should proceed to non-dualism. Just as cotton and thread are present in the cloth, likewise dualism and qualified non-dualism are present in non-dualism.

Today the devotees read many sacred books and listen to discourses, but there is no transformation in the mind. All these sacred texts and teachings are like jewels. Merely adorning these jewels does not give you bliss. The bliss is within; you should experience it.

Just as precious jewels are kept in an iron chest, likewise Atmic principle is present in this human body. God has kept many valuable jewels in your body. But you are not making any effort to realise this. God says, "O madcap, why do you entertain mean and low desires? If you give up desires and offer yourself, I will give you the most valuable gifts." When God is ready to give you the limitless non-dual bliss, why do you crave limited happiness? Do not ask for mean things. **!!!!!!! Offer yourself to God**; then God will grant you jewels of limitless bliss.

But in order to deserve God's grace, your faith should grow. When you do not have faith, you cannot offer yourself. One who does not know himself in spite of all his education is foolish. With his limited knowledge, he will enter into arguments and will never be able to acquire total wisdom. If ultimately one has to die, what is the use of studying? One has to study to be immortal. The Vedas declared, "Srunvanthu viswe amruthasya putrah. (Listen, O sons of immortality)". Understand and experience this.

God wants only selfless love

You pay water tax to the municipality for providing water to you. When the current is supplied to your house, you pay the electricity bill. But God has given the sunlight, the wind, and the rains - what tax are you paying to God? Self-surrender is the tax you are expected to pay. All your troubles are your

own making. God always gives you everything good. But you are not receiving it.

Some people do not listen to good words, And instead pay heed to all bad words. Such people can never understand Me.

What is that you need to do to make God happy? You should go close to God and worship Him with a sense of surrender. This is for your own sake. God does not ask for anything. Child sits on the lap of mother for its own satisfaction. When the child goes near its mother, she showers her love. When you want to be close to God, you do not need to go through sacred texts or undertake great spiritual exercises. Rituals and reading of holy texts are only worldly actions. They are meant only to give external satisfaction, but one has to make efforts to experience inner satisfaction.

Embodiments of Love! The letters that the postman brings give joy to some and plunge some in deep sorrow. It is the contents of the letters that are responsible for the joy or sorrow, not the postman. God is like a postman. He gives you the fruits of your actions. "Karmanubandheeni manushyaloke (Human society is bound by actions)." When you follow Truth, you will be happy and prosperous. Jealousy will make you miserable.

Strive for divine Love

Buddhi is governed by fate. Fate is governed by actions. Actions are governed by thoughts. If you do all activities with sacred thoughts, you will be successful. Wicked thoughts and wicked feelings confer only misery.

If you do not have the grace of God, all the worldly powers will be of no use. You know what happened to the great warrior Karna, who has had all powers but not God's grace. You should strive for divine Love. To acquire divine Love,

you should develop good thoughts.

Embodiments of Love! You are happy that the number of padukas is increasing year after year. It is quite natural to have such a feeling in the external world. But I do not desire increase in numbers.

It is the feeling that is important, not the number of padukas. What God wants is pure Love and steady mind, but those who have come for this paduka puja have not understood this truth. They have brought many eatables such as dry fruits, apples, bananas, and sweets and kept them in the Poornachandra hall thinking that I would eat them. Do they think that I am Kumbhakarna? I do not even take meals, so what are these fruits for? The boys will have to work for 15 days just to separate them, and in the meanwhile the fruits will become rotten. What I want is only your Love. Some people have brought towels and bedsheets. I do not need them, if you want you can give them in the hospital. Even that need not be done.

I do not desire anything. I want only one thing: pure, steady and selfless love. There is no selfishness from top to toe in Me. When I do not have any desires, why do you bring all these?

"Your heart is My chariot"

Chetty Garu is an ardent devotee. Yesterday, he prayed that I should ascend the chariot. I do not have any liking for these things. Your Heart is My chariot. Then where is the need for a golden chariot? Today, they brought a Simhasana (throne) too. They do not inform Me about these things till they are brought to Prasanthinilayam.

Do not bring any such things. I do not like them. I have already told you what I like: only Love. Do not bring any material objects hereafter.

I want you to acquire wisdom. That wisdom leads you to liberation. To reach this state of Liberation, offer yourself completely. Just as the essence of food you partake gets mixed in your blood and becomes one with your body,

likewise let your Love be unified with My Love. Then you will become one with Me.

In the morning during the paduka worship, Punditji spoke on the importance of unity, giving the example of bees collecting honey. The honey bee collects honey from different flowers and stores it at one place, which becomes the panacea for all diseases. Where there is Unity, there is Purity; and where there is Purity, there is Divinity. Understand the relationship between Unity, Purity and Divinity.

Pundits have been telling you these things, but you do not seem to practice at least one or two. By announcing the presence of light, would ever the darkness be dispelled? By listening to the efficacy and grandeur of medicine, will the disease be cured? To dispel darkness you should light at least a small lamp.

Let every activity be pleasing unto God

You all know that Deepavali is approaching. With one candle you can light the other lamps. That candle is Divinity, and the lamps are individuals. It is only one Divinity that protects and sustains all. Light the lamp of Love in you.

Even worldly activities will become spiritual if you have Love. You can do your office work or business, you can also take care of your family; but whatever you do, do it as an offering to God. Let every activity be pleasing unto God. That is true devotion. Wherever you go, do not offer any material objects to God. You all know that people go to Tirupathi and offer crowns and jewelry to God in the name of devotion. All these jewelry hide the pristine beauty of the idol. Wherever you go do not take jewels for God. Do you consider God poorer than you? Offering jewels to God is a narrow-minded idea.

Charity is the true ornament for the hand. Truth is the true ornament for the throat. Listening to sacred texts is the true ornament for the ears. Why do need any other ornaments? Offering all the jewelry to God is nothing but pomp and show. Devotees should not make such offerings.

You should offer only your pure love and sacrifice. The relation between a devotee and God is only heart to Heart and Love to Love. By offering jewelry, you are making God also a beggar. You should always keep in mind that God is bigger, never a beggar.

Today we find many swamijis going abroad whenever they are in need of money. It is a matter of shame; there is no spirituality at all. There is so much restlessness in our country. First they should spread the message of peace in Bharat. Charity begins at home. Yesterday I have told Srinivas to take back all that they have brought. Whatever they eat they have brought for Me. I do not eat anything. I eat your love. I hear only good words. Offer only these two to Me. Do not bring anything else. Let love be the underlying principle in whatever you do. With love and devotion even a small sadhana (spiritual exercise) will yield great results.

Many people wonder that I look so young even at the age of 73. The reason is I have three P's in Me. One is Purity, the second is Patience, and the third is Perseverance. It is because of these three that I shall remain like this for any number of years to come. So, everyone should cultivate these three.

To pray for the well-being of everyone is a noble quality

Give up all your mean and low desires and cultivate love for God. Dr. Gadia has prayed for good health and long life for Chettiar. To pray for the well-being of everyone is a noble quality. But well-being cannot be obtained by recommendations. The noble feelings of Chetty Garu have made him the recipient of God's grace. His Heart and My Heart should unify.

Last week, Allopathy, Homeopathy and Ayurvedic doctors all sent letters to Me. "Swami, we hear that there is going to be a very big function on 10th. Send Chettiar back to Madurai immediately. He may not live till 10th." I said, "As a result of his bhakti (devotion) and My shakti (power) he will certainly live." Though he is pretty aged and very weak, still he continues to come here with so much love. His devotion protects him.

Thyagaraja also has undergone many trials and tribulations. His wife died, and his elder brother has subjected him to many ordeals. His elder brother cast the idols of Sita, Rama, and Lakshmana into the Kaveri River. Thyagaraja could not bear the separation from Rama and, feeling frustrated, said, "O Rama! Why am I being subjected to these ordeals? Is it because my devotion has weakened? Or has your power declined?" He feels that his devotion has not diminished. So, Rama's power must have got weakened.

But pondering over it further, he realised how foolish he was to criticise Rama. He began to sing a song in praise of Rama's prowess. "Without Rama's power, could a monkey have crossed the ocean? Or would the Goddess of wealth have chosen to be his consort? Or would Lakshmana serve him, or the supremely intelligent Bharata revel in beholding Him and worshipping Him?" Thyagaraja ecstatically extolled the infinite prowess of Rama and blamed his own ignorance for having doubted Rama's prowess. Nothing is greater than divine power. Once you have the anugraha bala (strength of divine grace), what harm can the navagrahas (nine planets) do to you? So work for God's grace and surrender to Him completely. There lies the true Bliss.

38. Install God's Feet in your heart

Date: 12 October 1998 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Whether one is a great scholar in the Vedas and sacred texts, Or a hero who has won great victories,
Or a destitute gruelling in poverty,
Without devotion he is worthless.

A servant with devotion in his heart
is worthier of veneration than a king bereft of devotion.

Right from the beginning of creation, human life has been the rarest and most valuable of all living beings. Having taken such a noble birth, if one fails to know one's innate divinity, life becomes meaningless. When the diamond is cut repeatedly, it shines with added brilliance, and its value also increases. Similarly, in order to experience divinity within, one has to face many obstacles. So, devotees naturally face all types of trials and tribulations. But devotion should never diminish. Devotion alone bestows the supreme good; Devotion alone is the destroyer of the disease of the repeated cycles of birth and death; Devotion alone is the means of recognising divinity; Devotion alone is the means of liberation.

[Sanskrit sloka]

The Story of Manikavachagar

One may face problems, blames, and accusations of all types, but it is devotion that protects one from all these. Once upon a time, the Pandya kingdom in Tamil Nadu reigned supreme. The Pandya king was very fond of horses. Once, he sent his minister to buy horses. He gave him all the money

and manpower required to procure the horses.

The minister reached a village named Perundurai. There he came across a holy man, Balayogeeswara. He did not want to waste that pleasant evening, so he joined the congregation and listened to the discourse of the holy man with rapt attention. He forgot himself as he listened to the discourse. He developed strong faith in that holy man. He forgot even the task assigned to him by the king, spent his time listening to the discourses, and got immersed in the contemplation of God. One day, he found a Siva temple in a dilapidated condition. He used the money given to him by the king for renovating the Siva temple.

The king came to know that the minister had used all the money given to him to buy horses, to renovate the Siiva temple. The king was also a devoted man. But since the minister disobeyed his command, he sent his soldiers to bring him back. The king summoned the minister to his presence and asked him what he had done with the money given to him for procuring horses. The minister said, "O king, I used the money for God. Everything is God's gift. What God had given, I gave it back to Him. Not only that I have offered myself to Him." The king asked, whether he was justified in spending the money for a different purpose other than for which it was intended. The minister replied that he did not use the money for worldly purposes, but used it for a sacred purpose. The king became furious at the minister's audacious reply, had him arrested and put in prison.

The minister was unruffled. While in prison, he continued to recall the teachings of the holy man, Balayogeeswara, and started writing them down in the form of slokas (verses). He composed many slokas every day. He was immersed in bliss while composing hymns in praise of God and thus lost track of time.

Later, the king realised his mistake and summoned him. He was surprised to see the aura of radiance and brilliance around his face. How did he acquire such an aura? It was due to the constant contemplation of God. That minister was none other than Manikavachagar. Each sloka composed by him reflected

the essence of the Vedas and the sacred texts. This work is known as Thiruvachakam, meaning sacred reading.

Since ancient times, many such great saints took birth in Tamil Nadu. Divinity that blossomed in sacred Tamil Nadu is not noticed elsewhere. Right from daybreak people go to temples, make sacred offerings, and divinise their lives. That is why there are more temples in Tamil Nadu than anywhere else in the country.

Thiruvalluvar reforms a young man

There was another great saint by the name Thiruvalluvar. Initially, he was a weaver. He used to weave just one sari per day, sell it in the bazar, and earn money for his family. Good and bad exist together; it would be impossible to separate them. In the same village, there was the son of a rich man who was wasting his time wandering aimlessly. Where there is money, there is ego. Ego gives rise to bad qualities. Once the money is lost, all bad qualities too disappear. One day, the rich man's son came to Thiruvalluvar and asked for the price of the sari. Thiruvalluvar said it cost four rupees. The boy was known for his arrogance and mischief. He picked up the sari, tore it into two pieces and asked for the price of one piece. Thiruvalluvar replied, it cost two rupees, since he had made the Sari into two halves. The boy tore it again into another piece and asked for the price. Thiruvalluvar replied that the price was one rupee.

This brought about a transformation in the mind of the boy. He wondered how the businessman was calm and composed even after he tore the sari into pieces. The boy fell at Thiruvalluvar's feet and repented for his behaviour. The boy said that due to his pride and arrogance, he made this mistake. Then he went to his father, got the required money for the sari and kept it at the feet of Thiruvalluvar.

Not the statues but the teachings of saints are important

Many such great saints lived in Tamil Nadu who set an ideal to society.

Unfortunately, people do not follow the teachings of these saints. But their statues are installed and adored. It is not the statues of saints that are important, but their teachings. The best way to propagate their teachings is to practice them.

Just as hands, legs, ears, eyes, etc., form the limbs of the body, human being is a limb of society. Society is a limb of humanity. Humanity is a limb of Nature, and Nature is a limb of Divinity. Nature has been sustaining humanity.

Humanity is based on the twin principles of Truth and Righteousness. Without the individual, there is no society, and without society the country does not exist. So, the individual is important in society. For an individual, the limbs are very important. So, the limbs have to be used in a sacred way. 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.

Here lies the sanctity of human life. "Sareeramadhyam khalu dharma sadhanam (body is gifted to undertake righteous actions.)" Manikavachagar prayed, "O Lord, accept my heart, which You have given. The working of the heart is also Your gift. I cannot offer anything other than this. I offer whatever You have given me."

Only truth and good name are permanent

Asthiram Jeevanam Loke, Asthiram Yauvanam Dhanam, Asthiram Dara Puthradi,
Sathyam Keerthi DwayamSthiram.

Life in the world is impermanent.

So are youth and wealth.

Wife and children are also not permanent. Only truth and good name are

permanent.

So, earn a good name, always speak the truth, and follow the path of truth.

Truth is God.

The entire creation has emerged from Truth and

merges in it.

Is there any place where this non-dual Principle

of Truth does not pervade?

Kerala is the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu, where Adi Sankara was born. He said: Just as the water bubble originates in water, is sustained in it, and ultimately merges in it, the entire world has originated from Truth, is sustained by Truth, and ultimately merges in Truth.

Body should not be used for fleeting pleasures

Man is born out of amrita (immortality) but is merging in anrita (falsehood). What is the use of leading such a life? Today, man is highly intelligent and acquires all types of education. He should set an ideal to society. Man should understand that education is for sharing and serving and not for earning money. Education is meant for dharmacharana (practice of righteousness) and not for dhanarjana (acquiring wealth). "Dharmamoolam idam jagath" (This world is based on dharma).

Body should not be used for fleeting pleasures. The Bhagavad Gita declares, "Anithyam asukham lokam imam prapya bhajasva mam (having taken birth in this impermanent and sorrowful world, worship the Lord.)" Many people think that there is happiness in this world, but it is temporary. "Ma kuru dhana jana yauvana garvam, harathi nimeshath kalah sarvam (O man, do not be proud of

wealth, relations or youth. All these may be taken away in a moment by the tide of time.)" It is the feet that help us to move. It is said, "Pada darshana papa nashanam (Vision of the Lord's feet destroys all sins.)" Feet are so sacred. Feet carry the body, which is the temple of God. The Lord's Lotus Feet have to be installed in your heart. No doubt, external worship of feet is also important. As you continue to worship the Lotus Feet, they will naturally get installed in your heart.

Once Narada went to Lord Narayana and said, "Narayana, I come for Your darshan whenever I have any problem. But I do not know where exactly You reside. Where can I find You? In Kailasa, Vaikunta, or Swarga?" Narayana said, "Mad bhaktha yathra gayanthi tathra thishtami Narada (wherever My devotees sing My glory, I install Myself there.) Kailasa, Vaikunta, and Swarga are My branch offices." God is not present in foreign land, He is present in our heart. Heart does not mean physical heart. It means spiritual heart. It should be full compassion.

Man should have a strong will

Man has all comforts and conveniences. He has good intellect. Yet, he is not able to reach his destination. Man should have a strong will. For example, a small ant can travel any number of miles if it has the will to do so; whereas an eagle cannot move an inch if it does not have the will to move.

Thyagaraja said, "O Rama, you are present in all right from an ant to Brahma. You are present in Siva and Kesava. You are everywhere. There is no place where you are not there; there is no name that is not yours." But, today, man is carried away by delusions and does not realise this truth. If Brahma were to manifest in front of him, he would offer his salutations with reverence and devotion. But if the same Brahma comes in the form of an ant and bites him, he will immediately kill it.

The evil one is he who does not observe the unity of thought, word, and deed. You say God is present even in an ant; then why do you kill it? You are so weak that you are not able to bear the pain of an ant bite or a mosquito bite.

In this modern age, man is becoming weaker and weaker.

All our ancient rishis (sages) did penance for years together. They were unmindful of the movement of snakes and scorpions on their body. But modern man has developed body attachment. He is not attached to the Atma.

Today, there is no steadiness of mind in man. Some people think of their footwear when they sit for bhajans inside. Once, Ramakrishna Paramahansa was giving a discourse in a temple. Rani Rasamani, the owner of the temple, was sitting in the front row. All were listening to Ramakrishna's discourse with rapt attention.

All of a sudden, Ramakrishna got up, went to Rani Rasamani, and slapped on her cheek. Everyone was surprised. They thought Ramakrishna had become mad. Ramakrishna told the public, "O people, you may think it is a great mistake on my part to have slapped her. What for have you come? You are here to listen to my teachings. Whether you practice or not, at least you should listen to what is being said. If you do not like to listen to the discourse, you had better stay back at home. This Rani Rasamani is thinking of her legal disputes. Why should she come all the way to think of the court affairs?" She accepted her mistake and promised not to repeat it. In the modern age, many people attend spiritual discourses and get impressed by them. But they do not put them into practice.

Education should confer humility

Rama and Ravana were equally well versed in all forms of knowledge. But Valmiki described Ravana as moorkha (fool) since he did not practice what he learnt. Rama followed Truth. He put his knowledge into practice. He is therefore an ideal to be followed by everyone. Ravana merely accumulated knowledge without practising it. He could not digest all that he learnt. As a result, he suffered from 'indigestion'.

He is a fool who does not practice what he learns. One who practices is a truly educated one. Education should confer humility.

In society, there are agitations and disturbances. Students, you should join society and see that everyone follows sathya and dharma. You should become ideal citizens. That is what I desire. I do not expect anything from you. I expect only one thing: that you put into practice what you have studied and be an ideal to everyone in the society.

"Sarveloka hithe rathah (One who delights in the welfare of all people.)" You should aspire for the welfare of all. Do not hate anybody. "Sarve samudhitha gunaihi (You should have all good qualities.)" Today, man does bad deeds but is not prepared to face the consequences. If you want to earn merit, you should do good deeds. Do good, be happy, and share your happiness with others; this is your duty. With such sacred feelings, contemplate on the Lotus Feet of the Lord.

Gopikas' love for Krishna

Uddhava has described the Gopikas' (cowherd maids) devotion for Krishna in the following words. "Though their mothers-in-law were not happy with them and their husbands were against Krishna, they neither uttered a single word nor got angry." They bore it all with patience. They were never afraid of anybody. Just as a picture is imprinted on a paper, Krishna's form was imprinted in their hearts. The gopikas had no other thought than that of Krishna.

Once, the gopikas came to Krishna's house; Krishna pretended to be asleep. They tried to wake him up by catching His feet, but Krishna turned the other side and continued to snore.

Then they sang, "It is possible to wake up someone who is in deep sleep, but it is impossible to wake up someone who pretends to be asleep. Krishna, You don't sleep at all. If You sleep, the whole world will sleep. We know that in this world there is none who can understand Your mystery. You are smaller than an atom and mightier than the mightiest. You are present in all the 84 lakh species. Right from the atom to the entire cosmos. You are present everywhere. How can we know You, Krishna? Please put an end to Your

pranks and make us happy. We cannot be separate from You any longer."

Every incarnation upheld the principle of Truth

Before giving up her mortal coil, Radha was sitting on the bank of river Yamuna and feeling very sad that Krishna was not with her. She intensely prayed to Him to grant her His Divine Darshan.

She sang, "O Krishna, speak to me and fill my heart with bliss. Distill the essence of the Vedas and make it flow into the eternal music of your flute, O Krishna." When she sang like this, Krishna appeared and fulfilled her desire by playing on His flute. While listening to this Divine Melody, she breathed her last. Her Jeevan Jyothi (life principle) merged in Krishna. Krishna threw the flute away and He never touched it again.

In films, you would find Krishna with a flute, but, truly speaking, after Radha's departure, Krishna never touched the flute again. This was the promise given by Krishna. Every incarnation upheld the Principle of Truth. Anyone may forget, but God never forgets to keep up His promise.

Who is Radha? People consider her to be an ordinary woman and distort the facts. She had no attachment to her body. She had attachment to Krishna alone. This dhara (nature) itself took birth as Radha. This dhara is the adhar (basis) for the creation.

In the name Radha, R stands for Radha, A stands for Adhar, D stands for dhara (continuous), and A stands for aradhana. It means that dhara aradhana (continuous worship) is the adhar (basis) for Radha. She was in constant contemplation of Krishna. Even in her sleep, she would chant Krishna's name.

In order to please God, follow His footprints

Krishna always eluded the gopikas after playing His mischief. One day, they all lay in wait to catch Krishna. Krishna, out of compassion for them, wanted to provide a clue by which they could trace Him. Krishna went into a house

stealthily, broke a pot of milk, and dipped His feet in it. When the gopikas came to catch Him, He ran away. He just vanished in a trice.

The gopikas followed His footprints, which revealed to them His hideout. Krishna revealed to them the spiritual truth that if they clung to the feet of the Lord, they could win His grace.

In order to please God, follow His footprints. Those who take refuge at the feet of the Lord, will neither sin nor be miserable. With sincere devotion, when you take refuge at the feet of the Lord and contemplate on them, you will not have desires.

Yesterday, Dr. Gadhia in his speech said that by worshipping padukas, marriages were settled and the childless begot children. These are all worldly results. Is this to be expected from paduka worship? No. You should not worship padukas for worldly gains. You should worship them for gains in the inward path. When you can get mighty results, why are you concerned about worldly gains? Why do you go after small pebbles? Aim at the Meru (gold) Mountain itself, that is, the Lotus Feet of the Lord.

Once upon a time, Jaya and Vijaya (doorkeepers of Vaikunta) approached Lord Vishnu and asked Him, "Swami, why have you created the gold mountain?" Vishnu replied, "One who is desireless will be unmindful of its existence. But the one full of desires will never be satisfied even if a hundred such gold mountains are given to him. Who is the richest man in this world? One who has much satisfaction is the richest man. Who is the poorest man? He who has much desire is the poorest man. So, I have created this Meru Mountain in order to make people desireless." God does not have any desire. His only chintana (thought) is His devotee. Devotees should be good and develop society and should consider the welfare of the society as their own welfare. They should not get immersed in selfishness and self-interest. Their mind should be as broad as the ocean. You can never surrender completely to God if you are narrowminded. Do not give scope for worldly desires. Develop divine thoughts.

What is required is total surrender, not worship

Though there are many devotees, so why there are difficulties in this world? It is because devotion is not proper. The devotees are immersed in archana (worship), but what is required is arpitham (total surrender). Arpitham is greater than archana. When arpitham takes place, you and God become one. The fulfilment of worship of the Lotus Feet lies in the unification of the individual with the Divine.

Students, you should always have the welfare of the society and the world in view. You should not have the feeling that education is for a job. Always question yourself, "What is it that I can do for the society?" Enquire what is it that society expects from you. This should be your constant endeavour. Only then you can work for the progress of the nation.

Devotees, Embodiments of Love!

Many people from different countries have come here and celebrated their functions. For example, last year the Chinese came and celebrated their New Year. Devotees from Andhra Pradesh conducted Paduka Puja. Devotees from different States came here to celebrate their festivals. But one thing that made Me happy is that the devotees from Madurai have celebrated this function in the most systematic manner. Their discipline has been exemplary. Others should learn from their example. Subrahmaniam Chettiar is very old. Yet everyone followed his word. Each one followed the discipline on their own. The Paduka Trust, Madurai, adheres to the principle of discipline. Not only here, wherever you go observe this discipline.

The three D's: Devotion, Duty, Discipline

The three important principles of Sri Sathya Sai Organisations are Devotion, Duty, and Discipline. These three D's are to be followed sincerely. Do your duty. See that your devotion is steady, and observe discipline. When you follow these three D's you will always be happy.

Let this culture and tradition be passed on to your progeny. This culture and tradition should not end with you, it should continue. Under any circumstances, do not give up the chanting of God's name. You should have fear of sin, love for God and morality in society. Sanctify your life by leading an ideal life and experiencing the divine Atmic Principle.

39. Light the lamp of wisdom

Date: 19 October 1998 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Diwali

In this supremely sacred land of Bharat, forbearance is the highest wealth. Of all forms of rituals, the most important one is adherence to truth and integrity.

The sweetest of feelings in this country is love for mother and the motherland.

In this land, character is more important than the life itself.

Such sacred principles have been totally forgotten, and in the name of freedom

People lead a perverted life imitating western culture.

Just as the mighty elephant is not aware of its own strength, Bharatiyas are not aware of the greatness of their own culture.

Embodiments of Love!

All festivals of Bharat (India) have an inner divine significance. In Bharat, the festivals are celebrated to prove the immanent divinity in humanity. This day's festival, Deepavali, teaches a sacred inner meaning to humanity. No other element in this world is as significant as light. It is the light that shows us the way by dispelling the darkness. It is because of the light that man is able to attend to his daily duties.

The flame of a lamp has two significant qualities. One is to banish darkness; the other is a continuous upward movement. Even if a lamp is kept in a pit, the flame is directed upward. The ancients have taught that the upward movement of the flame denotes the path to wisdom and the path to divinity. However, the external light can dispel only the external darkness, but not the darkness of ignorance in man.

When Hanuman set Lanka ablaze, though there was light all around, Ravana's heart was filled with darkness. Ravana was no ordinary person; he belonged to the lineage of Brahma. He was the brother of Kubera, the god of wealth. He had a brother, Kumbhakarna, who was very powerful. He had a son by name Indrajit, who conquered the mighty Indra, the king of gods. He was a master of four Vedas and six Sastras. Such a powerful and highly educated Ravana could not get rid of the darkness of ignorance.

Dispel inner darkness

Ignorance is the cause of birth and death. One with ignorance is born again and again (punarapi jananam punarapi maranam). But one with wisdom has neither birth nor death.

God has neither birth nor death.
He is eternal; he has no beginning, no end.
He is in the form of Atma.
That is jnana jyothi (light of wisdom).

If you want to light a lamp, you need a container. You have to fill it with oil and place a wick in it. You need a matchbox to light the wick. Only when you have all four accessories can you light the lamp. This lamp dispels the external darkness.

Similarly, to dispel the darkness of ignorance, you need to have vairagya (renunciation), the container; love, the oil; one pointed concentration, the wick; and tatwajnana (spiritual wisdom), the matchbox. Only when you have all these four can you light the lamp of wisdom.

Even detachment has to be within certain limits

Renunciation is a must for every spiritual aspirant. Renunciation does not

mean leading a life of seclusion, leaving wife and children. Giving up evil qualities is the real renunciation. That is the real thyaga (sacrifice) and yoga. So, first and foremost, develop detachment.

But even detachment has to be within certain limits. Extreme detachment will lead to danger. It is impossible to live in this world giving up everything. So lead your life with equanimity.

Once, the gopikas (cowherd maids) prayed to Krishna thus: "O Krishna! Your mother is trying to catch you to chastise you for your mischievous deeds. You don't need to run hither and thither to hide yourself. There is a place that is beyond the reach of your mother, that is our Heart. Our Heart is filled with the darkness of ignorance. So enter our Heart and banish the darkness of ignorance." What is the inner significance of Deepavali? The capital of the kingdom ruled by Narakasura was known as Pragjyotishapuram. The name consists of four syllables: prag, jyothi, sha, and puram. Prag means before, jyothi means light, and sha refers to forgetting. The inner meaning of this name is that the inhabitants of this city have forgotten the ancient and eternal light (Atma Jyothi). Narakasura, the king of Pragjyotishapuram had totally forgotten the Atmic principle and was identifying himself with the body and leading a life in darkness of ignorance.

One has to develop attachment to the Self, not to the body. Attachment to the body is the main cause for all sufferings. One who travels toward ignorance is Naraka, and one who travels toward wisdom is Nara, the human. To travel along the path of wisdom one needs to develop sacred thoughts, sacred words, and sacred actions.

God has His own master plan for everything

God does not like to kill the wicked Himself. So Krishna devised a master plan to kill Narakasura. Since Narakasura was very strong both physically and mentally, Krishna decided to weaken him gradually by subjecting him to fits of anger. The modus operandi was to provoke Narakasura, and when he would come chasing in a fit of anger, Krishna would withdraw.

Anger is the main cause for man to lose his physical and mental powers. If one gets angry, one loses the energy obtained from the food partaken over a period of three months.

When Narakasura lost all his strength due to his anger, Krishna made Sathyabhama kill him. God has His own master plan for everything because He is the master of everything.

Narakasura committed many sins in his life. He imprisoned thousands of women and tortured them. They were the sixteen thousand gopikas (cowherd maids). They could neither live nor die. Such was their pitiable condition.

After Narakasura was killed, Krishna freed them from prison and asked them to return to their respective homes and lead a peaceful life. But all the gopikas fell at Krishna's feet and pleaded that it would be impossible for them to live in dignity in their homes after being prisoners of Narakasura. They said that Krishna was their only refuge and prayed that He would take care of them. Krishna agreed to take the responsibility of protecting them. Then the gopikas sang in praise of Krishna thus:

O Krishna! It is impossible to describe Your glory in words.
Even Brahma, the Creator cannot understand You.
We have been longing for your divine grace.
Listen to our prayers and protect us.
You freed Devaki-Vasudeva from prison.
You saved the honor of Draupadi and Protected the Pandavas.
You removed the poverty of Kuchela.
You turned ugly Kubja into a beautiful woman.
You freed sixteen thousand gopikas from prison. [Telugu Poem]

It is ignorance that makes one suffer. Only the external world is seen, but not the Atmic principle. The human being is like a bridge between the seen and

the unseen. That which is seen is bound to perish. It is the unchangeable and eternal wisdom that is important, not the transient world.

When Narakasura was killed, all those who suffered under him were overjoyed. Having led a life of darkness till then, both internally and externally, they celebrated the occasion by lighting lamps.

Significance of lighting lamps

There is significance in lighting lamps. The flame of one lamp can light the whole array of lamps. That one lamp symbolizes the paramjyothi (supreme effulgence). The others symbolize the jivanjyothis (lights in individual selves). Deepavali is celebrated in order to teach this truth to the world. People celebrate this festival by bursting firecrackers, signifying the victory of good over evil. The inner meaning underlying the Bharatiya (Indian) festivals should be rightly understood. On each festival day, people have a sacred bath early in the morning, wear new clothes, and keep their houses and surroundings clean. Thus, the festivals teach us the importance of internal and external cleanliness.

The Vedas declare, "Antha Bahischa Tat Sarvam Vyapya Narayana Stithaha." God is present within and around. So one has to be pure both internally and externally. It is the water that helps to keep your body clean. But it is love that keeps your heart clean. You should celebrate the festivals in full realisation of their inner significance.

Because man has no purity of heart, he has become the cause of all the restlessness in the world. What is the reason of all suffering? It is the polluted mind. Never blame the world for your suffering; blame yourself. "Yad bhavam tat bhavathi (As the feeling, so is the experience)." If your heart is pure, you will find purity everywhere. So, purity of heart is essential. Only when you have purity of heart can you attain wisdom. In the absence of purity, you will be immersed in ignorance and restlessness.

Man can accomplish anything if he puts in effort

Ignorance leads to suffering. We do not know what ignorance is. We should try to know what we do not know. That is the true sadhana (spiritual exercise). It is only through effort that man can achieve anything. Even a small ant can travel miles together if it makes an effort, but a bird cannot move even an inch if it does not make an effort.

Man can accomplish anything if he puts in effort. He is able to travel lakhs of miles into space, spending crores of rupees. But he is not making an attempt to travel at least half an inch into his heart.

Yantra, Mantra, and Tantra

Man is undertaking space travel with the help of yantra (machine). It is the mantra that is important, not the yantra. Hiranyakasipu could even reach the pole star with the help of yantra, but what is the use?

It was child Prahlada who could win the grace of God with the help of mantra. The power of Hiranyakasipu was related to yantra; whereas, the Prahlada's power was related to mantra. Yantra may fail, but not mantra.

Yantra, mantra, and tantra - all the three are latent in human beings. We are repeating the mantra Soham 21,600 times a day. Soham means "I am God." There is no better mantra than this.

The human body is the yantra. Who is responsible for making the heart beat? Who is responsible for digestion and blood circulation in the body? The eye, which is not even an inch in size, is able to see the stars, which are millions of miles away. The eardrum, which is small in size, is able to receive sounds from far off distances. Television and telephone are within the body.

Having been endowed with such a powerful yantra, the body, and the sacred mantra, Soham, it is a shame if we do not work for the redemption of our life. Hridaya is the tantra, Soham is the mantra, and body is the yantra. Though all three are within man, yet he is in search of them outside.

Man is encased in five koshas (sheaths): annamaya, pranamaya, manomaya, vijnanamaya, and anandamaya koshas. The physical body is the annamaya kosha (the sheath based on food). Subtler than this is pranamaya kosha. Still subtler is manomaya kosha. Today, man has progressed up to the level of the mind. The moment he progresses to the level of vijnanamaya kosha (wisdom sheath) he will experience anandamaya kosha (sheath of bliss). That is the non-dualistic bliss.

"Ekam Eva Adviteeyam Brahm (God is one without a second.)"

That is the Atmic principle. Just as the same current flows in different bulbs, the same Atma exists in all the beings. The culture of Bharat (India) speaks of this unity in diversity. Unfortunately, in the modern age, unity is viewed as diversity. It is this mistake that puts man to suffering.

Nations are many, but earth is one. Being are many, but breath is one Stars are many, but sky is one, Jewels are many, but gold is one.

Once you understand this basic unity, you can understand the divine principle. You should not hate anybody. Hate your own anger. Do not fight with others; fight with your bad qualities. Give up your bad qualities. How is it possible? It is possible only if you surrender yourself to God.

Once you are unified with God, there is no separation

Markandeya was the son of Mrukandu. He was to live only for sixteen years, but he was not aware of this. One day he found his parents in a very dejected mood. When he asked the reason, they revealed that his end was approaching. On hearing this he immediately rushed to the temple of Lord Siva, hugged the Siva Linga, and started chanting His name. When the Lord of death came and cast the noose, even Easwara was caught up in it because Markandeya was holding fast to the Linga. Then Easwara manifested and

burnt the Lord of death to ashes.

This means that once you are unified with God, there is no question of separation. How can this unification take place? For this you need not do any sadhana (spiritual exercises) It is enough if you have total and pure love.

All the worldly sadhanas are only to sanctify the time. Time is God. Do not waste time. Be happy. This is the sadhana you should do. Never be narrow minded. Expansion of love is life; contraction of love is death. Expansion of love is possible only if you have love for God. God can confer anything if you have love. There is nothing that He cannot give. God is always ready to give Himself.

"Ask and it shall be given. Knock and it shall be opened." But man does not ask, does not knock. He asks only demons and knocks at the doors of hell. You should call out to God whole-heartedly. You should knock the doors of liberation. The moha (attachment) has to be reduced in order to attain moksha (liberation). To reduce attachment, renunciation is very important.

In one of his songs, Bhadrachala Ramadas has compared human life to a lighted lamp and has declared that when the oil of life ebbs away none will follow the departed. Do not depend on this ephemeral world. Depend only on God. God is the basis for everything. If you totally rely on God you can achieve anything.

Since you rely on padartha (material world), you forget parartha (spiritual knowledge) and yathartha (the reality). All your material and secular knowledge are of no use in the field of spirituality. Give up materialistic thinking. Develop spiritual knowledge.

Removal of immorality is the only way to immortality

Pray to God, saying, "Tamasoma jyothir gamaya (Lead us from darkness to light.)" and "Mrithyorma amritham gamaya (Lead us from death to immortality.)" What is the way to Immortality? Removal of immorality is the

only way to Immortality. Give up all bad qualities such as lust, anger, greed, etc., and install God in your heart. Do as I say.

Some people do not listen to good words,
Though they are said whole-heartedly.
They readily pay heed to bad words.
Can such people ever know Me
What is the use of all their education?

Know thyself and you will know everything

Ravana was a master of all sixty-four types of knowledge, but he could not receive God's grace. Since he did not put his knowledge into practice, he suffered from 'indigestion'. That resulted in the sickness of sensual desires. Rama also learnt all sixty-four types of knowledge, and He put them into practice. Ravana was interested only in aggrandizement, whereas Rama was interested in practice.

Life without the knowledge of Self is useless, just like a tree without root, a tree without fruit, and a fruit without juice. If you do not know your true identity, what is the use of taking a human birth? Know thyself and you will know everything. This is the most sacred teaching of all the festivals. Think of God. Constant contemplation on the Divine will free you from all worries.

40. Serve parents, serve God

Date: 19 November 1998 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Ladies Day

This sacred land of Bharat is the birthplace of great women like Savitri, Who could bring her husband back to life; Chandramathi, who demonstrated the power of Truth by extinguishing the forest fire; Sita, who demonstrated her chastity by coming out of blazing fire unscathed; and Damayanthi, who burnt a demon to ashes by her power of chastity and pristine purity. In Bharat, there have been numerous such women, who have been proverbial for their chastity. Bharat is the teacher of such virtues to the whole world. O foolish mind, why do you go seeking Brahman when He is right within you? Look within, and there you shall find Him. Don't forget these profound words of Sai.

Embodiments of Love!

Right from the olden days, Bharat has given spiritual knowledge to the other nations, thus ensuring peace and harmony for the entire world. It is not only the kings that protect the nation, but women of great chastity are also responsible. It is because of noble men and women that the country has been able to achieve peace and prosperity. All the prosperity and the good that we find in this land of Bharat is due to the strength of women of virtue.

Rama's divinity blossomed under Kausalya's loving care;

Because of the tender feelings and austerity of Sita, Lava and Kusha achieved name and fame;

Fostered with the love of his mother Puthlibai, Gandhi became a Mahatma,

The loving care of Jijibai made Sivaji a great warrior.

Sons become illustrious examples because of the goodness and strength of their mothers. Mother is the very foundation for the entire world. One calls one's own country the motherland, not fatherland. Even the language is called mothertongue, not father tongue.

This land is the birthplace of many noble sons, who got their goodness and strength from their mothers. In those days, mothers gave their sons good guidance by being ideal themselves.

The welfare of the son depends on the mother. It is because of the love of the mother that the son becomes great and eminent. So, the foremost duty of the son is to be grateful to his mother, respect her, and serve her.

Divinity is immanent in every being. But who is responsible for this divinity within? The mother who has borne you for nine months with many difficulties and is even ready to sacrifice her life for your welfare. You owe your existence to your mother.

Purity of heart is very essential for man

Since time immemorial human being has been called Nada bindu kala swarupa. It is these three aspects that are responsible for the existence of

humanity. What is the meaning of nada? It is the primordial sound Aum, which emanates as a result of the combination of prana (vital force) and vayu (air). The combination of body, mind, and intellect is called the bindu. Divinity that reflects in buddhi (intellect) is called kala. So, man is the embodiment of nada, bindu, and kala.

The Principle of Atma transcends all these three aspects. That is why the sages, while offering prayers to God, used to say,

"Nada bindu kalatheeta namo, namo
(salutations to the One, who is beyond nada, bindu, and kala.)"

These three aspects pertain only to the nature. The potter makes pot by mixing water and clay. But that does not make him the creator. It is divinity latent in man that enables him to perform the task.

Spiritual knowledge helps us to undertake good actions and cleanses the mind. But that is not enough. The heart also should be pure. In the absence of purity of heart, there can never be purity of the mind and intellect.

We should not give scope to the creepers of bad qualities to entangle the heart. A creeper that goes around covering the tree ultimately smothers the tree itself. One should ensure that the creepers of lust, anger, greed, and infatuation do not get entangled to one's own Self.

It was lust that caused the downfall of Ravana, the one of great penance and the master of sixty-four types of knowledge. He not only ruined himself but his whole kingdom. Without purity of heart all spiritual practices are of no use. That is why Thiruthonda Alwar said, "Oh! Lord, I worship You not with flowers but with purity of heart." So, purity of heart is very essential for man.

Lack of sense control results in lack of respect

Hiranyakasipu had total control over the five elements. Such an all-powerful one was ruined because he had the evil quality of anger. In spite of being a great warrior, Duryodhana, king of kings, was ruined because of greed. His entire clan was destroyed. It was moha (infatuation) of Dasaratha toward Kaikeyi that was responsible for Rama being sent to the forest.

Kaikeyi's love for Rama exceeded her love toward her own son, Bharata, but Manthara poisoned her mind. Consequently, she lost not only her husband but also the respect of her own son. Due to this delusion, she not only earned a bad name for herself but put the entire kingdom to shame.

Today, no woman bears the name Kaikeyi, because she distanced herself from God. Similarly, no man bears the name Duryodhana, Ravana, or Hiranyakasipu because they lacked good qualities and developed hatred and enmity toward God.

Hiranyakasipu was a great scientist. Ravana was a great engineer, and it was he who invented airplane. He had mastered the language of animals, birds, and insects. He had so much to his credit. But does anyone bear the name Ravana? No.

People value purity of heart more than these achievements. It is the foremost duty of every individual to keep their senses under control. One can escape from the house on fire, but not from the senses, which are ignited by the fire of evil qualities.

Intellect is of four types:

- (1) swartha buddhi,
- (2) swartha parartha buddhi,
- (3) parartha buddhi, and

(4) niswartha buddhi.

The one with swartha buddhi is always interested in his own welfare and fulfillment of his desires. The one with swartha parartha buddhi is interested equally in his own welfare and that of others. The one with parartha buddhi does not desire anything for himself. Surrendering himself to God, he craves His love alone. He believes that God is the indweller of all beings and desires for the welfare of the entire world -

Loka samastha sukhino bhavanthu.

The one with niswartha buddhi has no sense of I and mine. The feeling of "I" (body) is ego, and the feeling of "mine" is attachment. The root cause of all sorrow and suffering of man is this feeling of "I" and "mine," by giving up which man can purify his heart. Purity of heart is the greatest achievement of human endeavor.

Divine origin of Bharat

What is the difference between nara and Narayana? Nara is one who is endowed with the three aspects: nada, bindu, and kala. Narayana is the one who transcends all these three. The former corresponds to pravritti and the latter to nivritti. Nivritti is the state of desirelessness. One who treads along the path of Nivritti surrenders himself completely to God. Such a man is one who has absolutely no trace of selfishness.

This sacred land of Bharat (India) is the birthplace of many such selfless souls. Though you call yourselves the children of Bharat, you tend to be selfish and full of desires. This is responsible for leading you away from the culture of Bharat. The culture of Bharat is pure, unsullied, and selfless. Only when the young boys and girls recognise and follow this sacred culture can this country prosper.

A nation bereft of noble men and women can never progress. The country needs virtuous men and women. That is why I have established these educational institutions. I willed that out of these institutions should emerge noble boys and girls. In a short time, all of you will realise and experience this happiness. Wait for the golden moment. Discharge your duties sincerely. Do not forget your mother. In the world today, there may be a wicked son, but never a wicked mother. You owe your blood, food, and head to your mother. What is the gratitude you are offering to the mother for the sacrifice made by her? She is the one who has fostered and nourished you. So, never forget the love of the mother. First and foremost, love your mother, father, teacher, and God. The mother shows the father; the father shows the teacher; the teacher shows God.

This day is being observed as Mothers Day, Ladies Day. From time immemorial, mother is considered synonymous with God. The Goddesses Durga, Lakshmi, and Saraswathi are worshipped as mothers. Saraswathi is the Goddess of Learning. Another name for Saraswathi is Bharati. Our country, Bharat, derived its name from Bharati.

There is a misconception that Bharat refers to the name of Bharata, the son of King Dushyantha. In that case, what was the name of this land prior to Bharat? On inquiry, you will know that this name has originated from God.

Purpose of Ladies' Day

Today, women are being looked down upon as mere workers in the kitchen. Women can study and undertake jobs, but they should not neglect their household duties. If both husband and wife go to office, who will look after the household responsibilities? If women go to schools to teach others' children, who will teach their own children? Mothers are responsible for the well-being of their children. They also show the spiritual path to their children. So, never forget your mother.

To set an ideal in this regard, I used to visit the samadhi of my parents on My birthday. To inculcate this good feeling in the hearts of people, even Sai Baba

has undertaken this sacred activity. Every individual should adore, respect, worship and love their mother. I have initiated this Ladies' day in order to foster respect and love for the mother. Not only the 19th of November, but the 19th of every month is being observed as Ladies Day in some States. Whatever may be the circumstances, good or bad, do not forget your mother.

Due to the effect of Kali Age, people consider their mothers as mere cooks in the kitchen. Not only that, they have been degraded to the level of servants. This is the misfortune that has befallen on man today.

All have to ask for alms from God

The beggar comes to the house and calls out, "Bhavathi Bhiksham Dehi (please give me alms.)" He cautions, "Oh! Master and the mistress of the house, in my previous birth I had not given alms to beggars as a result I am standing at your doorstep today begging for alms. Do not commit the same mistake. I am a beggar for three births. In my previous birth, I never doled out alms to beggars. In this birth, being myself dependent on others, I am unable to give anything in charity, and as a result I will again be a beggar in my next birth. Beware!" Whom is he asking for alms? He says, "Bhiksham Dehi." Dehi refers to the indweller (God).

This body, made of five elements, is bound to perish one day or the other. But the indweller has neither birth nor death. He has no attachment whatsoever. Truly speaking, the indweller is God Himself. So the beggar addresses the indweller, not the master or mistress of the house.

He asks for alms from God. All have to ask for alms from God. God can give us all types of alms - money, education, knowledge, intelligence, etc.

Whatever you have acquired from God has to be shared with one and all. Only when your wealth is shared with others will it remain with you forever. Sacrifice is very essential for man. It is the stepping stone to immortality. Mothers are prepared to give up their own life for the sake of their children.

Mother is the very embodiment of sacrifice. That is why in this land of Bharat (India) mother is given such an exalted place.

Lord Rama said that the mother and the motherland are greater than heaven itself. Such an ideal of Rama is forgotten today. Mere chanting of Rama's name will not suffice; it is only when you follow His command that you can be called a true devotee. The Ladies Day serves as a reminder that one should revere and love one's mother and never hurt her feelings.

Love and worship your parents

Sankaracharya posted two sentinels in his ashram, who went around repeating,

"Thasmat jagratha jagratha (Beware.)"

It so happened that one day Sankaracharya was thinking of his worldly achievements and wealth of his mutt. As he came to the doorstep, he heard the sentinels repeating, "Thasmat jagratha jagratha," which made him realise his folly. He declared,

Janma dukham jara dukham
Jaya dukham punah punah,
Antya kale maha dukham,
Thasmat jagratha, jagratha

Beware! Birth, old age, and death Are filled with misery.

In this context, the Vedas declare, "Arise and awake and stop not till the goal is reached."

Students! Boys and girls!

Always remember your mother's love. Do not hurt your mother in any way. You say Swami's love is that of thousand mothers. When you are unable to comprehend and experience the love of a single mother, how can you understand the love of thousand mothers? If you are unable to please your mother, how can you make Swami, happy? Swami will be happy when you make your mother happy. Swami does not want anything.

Many people wish Me happy birthday. You need not wish Me happy birthday since I am always happy. Give happiness to your parents, friends, and relatives.

God is the embodiment of Supreme Bliss and Wisdom;
beyond dualities; One without second;
Eternal, pure; transcends the mind and the three attributes.
[Sanskrit sloka]

How can you wish God happiness? I often tell the students, "Happiness is union with God." God is pleased only when parents are respected. I do not desire anything. My happiness lies in you being happy and you making your parents happy. Love and worship your parents. Your welfare lies in their happiness. God showers His grace on those who make their parents happy. The respect and love you receive from your children depends on the respect and love you show to your parents.

Hurting others amounts to hurting God

Have you ever visualised Viswa-virata Swaroopa (the cosmic form)? Earth, water, sky, etc., can be seen in it. The universe is made of five elements, and the same five elements are present in you. So, you are Viswa-virata Swaroopa. God is in you and in everybody. So hurting others amounts to

hurting God. Do not criticize and find fault with others. Love all, Serve all. Respect, adore, and worship your parents. They constitute the real wealth of your life. The blessings of your parents will confer health and wealth on you. God comes to you on His own when you love and serve your parents.

One can choose one's wife but not one's parents

Pundarika used to visit the temple of Lord Panduranga every day. One day, he was engrossed in serving his parents and hence could not visit the temple. So, Lord Panduranga Himself came to Pundarika. At that time Pundarika was pressing the feet of his parents. Since Pundarika was busy serving his parents, he requested Lord Panduranga to take His seat and wait. So saying, he passed a brick to the Lord, because there were no chairs and sofas in those days.

After attending to his parents, Pundarika offered his due respects to Lord Panduranga. The Lord was immensely pleased with his devotion to his parents and blessed him profusely, saying "God comes to you on His own when your behavior is good. There is no service greater than service to parents. Consider service to parents as service to the Lord." We need not go to God but should make God come to us. One can select one's wife, but not one's parents. Only God selects His parents. I wish that you obtain the blessing of your parents and set an ideal for the rest of the world: Today, I do not see parents being accorded the respect due to them. They are approached only in times of need and neglected later. There is a proverb in Telugu: the boat is set on fire once it serves its purpose of taking you across the river. Similarly, parents are sought after only in times of difficulties. Once you are highly placed in the society and accumulate wealth, parents are forgotten.

Here is a small example. V. Ramakrishna was an I.C.S. officer from Madras. His wife was Durgamba. They sent their son to America for higher studies. A month later when Durgamba contacted her son over phone and enquired after his welfare in Telugu, to which he replied that he had forgotten Telugu and could converse only in English. On hearing this, the mother was

overjoyed and came to Swami to share the news proudly. I replied that a person, who forgot his mother tongue in a month, was likely to forget his mother too.

There are many such students in the world today. They forget their parents once they go abroad.

Influence of western culture

There was an orthodox brahmin who was hesitant to send his son abroad, fearing that he might lose his culture. On the insistence of his son, he reluctantly consented to send him abroad and exhorted him to chant the Gayathri Mantra thrice a day. He warned his son that he would forsake him if he failed to do so and extracted a promise from him.

But the son failed to keep up his word. He did not chant the Gayathri Mantra even once. He was absorbed in the western culture.

On many occasions, the father asked him to return home, but the son did not pay heed to his word. The father as a last resort sent a telegram that his mother had expired. Immediately the son rushed home and was received at the airport by the father, who told him that mother was brought back to life by the infinite grace of the Goddess. Then he took his son to the temple of the Goddess enroute home to offer their obeisance and gratitude. As soon as they entered the sanctum sanctorum, the son greeted the Goddess, "Hello! How are you, good morning!" On hearing this father became furious and asked him to get out. This is how many people change their life style once they go abroad.

Our Jayamma (previous speaker) said that only Anantapur girls are great. What about our Prasanthi Nilayam boys? These boys are also good. She said that on many occasions the girls asked her to speak more and more about Swami and show them the way to please Swami. Even our boys here day in and day out are engaged in pleasing Swami and attending to His needs. Nobody is less or great; girls and boys are equally good.

Satisfaction of parents is what pleases Me

It is not that you and I say, but the parents say. The parents feel within themselves that there is a transformation in their sons after joining Swami's institution. Parents should be satisfied, that is what I want. Only then do I feel satisfied. So, boys and girls should make their parents happy.

You do not need to enquire what pleases Swami. Satisfaction of parents is what pleases Me. I do not require anything. When you make your parents happy I am also happy. I wish that you develop these qualities and set an ideal to the whole world. Do not try to satisfy Swami, make efforts to satisfy your parents.

If your parents are not convinced about your views, try to explain the rationale behind them. Speaking harshly to them will not help them understand your views. Be calm and give them a patient ear. Only then will you be able to convince them. Try to inculcate such holy feelings; only then will your study in this institute fructify.

41. Unity is our life breath

Date: 20 November 1998 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: First Overseas Convention of Chairs of Sai Centres

Punar viththam punar mithram Punar bharya punar mahi, Ethath sarvam punar labhyam Na sareeram punah punah.

Embodiments of Love! Wealth once lost can be regained by one way or the other. If a friend is lost, one can make many more through good feelings. If a wife is lost, one can marry again. If land is lost, it can be reacquired through some means. But once the body is lost. it can never be regained.

"Sareeramadyam khalu dharma sadhanam (the body is gifted to man to undertake righteous actions.)" So, it has to be sanctified by performing sacred deeds. Health is very essential in order to do so. In fact, health is the very foundation on which human life rests. If health is lost, you have to suffer in many ways. There is no greater wealth than health. The body is a combination of different limbs. So, only when all limbs are utilised for sacred purposes can one have pushti and santushti (good health and happiness). For a healthy mind, one should have a healthy body. The Atma sustains human life on the basis of health of the body and the mind. A healthy human body is the very foundation for all virtuous and good actions. It is the primary requisite for the realisation of the four objectives of human life - dharma (righteousness), artha (wealth), kama (desire), and moksha (liberation).

Excessive activity in any field is harmful to health

We have to investigate why we lose our health. Excessive thinking, worrying, and studying is the main cause for man's illness. Some students are absorbed in studies all the time, because of which they lose their health. There a limit to everything.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle conducted extensive research on the digestive system of man, and as a result of too much of thinking, his health

deteriorated, and ultimately he died of digestive problems. Constant investigations into cardiac ailments made the heart specialist Dr. Herin a heart patient and ultimately led to his death. Excessive activity in any field is harmful to health. Bear in mind the limitations of the body and act accordingly.

The main cause for your illness is psychological. This is nothing but illusion and delusion. We start imagining that a disease that is present in another person may also be present in us. 80% of the diseases are psychological. If you check your pulse rate under anxiety, you will find it abnormal.

Do not bestow undue attention on your health. Discharge your duties peacefully and happily, then everything will be all right.

We are propagating principles of human values among the students. You should be aware of the capabilities of each student. Weak students should be equipped adequately both physically and mentally before they are taught higher values. The truth that health is wealth should be imprinted in their hearts.

The word vidya has its origin in the Sanskrit root vid, meaning wisdom, effulgence, and bliss. The equivalent term for vidya in English is education. Education is derived from 'educare', meaning 'to bring out' or 'to elicit'. It refers to manifesting that which is latent in man.

Sacred qualities originate from the heart

Educare comprises two aspects; one is related to the head and the other to the heart. Those faculties that enable man to carry on activities like reading, writing, undertaking a job, and earning a livelihood are related to the head. Sacred qualities like compassion, love, patience, truth, righteousness, and justice originate from the heart. These are meant for life, not for a living. The former relates to pravritti, which is external and negative in nature; the latter to nivritti, which is internal and positive in nature.

Compassion, love, truth, and patience cannot be acquired through the study of books. They are latent in our hearts. Education manifests these latent qualities in man.

All that emanates from the head is transient. Good health is ensured by the proper utilisation of head and heart. There are many unseen qualities in man. But man values only that which he sees, hears, and experiences; no importance is given to that which is unseen. That which is unseen is actually responsible for experiencing the fruits of one's action.

All human qualities spring from the heart only; they cannot be obtained from teachers or texts. Today, we are human only in form, lacking human qualities. We should bring out our latent human qualities and start practising them. This will foster good health in us. Teachers should practice before they preach. Be good, do good, see good, and tell good. Practice speaks louder than precept. Modern students are highly intelligent. They observe the actions and behaviour of their teachers. They respect and follow their teacher only when they see harmony in their thoughts, words, and deeds.

Earlier, teachers were called acharyas, meaning those who practice what they preach. Today, the term acharya has lost its significance since the teachers teach not from practical experience but from bookish knowledge. That is why the desired results are not realised.

Art should come from the heart

Everything in God's creation follows certain rules and regulations. The rising and setting of the sun is regulated by the divine command. But man today is not following the dictates of God, though he is endowed with supreme intelligence. Today man is acquiring knowledge, which is information-oriented and not transformation-oriented. This information-oriented knowledge makes man a machine, a computer, whereas transformation-oriented knowledge makes man a composer. The transformation-oriented knowledge confers human values.

Today, everyone is crazy after computers. What is the benefit accruing from it? The human brain is being underutilised. Today, people depend on calculators for simple arithmetic. One should make use of the original computer, the brain, which was gifted by God. We are giving up the original for the artificial. Art is outside; heart is inside. People follow the art, not the heart. Art should come from the heart.

A lot needs to be modified in the present educational system. Today, I do not find men taking an active part in the bal vikas movement. The number of certificates awarded to the lady teachers today bear ample testimony to this fact. The bal vikas movement has gained momentum because of the active participation of ladies. Men should take a cue from the ladies and play an active role in bal vikas.

Some men excuse themselves from bal vikas activities in the name of office work and other responsibilities. But they have time for watching television, playing cards, reading newspapers, and attending clubs. Can they not utilise this time in bal vikas as the ladies do? The country will prosper on the day when men cultivate the qualities of sincerity and devotion inherent in ladies.

Women teachers treat children with motherly love

Take Prashanthi Nilayam as an example. There is a Primary School, a Higher Secondary School, and an Institute here. There is an ocean of difference in the quality of Primary School students on the one hand and those of the Higher Secondary School and Institute on the other. The reason is that all teachers in the Primary School are ladies, who treat the children with motherly love and affection. On the contrary, men teach like fathers with all authority and power.

Education should be imparted with all love and concern for the children, which unfortunately is lacking in men of today. A lady teacher, if she comes to know that her student is sick, will visit him at home to enquire about his well-being. This type of love and concern for the children should develop more and more among men.

Men in positions should discharge their duties commensurate with the salaries received. Women have been setting an example in this regard. There is a telephone factory in Bangalore in which only women workers are employed. In reply to the question why only women are employed in the factory, the Chairman clarified that their output was much higher than that of men. Ladies are more determined, dedicated, and devoted to their work as compared to men. Here is another example. Today you find both men and women driving cars. But more accidents occur when men are behind the wheel. This is due to the lack of concentration in men.

The determination shown by a Mahila volunteer

In countries like Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, Germany, etc., women are practising human values more than men. They are following Swami's command under all circumstances.

Here is a small example. It is not for any glorification that I am relating this. Last week, the mother of a Mahila volunteer expired suddenly. She spent that night in the hospital and reported for duty as usual the next morning. I asked her how she could attend to her duty immediately after the demise of her mother. She replied, "Swami, You have said that both birth and death are, but, natural. Both are like twin birds that move together. Anyone who is born is bound to die. Whatever had to happen has happened. But I must discharge my duty. This is duty towards God. Everything else is ephemeral and transient, only God's work is permanent. So, I have come here to do that work." She is a resident here in the mandir and has been serving for long. Since then she has not taken a single day's leave. The untimely death of her mother did not deter her from discharging her duties sincerely. She withstood all this by diverting her mind to God. Women have that sort of determination.

She is none other than Asha, seated beside Mrs. Shourie. Her husband, Shiv Pandit, is a lecturer in the Institute.

There are crores and crores of such sincere workers in this world. They are striving not for name and fame but for Swami's grace. This shows that they

have received Swami's teachings in their proper spirit. Even if a man practices one or two of these teachings, he can achieve a lot. Lord Krishna declared in the Bhagavad Gita, "There is nothing in this world that I want. Yet, I am constantly engaged in activity for the welfare of humanity." When God Himself is engaged in selfless activity, why not man? Success prevails where God and His ardent devotee come together. So, we should determine to follow the path shown by God.

Only sacrifice confers immortality

Wealth and property are passing clouds. "Money comes and goes, but morality comes and grows." Nothing is great in earning money. What happened to all the great kings of yore, who ruled over vast kingdoms? Could they take even a pie with them when they left this world? No! So, utilise the money earned for the welfare of humanity. Do not be proud of your wealth.

Greatness lies in sacrifice alone. One who sacrifices is a true yogi. One who is immersed in worldly pleasures is a rogi (diseased one). It is only sacrifice that confers immortality.

Serve in your respective villages. Service does not mean sweeping the roads, cleaning the temple, and feeding the poor. Discharging one's duty sincerely is true service. Work in accordance with the salary you draw. That is service to the nation. Ensure that the government is not put to loss under any circumstances. We are compelling the government to borrow, because we are not contributing our share in sufficient measure. All those who are members of the Sai Organisation should work hard and wholeheartedly.

Embodiments of Love! Develop love, take care of your health, and serve the society. Then God will confer on you the necessary strength and happiness. When God can make the dumb speak and the lame ascend the mountain, why will He forsake those who are sincere and hardworking? Develop faith in God. Mere chanting of the divine name will not confer peace of mind. Only selfless service coupled with total faith in God can do that.

Differences should not divide us

Treat everyone as your brother and sister. There may be difference of opinion at times but that should not lead to hatred and enmity.

The Pandavas are an outstanding example of this. When the Pandavas were in exile, Krishna visited them. On finding only Dharmaraja, Krishna enquired about the whereabouts of the other brothers. Dharmaraja replied that four of them had gone to fetch food and the remaining hundred were in Hastinapur. Krishna chided Dharmaraja for considering the Kauravas also as his brothers.

To this, Dharmaraja replied, "Krishna, don't you know this? When there is an internal conflict among ourselves we are five and they are a hundred in number. But when there is an external threat, we all unite and are 105 in number." Differences should not divide us. Members of the Sai Organisation should foster such unity. Let there not be any conflicts. Live like children of the same family. Get a good name, so that there is no other organisation comparable to the Sai Organisation in the world. Develop love and work unitedly.

Only when five fingers of the hand come together can any task be accomplished. One may be the President of the Organisation. That does not mean that one can act according to one's whims and fancies. I am aware of the fact that there are no such people in Sai Organisation. Yet, I am cautioning you.

Once there was a quarrel amongst the five fingers of the hand. Each one claimed that it was the greatest and the most important one. The little finger felt that it was the chief of all, since it always took the lead in punishing the wicked. The ring finger claimed that it was the king of all because it bore the precious gems. The middle finger felt that it was the one of authority because it had two fingers on either side as bodyguards. The forefinger claimed that it was the ultimate authority because it evaluated who was good and who was bad. And in the end, the thumb said that it was the greatest because other fingers were ineffective in its absence. Each finger is unique in its own way,

but it is only when all are united that success can be achieved.

Everyone is a member of the universal family

Similarly, all are great, be it the president, secretary, coordinator, or a member. But, to make the work successful, all should unite. All the wings of the Organisation - samithi, seva dal, bal vikas, etc. - should work in harmony. Consider different wings as the fingers of the same hand and work unitedly. So, unity is very essential. You feel the stress and strain when you walk or work alone; not so when you are in a group.

Let us all grow together, enjoy together,
Let us perform heroic deeds by working together, Let us live without any conflict.

The Vedas echo the same sentiments in the following verse:

Saha navavathu, saha nau bhunakthu, Saha veeryam karavavahai,

Tejaswi navadheethamasthu,

Ma vidvisavahai.

This togetherness made India a land of sacrifice, a land of spirituality and a land of purity.

Just as each limb is as important as any other in the body, so also is each individual in the society. All limbs have to work in unison for the effective functioning of the body. Unity is most essential for man. Unity leads to purity, which in turn leads to divinity. Cultivate the feeling of brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God. People may come from varied cultures, languages and

countries, but all are the children of God.

Since you make distinctions based on country, culture and language, you are unable to comprehend divinity. Everyone is a member of the universal family. Teachers must understand this truth and teach their students.

Lack of unity can lead a country, community, or society to fragmentation. So, we should first and foremost achieve unity. Members of Sai Organisations should consider unity as their very life breath. They should not differentiate between people on the basis of caste, creed and nationality. Follow the example of Sai! When Sai Himself treats everyone equally, why not you? Never give scope for any differences. True independence lies in fostering unity. Therefore, to develop sacred divine human values, you should have unity first.

Keep in view the prestige and honour of Sathya Sai Organisations. Whatever you do, be it good or bad, will reflect on Sathya Sai. To keep up the dignity of Sathya Sai, act in a truthful way. There should not be any differences or insights among the members of the Organisation. Resolve all conflicts through love and understanding. Love is God; live in love.

Duty is God; work is worship

Understand this point clearly. People engaged in various activities take at least a day off in a week. Why? For effective functioning of man and machine, rest is essential at regular intervals. It is good to take rest. Does Sai take any day off? No! Every day, every minute, every moment, I discharge my duties. Discharging one's duty is true yoga. So, do your duty. Duty is God; work is worship.

When elders set an ideal, children will follow their footsteps. Elders should lead from the front. All elders should resolve to practice and propagate the human values. Chairmen, secretaries, and coordinators should plunge into action. Only then will there be transformation; otherwise, the whole life will be spent in giving and receiving information.

Information relates to quantity; whereas, transformation relates to quality. Quality is essential, not quantity. Leaders should introspect and find out what transformation is effected in the individuals rather than keeping track of the number of certificates they have been awarded.

There is a lot of work going on abroad. Students consider human values as their very life breath. Though reluctant in the beginning, parents are sending their children to the bal vikas classes after observing a remarkable change in them. Human values will spread on the basis of interest evinced by the teachers. Everyone should work with sincerity, honesty, devotion, and discipline.

Embodiments of Love! In order to realise the goals you have set for yourself, work unitedly. Dr. Goldstein and Dr. Jum Sai spoke very lovingly. They want many more bal vikas centres to be started and new institutions founded right from primary school to college level. Very good. Peace will reign supreme only when such noble things take place in this world.

Seva is for the benefit of one's own self

If you all stand united, these things can be achieved in a moment. I am always in you, with you, around you, above you, and below you. I am not confined to Prashanthi Nilayam and India alone. I am there wherever you are. Your heart is my temple.

There will be no scarcity whatsoever. You will never fail in your endeavours. Work with total faith. Have total love. You are bound to achieve success. The whole world itself will be transformed into a Sathya Sai Organisation and Sathya Sai will be installed in the hearts of one and all. Realise that seva (selfless service) is for the benefit of one's own self and not for others. You need not wait for My approval of your projects. I bless all your projects and plans.

Embodiments of Love! Just as all of you joined together in perfect harmony and unison in following My bhajan, have the same principle of unity in

undertaking service activities. You should take part not only in community singing but also in community work. Only then you will be blissful. I wish that you have this kind of harmony, integration, and unity in singing bhajans and rendering service to society and derive the joy therefrom.

42. Fuse spirituality with education

Date: 22 November 1998 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Convocation - 17

Bharat has men who are capable of educating
Even the ancient sages about the essence of scriptures;
Men who sacrificed their lives for the uplift of society;
Men who have immense administrative capabilities.
Bharat has many such eminent personalities.
Alas! Of what use are such men in Bharat
If they have no awareness of the wail of the oppressed?
When will they respond to the heart-rending cries of the poor?

Students! Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached. The need of the hour is men who set an ideal by their valor and courage in the battle of life, and not men who pursue physical, ephemeral, fleeting pleasures.

Students! Investigate the concept of ideal education propagated by the ancient sages. They enthroned righteousness and welcomed truth. They enshrined valor and courage. You should emulate such people, who strove for the glow of Indian culture. In fact you are the true inheritors of the legacy of Indian culture. You should resolve to uphold dharma and work for the welfare of the country.

Absence of human values leads to decline in spirituality

Science and technology has improved by leaps and bounds over the past 200 years, yet no sanctity has been attached to it. This has stimulated development in human civilization, but not within man. The absence of human values will lead to a decline in spirituality. Develop the strong faith that the body has been gifted to uphold human values.

Since ancient times, Bharatiyas (Indians) stood for peace, forbearance, and forgiveness. A study of the history of Bharat will reveal the fact that many invaded Bharat and plundered its wealth, but never has Bharat invaded any foreign land on its own. Bharatiyas have considered divinity and purity as their two eyes. In such a sacred land, justice and righteousness have been consigned to flames, resulting in trials and tribulations, turmoil and unrest on a large scale.

Education does not mean mere bookish knowledge. Acquired knowledge should be put into practice and shared with the rest of the community. Does the ability to read and write make one educated? Does securing college degrees make one educated? If education is for a living, are not birds and beasts living? There are millions of educated men and women all over the world, but what is the benefit accruing to their respective nations? None. They are utilizing their education for selfishness and self-interest alone.

Embodiments of Love! Boys and girls! Eschew selfishness and self-interest and resolve to serve society.

The eternal and long lasting values have disappeared into thin air.
Good nature in men and women is on the decline. Ancient Aryan wisdom is
frittered away
Western education is on the rise.

[Telugu poem]

Bharatiya education makes one ideal and self-reliant. It inculcates the sense of sacrifice in man. Having called yourselves children of Bharat, you should keep in mind the welfare of Bharat Matha. Modern education enhances the intelligence, but not broadmindedness. It makes the students stonehearted. True education is one that instills compassion in you. Patriotism coupled with sacrifice; devotion coupled with love should become a part and parcel of your life. Education confers humility. Humility confers deservedness;

deservedness secures for you wealth as well as divinity and devotion to God.

In this sacred land of Bharat,
Forbearance is our best wealth;
Of all forms of rituals, the highest is
The observance of truth and morality;
Of sweetness of disposition,
The greatest is maternal love.
Jettisoning the national ideal
That honor is greater than life itself,
What a pity people have fallen
a prey to exotic practices
What can I say about the plight of Bharat! Like the elephant unaware of its
strength, Alas! Bharatiyas have become docile today.

Since ancient times, Bharat has stood as an ideal for the rest of the world. Unfortunately, we witness a different scenario today. We find educational institutions proliferating in every street, in every village. What is the gain therefrom? Absolutely nil.

Humility, the hallmark of a true student, is not noticed. Harm is done to those that help,
A sense of gratitude is lacking.
Teachers are made a laughing stock.

This is the progress of modern education.

To realize the purpose of education, serve society. Cleanse the country of all evils. True education is that which makes one a complete man. Only when

one gets transformed into a complete human being is the purpose of education fulfilled.

Education is meant to broaden the mind

Students! Resolve to make the best use of the education that you have received. Respect and revere elders and set an ideal to humanity. Let your conduct befit the degrees you have acquired. Nothing great in obtaining good marks, see that you do not invite bad remarks. In the modern system of education, a student is declared pass if he secures just 35% of marks. What about the balance 65%? If a person completes only 35 out of 100 tasks assigned to him, can you call him a successful one? One should secure 100% marks. That is true education.

Attaining high marks is not the aim of education. Education is meant to broaden the mind. Education and discrimination should go hand in hand. The prosperity of the nation depends on the progress you make in the field of education.

The future of the nation rests on the students.

Moral and ethical values are confined only to books. Heart has become a dwelling place for evil qualities. Actions have become completely self-centred.

This is the progress of modern education.

Education acquired should be translated into action. When you put your knowledge into practice, only then do you become an ideal person.

Students! As I have told you repeatedly, knowledge can be classified into five categories: bookish knowledge, superficial knowledge, general knowledge, discrimination knowledge, and practical knowledge. General knowledge and common sense are very much essential.

You should set an ideal by exercising practical knowledge and following the four Fs. The first F is Follow the Master. Who is your master? Conscience is your master. So, follow your conscience. The second F is Face the devil. The third F is Fight to the end. The fourth F is Finish the game. Play the game of life in the true spirit of sportsmanship.

Students lack self-confidence. Confidence in the Self is very essential. Lack of confidence in Self will lead to depression. Today, 90% of the people are afflicted with depression. Depression will lead to weakness of mind. "Na ayamatma balahinena labhyah (a weak-minded one cannot realise the Atma.)" If you have confidence in the Self, you will never be weak-minded.

Render service to others till your last breath

Bharat has stocked plenty of wealth for you. What is this wealth? It is the spirit of sacrifice, which can be acquired through service to society. Do not waste time. "Karmanubandeeni manushyaloke (human society is bound by action.)" "Sareeramadyam khalu dharma sadhanam (body is gifted in order to undertake righteous actions, not to eat, drink, and make merry.)" Render service to others till your last breath.

The essence of 18 Puranas can be summed up in one phrase: "Paropakarah punyaya papaya arapeedanam." Help ever; hurt never. Set an ideal that is helpful and delightful to one and all.

Education is for life and not for a living

Students! "Janthoonam narajanma durlabham (human birth is the rarest of all.)" Human life should be one of character, good actions, and good qualities. It should be dedicated to the service of society, not for amassing wealth. Education is for life and not for a living. One need not strive for money. If education is properly utilised, money will come on its own. Today, educational institutions have become business centers.

Money has become our God;
Pride has become our creed;
Selfishness sits supreme in the minds of men; Egotism has become our fashion;
Greed has become our beauty;
Dharma has come to naught;
Compassion has sunk low;
Morality forever is lost;
Hypocrisy has become the light of our life;
Love and kindness lie sick and diseased; Modern education has blinded men with lust; Life has become a burden;
Minds have gone astray;
Delay no more, for delay is disastrous;
Fuse morality with education in sweet harmony; Live up to the reputation as children of Bharat.

Moral values should be the underlying current in each and every action of man. Only when you have moral and ethical values can you deserve to be called children of Bharat.

Embodiments of Love! Loka samastha sukhino bhavanthu (Let the whole world be happy) has been the motto of Bharat since ancient times. Resolve to revive and rejuvenate the pristine glory of Bharat. Propagate these noble ideals in every village, every street, and every house. Observe unity in every activity of yours. Believe in the dictum, "Brotherhood of man and Fatherhood of God".

Do not feel jealous of anyone. Jealousy is an incurable disease. Praise and censure are inevitable for man. Only the tree that bears fruit is stoned. Likewise, only the good face problems. Do not attach importance to these trials and tribulations.

A Tree welcomes stoning because it is aware of the fact that people have recognised its value. Similarly, man should not feel dejected when he is censured. Treat dualities like pain and pleasure with equal-mindedness. Develop this broadmindedness. Divinity blossoms in those with such a sacred attitude.

All are the embodiments of God. Krishna declared, "Mamaivamso jivaloke jivabhuta Sanathanah (All are sparks of My divinity.)" Do not consider yourselves as mere mortals. Have firm faith that you are divine. Only then will you be able to work for the emancipation of this country, and it will be restored to the status of teacher to the rest of the world.

Education is the very form of God

The Vice Chancellor quoted from the Taittiriya Upanishad, "Matrudevo bhava, Pitrudevo bhava, Acharyadevo bhava, Atithidevo bhava (revere your mother, father, preceptor, and guest as God.)" This was the teaching given to the students at the time of leaving the portals of Gurukul in ancient times. This act of benediction is termed Convocation today.

Education is the very form of God. The word "education" originated from the root word "educare", meaning "to bring out" or "to elicit". Educare has two aspects: that which relates to the head and that which relates to the heart. That which emerges from the head is pravritti (external); that from the heart is nivritti (internal). Unless the head is empty (free from evil) it cannot be stuffed with good. Modern education relates to the head, but true education relates to the heart. Sacred qualities like compassion, truth, forbearance, and love originate from the heart.

Here is a small example. Physical features like height, weight, and complexion can be seen by the naked eye, whereas there are innumerable qualities like compassion, truth, and love that are unseen. Merely acquainting oneself with the physical features of an individual does not make one aware of one's true personality.

Essence of Bharatiya vidya

Hiranyakasipu's scientific achievements far exceeded those of the modern scientists. He could even reach the Pole star, whereas the modern scientists have traveled only up to moon. Prahlada cautioned his father Hiranyakasipu, "Oh! Father, you have conquered all the worlds but not your senses. The same sentiment was expressed by the Prime Minister of England, Churchill, "Man has conquered all, but he has not conquered himself." On being questioned by a westerner as to why he was in a pensive mood, Gandhi replied that he was ruminating over the modern educational system, which was making him stoneheaded.

Education should fill one's heart with love and compassion. Two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen add up to make water. Greatness lies in sharing water equally, not in making it. Everyone has an equal right to water. Today, everyone is fighting for rights, but what about responsibility?

Students! You do not need to fight for rights. Discharge your responsibilities, and rights will follow. Do your duty. Duty is God; work is worship.

What is your right? To make everybody happy is your right. Serve everybody and make everyone happy without expecting anything in return. Service is God. The best way to love God is to love all and serve all. Speak softly and sweetly. You cannot always oblige, but you can speak always obligingly. That is the essence of Bharatiya vidya.

Education does not mean, "Twinkle, twinkle little star, how I wonder what you are." All this is artificial education. True Bharatiya vidya is one, that fosters spirituality and human values.

Our institute is based on sacrifice

Students! Propagate the ideals of true education in the four corners of the world. Sacrifice everything for the sake of truth, and tread along this sacred path. Truth is God; Love is God; Live in Love; Live in Truth. Imbibe these

principles. Once you are along the path of love and truth, you will gain all wealth and wisdom. Be steady, do not waver.

Students of our institutions live up to these ideals and bring a good name to the institute. There is no institution comparable to our institution in this country. Business has taken over education right from K.G. to P.G. in other institutions. But our institute is based on sacrifice. Foster this sacred quality of sacrifice. Offer education to your fellow beings free of cost.

The Vedas declare, "Na karmana, na prajaya, danena tyagenaike amrutatwa manasuh (Immortality can be attained only through sacrifice and not through wealth, progeny, or action.)" Be prepared to sacrifice, True yoga lies in sacrifice.

First and foremost, make your parents happy. Make everybody happy and be an ideal. The Vedas declare,

Sahanavavathu, sahana bhunakthu, Sahaveeryam Karavavahai

Tejaswi navadheethamasthu

Ma Vidhvisavahai.

May the Lord protect and nourish us!

May we grow in intelligence and valour working together! May we live in friendship without any conflict!

I wish that you practice and propagate these sacred ideals. Blessing you, I bring this discourse to a close.

43. Fill your heart with noble feelings

Date: 23 November 1998 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Birthday - 73

This Motherland of ours gave to the world Noble souls renowned in all the continents. It is the land that ousted the

Foreign rulers and achieved freedom.

Born in the land of Bharat,
noted for its fine arts and natural beauty,
Oh devotees! It is your bounden duty to foster The glory and prosperity of
the Motherland.

[Telugu poem]

Divinity is more resplendent than the sun, Purer than the purest snow,
Subtler than the sky and space,
And is immanent in all living beings.
Divinity pervades the microcosm and the macrocosm. God is unattached,
though He is present in all.
You are in Brahman and Brahman is in you.
In fact you and Brahman are one.
What else is to be conveyed?

This Bharat is reputed for its scholarship. It is the sacred land that stood forth
As the exemplar in the realms of music, literature and sacred lore;
Embodiments of Love! Bharat is the birthplace of spirituality, righteousness,
charity, nonviolence, and peace. Adherence to these qualities as observed in
Bharat is not found elsewhere. It is the birthplace of saptha rishis (seven
sages) and the first poet, Valmiki. This is the sacred land ruled by the very

embodiment of dharma, Rama. This is the land where the Song Celestial, the Gita, was sung by Krishna. It is the land where the oneness of the individual soul and the Cosmic Soul was proclaimed.

There is no other land like Bharat, the land of sacredness, righteousness and peace. Truth permeates the atmosphere of Bharat. Compassion pervades the dust of Bharat. Love fills the Ganges of Bharat. Forbearance dwells in the heart of man in this land. Such noble, divine, unique qualities are manifest in Bharat alone.

Divine magnetic power

God is all-powerful and all pervasive. "Sarvam khalvidam Brahma (Verily all is Brahman.)" An enquiry into science and spirituality will reveal that both affirm the same Truth. The existence of God is visualised by science in the form of electric, magnetic, laser, radio, heat, and light waves, which are allpervasive. This is the direct evidence for the existence of God. Divinity is present in the food you eat, the water you drink, and the air you breathe. There is no place in this world devoid of magnetism. What is a magnet? It is not merely the one that attracts iron filings; everything in this world is suffused with magnetism. Mother is a magnet for the child and vice-versa, similarly husband and wife are attracted to each other. Grass is the magnet for the cow. Flower is the magnet for the honeybee. When we investigate on these lines, it is evident that everything is governed by the principle of magnetism.

Vedanta declared, "Ramayathi ithi Ramah (that which attracts is the Principle of Rama.)" The magnetic power acts as the link between that which is apparent and that which is nonapparent. The philosophers term it divine magnetic power, whereas the scientists term it bio-cosmic or super power. Therefore, scientists as well as Vedantins experience the same divine power in varied names and forms.

Experiencing omnipresent divinity

In this fleeting world, there are many mysterious powers unknown to man.

These are referred to as transcendental and hidden powers; not all can understand them. Every creature is endowed with divine power. That is why I always address you as Divyatma Swarupulara (Embodiments of divine Atma).

Doctors are unable to comprehend the secrets and mysteries of the human body. Take for example, the tongue. There are 40,000 taste buds in the tongue. There are 25,000 buds that generate heat in the tongue. The eye, which is hardly an inch in size, can cognise 13 crore types of light rays. There are millions and millions of cells in your body, and each cell is divine and contains your complete form. Is it not awe-inspiring? Whose creation is this? This is the transcendental power of Divinity.

It is foolish to consider Divinity to be non-existent. Those who are not able to understand this transcendental power deny the very existence of God. Do not pretend to know what you do not know in reality. No one has any right to deny the existence of God. "Munde munde mathir bhinnah (Thoughts vary from head to head.)" Each has their own faith.

"No" is the reply for those that say "no". "Yes" is the reply for those who say "yes". "No" and "yes" pertain to you.
But for Sai, it is always "yes, yes, yes".

People tend to deny the existence of all that is formless. The fact that radio waves are invisible does not mean that they are non-existent. The program that is being broadcast in the Delhi Radio station can be heard anywhere if the radio is tuned to that frequency.

The human body can be compared to a radio. It has to be tuned to the formless God in order to experience Him. The human body is a computer, which has so many hidden secrets. The mind is like a television set. Many names and forms are displayed in it. Body is a generator. The sum and

substance of all this is that all powers are latent in man.

Einstein showed that matter could be converted into energy and energy into matter. Energy is all encompassing. Newton said that energy could be neither created nor destroyed. However, energy could be converted from one form to another. Philosophers explained this in varied ways.

God has neither birth nor death. He has neither beginning nor end. He is present everywhere.
He is the eternal witness.

Modern scientists are not able to comprehend this truth. What they have known and understood is just a fraction of totality. What is awareness? It is total understanding. Total understanding denotes knowing and experiencing the omnipresence of Divinity.

Minister Sri Vajpayee, who spoke earlier, has made mention of the efforts being made by the people to attain moksha (liberation). What is the meaning of moksha? moha kshayam is moksham (Absolute detachment is liberation). What does this mean?

Air mixes with air, fire mixes with fire, water mixes with water easily; similarly, God is the very form of Light. Become Light yourself. You will become one with the cosmic light. God is formless. In order to merge in the formless God, you have to give up identification with the body. Concentrate on the principle of Atma. When you are always attached to body, how can you realise the Atma, the Cosmic Principle? Concentrate on the Atma. Only then will your conscience merge with the cosmic consciousness. This unification is called Sayujya (mergence with the Divine).

Only ONE is the hero, and that is Divinity

"Ekatma Sarvabhoothantaratma (The same Atma dwells in all beings.)" There is only One, but it has been attributed by different names and forms. Only One exists. Zero gains value when one precedes it. World, life, sun, moon, sky, and everything else is zero. Only ONE is the hero, and that is Divinity. Man, who is inherently Divine, becomes zero if he forgets God.

Embodiments of Love! God is not separate from you. You are God. Enquire and understand this truth. If the whole life is spent in research and experiments, when are you going to practice? Individuals may differ in names, forms, and attitudes, but the Atma remains unchanged. Water is referred to by different names in different languages. It is called neeru in Telugu, pani in Hindi, thanni in Tamil, and vari in Sanskrit. Names vary, but water remains unchanged. Similarly, God has different names and forms, but the Atmic principle remains the same. This Atma is common in one and all, and it is termed conscience, which originated from consciousness. Be it theist, atheist, theist-atheist, or atheisttheist, all have to admit this fact. Be it a bhogi (one of worldly pleasures), rogi (one of disease), yogi (one with equalmindedness), viragi (one of detachment), or anuragi (one of attachment), the atmic principle is the same in all.

The body can be compared to a color balloon. Balloons differ in size and color, but the air within them is one and the same. The same air is present inside as well as outside the balloon. The air within the balloon can be compared to conscience, and the all-pervasive air to consciousness. When more and more air is blown into the balloon, ultimately the balloon bursts and the air within (conscience) merges with the air outside (consciousness).

Similarly, expand your love so that the balloon of your body attachment bursts and the conscience within merges with the consciousness outside. The difference between conscience and consciousness is only in quantity, not in quality.

Attraction of love is Divinity

The power of attraction is divinity. A small example: Thousands have gathered here today. Who invited you? Has anybody sent invitations to you? No invitations have been sent. Then how have you come here? Your love for Swami is the main cause. Nobody has brought you here by force. You all know this.

People are brought in lorries for political meetings. In spite of repeatedly requesting you not to come, you still come here. Attraction of love is Divinity. This is the divine magnet.

Here is a similar illustration from the Ramayana. Janaka resolved to give his daughter Sita in marriage to one who could lift the Siva Danush (bow) as done by his daughter. Since Sita was Bhujatha (daughter of Mother Earth), she had the magnetic power inherent in her, which enabled her to lift the Siva Danush effortlessly. It was only the divine magnet Rama who could lift the bow and string it.

This divine magnet is present in one and all; the difference lies only in intensity. This intensity can be developed only through love. Cultivate the sense of unity that I and you are one, Experience the bliss of unity. God is in you. You are God. When you recognise this truth, there will be no scope for doubts of any kind.

The mistake lies in your vision, not in creation

Praise and censure are reflections of the inner being. A virtuous one never criticises others. It is only the mean who indulge in such unsacred activities. The color you see depends on the color of the glass you wear. Wear the glasses of love, and you will see love all around. The mistake lies in your vision, not in creation.

Do not attach importance to criticism. If someone criticises you loudly ,it goes into the thin air. If he accuses you within, it goes to himself. Is he criticising your body? The body is inert. Is he criticising the Atma? The same Atma dwells in both. It amounts to criticising one's own self. One who realizes this

fact is the true seeker of truth.

Man does not recognise hundreds of faults present within him. But he tends to point out the most insignificant fault in others. The bad in you is reflected as the bad in others. Correct yourself in the first instance. Only then will your mind become pure. So, develop sacred thoughts.

Man has many powers in him. Here is a small example. When I went to East Africa, Dr. Patel, a great devotee, gifted to Me a hairbrush made of iron. When I comb My hair, it automatically gets attracted to the hairbrush. Even boys have witnessed this. Today I am making it public so that you will understand the existence of divine magnetic power in Me. It is this power that has attracted all of you here. My love is my greatest property.

Love is My form, Truth is My breath, Bliss is My food.

My life is my message, Expansion is my life. No reason for love, No season for love, No birth, no death.

The divine power has neither birth nor death. I do not feel elated when praised or depressed when blamed. I treat these dualities of life with equanimity. I am happy both in pleasure and pain. There is only love in Me. My love lives by giving, giving and giving. It never receives. This is the difference between My love and the worldly love, which believes in receiving alone. That is why My love is ever expanding.

A small seed becomes a gigantic tree with many branches and fruits. All of them have their origin in the seed. Likewise out of love has emerged the creation. Love is God, live in love. Develop love. Love everyone wholeheartedly. Only when love is manifested will you attain self-realization.

In the first instance, develop self-confidence. Selfconfidence is the foundation. Self-satisfaction is the wall. Selvesacrifice is the roof. Self-realisation is the mansion(of life). Everything is contained in the Self. Self means Atma, the Spirit. With this Atmic Principle, acquire the spiritual knowledge.

The power in spirituality is limitless. The Power of Love far exceeds the power of the atom bomb. It transforms even those who hate. Develop such sacred love. Only then will there be harmony among Bharatiyas (Indians). Chavan, who spoke earlier, has mentioned that violence is rampant everywhere. The wicked thoughts in men are responsible for this. Once man develops love, there will be no hatred in the community. That is why I tell the students repeatedly, Start the day with love, Fill the day with love, End the day with love, This is the way to God.

Same divine power assumes different names and forms

God is the primordial cause for Creation, Organization, and Destruction. The same divine power assumes different names and forms. For example, we have only one Chief Minister for Andhra Pradesh. Every department is governed by a minister, who is under the direct supervision of the Chief Minister.

Similarly, the whole world rests upon three basic activities: Creation, Organization and Destruction. The creation aspect is governed by Brahma, organization by Vishnu and destruction by Siva. This division of powers is essential for the smooth functioning of the world.

The collective aspect of the three is God. The word GOD comprises three letters: G O D. G stands for Generation, O stands for Organization, and D stands for Destruction. These three aspects of Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwara constitute God.

None can deny the existence of God. If someone argues that there is no God, tell him that he has no right to question your conviction. God may not exist for those who deny His existence, but He exists for those who have faith in Him.

One may say "God is nowhere." Take the letter "w" away from the word "where" and join it to "no," which will make it, "God is now here." All this is word building.

Understand the Divine Principle

Man is wasting his life with narrow-minded feelings. He is concerned only about himself and his family. This is contraction of love. Consider the whole world as one family. That is expansion of love.

Different countries are like different rooms in the mansion of the world. Consider all those that live in these rooms as your brothers and sisters. When you develop such relationship with your fellow human beings, you will not hate anybody.

Embodiments of Love! Try to understand the principle of Divinity. In this world, there is none else other than God. Some may say that the world consists of matter and energy. Truly speaking, there is only energy, no matter. Whatever matter you see will be transformed into energy after some time.

This is a cloth; it is made of threads. Threads are made from cotton. So, cotton, thread and cloth are one and the same. Similarly, name and form vary, but there is only one fundamental principle, and that is Divinity. Today, there are many to criticise those that do good, but very few involve themselves in good actions.

Students! Boys and girls! You are the emancipators of Bharat and the world. You are the leaders and the pleaders of the future. Develop the quality of leadership. "Loka samastha sukhino bhavanthu (Let the whole world be happy.)" Vajpayee said, "Sarva bhootha hithe ratah (aspire for the welfare of all living beings.)" Everybody should be healthy and happy. That is My true birthday.

Many people have wished Me "Happy birthday". Convey that wish for those who are not happy. Where is the need to wish for Me when I am always happy?

Prahlada said that a father rejoices only when the son earns a good name in society, not on the day of his birth. Who is "Manava"? Manava is the very embodiment of God. M a means ignorance, na means without, and va means to conduct oneself. So 'Manava' means the one who conducts himself devoid of ignorance. You are Awareness embodied. Act according to the name you bear. It is not enough if you bear the name of Thyagaraja or Rama, you should live up to their ideals.

There are divine powers in the food that we consume. Every student must have a balanced diet. Orange juice, tomato juice, lime juice, and apple juice are very good for health. Leafy vegetables contain vitamins as well as iron and hence are of high nutritive value. The body should be healthy. With a healthy body, you can undertake any task.

My Birthday message

You do not need to search for God anywhere. God is immanent in every inch and every hair of your body. That is why, when Sita offered her pearl necklace as a token of appreciation, Hanuman bit the pearls of the necklace and threw them away because they did not resonate with the name of Rama. On being questioned by Sita as to why he had acted in such a foolish manner, Hanuman replied: "You go by the value of the pearls, whereas I listen to the holy sound of the Lord's name. Any jewel bereft of the name of Rama is as good as a stone for me. Every hair of my body is suffused with the name of Rama." Therefore, divinity pervades every cell, every hair of Bharatiyas (Indians). It is for this reason that many foreigners like Max Mueller desired to be born and die in this sacred land.

Having been born in this sacred land of yoga and tyaga, it will be a pity if you do not adhere to these sacred values. Lead the life of a true Bharatiya. Set an ideal for others and make everyone happy. This is My birthday message.

This is the birthday of this body. Truly speaking I have no birthday. Since all of you have assembled here, I am celebrating this day as birthday. This birthday is not important to Me. The day when all of you are happy is My true birthday.

I desire nothing. I will be happy when you imbibe prema, thyaga, and yoga and experience divinity therefrom. I wish that you all live an ideal life in peace and security. On this auspicious day fill your hearts with noble feelings and chant the name of God.

44. Love God wholeheartedly

Date: 24 November 1998 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Valedictory of First Overseas Convention of Chairs of Sai Centres

Manam Hithva Priyo Bhavathi,
Krodham Hithva Na Sochathi,
Kamam Hithva Arthavan Bhavathi,
Lobham Hithva Sukhi Bhavathi.

As long as a person is egotistic, no one will love him including his wife and children, though they may pretend to do so. As long as there is anger in an individual, grief is inevitable. Satisfaction eludes one who is full of desires. One with greed can never be happy. Ego, anger, desire and greed are the root cause of restlessness in the world.

Embodiments of Love!

Man feels that happiness and peace of mind result from spiritual practices, but in reality it is not so. Mind is the source of happiness and sorrow. So, conquer the mind. Conquering the mind will lead you to the state of equanimity, wherein you treat the dualities alike. Vedanta has declared,

"Manayeva manushyanam karanam bandhamokshayoh
(mind is the cause of both bondage and liberation.)"

Once you control your mind, you will grow beyond the dualities of sadness and happiness.

Happiness is derived from pain and suffering

Welcome sorrow, just as you welcome happiness. In fact the happiness that you derive out of pleasure is negligible compared to the happiness that results from difficulties. History is replete with examples of people who stand testimony to this fact. All noble and ideal people had to undergo ordeals before they experienced happiness. Na sukthath labbyathe sukham (happiness is not derived from happiness). It is derived from pain and suffering, but man wants only happiness, not difficulties. This is quite contradictory to the principles of spirituality. People should understand this truth.

Punyasya phalamichchanthi Punyam nechchanthi manavah
Na papaphalamichchanthi Papam kurvanthu yathnathahaha.
Man desires to have fruits of meritorious deeds but does not perform any.
He does not want the fruits of sinful actions, yet he indulges in them.

Whatever you want to achieve, you can do so by proceeding along the right path. Do not go on the wrong path if you are not prepared to face the consequences of it. All spiritual practices today are going in the wrong direction.

There are nine paths of devotion for man to experience divinity and to achieve self-realisation. They are: sravanam (listening), keerthanam (singing), vishnu smaranam (remembrance), pada sevanam (serving the Lotus Feet), vandanam (salutation), archanam (worship), dasyam (servitude), sneham (friendship), and atma nivedanam (surrender). Love is the lifebreath of all these forms of devotion. It is the inner current passing through all these nine paths of devotion. It is their cardinal principle.

How can one attain the Principle of Brahma ? Brahma means the all-pervasive cosmic principle. According to the Puranas, Brahma originated from the navel of Vishnu . Who is Vishnu? He is the one who is all-pervasive. Vishnu and Brahma are synonymous with the Atma.

Atma is derived from the root word Ahas , meaning 'day time'. Ahas dispels darkness of ignorance.

Therefore, the cosmic form is described as the Effulgent One.

This Brahma is not limited to a specific name and form. It is also referred to as Brihat , meaning all-pervasive. One has to follow the truth to attain the Effulgent One.

"Yath drisyam thannasyam (all that is seen is bound to perish.)"

Asthiram Jeevanam Loke,
Asthiram Yauvanam Dhanam,
Asthiram Dara Puthradi,
Sathyam Keerthi Dwayam Sthiram.

Only truth and good name are permanent
Life in the world is impermanent. So are youth and wealth.
Wife and children are also not permanent.
Only truth and good name are permanent and remain forever.
That is why Brahma is referred to as Sathyam (Truth).

Jnanam (wisdom) emerged from Sathyam . Sathyam and jnanam are all-pervasive. That is why the Vedas have declared,

Sathyam Jnanam Anantham Brahma.
God is Truth, Wisdom and Eternity.

The embodiment of Truth can be experienced only by following the path of Truth. Truth transcends time - past, present, and future. Why does God incarnate? To enable man to understand and experience his latent divinity, and unity in diversity. The essence of spirituality lies in visualising unity in diversity. This is the goal of human life.

The Atma is the same in all irrespective of their name, country, and life style. This Atma is referred to as conscience, which permeates the body from top to toe. The goal of spirituality is to realise oneness of the Atma in all.

Man, on account of attachment to body, is oblivious of his innate divinity and visualises diversity in unity. This is due to ignorance. God incarnates in order to teach the underlying unity in diversity. Krishna declared,

"Mamatma Sarvabhoothantharatma (I am the indweller in all beings)."

Chinmaya is within mrimmaya

Body can be compared to a mirror. This mirror (body) is made of clay. This body, mrimmaya (made of clay) has to be transformed into chinmaya (one of awareness). No spiritual practices are required to do so. Realise the truth: chinmaya is within mrimmaya.

But you are not making any effort to realise the true nature of yours. Ash covers the neglected embers. The embers can be seen only when the ash is blown away. Similarly, the Atma, which is inherent in man, can be seen only when the ash of ego, anger, desire, and body attachment is blown away by chanting the name of the Lord.

Body attachment gives rise to ego in man. Success eludes one who is

egotistic. Egolessness is true humanness. There is no trace of ego in man at the time of birth, but it develops as he grows up. Feelings of I and mine are responsible for man's bondage. Man will enjoy bliss only when he gets rid of ego and attachment. Bliss cannot be achieved through any other spiritual practice. Spiritual practices confer only temporary mental satisfaction. Only awareness of the Atma is true and eternal. We should develop this awareness more and more.

The final goal of life is to attain the Atma

As pointed out by Bozzani (previous speaker), each individual should question himself, "who am I?" On the contrary, each one asks "who are you?" which is information-oriented. No gain accrues from acquiring this information. What is required today is transformation, which can be effected by questioning oneself "who am I?" Once you know the answer to this and reach the state of transformation, you need no further spiritual practices. This is possible only when you control your mind. Sage Patanjali has enunciated the same: "Yoga chitta vritti nirodha (controlling thoughts and aberrations of the mind is true yoga)." Yoga does not mean physical exercise. Yoga means "to unite with the Atma. There is no greater happiness than being one with the Atma. But today, no one is making any effort to attain the Atma, the final goal of life.

The senses are above the body, the mind is above the senses, the intellect is above the mind, and the Atma is above the intellect. Man does not travel even up to the level of the intellect. He travels only up to the level of the mind. Since man is unable to control his mind and senses, he is subjected to confusion and depression. As a result, he forgets the Principle of the Atma.

Body, which is made up of the five elements, is transient and may perish at any point of time. Attachment to body brings in attachment to money, which leads to multifarious attachments. Today, people value education and money more than anything else. Money and education by themselves are not bad. Good or bad lies in their utilisation.

Water by itself is colourless, but it assumes the colour of the container in

which it is poured. Similar is the case with money and education; their value depends on the nature of the person who has acquired them. Good and bad are the reflections of our mind, they do not exist in the persons around. Defect lies in vision, not in creation. So, purify your vision and sanctify your heart. Only then you can experience unity in diversity.

Serious clarification for doubts

I have received letters from delegates to this conference seeking clarification of their doubts. What is the root cause of doubt? It is the absence of total faith. Jesus had a disciple, Thomas, who doubted everything he came across and was appropriately called "doubting Thomas". In the path of spirituality, doubts do arise at times, even though one may have faith in God. One of the doubts is this: Did Jesus really declare that He was the Truth, the Path, and that none was superior to Him?

Enquire into the truth yourself. Jesus was never egotistic at any point of time and never made any such declarations. There was a tax collector who recorded the conversation between Jesus and the fishermen. It was during one of those conversations that Jesus assured them that He would take care of them, but at no point of time did he mention with a sense of ego that He was the only One and the ultimate One to protect them. He did this only with a view to increase their confidence and enthuse them into action.

At the time of divine birth, three wise men visited Jesus in the manger. One of them, looking at child Jesus, remarked; He looks as though he was a "Messenger of God". The second wise man exclaimed that the child looked as though he was the "Son of God". The third wise man disagreed with both and concluded that He and God were one and the same. These three statements have been interpreted in varied ways. Jesus had no trace of ego in Him. He was filled with compassion at the sight of the meek and the afflicted. Paul opposed Jesus in all matters from the very outset. Once Jesus appeared in the dream of Paul and questioned him, "What harm have I done to you? Why do you criticise Me so?" This caused Paul to ponder and realise that his ignorance and ego blinded him to reality. Thereafter he became an ardent disciple of

Jesus.

In every age, every noble soul had to put up with criticism. People always have mistaken notions about good and bad. If only we understand the truth in the Bible, we will come to the conclusion that there was no fault in Jesus at all. Jesus always aspired to put people in God consciousness.

At the time of crucifixion, Jesus prayed: "O Father! What sin have I committed? Why am I put to suffering thus?" When Mother Mary stood crying at the foot of the Cross, an ethereal voice was heard. "All are one, My dear Son; be alike to everyone."

Do not give room for any constriction of thought

In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna declared, "Chaturvarnyam mayasrishtam (All the people of four varnas were created by Me)." What is varna? Varna means colour, but it has been misunderstood to be caste. Therefore, do not make any distinction based on colour. The four colours are: black, yellow, white, and red. The Africans and the Bharatiyas (Indians) are black in complexion. The Japanese and the British are white in complexion, while the Chinese are yellow and the Russians are red.

What God has declared is broad in nature and not narrow. Do not give room for any constriction of thoughts. You may be a Christian, a Muslim, a Hindu, or a Zoroastrian, but you must consider yourself to be a child of God.

Jesus said that He was "persona", meaning that He was the spark of the Divine. This Roman word has been translated by the British as "Person". "Persona" originated from the Roman language. "Persona" means that which is sacred. Since man has divinity inherent in him, he is called a person.

In Hindu scriptures, e.g., the Puranas, the Vedas, the Sastras, and the Ithihasa, this has been declared as Purusha. Yallabdhwa Puman Ichcharamo Bhavathi Trupto Bhavathi Mattho Bhavathi Atma Ramo Bhavathi (After attaining That, man gets total satisfaction, fulfilment, ecstasy and bliss). It

means God is in everyone. We should visualise this unity in diversity and try to experience it. Consider this as the chief goal of Sathya Sai Organisations.

You should not give rise to differences or hatred of any sort. There is only One that is present in all. If you realise this Truth, that in itself would be spirituality in practice. Practice is more important than publicity.

Experience the divinity in various names and forms

There are two mikes in front of Me. There is one mike in front of the translator. The words that emanate from the mikes may differ, but the underlying sound principle is the same. Similarly, we must experience the divinity in various names and forms.

Words that emerge from the heart constitute expansion talk. Some people speak only from lips in order to suit the situation. Such words constitute contraction talk. Such contraction talk is equivalent to death. People who indulge in such contraction talk have no connection between their speech and heart. When all that which is in the heart finds expression in speech, that is termed as expansion talk.

Those who speak from the heart speak the truth; others, whose speech does not come from the heart, speak untruth to suit the occasion. Your words should emanate from the heart. This is possible only when there is complete confidence in the Self. One with total conviction does not give room for doubts. The enquiry into the fact whether that which is applicable to others is applicable to individual self also constitutes a search for Truth (Sathyanveshana). One may ask why there should be a search for Truth, when Truth is all-pervasive.

In each human there is the dual aspect of truth untruth; righteousness unrighteousness; and nonviolence violence. There is an example to illustrate this. Suppose you have pure 24 carat gold with you. After some time, you add copper to it. Later you add silver to it, and then aluminium and brass. As and when new metals are added to the gold, its true nature undergoes a change

and it loses its value.

Today man is undergoing such a change. When he is a child, he is pure. As he associates himself with others, he acquires violence and nonviolence, righteousness and unrighteousness, truth and untruth. This is the root cause for the cycle of birth and death.

When you are one with the Self, there is no scope for birth and death. Body attachment, educational and monetary attachment reduce the Self to the present state of man. Man thus forgets his true nature. Man has to be cleansed by the process of samskara (refinement) to get rid of all the bad qualities and regain his resplendent pristine purity.

Man has been acquiring evil qualities such as jealousy, hatred, and ego. Due to such a tendency, man destroys his very human nature. Do not let it be debased by evil tendencies. We have to foster our faith firmly. Only pure gold should be mixed with pure gold and truth should be mixed with truth. Similarly, one should join good company and run away from the bad company, which is harmful.

Tyaja Durjana Samsargam,
Bhaja Sadbu Samagamam,
Kuru Punyamahorathram,
Smara Nithyam Anithyatham.

Run away from bad company;
Join the good;
Do meritorious deeds day and night;
and Ponder over what is permanent and what is transient.

Quality should be preferred to quantity

Some may appear very pious through their words and deeds, but if you observe their behaviour, it is demonic in reality. Do not have faith in such people, and do not lose your purity. Impure gold of this nature is increasing. You must become pure gold. Even a small quantity of pure gold is better than a mound of debased gold. Quality should be preferred over quantity. Half an acre of fertile land is better than ten acres of barren land, so that you can grow crops on it.

Man today is proceeding on the wrong path. You need not follow anybody. You should follow your conscience, which is your master.

Follow the Master, Face the devil, Fight to the end, Finish the game.

Your duty is to follow the four F's. Since you respect and follow the words of those who have disharmony in their thought, word, and deed, you tend to forget your Swami, your true Self. This situation is of your own making. Follow your conscience.

I never force anybody to do anything. What is the reason? The reason is that one has to follow the dictates of one's source, conscience. Force connotes external imposition. Source relates to the Atma, which is verily love. So, cultivate love. This is the answer to the first question about Jesus. Jesus said, all are the embodiments of truth and purity, all are children of God. His teachings were based on such broad-minded feelings. He emphasised the need for refraining from hurting others.

Dream are reflections of the subconscious mind

The second question raised is this: Swami appears in the dreams of many persons. Why Swami doesn't appear in my dreams?

It is naive to think in such a manner. You cannot have such dreams as and

when you would like to. You think of many people, but do they all appear in your dreams? No. It is a mistake to think that Swami does not have compassion on you just because He does not appear in your dreams. Dreams are nothing but reflections of the subconscious mind. Swami appearing in dreams is very auspicious.

Now I will explain the different types of dreams. Sometimes you experience nightmares, and at times you experience dreams that fill you with happiness. All these dreams occur because they are accumulated in your subconscious mind. It is good that they find expression in dreams. Dreams are the reflection, reaction, and resound of that which is within you.

The same does not apply to the dreams in which Swami appears. Swami appears in dreams only when He wills it and not when you want.

The Mohammedan musician who performed yesterday had not seen Me on any prior occasion. I asked him, "Son, do you remember that when you met with a car accident in America I appeared before you at that very instant?" Hearing this revelation, he exclaimed, "O my God!" and shed tears of joy. The same night, I appeared in his dream and told him that he would be coming to Puttaparthi for the ensuing Birthday celebrations. It happened accordingly; he came here yesterday.

There are certain confusing dreams in which your feelings play an active role. You may be seeing Swami but at the same time your feelings get mixed up and cause confusion. You may see yourself in Puttaparthi at one point of time and in America in the very next, so on and so forth. These dreams are not willed by Swami. These result from indigestion and improper food. Dreams that are willed by Me are very clear and give no room for confusion or doubt. I come to you and convey what I want to in the most direct manner.

Swami's grace is very much there on one and all whether He appears in their dreams or not.

Work with the conviction that you and God are one

The third question: Everyone is undertaking spiritual practices, but I am unable to do so for lack of time. Due to my preoccupation with my business and profession, I am unable to think of Swami and participate in service activities.

It is a big mistake to think on these lines. There is no need for a specific time and place to think of Swami. Discharge your duties sincerely with the conviction that everything is Swami's work. "Work is worship, duty is God." You do not need to sit and chant "Sai Ram" repeatedly. Sarva karma Bhagavad preethyartham (do all acts with the feeling that they are for pleasing God.) That is the greatest sadhana (spiritual exercise). Suppose on a Sunday, you sat for meditation. But could you concentrate even for a minute? So, instead of wasting your time in meditation devoid of concentration, it is better to attend to your household work. Karmanubandheeni manushyaloke (human society is bound by karma (action).) What is karma and what is its inner significance? Karma does not mean sweeping the roads and serving the sick. Vibration is karma. Even your breathing process, batting your eyelids, eating, sleeping, reading can be termed karma. Life without karma is impossible even for a moment. Life will be sanctified only when you do all karma (actions) to please God.

Do not make any distinction between God and yourself, His work and your work. Work with the conviction that you and God are one. Then even a small work will assume magnificence.

Greatness lies in small things. No doubt, sweeping the roads and visiting hospitals are good deeds but they in themselves do not constitute service. Discharging one's duty properly is true sadhana. In the name of sadhana or spiritual practices, if you neglect your office work and if your work is not commensurate with the salary you draw, then it would amount to cheating the government. True service lies in discharging one's duty properly. Hence, service can be done even in office. Any work undertaken without discriminating it to be a personal work or God's work would become service. Suppose you work in office for eight hours and you need six hours for sleep.

Then what do you do in the rest of the time? Never give an excuse of lack of time.

Set aside sufficient time for spiritual practices

There is a small story. A devotee wanted to know his life span so that he could set aside sufficient time for spiritual practices. He prayed to God to let him know his life span. God replied that he was given 80 years. The devotee felt happy, but he continued, "Out of 80 years allocated to me, 20-25 years will be spent in studying and playing. The next 25 years are required for family and household activities. The next 25 years are needed for planning my future and for the well-being of my children. So, I am left with practically no time for spiritual practices. Therefore, O Lord! Grant me 20 more years so that I may think of You and attain You." God laughed and said, "O mad man! Do you need 20 years to attain Me? Even two seconds are enough. How long does it take to put on the switch to get light? Not even a second! Granted that you need 20 years to think of Me wholeheartedly, what is the guarantee that you will not use it for other activities?" It is nothing but laziness. Slow and steady wins the race. Even a second spent in contemplation of Me with a steady mind is enough to draw you to Me. Do not waste time; Time is God, time waste is life waste. Proper utilisation of time is true spiritual practice. Consider time as the very form of God and your life will be sanctified. Some people lament saying that they do not have enough time to contemplate on the Lord. Whoever has raised this point is lazy by nature. Once you give up laziness, you can easily tread the path of sacredness. Laziness is rust and dust; realisation is best and rest.

God is everywhere

The fourth question raised is: Being in a foreign land, we are unable to do Swami's work. So, we want to come and stay in Bharath to serve Swami wholeheartedly.

This is another sign of laziness. To do a service activity can there be a distinction between a foreign land and Motherland? God is everywhere.

Whether the service is done abroad or in Bharat, it does not lose its significance. It is utterly selfish to come to Prashanthi Nilayam to do service activity. You may come after retirement for service at Prashanthi Nilayam. But now you have your own duties to your children, for their education and career. If you were to come here without fulfilling the same, you would begin to develop frustration after some time. Don't come now. It is better that you stay in your place and serve.

Swami does not expect any service from anyone. Many of my boys are here, but I attend to My own work. They all aspire to do service to Me. Only a few noble souls have the opportunity to serve Me. Others, for this reason, should not get disheartened. Attend to your own duty. That is service in itself.

I am 73 years. My legs, hands, eyes are in perfect condition. I attend to My own work. So, serve those who are incapacitated and weak. This can be your service to Swami.

You may wonder that Swami may suffer from leg pain as He moves around much. Let Me tell you, I have never suffered, nor will I ever suffer. Only when I take upon Myself the suffering of others do I appear to be suffering; otherwise this body does not have any suffering. I call Dr. Alreja to check the blood pressure. He always replies, "Swami! Normal, perfect normal! 120/80." Not even that, it is 117/78, which is absolutely correct blood pressure. Then I ask him to check My pulse. Normal pulse rate is 70. But not so with Me. My pulse is always 68 - perfect normal. I may move about or speak for a long time, but My blood pressure does not increase.

Three qualities keep My body perfect. They are: Purity, Patience, and Perseverance. None of you ever need to serve Me. You may perform your own duties and look after the welfare of your family.

Do your spiritual practices with a steady mind

The fifth question: How are we to clear the debts of the consequences of our actions?

In order to be free from the consequences of your karmas, you have to use the medicine of Love. There is nothing greater than Love. **Love God wholeheartedly. All the effects of your action will be nullified. All your diseases will be cured. If it does not happen so, you should not think otherwise. But, if you pray wholeheartedly, it would come to pass.**

Some people sit for prayer in the puja room chanting "Sai Ram." Suddenly their mind wanders toward the washerman, and they enquire if he has brought the clothes. If you are really chanting the Lord's name wholeheartedly, why should the mind go to the washerman?

Some others sit in meditation but are easily distracted by the smell from the kitchen. If this is the nature of your spiritual pursuit, how can it be termed as a prayer to the Lord? All your spiritual practices are done with a wavering mind. Do them with a steady mind. You are bound to reap the fruits.

You may undertake any type of spiritual pursuit, but love wholeheartedly. Love can eradicate any type of disease and act as a panacea for all afflictions. You must, in the first instance, develop love. This can be possible if you believe that God is the embodiment of Love. How can you develop love when you do not believe that God is the embodiment of Love?

Love is the perfect medicine. If you were to put a plant in a tin and water it, the plant would die in due course of time; but if you were to plant the same in the soil and water it, the plant would grow into a fine tree. Similarly, God's name and form should be implanted in the soil of your heart and nurtured with water of love. This will ensure good results. If one cultivates love, one need not undertake any other spiritual pursuits.

Undercurrent of divinity is the same in one and all

The sixth question is very strange. In our puja room, we have photographs of Rama, Krishna, Shiva, and Jesus. We also keep Swami's photograph amidst them. Is it right or wrong?" Once you are convinced that

all forms are of one God, why should you fear to keep any particular photograph? You may worship Rama, Eswara, Jesus, Allah, Zoroastra, or Sai! Develop the feeling that all are one.

I often give a small example. In Bharat, there are various types of sweets, viz., godum halwa, badam kheer, gulab jamoon, jilebi, laddu, mysore pak. Though their names and forms are different, the sugar in all of them is the same. You may worship Rama, Eswara, Vishnu, Allah, Jesus, or Sai. But, you should realise that the undercurrent of divinity is the same in one and all. Then the difference of name and form will not affect you in any manner.

If you do not like other gods, you can remove their photographs and replace them with those that you like. If you do not like Sai Baba's or Rama's photograph, you may remove the same. But this will not serve any purpose. What is essential is recognising unity in divinity.

Story for recognising unity in divinity

Here is a small story. A student was to appear in an examination. He was weak in mathematics. Since the exam was the next day, he worshipped Swami and went for the exam. He failed in mathematics. With the result he removed Swami's photo in the altar and placed it in a cupboard.

The second day, he had Mathematics Paper Part II. That day he worshipped Rama's photograph. He fared even worse.

The third day, he was to go for the accounts examination. Thinking that Mother Goddess would be more benevolent compared to other gods, he brought Devi's photograph and did puja. That day, he could not even understand the questions in the examination. He came back and put this photograph also in the cupboard.

Fourth day was Accounts Paper, Part II. Realising that Vinayaka is the remover of all obstacles, he brought incense sticks and coconut and garlanded the idol. When he lit the incense sticks, the smoke began to waft toward the

cupboard in which the discarded photos were placed. Then he thought, "I brought incense sticks for Vinayaka; why should I let the benefit of the fragrance be experienced by these gods - Rama, Sai Baba, and Devi, who have betrayed me?" He went into the house and brought a piece of cloth to tie the nose of Sai Baba, Rama and Devi. Having assured himself that the fragrance would not reach them, he sat down for prayer.

At that very moment, Sai Baba, Rama, and Devi appeared. He was amazed and questioned the deities: How is it that you did not appear when I worshipped you and now that I have punished you, you have appeared before me?

Sai Baba replied, "Son, till this day you had limited Me to a picture. Today you have got the feeling that this photo is a living entity, so you tied a cloth around the nose to prevent the fragrance from reaching Me. The photographs will not help you. Picture will remain a picture. You may worship picture as God, but not God as a picture. Today, you have begun to believe the picture as God Himself and tied the cloth. So, I have appeared before you."

Worship of God as a picture

Nowadays, we worship God as a picture. It is only when we take picture as God in form that our desires will be fulfilled. It does not matter what form you worship or what name you chant. Realise that all names and forms are His. Nothing is wrong with any name. All are the forms of the same Godhead. You may even worship your own parents.

Mathru Devo Bhava, Pithru Devo Bhava, Acharya Devo Bhava, Atithi Devo Bhava. In such a case, how can you have doubt about various forms of God? At no point of time, you should entertain doubts regarding God. God is God. Never comment or criticise the names or forms of God. Have any photograph and chant any name. God is one; Truth is one. "Ekam Sath Viprah Bahudha Vadanti (Truth is one, but scholars refer to it by many names)." Do not go about changing photographs. Have the photograph of your choice and worship.

Do unto others what you do unto yourself

The seventh question:

In the worldly path, which spiritual practice will satisfy Swami? I am ready to do the sadhana that pleases Swami.

There is only one answer to that. I do not advocate any specific sadhana. Consider all people to be the forms of Divinity. Have faith that God is in all. That pleases Me the most.

Refrain from doing that which causes grief to others even if it were to give you happiness. Do unto others as you would like to be done by. "Help ever; Hurt never." Help everybody. Do not harm or hurt anyone. Do not develop ill feelings toward anybody. Even if people were to hurt you or curse you, do not refrain from loving them. This is the main point of Swami's teachings. That is what Swami expects of you.

There are people, who do not worship Swami. Some worship and some others criticise. I remain unaffected by both. I do not take note of any of these. I continue to love all. Each one has to bear the consequences of their actions.

If you do good deeds, you would reap good results, and bad results if you have done bad deeds. Realise this in the first instance and act accordingly. I do not hate anybody. I do not doubt anyone. I love even those who do not believe in Me. That is My nature. Some tend to doubt My power because I repose faith in them, though they themselves do not have faith in Me. That is a mistaken notion. My Love is the same for all. I desire that all be blissful.

Even if you were to hate Me, I shall love you

Water is colourless, but it assumes the colour of the bottle in which it is poured. Good or bad are within you and not in Me, and they shall never be in Me.

I am always for the maxim, "Loka samastha sukhino bhavanthu (May the whole world be happy)." Even If you were to hate Me, I shall love you. That is My nature. That is the divine quality. You may worship Me today and censure Me tomorrow, and vice-versa. When drunk, one talks in a certain manner, while when sober, in another. When you are deeply drunk with worldly desires, the mind oscillates from one side to another. But one who is filled with wholesome and unsullied love remains the same under all circumstances.

You may forget Me, but I will never forget you. I am always with you, in you, around you, and above you. People who are in divine proximity are extremely fortunate. It is a culmination of the merit acquired in various births. It has not come in this birth. Therefore, do not waste your energy brooding over what pleases Swami and what displeases Him. Do not entertain such doubts. I am pleased with whatever you undertake with purity of heart I desire only the purity of your heart.

With pure love in your heart, you may undertake any type of service. Have total faith in Swami's words, implicitly obey His commands.

I do not misguide anyone at any time. Whatever I say is for your own good. Whatever I tell, whatever I do is good for you; not for Me. I do not have any work of My own. Everything is done for your sake. On no account should you entertain the thought that I do not have love for you. Fortunate people get a chance to undertake sacred deeds in close proximity to the Divine. But those who do not get such an opportunity should not entertain any jealousy that others have received what they have not. The most incurable disease of all is jealousy. Cancer may have a remedy, but not jealousy. Cancer may be canceled, but jealousy has no remedy whatsoever. Jealousy would frustrate and depress one to such an extent that one would perish in the process.

Teach good virtues to children

Members of Sai Organisation should develop broadmindedness without giving room for jealousy, hatred, and ego. Consider all as brothers and sisters and

immerse yourselves in bliss by doing service.

Embodiments of Love!

Today, you have resolved to bring change in the education system. Education is very essential. It can neither be stolen by thieves nor burnt by fire nor diminished by sharing with others. Education always grows. Share this eternal wisdom with one and all. Practise all that you have learnt. Teach good virtues to the children, "Son! Do not study for money. Affluence, friendship, and physical strength are of major importance in a worldly sense. But money is here today and gone tomorrow. Money comes and goes. A friend may turn into a foe in a day. You are strong today, but you may become weak tomorrow. However, your virtues will never desert you. Develop that permanent character which does not desert you. Develop sacred virtues." Enter society with noble virtues. Help everyone. Do you know why the hands are given? Is it for eating? It is for helping others! Charity is the ornament for hand. Do you know why the throat is given? Not to sing cinema songs! Not to criticise or blame others, but to chant the name of God. That in itself is the beautiful necklace. Wear that necklace and sanctify your throat. Do you know why intelligence is given? Is it for becoming egotistic? It is to ponder over the means of contemplating on Divinity and reaching and experiencing the same. One must engage each limb and all senses in sacred activities.

Be good, do good, and set an ideal

Delegates from 180 countries have assembled here. All occupy exalted positions. If you tread the right path, you can mould thousands of people in turn. Officebearers should be very careful, because if one office-bearer goes wrong, many people can go astray. Help ever; Hurt never. Be good, do good, and set an ideal; then all would follow the ideal path. Without practising, if you were to tell others, it would be of no avail. If you are unable to follow all the teachings, practice at least one or two. That is enough.

Embodiments of Love!

Be ideal members of Sathya Sai Organisation and bring about proper development and transform the nation itself. I do not desire for My name to be upheld. I do not require any name or fame. If only I wanted, the whole world would have been at My feet by now. But I do not want. I want only to help you. Foster the sense of service amongst yourselves. Entertain noble thoughts.

Goldstein said that Swami always gives and does not take anything. Except for one, I do not ask for anything. That which I ask for is your love. I do not desire anything else. Whatever you ask, I will give. But I aspire only for one thing: Love. Therefore, give your love and accept everything.

Strive to develop and bring about transformation in the system of education. Members belonging to the Organisation should discuss among themselves and do what they consider good. They need not wait for orders from the Centre. In fact, the Centre would be happy to know of such an initiative. What else can give Me more joy than the news that you do not have any differences, jealousy, in-fights, and are conducting yourselves as brothers and sisters.

Work in accordance with Swami's ideals. This gives joy to Swami. Happiness lies in union with God. That is true happiness. You cannot attain happiness by experiencing worldly comforts.

Leaving aside all differences, you must mingle with each other and undertake service activities. You should not form separate groups. Realise that pain inflicted on others is pain inflicted on Me. If all are united, I shall be extremely happy. If you were to meet someone whom you may have hated, greet him lovingly. You must conduct yourself with love. This is real penance, meditation, japa, and sadhana.

Talk sweetly and smilingly

One should give and take love for love's sake. If you continue this way, the entire country will become happy. We can experience that kind of joy that has

not been experienced hitherto in any previous yuga (era).

When you greet others, do so wholeheartedly. Let there be no disharmony in your thoughts, words, and deeds. Talk sweetly and smilingly. This makes all happy. Happy mood, happy face, happy talk, and happy work should be your guiding force. You should not smile artificially; smile wholeheartedly. Forget your past differences and live in the present. This present is not ordinary, it is omnipresent.

Develop unity. There is immense strength in unity. In unity, not only you, but also the country would have a chance to develop. Only love brings about unity. For the past four days, you have been debating and discussing various issues. Keep away all the hatred. Cleanse yourselves. Be pure, be happy. Go back happily.

This is a big workshop. Your body is like a car. All the worn-out bolts, nuts, brakes, springs, and seats have been repaired and replaced. When you get back to your places fully transformed, people should observe this transformation in you and emulate you. I am teaching you all this prompted by love, so that you also develop love.

45. Sacrifice leads to immortality

Date: 25 December 1998 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Christmas

Adored by the Muslims as Allah,
As Jehovah by the Christians,
As the lotus-eyed Lord Vishnu by the Vaishnavites,
And as Sambhu by the Saivites,
God is worshipped as the one Supreme Self,
Who confers health and wealth.
People may worship God in various names and forms,
But the very same God responds to the prayers of all.

Embodiments of Love!

Everyone is aware of the fact that human life is highly valuable, noble, and sacred. Keeping in view the welfare of society, the alumni of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Anantapur, calling themselves "Messengers of Sathya Sai", are undertaking many service activities.

First and foremost, one has to understand the true meaning of the term "messenger". Every human being is a messenger of God. Everyone is born in this world by the Will of God. Only constant enquiry will reveal the reason behind God sending His messengers to the world.

Man's foremost duty is to make the stream of Divine Love flow to one and all.

Man is born not merely to live for himself.

Only by dedicating his life to the service of the society will he ennoble himself and achieve self-satisfaction.

God has sent man to this world to practice and propagate this message.

Of what avail is human birth if man remains like a lump of clay without serving the society?

All are messengers of God

Having taken birth as a human being, one has to realise the divinity within. The primary duty of every individual, as a messenger of God, is to practice and propagate the principles of truth, love, and peace and to experience the bliss and share it with others. The one who propagates the worldly, fleeting, and ephemeral matters cannot be called a messenger of God.

When Jesus was born, three Arabian kings came to see Him. They were overjoyed on seeing the new-born babe. While returning, the first king said to Mother Mary, "Mother, you have given birth to a child who loves God." The second king said, "Mother, you have given birth to a child who will be loved by God." The third king said, "Mother Mary, your child is not different from God; both are one and the same." Once we understand the inner meaning of these three statements, we will know the truth. The one who loves God is the Messenger of God. The one whom God loves is the Son of God. The one who understands the principle of unity becomes one with God.

Today, there are only a few who are propagating the message of God, but the majority of the people are doing just the opposite. Having been the recipient of divine love, man should propagate the same principle to his fellow men. This is what Jesus proclaimed at the time of leaving his mortal coil, "All are one, my dear son! Be alike to everyone." Give up body attachment. The body is bound to change and will ultimately perish. God is the embodiment of Truth. Truth is that which does not change in all the three periods of time. One has to follow the path of truth to propagate the Principle of Truth and Divine Love. God loves those who follow the path of truth. Jesus propagated the divine message of Love. He said, "Death is the dress of life." So, He said, one has to give up body attachment and develop attachment to the spirit. Body is like a water bubble. It is merely a vesture of the individual soul.

Every activity of man should reflect the divine message

The culture of Bharat (India) declares,

"Deho Devalaya Proktho Jeevo Deva Sanathana
(Body is the temple of God and the indwelling spirit is eternally divine)."

The ancient and eternal Divinity assumes human form in order to show the Path of Truth to man. Just as the son is the rightful heir to the father's property, man has equal claim to God's property of love, truth, forbearance, peace, and empathy. The Principle of Love is supreme. Love is the underlying principle of all human values. Love is God, live in love.

Every human being is a messenger of God. Man should not waste his life in merely eating, drinking, and sleeping. In fact such a life is a blot on human nature itself. Every activity of man should reflect the divine message. Unfortunately, this is not the case today. Some people claim that they have dedicated their lives to the mission of God. But in reality it is not so. They are wasting their precious time in materialistic pursuits. There is nothing wrong in studying, doing jobs, and earning money provided they are done in the right spirit, which is beneficial to one and all.

You see many people suffering. In what way are you helping them? Jesus opposed the practice of animal sacrifice in Jerusalem. As a result, he had to face strong opposition. People who help mankind are put to harm.

The dualities of life such as pain and pleasure go hand in hand.

Pain and pleasure coexist.
It is impossible to separate them.

Pleasure does not exist separately.
The fructification of pain is pleasure.

This message of truth must be taught to the entire world. Without pain, one does not realise the value of pleasure. The value of light can be realised only when there is darkness. This was the teaching of Jesus.

One has to overcome difficulties to be successful in life. Give happiness to those who are suffering. Consider every activity as God's work. Right from birth, man has been experiencing pain and pleasure. But, he is unable to realise that there is happiness in pain. What type of happiness? Is it related to the body or the mind? No. It is related to the Atma.

Peace is essential for man at all the three levels: body, mind, and spirit. This is the reason we chant santhi (peace) three times. Man can attain peace at these three levels only by developing love for God.

The one without love for God will never be peaceful. All worldly pleasures are fleeting momentary. The same sentiment was echoed by Sankaracharya:

Ma kuru dhana jana yauvana garvam Harathi nimeshath kalah sarvam.
Do not be proud of your wealth, progeny and youth. The tide of time may destroy them in a moment.

What is happiness? Is it sitting in an air-conditioned room or partaking of delicious food? These confer happiness only at the physical and mental levels, not at the level of the Atma. True happiness is that which is related to the Atma. You should not be afraid of difficulties; they are passing clouds. Do not waver. Follow the heart, which is steady and unwavering Unity of head, heart, and hand is essential for man. This is the true significance behind the

Christians making cross sign. Install God in your heart. Contemplate on Him and undertake good deeds Consider every activity as God's work and act accordingly. Merely feeding the poor and distributing clothes to the needy do not constitute seva (selfless service). Along with this, one has to cultivate love, which is eternal. Right from dawn to dusk all our actions should be suffused with love.

Start the day with Love, Fill the day with Love,
Spend the day with Love, End the day with Love.
This is the way to God.

There are very few who publicise this message. It is not enough if you call yourself a messenger; you have to spread the divine message. Fortunate are those who pay heed to God's words. Whether people listen or not, discharge your duty of spreading His message.

Many people call themselves devotees without understanding the meaning and significance of the term devotion. Devotion does not mean performing rites and rituals. True devotion lies in obeying the command of the Lord and spreading His message. In spite of innumerable difficulties, King Harischandra never swerved from the path of truth.

One has to worship God both in times of pain and pleasure. Unfortunately, due to the effect of the Kali Age, people worship Him when everything goes well but criticise Him in times of difficulties.

When it was ordered that all devotees of Jesus should be crucified along with Him, even His closest devotees, Peter, Matthew, and Paul, refused to identify themselves as His followers. Can these be called true devotees? One should be prepared to sacrifice everything for the sake of God. Under any circumstances, do not disobey the command of God. That is determination. Determination gives rise to sacrifice, which leads to immortality.

Truth and divine love constitute one's wealth

"Na karmana na prajaya danena thyagenaike amrutathwa manasuhu
(It is only sacrifice, not wealth, progeny, and action, that confers
immortality.)"

If money and health are lost, they can be regained, but if character is lost everything is lost.

Today man is striving hard for wealth and happiness, while neglecting character. Truth and divine love constitute true wealth. If you earnestly follow the path of truth, you will not encounter any difficulties. How can you expect God to protect and confer His grace on you if you do not adhere to truth? True devotion lies in accepting both pleasure and pain with equalmindedness. Such a divine message should be passed on to others.

The true message is the message of Love. Share love with everybody. There is no greater wealth than love.

Once, an angel appeared in the dream of John and handed him a book, asking him to read and digest its contents. Here, digestion means putting into practice the essence contained therein. Valmiki described Ravana as a fool, though he had mastered sixty-four types of knowledge, because he did not practice what he had learned. Rama on the other hand practised what He learned.

Follow the ideals of Jesus

Vedanta says,

"Brahmavid Brahmaiva Bhavathi
(the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman himself.)"

John resembled Jesus in all respects, because he constantly contemplated on Him. "As you think, so you become." If you think of God incessantly, you will assume His form.

Prahlada never gave up the Lord's name even in times of adversities. As he surrendered himself to Lord Narayana completely, he was protected. When he was thrown into the ocean, the waves assumed the form of Lord Narayana. When he was pushed from a mountain top, Lord Narayana held him in His arms, and when he was bitten by venomous snakes, the poison became nectar.

Never feel depressed when you are weighed down by difficulties. God will never impose on you ordeals that you cannot bear. He tests his devotees in various ways. Test is the taste of God. Never fear any test. Be ready to sacrifice even your life for the sake of God. Only then will God protect you.

Initially, Paul hated Jesus. One day Jesus appeared in his dream and asked him lovingly, "Paul, what harm have I done to you? Why do you criticise Me? All your travails are consequences of your own actions. I am not responsible for your suffering." Paul was transformed and attained sainthood. Thus, Jesus transformed many sinners into saints. Worship Jesus by following His ideals.

Jesus pointed to three stages. The first one is "I am the Messenger of God." He wanted to propagate the message of God. The second one is, "I am the Son of God." The son has a claim to father's property. What is the property of God? Truth, love, forbearance, peace, and righteousness are the properties of God. So, man has to strive to attain these qualities. He has to practice, experience, and propagate these virtues. Only then does man deserve to be called Son of God.

The third one is "I and My Father are one." This stage is attained when the principle of unity is realised. When Jesus reached this stage, He had no suffering at all. He was always blissful and was prepared for anything. Even at the time of crucifixion, he was smiling, because he realised that He was not the body. Body is bound to perish, but the indweller has no birth and death. Truly speaking, the indweller is God Himself. Jesus understood that the body was merely a vesture and He was the indweller.

Propagate Swami's message to the entire world

You should have the firm faith that you are the Messenger of God. Propagate Swami's message to the entire world. Some people may like it and some may not. Do not bother about what others say, be it 'yes' or 'no'. 'No' and 'yes' relate only to you, but for Sai everything is yes, yes, yes.

There are no defects in God. All words and deeds of God are perfect. You see the reflection, reaction and resound of your feelings. They are psychological in nature. God always gives good alone. Understand and experience this truth.

Matthew was a tax collector. He would meet fishermen regularly and enquire as to how they acquired faith in Jesus. Thomas used to doubt the divinity of Jesus. Such doubting Thomases are on the rise in this Age of Kali. Never be in the company of such people. God is like fire and you are like coal. When coal comes in contact with fire, coal becomes one with fire. Similarly, when you come in contact with God you become one with Him. Have total faith in God.

Embodiments of Love! All are messengers of God. All are embodiments of love. There is nobody without love. But you are misusing it by diverting it to worldly relations. No doubt, you need to take care of your wife and children. But that is not all. God alone is important.

Zero gains value when one precedes it. Moon is zero, sun is zero, world is zero, only God is the Hero. Everything comes to nought in the absence of this Hero. A hero becomes zero if he forgets God. Have total faith in the Hero,

God. Never give scope for any doubt. Then you are bound to be successful. Jesus experienced and propagated this truth.

Divine proximity, the greatest wealth

The term Christmas was derived from the Roman language. Truly speaking, Christmas falls in the month of March, not in December. Since it is very cold in December and people are confined to their homes, they utilise this time to celebrate Christmas. Actually, Jesus was born in the month of March. With the passage of time, this fact has been distorted and misrepresented in the Bible.

"Munde munde mathir bhinnah
(Opinions vary from person to person)."

Each one interpreted the Bible in their own way. Some wrote that Jesus was never born. Some wrote that it was the brother of Jesus who was crucified, not Jesus, and that He was in Japan at that time. This is all imagination. Jesus is Truth.

When Jesus was a small boy, His parents took Him to Jerusalem to attend a fair. After some time, Mother Mary, not finding her son Jesus by her side, believed that He had lost His way in the crowd and searched for Him frantically. Ultimately, she found Him listening with rapt attention to the sermon of the priest in a temple. That scene reminded her of the prophetic words of one of the Arabian kings, who visited Jesus at the time of His birth, that He would love God. She hugged her son and shed tears of joy. Jesus said, "Mother, you can find Me in the company of God, but you have been searching for Me elsewhere. I consider divine proximity as My greatest wealth."

How can you search for God, who is all-pervasive?

There is a profound message in this. Man is in search of God without realising that He is all-pervasive. He is the embodiment of love and can be attained only through love. When you realise that you are with God, for God, from God, you will find God everywhere. Strengthen the feeling that God is in you, with you, above you, below you and around you.

How can you search for God, who is all-pervasive? Saint Thyagaraja expressed the same feelings in a song, "Nenendu Vedakudura Rama... (O Lord Rama! Where am I to search You?)" "You are my only refuge. I cannot live without You," so saying he jumped into a river.

To his joy, he found the idol of Lord Rama in the river. "O Rama! You are so great and compassionate; you are with me always. Not realising this truth I have spent my life in total ignorance." He extolled Rama in manifold ways and expressed his feelings in a song, "Rara Ma Intidaka... (O Lord! Please come to my residence).

Only an ardent devotee can understand and experience the bliss of oneness with God. Sugar tastes bitter to a person suffering from malaria. The defect lies in their tongue, not in the sugar. So is the case with a person immersed in worldly desires. He cannot experience the sweetness of Divinity. Have the firm conviction "God is in me, with me, around me, behind me." When you think on these lines, you become divine. Never entertain the thought that you are separate from God.

Total surrender earns divine grace

When I distributed saris to the "messengers" yesterday, they expressed their gratitude by saying, "Thanks, Swami." I exhorted them, Do not thank Me. I am not a third person. Do you thank your mother who serves you food every day? You may thank an outsider from whom you receive a favour, but I am not an outsider." So, never say thanks to Swami.

Consider Swami as your own. Only then will you have the right to approach

Swami. I do not desire anything from you for Myself, nor do I say or do anything for Myself. I do not want anything except one - your love. Even that is not your property; that also is My property.

Oh Lord!

I offer you my heart, which is but your gift.

I offer you what you have bestowed on me.

What else can I offer you?

Kindly accept my humble and prayerful salutations.

Love cannot be earned by any means. It is a gift of God. Gift this gift of love to God. Only then you will have self-satisfaction. That is your duty. The ancients used to pray, A person with such noble feelings is a true devotee and the one of sacrifice.

Extolling one's own devotion to the exclusion of others amounts to being egotistic. Never give scope for ego. Great devotees like Tukaram, Ramadas, and Thyagaraja had to face many ordeals before they could win God's grace. Difficulties are part and parcel of lives of great devotees. God subjects His devotees to tests so that their faith in Him can be strengthened and their hearts are purified. It needs a great effort on your part to cleanse a stained vessel. Difficulties are meant for cleansing the vessel of your heart.

When the idol of Rama was taken away from Thyagaraja, he was grief-stricken. He questioned the divinity of Lord Rama. "Don't you have the power to solve my problems, or do I lack devotion? Definitely I have devotion, it is only you who lack power." He continued in this vein extolling his devotion and in the process, he became egotistic.

When he sat in meditation, wisdom dawned on him. He realised his folly in doubting Rama's divinity. He reflected, without the grace of Lord Rama, could

a monkey cross the ocean? If Rama lacked power, would Lakshmana worship Him or for that matter Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, serve Him and the extremely intelligent Bharata offer his salutations? "Oh Rama! Certainly your power is immense. It is because of my ignorance and meanness that I doubted your Divinity." He sought His pardon and surrendered himself to Lord Rama.

The power of devotion

When you purify your heart and surrender yourself completely to God, He manifests instantly. He does not delay even for a moment. This was proved in the case of Ramadas also. When Ramadas surrendered himself to the Lord completely, Rama and Lakshmana went to King Thaneesha in disguise and paid the tax on behalf of Ramadas. On being questioned as to who they were, they replied that they were the servants of Ramadas. Thus, we find that the Lord becomes the servant of His devotee, when there is total surrender. This is the power of devotion.

There are many obstacles along the path of devotion. Some people accuse, criticise, and censure God in times of difficulties. Each one has to bear the consequences of his own actions. God remains unaffected. God is pure, unsullied and sacred. Let people say anything, be cool and calm. Do not enter into unnecessary arguments with them. It only breeds enmity. Speak softly and sweetly with a smiling face. That will silence the critic. Smile is the best answer to criticism.

When Paul went on accusing Jesus, He lovingly went up to him and gave a pleasing smile. The sweetness in the nectarine smile of Jesus transformed the poisonous heart of Paul. Be always cheerful, even in times of adversities. Always put up a smiling face, never a castor-oil face. "Happiness is union with God."

True Christmas in Prasanthi Nilayam

Embodiments of Love! We have been celebrating Christmas every year here.

True Christmas is celebrated only in Prashanthi Nilayam, where people of all religions join together to celebrate it. Generally, the Hindus celebrate Hindu festivals, the Muslims celebrate their festivals, the Christians celebrate their festivals, and so on and so forth. It is only in Prashanthi Nilayam that people of all religions - Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis, etc. - come together to celebrate Christmas.

Prashanthi Nilayam symbolises the unity of all religions. Elsewhere people drink, eat non-vegetarian food, and make merry in the name of Christmas. But Christmas in Prashanthi Nilayam is celebrated in a holy atmosphere. Christmas in Prashanthi Nilayam is a "holy day", not a "holiday".

Practise whatever you have learnt here, even after you go back to your respective countries. Strengthen the feeling that you are the messenger of God and propagate the divine message far and wide. That is your primary duty. There is no greater service than this. Strive for the welfare of the whole world.

The world is like a big mansion. Countries may be compared to its different rooms. Do not have the narrow feeling that only your country should be happy. Be broad-minded. Pray for the welfare of all nations. On this basis, the ancients prayed,

"Loka samastha sukhino bhavanthu
(Let the whole world be happy.)"

Cultivate love. That is true sadhana.

Love is My form,
Truth is My breath,
Bliss is My food,

My life is My message, expansion is My life,
No reason for Love, no season for Love,
No birth, no death.

Yesterday, children presented a magnificent drama, wherein the power of love was depicted. Love can transform even the wicked. It is only a matter of time before the wicked are transformed. Be patient. Develop love more and more. None can comprehend the divinity and sanctity of Swami. **Twenty years ago, when Christmas was celebrated for the first time in Prashanthi Nilayam, I sang this song**. If anyone asks you to tell about Sai Baba, sing this song. It will convey the whole message. Tell him, Love is His form and His life is His message. Develop the feeling of brotherhood of man and fatherhood of God.