



Summer Showers 1977

Divine Discourses of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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1. Opening Address

Date: **May 1977** / Location: **Brindavan** / Occasion: **Summer Course 1977**

Pavitratma Swarupas:

One may have great physical strength. One may also be a great man by his achievements. One may possess many such qualities, but if unfortunately one gets into difficulties, his weaknesses will show up and he will not be able to achieve anything. There are several instances in the epic of Ramayana to illustrate such a situation. Ramachandra gets into many difficulties, and at such times, it appears that everything is against him. We should say that unlike many ordinary people, even in those situations, he faced all of them with great courage, and demonstrated by his example to humanity at large how such situations are to be met in our daily life.

Although by sadhana, one can get the grace of Lord Rama, yet, if one does not understand and recognise the human qualities in Him, one cannot comprehend the divinity in Him either. It is very necessary, at the present time, to look upon Rama as an ideal human being who is an example for all people rather than simply believe Him to be an incarnation of God. When we cannot understand Rama as an ideal example of a human being, how are we going to understand Him as God?

In every family, the kind of relationship that should exist between mother and son, between hus-band and wife, between brother and brother, has been amply demonstrated by Ramachandra during His life. The entire story of Rama is such that all of it can be related to the daily experience in the life of all individuals. To forget this essential aspect of the sacred story, and to attach more importance to the trivial matters in that story, is not something which is correct.

When we meet with difficulties and when we come across sorrow, we should take courage and we should use whatever strength we have, in a good and appropriate manner, and face the situation bravely. Man's life consists of ups

and downs, man's body also consists of ups and downs. This is only natural. It is a characteristic feature of things in nature that they go on changing continually. If there is no change, human nature itself has no value. If there are no difficulties in one's life, life itself will not work. If there is no sorrow, if one does not meet with sorrow, there is no value for one's life. If there is no death at all, even a mother cannot show affection and love to her child.

Sorrow, pain, difficulties and situations which could bring losses, come to us in many different ways and on different occasions in our lives. In such situations, we should not sink. In situations which give pleasure, we should not be elated. We should have an equal mind and face all situations with equanimity. We must take these things with an unwavering mind and attain bliss. In every life, good and bad are always present together. When we look at the good, the bad things, that always exist alongside, appear to defeat the good. A bad man, when he looks at the prosperity of others, gets jealous. When a bad person looks at the happiness of other people, he always feels sorry. These are qualities which show up naturally in those circumstances.

We know that in the same tank full of water, we can have lotus flowers and we can also have animals like fish and frogs. Lotus attracts the vision of man and pleases him. On the other hand, animals in water do not please us but give us sorrow. The place where both are born is one and the same thing, and that is water.

Amritha comes out of water. Amritha is born out of water. So also, poison is born out of water. Here we see that the birth place of Amritha as well as poison is one and the same. It is in this context that it has been said that for both the bondage and for the liberation of man, his mind alone is responsible. It becomes necessary that we should recognise the nature of the mind, if we wish to understand this dual part played by our mind.

In the story of Rama, we come across many situations where He starts as an ideal human being and as the situation develops, He shows us His divinity. But many rishis took care to see that the human quality of Rama is made clear to the world, and that the divinity of Rama is hidden under the facade of

this outward human form. We should note that if Rama was recognised as divinity, as God, in the very first instance, then the killing of Ravana would not have taken place and the rest of the story would not have followed.

This is the reason why, when Vishwamithra took Rama and Lakshmana for help, he argued with Dasaratha that the abundant strength possessed by Rama and Lakshmana are known only to a few people. He said that the infinite glory of Rama and the great power He had can be understood only by great men and not by ordinary individuals.

Rama is all-knowing, all-powerful and omni-present. For ordinary people, it is difficult to understand this infinite nature of divinity. To recognise and understand Brahman, we should ourselves be able to experience Brahman. One who comprehends Brahman becomes identical with Brahman.

If we want to understand this aspect of the Ramayana, we should ourselves experience what is contained in the Ramayana and the story of Rama. In this world, there are many people who claim to be devotees of Rama. Is it possible to decide and to proclaim that they are all devotees of Rama? Some of these people are devotees of Rama (pleasure), some of them are devotees of Rama and some of them are devotees of Rama. There are devotees and devotees. In this manner, people only claim and describe themselves as devotees of Rama; but in truth, to justify the claim, they do not promote and develop that connection and that closeness with the aspect of Rama.

Without any reason, we create havoc for our-selves during our life. But during our lifetime, the mansion of hope that we create for ourselves is going to break and fall down sooner or later. Life is like a flower which opens out in fair weather and is bound to fall when there is a storm. During our life, in order that we can face such storms and survive them, we should develop courage and mental strength. All the great people and great saints, who understood Rama's divine aspect, took care to hide it from the general public. Vishwamithra and Vasishta were not ordinary people. They were great saints. They were people with great courage and strength. In fact, they had acquired proficiency in all the different aspects of learning and wisdom. It is not as if

Vishwamithra was unable to protect his own yagna. He told Dasaratha, "It is not as if I do not have the strength to protect my yagna, but I have come to you with the specific purpose of letting the world know the great Rama, your son, and of spreading His reputation and your reputation." Vishwamithra is not taking Rama just for the protection of his yagna. We should see him only as an instrument for a higher purpose. He has no doubt prepared the ground for the destruction of the various demons, but he has also prepared the ground for the marriage of Rama and Sita. Having done all that, at a crucial time, Vishwamithra goes out of the scene. Not only this, the situation then was such that we cannot easily determine whether Rama is truly divine or is an ordinary human being with great qualities.

Great people are often such that their attention to every one is the same. The same attitude is displayed by them to good as well as bad. They are truly equal-minded. If we take a good flower which gives fragrance, its fragrance is not going to change whether we pick it up with the left hand and put it in the right hand, or pick it up with the right hand and put it in the left hand. It does not matter in which hand the flower is put; it gives the fragrance. The hand may change but the fragrance does not change.

In the same manner, good and bad give a lot of trouble to the mind of an ordinary human being and make his mind suffer. But to great people and great saints, good and bad are exactly the same. In that context Rama is an Avathar, for He could look at the good and bad with complete equal mindedness. In the Ramayana, there are not only instances where Rama has displayed this quality of equal-mindedness but also instances where he displayed the absence of such a quality and thus appeared like a weak, ordinary human being. But how long could such a facade last? Only so long as he wanted to demonstrate to ordinary beings the weakness which is characteristic of such human beings. In such situations, he could give courage and strength to others. All the other great men are also like that. Just for the sake of man, for the sake of dharma, for the sake of setting an example, great god-like saints do things as if they were ordinary human beings to illustrate how people should behave in such trying situations.

It is only when God comes amidst men as an Avathar, that He will be close to man, and will be able to set an example to human beings. Only then, he will be able to correct the ways of human beings. The real connection that should exist between man and man is always demonstrated by an Avathar. Because God comes as an Avathar in human form, man is able to see and experience some ideal examples, in real-life situations. It is natural in that context that God takes the human form in Rama and creates situations where man learns the virtue of adherence to dharma.

Valmiki, the great poet, was essentially projecting Rama as an ideal example to human beings. However, in many cases, he was also showing the sacredness and divinity that is contained in Rama. In the same manner, the poet Tulsidas wrote the beautiful story of Ramayana for the sake of propagating the great name of Rama to the world, as an example of an ideal human being. In the lives of these poets, there were several incidents in which the strength of the name of Rama is seen. On one occasion, gods began to quarrel amongst themselves as to who among them was greater than others. In order to get a decision, they all approached Brahma.

It was decided that whoever goes round the world first will be adjudged as the greatest amongst them. As soon as they heard the decision, each one took his own chariot, and started going round the world. Vigneswara (Ganesh) by tradition has a mouse as his chariot, and because of this small vehicle, he was lingering behind and making very slow progress. At this stage, Narada appeared and asked him how long he would take at that slow pace to go round the earth. Narada suggested that Vigneswara (Ganesh) should write the word Rama and just go round that word Rama and quickly go to Brahma.

Vigneswara wrote the name Rama, went round the same and immediately went back to Brahma. Brahma decided that he was the best form of god. It is our tradition that whenever good work is undertaken, we first worship Vigneswara. This is the reason why Vigneswara is also called Gananatha; the superior one amongst all the ganas. It is believed that he will remove all obstacles in the work that we undertake. This has now become a part of our culture.

Tulsidas demonstrated the fact that wherever you go, whatever you feel, the name of Rama is contained therein. Thus, Tulsidas reached the end of his life by proclaiming the greatness of the name of Rama. In the Ramayana, there are several instances which enable you to derive the strength that is necessary for facing various situations that come up in one's life. Not only in worldly matters and in spiritual matters, but in daily life, every human being can perceive the grace of this name Rama.

There are three important reasons for the birth of a human being. These three reasons are sin, agitation and ignorance. Because of the sin that we commit we get a rebirth as punishment. Because of lack of peace in an agitated mind, we get rebirth. Because of ignorance and lack of knowledge, we get rebirth. If at one stroke, we want to get rid of sin, agitation in our mind and ignorance, the only way is to constantly think of the name of Rama.

Students:

In the word Rama, there are three letters. They are 'Ra,' 'a' and 'ma.' These three components can be described as Amritha Beeja and Agni Beeja. In these three letters are also contained the Surya and Chandra, the sun and the moon. The letter 'Ra' is the letter which can be connected with the sun. The letter 'a' can be connected with the moon and 'ma' with fire. The letter 'Ra' which we have connected with the sun, has got the potency by which to shed light and remove all ignorance. 'A' which has been connected with the moon, removes your agitation and gives peace. 'ma' which is connected with fire, burns out all your sins. This one name Rama will thus remove, in one stroke, all your sins, the agitations in your mind and your ignorance.

Valmiki established that there is nothing greater than this one single name, Rama. He has also given us a way by which ordinary people can understand and get the benefit out of it. The way by which we utter the word Rama is such that first we open the mouth; and out of the mouth we then send out all that is within us, which is sin; and then we close the mouth to say Rama. Nothing thereafter enters that way into your body.

Truly, all are not able to recognise the great strength that is contained in this name Rama. Some-times, we wonder whether the utterance of this one simple name will remove all our sins and all our troubles. This inability comes from the weakness in us and not because of the weakness in the name of Rama. The first thing which one has to do is to strengthen one's own faith.

Today, a doubt about the existence of God is prevalent, to a large extent, in the world. We are now conducting a seminar on the Ramayana. There are many people who ask why we need conduct any seminars on the Ramayana in this modern age. There are people who ask why we are concerned with the Ramayana at all. Ramayana has no antiquity or modernity. They seem to be arguing about the compatibility of ancient traditions, and modernity and the usefulness of thoughts about God and divinity. Why do they not argue whether eating food, sleeping, etc., are modern ideas or old ideas? Why do they argue only about matters relating to God and divinity?

We are eating food today which we have been doing all these days. We are looking at faces today which we have been looking at all these days. Are we telling ourselves, this is the face we have seen yesterday and the day before yesterday? Why do we see the same face again and again? Do we ask such a question? This is the same stomach which we have fed with food yesterday and the day before yesterday. Do we ask ourselves why we have to feed the same stomach once again today? In this context, there is no difficulty in understanding why we have to think of our traditions and customs and pray to God everyday.

The sacred stories from our ancient lore are the only stories which are going to save us either today or tomorrow. Times may change. New epochs may come. The world may change, but the aspect of divinity is one and the same and is unchanging. "Ekam Eva Adwiteeyam." Truth is only one and there is no second parallel. At the present time, we are only seeking things which keep on changing. Why do we not seek things which are permanent and unchanging?

Students:

You are the future citizens of this country. I am hoping that you will respect ancient culture, that you will study the life-stories of divine personalities who had come from time to time to re-establish dharma in this ancient land. When we talk of Rama Rajya, it does not mean going back to old times. It means that we are wanting our present rulers to rule the country according to dharma. As in the saying "Yatha Raja, Tatha Praja" - "people will be like the king and the king has to be like the people." Just as the ruler protects the people, looks after them, sees to their welfare; so also the people should take care of the ruler, make him take the right path, look after him and his spiritual dharma. The people are like the body with different organs making up the body. The close connection between the people and the ruler should be one like that between the body and heart. Without the body, we cannot have heart. Without a heart, the body cannot survive. The connection between the ruled and the ruler should be such that they are inseparable from each other. That will be called the Rama Rajya.

People in those days were pure and sacred. This is the reason why they showed great reverence to Sita. A wrong was never condoned. Untruth was never accepted. This shows the sacred strength that was present in the people. That is why, the beginning of the destruction of the Rakshasas was established in those times.

Several such great and sacred situations are present in the story of the Ramayana. We should make an effort to understand the qualities of each individual character in the epic and try to get the lessons that Ramayana gives us. Every individual and every character that is depicted in the story of the Ramayana has stood forth as an example of an ideal person to all humanity.

Even in Ravana, who is generally taken to be a bad person, Valmiki has shown certain good qualities. In some places good qualities of Vali also were described by Valmiki.

As has been stated earlier, great saints are equal minded. Because of the

saintly character of Valmiki, he showed the weaknesses in Rama and he showed the good qualities in Ravana. He was a selfless person. He was called Maharishi, because he could see the past, present and future. It is only a great saint or a maharishi that is entitled to write poetry. Poets like Valmiki and Vyasa were maharishis. Because of this, whatever they had written has come to be regarded as permanent truth and it remained so for all time.

The poetry of today has in it lots of selfishness. It is used for the purpose of promoting the selfish interests of the poet. In the ancient days, there were several great saints who had looked upon poetry as an instrument for achieving the prosperity of our country and the good of our people. In the following few days, during which there will be lectures on the Ramayana, I am hoping that our students will take some of the great examples from that sacred story and get them deeply imprinted in their minds and become ideals to others.

2. God Is Beyond Description Through Words

Date: **May 1977** / Location: **Brindavan** / Occasion: **Summer Course 1977**

It is not possible for any one to say what Brahman is. One can at best say this is not Brahman, that is not Brahman, but no one can say what Brahman is. Truth, which is permanent, and wisdom, which is infinite, are in some ways related to Brahman. These or other words do not describe Brahman at all. In the same manner, it is impossible to describe what Divinity is, what God is.

The story of Rama is as sacred as it is surprising. Although Vedas, Sastras, Ithihasas and Puranas have tried to describe the qualities of Narayana, they have only succeeded in saying that this is not God, that is not God, and so on; but they have never been able to pinpoint and state what God is and describe His attributes and qualities by positive statements. However great the person concerned may be, it is not possible for him to say that God is like this or like that. God is beyond all description in terms of words we know and use.

Many poets and many speakers could talk about God, God's leelas, God's powers and God's manifesta-tions in their writings; but it was not possible for most of them to experience the true greatness of God. Till now, no one could find either an individual or a text, which has described truly the great form of God. To some extent, limited by their own beliefs, based upon their own faith, they can say God is like this. They can only point a finger as we point at the moon, which we can see only from a distance. Such a description is of limited validity, within the context of their own faith and their own belief.

The ancient poets and the ancient rishis, were all knowing and so they were only talking about Paramatma in a very modest way and were describing parts of this glory. These great men had great powers, had great strength and were selfless people, and had divine qualities in them. Because of these

qualities and because they were all-knowing they tried to picture God in the world, to some limited extent.

The poets of today also describe God in their writings and in their poems and thus try to picture Him to the rest of the world. But they should ask themselves the question whether a thousandth of what they say in their descriptions is based on their own belief and on their own faith in God. We read in such writings that Rama is the incarnation of Narayana, that Rama is God in human form and so on. But we are not able to get the faith and confidence in the human form of God. Truly, if the statements that are in such writings are put into practice, the world will be a very good one.

There is a great difference that we perceive between the poets of today and the poets of earlier days, the rishis of today and the rishis of the ancient lore. The rishis of those days were picturing God in the usual way in a human form, as a human being, in their speeches and writings. But in their minds and in their faith they were regarding the human form as an incarnation of God Himself. Here we should ponder over one aspect of the Ramayana with great care. Rama, along with Sita and Lakshmana, entered the forest of Dandakaranya. The rishis in the Danda-karanya knew very well that Rama was an incarnation of God, and so they came to Rama and placed their difficulties and troubles before Him. Not only this, many rishis were killed by the demons. These incidents were brought to the notice of Rama, and he was moved and his heart melted. He could not bear this any longer; and so He took a vow at that very instant of time and gave His word to the rishis that from that time, He would undertake the task of exterminating the rakshasas.

In this vow of Rama's Sita noticed what is usually referred to as the vow of Bhishma. Sita came and cautioned Rama that He was taking a vow, which was very difficult to fulfil. Then Rama answered by saying that the Himalayas can give up the ice on them, that the moon can give up its brightness and the oceans may flow beyond their boundaries, but Rama will never give up His vow unfulfilled.

From that day onwards, Rama saw to it that the rakshasas in the

Dandakaranya were removed from their positions of strength, and He has been protecting the rishis from the hands of those rakshasas. He spent ten years in the forest fulfilling His vow and the task He took upon Himself. He was tired. He wanted to take some rest and then wanted to move to the ashram of Rishi Agasthya. He wanted to see Rishi Agasthya and ask him where he could put up a hut, and live along with Sita and Lakshmana. In fact, he wanted to live in Agasthya's ashram. Agasthya thought for a while, and smilingly told Ramachandra that sixteen miles from his ashram, there was a beautiful place on the banks of the river Godavari. He suggested that Rama can have his hut at that beautiful place and live there.

It is not as if Agasthya did not know that Rama-chandra was an incarnation of Narayana Himself. We should recognise the inner meaning of the fact that while Agasthya knew very well that Narayana Him-self came in human form and asked for a place in his ashram, he suggested that Rama take up a hut sixteen miles away from his ashram. The idea that was in the mind of Agasthya was that, if Rama stayed along with Sita and Lakshmana in his ashram, then Sita could not possibly (as was to happen later) be stolen. In that context, the killing of Ravana would become even more difficult and would not have taken place at all. Thus, the rishis had already made a master plan for the destruction of all the rakshasas.

It is at the time when Rama, along with Sita and Lakshmana, was having His sacred hut sixteen miles away from the Rishi's ashram that Surpanakha came there and was humiliated. Later, the entire drama unfolds itself.

Not only this, while Agasthya was wanting Ramachandra to stay sixteen miles away from his ashram, Agasthya took care to see that the bow and arrows which were given to him by Varuna were also handed over to Ramachandra as weapons. There is an important truth here. These rishis knew well when the destruction of the Rakshasas was coming. They kept these weapons with great care in order to hand them over to Ramachandra when time was ripe for such destruction.

The second thing we should notice here is that Vishwamithra took Rama for

the sake of protecting his yagna in his ashram. After Tataki, the rakshasi, was killed in the ashram, there were two sons of Tataki who were still alive. They were Maricha and Subahu. While Subahu was killed, Maricha was allowed to go alive. There is some significance which we should recognise here. The reason for this is that Maricha had a future role to play in the destruction of Ravana. So that the task of destroying the rakshasas by Rama can be completed according to plan, Maricha was allowed to go alive.

After Surpanakha was disfigured, she went to Ravana and conveyed to him a description of Rama. Then Ravana went to Maricha and sought his help for killing Rama. Maricha knew the power and strength of Rama. So, he described the power and strength of Rama truly to Ravana. Maricha made it quite clear to Ravana that Rama is not an ordinary person and that Rama is God Himself; and with His power and strength, He can achieve anything. As a result of such a description, it is quite natural, however brave and however courageous an individual may be, that some kind of fear will naturally enter his mind. In that context, Ravana turned back and returned to Lanka. While Ravana was in that hesitant mood, Surpanakha went again to Ravana and told him that while he is brave and beautiful, while he had everything in his favour, that he is not able to get Sita for himself is something which is difficult to understand. Thus, she poisoned Ravana's mind.

When such words were heard by Ravana, he became rather weak, succumbed to temptation and went again to Maricha for advice. Maricha again told Ravana all that had to be told. But since Ravana was all the time recollecting what his sister Surpanakha had told him, he was not listening nor paying any attention to what Maricha was telling. In that conversation, Ravana became very angry and threatened to kill Maricha if he did not obey his orders. Maricha then thought that anyway he was going to die and decided that he would prefer to die in the hands of Ramachandra, rather than in the hands of Ravana. Accordingly, he accepted the orders of Ravana and took the form of a deer and went to the hermitage where Rama and Sita were living. We notice here that if Maricha was killed earlier when Rama killed Subahu, then Maricha would not have fulfilled this part of his in the drama.

Here we see that not only did the rishis realise the divinity of Rama, but also Rama knew that He was God Narayana in human form. In order that He may fulfil the task for which He had come, He spared Maricha earlier, so that Maricha could play his part in Rama's master plan.

These rishis, while projecting a picture of Rama to ordinary persons as an ideal human being, an example for all of them, knew that they were hiding to some extent the truth of Rama as an incarnation of God. This was the reason why Vishwamithra, when he took Rama for the protection of his own yagna, handed over all his weapons which were in his possession to Rama. God took the human form of Rama as a leela of His. The rishis took advantage of this human form of Rama and used Him for the purpose of the destruction of the rakshasas.

Vishwamithra took Rama for the protection of his yagna in the normal course. As soon as his yagna was over, it was Vishwamithra's duty to take Rama and Lakshmana back to Dasaratha. He did not do that. From his yagna, Vishwamithra took them to Mithilapura. There, the Bow of Shiva was broken and thereafter the marriage of Rama and Sita took place. Thus every step taken by Vishwamithra was indeed planned for the ultimate destruction of Ravana.

The rishis of those days worked in a selfless manner, for the prosperity of mankind. In fact, they were using their thapas and their strength for helping mankind. A human being, on the day when he can push away his selfishness, when he can push away his ego, will really acquire his entitlement for thapas. On one occasion, when Hanuman entered Lanka and looked at the beauty and brilliance of the city built by Ravana, he thought that there could be no one else anywhere in this world who can equal Ravana in his strength, his brilliance and his ability. Simply because of some bad qualities in him, Ravana should have been subjected to these difficulties. Some amount of ego and selfishness in him should have degraded him to that position.

Man may be very wealthy, man may be very prosperous, but if man suffers from selfishness and ego, he is undoubtedly going to suffer difficulties and

pain. In this context, we should realise that it is the duty of every human being to give up his selfishness and to be able to serve others in a selfless manner. In the story of Rama, especially in His younger days, the manner in which He used to respect the elders, the manner in which he used to show affection and obedience to his mothers, and the manner in which He treated others around Him must be taken as an important lesson and as an example to all of us. These are things which young students should know very well. In Rama, we see a great amount of humility. There were many rishis in the forest, and Rama used to go and pay respects to them, but the rishis were all the time proclaiming, apparently only as a facade for the world, that they were very wise people, and that Rama was only the son of a king. The truth is that behind this facade, in their minds, they had the greatest devotion and respect for the divinity in Rama.

When Parasurama was nearing his end, he recognised the divinity in Rama and he surrendered to Rama. It is not as if there was no good reason for these rishis to refrain from proclaiming the powers and the strength and the divinity of Rama.

The rakshasas of those days exceeded all limits of decent human behaviour. They were terrorising people; and the rishis thought that if they proclaimed the divinity in Rama immediately, the destruction of the rakshasas, which was to take place at the hands of Rama, would not take place. It is in this context that throughout the story of the entire Ramayana, from the time of the birth of Rama till the time when Ravana was destroyed, Valmiki was describing Rama only as an ideal human form.

Rama was aware of all types of dharma. He had intelligence which could cover every aspect of life. He could demonstrate the need for humility, respect and devotion under the most trying conditions. He was a great individual who conducted Himself and His life consistent with the conditions prevailing around Him, at that time, in the country.

Looking at the body of Ravana after his death, Vibhishana expressed unwillingness to perform the last rites that are usually performed. Vibhishana

thought that Ravana was a very great sinner, that he was thinking badly of Rama, the incarnation of the Lord, and that it was not right to perform the obsequies of such a person. Rama, who was an embodiment of dharma, called Vibhishana and said, "If there is any dislike for a person, that should not go beyond his death. Let it end with his death. All hatred should disappear with the death of the person." Rama asked Vibhishana, "Will you, as a brother, perform the obsequies or shall I perform the obsequies?" As soon as he heard these words from Rama, Vibhishana realised his mistake and was prepared to perform the last rites.

It is because Rama knew all the aspects of dharma, he is referred to by saying "Ramo Vighrahan Dharmaha." (He is the very embodiment of dharma.) Thus, Narayana, the Lord, took the human form in Rama and by His conduct and by His adherence to dharma, he demonstrated that dharma is part and parcel of the ordinary daily life of a human being. How should one conduct oneself in a family? How should one conduct oneself towards a friend? How should one conduct oneself towards the community? In this manner and in all aspects, Rama was translating every moment of his life to be an example for ideal behaviour.

By showing equal affection to all people, Rama used to attract all the people. In His childhood Rama spoke very little. He was conducting Himself in that manner in order to show the world the ideal that is contained in limited speech. Limited talking will always promote the divine strength in one and will also promote his memory. It creates respect for him in the community. If one talks too much, it will, to an extent, destroy one's memory. Not only this, if one talks too much, the strength in the nerves will diminish and the person will become somewhat feeble. It is in this context that all great saints were observing the path of silence, whenever possible. By observing silence, one can get strength. Because the youth of today talk too much, it so happens that their memory becomes weak; and when they go to the examination hall, they forget what they have read. Amongst the many ideals which Rama has given to the young people, the first one is to talk less. The second one is that when you meet elders, to show them respect. The third one is to happily obey the orders of one's parents.

Vishwamithra went and saw Dasaratha just before taking Rama and Lakshmana for the protection of his yagna. As soon as Vishwamithra asked for his two sons, Dasaratha was quite pleased and sent for his children. In that meeting were Vasishta, Vishwamitra, Kausalya and Dasaratha. When Rama and Lakshmana came in, they first touched the feet of the mother, then the feet of the father, then the feet of Vasishta and Vishwamithra. According to our traditional concepts, one is asked to regard one's mother, father, guru and guest as Gods; and they set an example for this in acting thus.

Students:

It is not right for you to forget the traditional culture of our country and accept something strange and foreign to us. The first thing we should attempt to do is to respect the parents at our home and to accept willingly whatever orders they give.

When the rituals in the forest were completed, Rama and Lakshmana came to Vishwamithra and requested him to permit them to go back to Ayodhya as their work was over. Vishwamithra then told them that he had just received the news of celebrations that are taking place in Mithilapura and suggested that they all go and participate in the celebrations.

Lakshmana, who was very smart, reacted to this and said that their parents had sent them for the protection of the yagna, but not to go to Mithilapura. Rama then addressed Lakshmana and said that they were asked, by their parents, to do whatever Vishwamithra asked them to do. He, therefore, suggested that they should follow Vishwamithra and do whatever he asked them to do. Here, we should carefully see how much respect and attention Rama is giving to the words of Vishwamithra. Later, even at the time of Rama going to the forest, it was not Dasaratha who gave the orders. When Dasaratha saw Rama, he was simply steeped in sorrow. How could Dasaratha, in that sorrow, tell Rama to go to the forest? How could he speak at all when he was steeped in such sorrow? Recognising the situation, Kaikeyi gave expression to what she thought was in the mind of Dasaratha. Accepting the decision and the orders of Kaikeyi, Rama went to the forest. Here, we should

recognise Rama as a person who implicitly obeys the orders of the father, whether they came directly from the father or indirectly, through someone else. The sacredness that is contained in obeying the orders of the parents and the beneficial results that will flow by following the orders of one's parents is something which we should note very carefully. By looking at it in a worldly manner, one may ask the questions, why should I continually go on respecting my parents? I have grown older, I have become an important person and I am strong. Why should I still respect my parents?

Students:

For every action of yours, there is always a re-action, there is a resound and reflection. If, in future, you want to have a life of peace and of happiness, that will depend upon the kind of action which you take at the present time only. If you respect your parents today, your children will respect you in future. The kind of seed, which you plant today, will determine the kind of tree which will grow. So, if you want to be near God, see good, do good, be good; this is the way, the royal way for you to go near God. To be good, to do good and to see good is the primary duty of every human being.

Young people, the wealth which we may earn, the prosperity which we may acquire, the mansions which we may build are all transient and temporary. Our conduct is the most important thing in our life. Our conduct is the one which lays the foundation for our future life. It is only when we can shape our present conduct along a proper path, that our future can hopefully be peaceful and happy. In this context, we can take a small incident from the Ramayana as an example. Sita, who was wanting to be close to Rama, was willing to sacrifice all her ornaments, sacrifice all her wealth and every one of her possessions. Because of this supreme sacrifice, it was possible for her to go close to Rama. But in the forest at Panchavati, the moment Sita developed an attraction to the golden deer, Rama became distant from her. If our worldly desires and worldly attachments become stronger, we move further away from God. If we cut out the worldly desires more and more, we get closer and closer to Paramatma.

We are now neither here nor there. We are in the middle. We are living in the Bhu Loka along with human beings. On one side there is the Divine world, and on the other side is the Netherland, the lower world. If we develop qualities like lust and anger, we will move closer and closer to the lower world and we will become more and more distant from the Divine world. But if we travel towards the Divine world, then we will become more and more distant from the lower world. To attach importance to the transient pleasures is the same as moving away from divinity.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

All life is so transient that it can disappear in one moment like a bubble. All that you see in this world is transient and not true. All we see during the daytime vanishes when we are asleep. All that we see in our dream during sleep vanishes when we are awake. What we see and experience during the day is like a day dream, and what we see and experience during the night is like a night dream. In the day dream, what we see in the night dream is not present. Similarly, in the night dream, what we see during the day is not present. You are present in the night dream, you are present in the day dream. You are present in both dreams, but the day dream is not present in the night dream, and the night dream is not present in the day dream. You alone are present in both places and you should recognise this.

Here is a garland, this is a bunch of flowers. I have put the garland on my hand and the garland is moving in this manner. This bunch of flowers is like the future and the opposite side of the garland is like the past. As the garland is moving on the hand, what was representing future has come to the position indicated as present. By the time it moves a little more, what is present becomes past. It is the bunch of flowers which is becoming past, present and future, but the hand is always remaining at the same position. The hand is omnipresent. What goes on and what changes with time, becomes future, present and past. Life in future, present and past is one, time is one and is present in all the three situations. Time is everything, do not waste time. It is in this context that time has been described as all-important. Time is everything and should be treated as such. It is by the change of time that

good and bad come about. If time does not exist, there is neither good nor bad.

In the spiritual sphere, it has been said "Ekam Eva Adwiteeyam." What exists in reality is only one, there is no parallel second that exists. All other things that we see in this world are manifestations arising out of changing time. Man is one, but changes come in him because of changes in time. When he is ten years old, we call him a boy. When he is thirty years old, we call him a man; when he is seventy-five years old, we call him a grandfather. The different stages, described as child, boy, man and grandfather, have come about because of changes in time. At all times there is only one aspect of this individual which is common. So also, it is by the change in time that good and bad appear. There do not exist two separate things called good and bad. Good is simply the opposite of bad. Absence of good may appear as bad.

Students:

I will give an example which you commonly come across in your daily life. This evening we eat tasty food, some fresh fruit. When we look at the fruit, it is very good and attractive, we call it good fruit. That is true this evening; but by the next morning, the same fruit gets digested and it becomes matter which should be excreted and then we call it bad. We call a thing good this evening, we call the same thing bad tomorrow morning. It is only a difference in time. Good food or good sweets that we make today, become stale and poisonous in three days. Here we see that a good thing by the passage of time becomes bad. There is nothing which is intrinsically bad. Since for all these changes time is responsible, we should take the decision that we use time in a sacred manner.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

There is a reason for my talking to you on an example like this today. For our summer classes, today is the third day. For another twenty-seven days in these classes, we have to collect sufficient amount of pleasure and happiness. In your heart, in the vessel of your heart, you have to create sufficient space

for gathering such good material during the next twenty seven days. Today by my talking to you at some length, I can remove all that you may have used earlier for filling the vessel of your heart and make a place so that you can fill in it the good things that will come your way. If the head is empty, you can put whatever you want to in that empty head. But if the head is filled with all kinds of things, where is the place to put anything else into the head? If the head has no place in it, how is it possible to fill it at all? It won't be possible to establish what is good in our dharma. In order to establish and resuscitate our ancient dharma, the students must take a vow to bring about necessary changes in their conduct. If bad ideas have already filled your head, if you have got such ears which wish to listen to bad things, if you use your eyes only to look at obscene and bad things, if you have a mind which is crooked, if you want to deceive others by your ideas and if you have a heart that can love only one person, how can good things thrive in your presence? Truth and justice must be established. Untruth and injustice must be pushed away.

When you are young, you will have physical strength, spiritual strength and the ability by which you can establish good things. If you waste this part of your life, you are not going to get once again this strength and time. If you let this opportunity slip away once, it will never come back again. The youth that has slipped away and the water that has flowed down the stream, can never retrace their path. This time of your life is a very sacred age for you. You must make a sincere attempt by which you can make this part of your life very sacred. Everything in Ramayana, every incident in Ramayana, relating to Rama and Lakshmana are such that they offer good ideals even to this day, to young people. Make an attempt to regard them as ideal examples and try to follow them. More than worshipping God, to regard God as an ideal example of a perfect human being is important. To worship God and cause pain to human beings cannot be called devotion. If you want to proclaim to the world that you are true devotees, then you must show that in your conduct and in your daily life.

In the world, there are so many people who are educated. But this education is not giving us the necessary happiness. True peace is present within your heart. To go out and search for true peace of mind is a waste of time. All that

you wish to acquire is within you. You are God. That is why I often tell you that you are not one person, but you are three persons: the one you think you are, the one others think you are, the one you really are. That is why we say that in the aspect of your body, in the aspect of your mind and in the aspect of your Atma, you have three different facets of your personality. In the aspect of your body, you do physical work. Take the decision to do good work. Rama was always devoted to work. It is in doing your work, that you derive happiness. In the aspect of your mind, promote good ideas and good thoughts. If in these two aspects of work and worship, we take the proper path, then comes the important role of your heart, which signifies wisdom. Wisdom is the third aspect.

Work is like a flower. If we can protect the bud of this flower, it will transform and change into a flower. The same flower, in course of time, will ripen and will become a fruit. Without a bud, we won't get the flower, and without the flower we won't get the fruit. This is the reason why we should not regard work, worship and wisdom as three things distinct from each other. They are inseparably connected with each other. Whatever work you do, do it in the name of God. Do it as a task of God, then work will become worship. So I am hoping that you will remove the bad ideas, the unsacred ideas that filled your heart in the past. Throw them away and fill your heart with good and sacred ideas. We are not getting education for the sake of earning money. The end of education is character, the end of knowledge is love. This is the reason why we should develop our character with the help of our education. Money comes and goes, morality comes and grows.

Young people, you now have an opportunity to understand the meaning of these sacred things. I am hoping that by understanding the meaning of these sacred things, you will be able to change your ideas, and develop good conduct and good ideas. Derive examples from Rama and Rama's life and thereby improve your life.

3. The Law Of Karma Is Invincible

Date: **May 1977** / Location: **Brindavan** / Occasion: **Summer Course 1977**

By planting the seeds of a lemon tree, you cannot expect to grow mangoes; and by sowing the seeds of a mango tree, you cannot expect to get lemons. In a similar manner, by doing a bad act, you cannot expect to get a good result and if you do a good deed, you cannot get a bad reaction from it. The kind of seeds you sow will determine the nature of the crop they will yield.

Do not simply go on imagining that you will do this or that and that you will achieve this or that and tire yourself out during your life. You cannot plant seeds in one place and expect the tree to come out at a different place. You cannot plant one seed and expect to get a different tree from that seed. Whatever the level of your intelligence may be, you must keep on doing work, with your thoughts on the Lord. The result of all good work will only be good. Whatever work you have done in the past, Brahma will put all that, the good and the bad together, as a garland round your neck when you are born. You will be born with this garland of good and bad round your neck, and you have to suffer all the consequences thereof.

Prema Swarupas:

In this world, for all the good and bad, our own actions are responsible. The cause for your birth is your own karma. Whether you do good or bad, all that makes you take birth again and again and experience the consequences of your own karma. Our dharma, the Hindu dharma, is one which has faith in the doctrines of karma, of rebirth, and of the characteristics of an Avathar. Of all the faiths in the world, Hindu dharma alone accepts all these three doctrines. In this context of believing that one's karma is responsible for one's rebirth, you might get a doubt as to what karma God should have performed to be born as a human being. Just as for man's birth, his good and bad karma is

responsible; so also for God to take birth as a human being, there have to be good and bad circumstances. There is an important distinction that is to be noted here. If man has done good or bad, the consequences will apply only to him. The aspect of Avathar is not exactly like that. The bad work done by bad people and the good work done by good people are both causes for an Avathar, God coming in the human form. This will become very evident to us in the story of Narasimha Avathar. The good karma of Prahlada and the bad karma of Hiranya Kashyapa are both responsible for Narayana's appearing in the form of Narasimha. In the same manner, for every Avathar, there is some reason. The Lord takes a human form for the karma done by others. He takes such a form out of His own free will.

For the Avathar of Rama, there are several reasons. When the war between the devas and rakshasas was going on, the rakshasas sought refuge from the wife of Maharishi Bhrigu. Then she was of some help to the rakshasas. Because she willingly helped them to some extent, the rakshasas were saved. When Narayana came to know of this situation, Narayana went to the wife of the maharishi in anger and killed her by cutting her head off. Then Bhrigu was suffering because of separation from his wife, who was killed. Bhrigu cursed Narayana that he should be born as a human being and suffer separation from His wife in that birth. The significant inner meaning of this situation is that every action will have a reaction and a reflection. Even though He is Narayana, the all powerful God, results of His own karma will inevitably follow when He comes in human form. This is, of course, to illustrate this truth to all humanity.

However, because of maya, instead of drawing this sacred lesson from this incident, we question the divinity of the Lord and are not able to firmly believe that the human form is that of Narayana Himself.

In the forest, when Rama, Sita and Lakshmana were walking, if we examine closely, we find that they are going forward in a single line, one behind the other. We can take our three fingers as the three members of the party. The first, the forefinger represents Ramachandra. As Rama is moving forward, behind Him is walking Sita. Behind Sita, Lakshmana is walking. Here Rama is

the Paramatma, Sita represents maya and Lakshmana is typical of the jiva. In this situation, when Lakshmana, the jiva, wants to have a look at Rama, the Paramatma, Sita in the form of maya is standing between them. What should Lakshmana do in that situation? Should he be arrogant to Sita and ask her to move away? That cannot be. If he does that, then Rama would not tolerate it. He should pray to Sita, "Oh mother, I want to have a vision of the divine Paramatma. Please step aside for a moment and let me have a vision of Paramatma." If on the other hand, he begins to argue with maya and he begins to command maya to step aside, then the result will be that he will not be able to look at Ramachandra or have a vision of the divine. Paramatma is always surrounded by maya. He wears maya as His body. Maya is part and parcel of Paramatma's body. No one will agree to remove or cut away part of His own body. Regard Sita as maya. Through her and by praying to her, one should be able to get a vision of Rama, the Paramatma.

In this context, Sita is responsible for our inability to realise the true form of Paramatma. To be able to understand Him also, Sita will be the reason. As we have already said, man's mind alone is responsible for his liberation and for his bondage. Here, the aspect of maya is similar to the aspect of mind. Mind has got a special form of its own. It is our own illusion that takes the form of our mind.

Here is a piece of cloth. This is not a piece of cloth in reality. This is actually a bundle of threads. If you look more closely at it, it is not even a bundle of threads, but it is just cotton. If we remove these threads one by one and pull them away, then the form of cloth will disappear; and we will not see the cloth any more. In the same manner, mind is simply a conglomeration of desires. These desires, like threads, come together and constitute what may be called the cloth which is the mind. Just as the cloth disappears if you pull away the threads, there will be no mind left if you pull away all the desires. The mind has no form of its own. The result is called mukthi or liberation. This process is also referred to as diminishing and removing our own responsibilities and desires. Our life is a long journey. In this long journey, if we carry a small amount of luggage with us, then that journey will become pleasant. Many students who travel in the railway trains would have seen the

motto, "Less lug-gage and more comfort makes travel a pleasure." In this life, which is like a long rail journey, the desires constitute the luggage. In order to minimise the lug-gage, we should minimise the desires. It is because of these desires that we get into bondage. It is by such bondages that we get sorrow and difficulties.

As was mentioned the other day, Rama became close to Sita because she had sacrificed everything of hers, gave up everything and thought that Rama was the only thing which she wanted. But in Danda-karanya, at the Panchavati, because she began to ask for and desire the golden deer, Rama became distant from her. It is in this context that we say that when there is kama or desire, there cannot be Rama. Where there is Rama, there cannot be kama or desire. Light and darkness cannot coexist in the same place. For every human being, the results of his own past karma, either give him happiness or give him sorrow.

In Ramayana, when Rama follows the golden deer, one hears the deceptive cries, "Ah Sita! Ah Lakshmana!" Lakshmana knows very well that these sounds have emanated from Maricha. Knowing that, he did not pay any attention to those sounds. He was looking after Sita and he was doing his duty in want-ing to protect her. When these sounds were heard by Sita, she was terrified and was in confusion. She brought undue pressure on Lakshmana, saying that Rama was in danger. She urged Lakshmana to go immediately and protect Rama. Lakshmana knew very well the tricks and the deceits played by the rakshasas. So Lakshmana told Sita, "No, you must not believe those things; they are only tricks. No kind of harm can ever come to my brother, Rama." But Sita's words, at that time, exceeded all reason. It looked as if she was not thinking clearly at all. She started utter-ing very harsh words. Lakshmana could no longer bear those harsh words. Therefore, he unwillingly left the place because he had no other alternative. The words that Sita uttered while urging Lakshmana to go were such that an innocent person like Lakshmana did not deserve them at all. Sita was not an ordinary woman. She was the consort of Narayana, Himself. She was the incarnation of Lakshmi Devi. In spite of all that, the inevitable law, by which one has to experience the results of one's own karmas, was to be demonstrated here in

that situation.

After the death of Ravana, when Sita was asked to go through the ordeal of having to walk into the fire to prove her purity, Rama uttered several harsh words because He wanted to test her and set an example to the world. For ten months, Sita had been waiting for the vision of Rama and when Rama appeared, He never showed any compassion, but was even using very harsh words. When Sita was in tears, Rama would show no kindness and no compassion. On the other hand, He was so harsh that he said, "Sita, I will not show any grace to you. You can choose to remain and live with Lakshmana or Bharatha." Sita was not an ordinary person. The moment she heard such words from Rama, she realised that this was the result of the harsh words she had used when talking to Lakshmana. The result of one's own karma is so invincible that one can never escape it. This situation in Ramayana illustrates the law of karma very well and sets an example to human beings. It teaches human beings always to be good, to do good and see good.

In other situations also we find important illustrations. On one occasion Sita was in an advanced family-way. At that time Rama was the ruler and in Rama Rajya, people's words were given great importance by the ruler. There is a conflict here between one's duty as a husband and one's duty as a king. When Rama contemplated and discussed within himself, "Is my duty as a husband more important or my duty as a king more important?" He came to the conclusion that His duty as a king was more important. The duty as a husband is an individual's duty. The duty as a king is something which has to do with the community as a whole. After coming to the decision that His duty as a king was more important, He decided to send Sita to the forest. Although the people thought that this was a harsh action, Rama never deviated from the path of dharma even under the most trying circumstances.

If we look at yet another event in the story, we find that Rama, along with Sita and Lakshmana, were seated on a chariot and they were going to the forest. Dasaratha was immersed in sorrow, and while running behind the chariot, shouted, "Stop, stop." Sumanta, who was driving the chariot looked at Ramachandra as if he was asking a question, "Shall I stop the chariot,

following the orders of Dasaratha or shall I go forward?" Ramachandra said, "Go on, go on." After going some distance, Sumanta turned to Rama-chandra and asked the question, "It would have been very good if I, too, had to stay with you for years together in the forest. But I will have to go back to the city and then Dasaratha will ask me, 'Why did you not stop the chariot when I asked you to stop the chariot?' What kind of answer shall I give to Dasaratha?" Ramachandra said, "Oh, say that you could not hear his words." Is that not an untruth? No, there is no untruth in these words. There are many reasons for this. Ramachandra has to go to the forest and the quicker he goes the better. If He delays going to the forest, He would be causing great sorrow and pain to His parents. There is another reason for this. In the battle between the devas and the rakshasas, Dasa-ratha gave a boon to Kaikeyi and he wanted her to have that boon granted. He gave that boon to Kaikeyi in his capacity as a king. In order to satisfy and fulfil the boon that he had given to Kaikeyi, in his capacity as a king, he had banished Ramachandra to the forest. But on the day, when Dasaratha was asking the chariot to stop, with the intention of having another look at Ramachandra, he did so in the capacity of a father. He is not uttering these orders in the capacity of a king. This order is something which is connected with the relationship that exists between a father and a son, which has nothing to do with a king.

He told Sumanta, "You have obeyed the orders of your king. You did not obey the orders given by my father." We should observe the important distinction which Rama is making between king and father. If, say, a person by name Yellaya with four sons, becomes a minister, in the olden days he used to think that the minister had no children, but all the people in the country were his children and would look after everyone. But in these days, the moment Yellaya be-comes a minister, his four children become important. They are not recognising that along with a position, there is a responsibility when he occupies that position. Thus, if we compare the situation today, with the situation that existed in the time of Rama Rajya, we will see a big difference.

The rishis are leaders of the world. That is, they are the path finders. In history, you may find various human qualities ascribed to great rishis. All such qualities have always been used by them for the prosperity of the people.

Individuals, who cannot understand this truth, begin to comment and discuss the conduct of these great rishis. Rishis were always totally selfless. All their actions were directed towards the prosperity of the people. The important events, that are contained in the sacred story of Ramayana are examples for proclaiming such ideals. Every word in Ramayana has the potency of a manthra. Rama has been showing Himself as an ideal human being.

Students:

You have the responsibility for the good of the country, and it is necessary for you to understand the inner significant meaning of Ramayana. It is not right for you to think that these are just stories which have been created by somebody, and that they have no relation to the context of your life. These are incidents which have been narrated by Maharishis and offer an ideal to you to follow at all stages of your life, whatever the situation may be, whatever position you may be occupying and whatever the circumstances may be. But today, we are not making an attempt to keep our thought and intelligence in the correct path. The intelligence that has been given to you, so that you may understand who you are, is being used to understand the rest of the world and not yourself.

If the intelligence that has been given to you, for the purpose of introspection and search of your Atma, is used to procure food, there is no meaning in your life. Even the birds and the animals are searching and procuring food. It is a shame to be born as a human being just for the sake of getting food to eat. If a mirror that is given to you to look at your own face is used to see the faces of others, how are you going to know your own face?

God has gifted this intelligence to you so that you may be able to understand yourself and to realise your own true nature. Make an attempt in the first instance to find out who you are. It is this enquiry that will automatically become the enquiry of self and lead to questions like, who am I? Am I this body? Am I this mind? Am I this intelligence? etc.

When you examine each of these questions, you will realise that you are none

of these. For example, you say, "It is my body." When you say that, you imply that you are separate, the body is separate and that you are not the body. This truth must be understood by you. If I take this as my kerchief, the kerchief can be thrown away at any time and I can become quite separate from the kerchief. When you say that this is my body, my mind, my intelligence and so on, it simply means that you are different from the body, the mind and the intelligence. You are in the body, you are in the mind, you are everywhere, but they are not in you. They belong to you but they are not the same as you.

We should also enquire here into a small situation. Yes, they are you, but you are not they. What is the implication? When you say that you are those things, it is right. And when you say that you are not those things, that is also right. How is this possible? There is a small tub of water. You are looking into that tub of water, and you find by reflection your image in the water. You then say that is you. What you see as an image is you. Then I say, no, that is not you. If you claim that the image is you, and if I take hold of a stick and beat the image, you are not going to feel the pain. How do you then claim that the image is you? That is the image. That is not you. But you are that. If I abuse that image, then you will become angry. If I beat the image, you do not feel the pain, but if I abuse the image, you certainly feel hurt. This means that you are in it, but are not identical with it. In the same manner, you are present everywhere. You are present in the image, you are omnipresent and you are divine. In this context and in the aspect of this truth, I say that you are not one person, but you are three persons. The one you think you are, the one others think you are and the one you really are. The body, the mind and the Atma, represent these three different aspects.

This morning, one of the speakers gave the meaning of the letter 'W.' Very cleverly, he decided that 'W' stands for woman. In that conclusion, it becomes established that either for the prosperity or for decline in the world, women alone are responsible. Whether to improve the world and make it a happy place to live in and to take it to the heights of glory, women alone are responsible. It is said in the Bhagavad Gita that women have got a very distinctive quality in them, and that women should get the first place in

everything. Our country is described as the mother. Nature, the creation, is compared with a mother. If we fall down and experience pain, we cry out "Amma," we do not cry out "Appa." In all these situations, in our symbolising the mother, there is a very distinctive and special position for the woman. A woman can take a person to the heights of glory and she can also drag him to the deepest depths of degradation.

There are three sacred words: work, worship and wisdom. In all the three words, "W" is common and is the first letter. There are also three other words beginning with "W" and which take you to the very depths of destruction: wine, woman and wealth. In the world you can see a person of position and of authority such as a general, commanding thousands of sepoys, or a supreme court judge, who has the power by which he can punish in any manner that he likes. In big colleges, there may be thousands of students. The principal will have such power that even at the mention of his name the students will be frightened. Can a general who commands all his soldiers, a supreme court judge who can wield such an authority, a principal of a college who can terrify thousands of students wield a fraction of such authority over his wife in that manner? We conclude that in women, there is some divine strength. Because of this divine strength, Sita could secure Rama who is not easily available to everyone.

When we hear the name of a mango from Vijayawada which is called the 'Rasam' the very name will make us feel that it is a very attractive fruit. When we hear the name, it creates a great attraction and we think it is a very sweet fruit. But when we actually see the fruit itself, and we want to eat it, we may get a doubt whether it is really sweet or sour? In the same manner when we hear the name of God, then we certainly have a great attraction to that name. But when the same God, takes a human form, we begin to have doubts. The changes that come about in a form, a natural characteristic of all creation, are responsible for these doubts.

All that we see around us is the creation of nature. This is simply a manifestation of creation, and is called nature. There is a great deal of weakness in this creation, and the source for such weakness is in the creation

itself. Wherever there is a weakness in any individual, to that extent he is simply in the form of a woman. In this world which is like a stage, a man and a woman are merely actors and are playing their roles. However, simply because one takes the part of a man or of a woman in a play, one cannot conclude that some are men and some are women.

Here is a small example. There is a girls' college in Anantapur. At the time of the Annual Day in the girls' college, the students stage several dramas. In a drama, whether it is the part of a king or any other man, it is the girls who play that part. Whether it is the king or the queen, whether it is a man or a woman, all the parts are played only by girls. Just for that day, they are putting on the appearance of a man or a king on the stage, but truly, they are simply girls, they are women. In the drama or on the stage it is only a part that they are playing. They are in reality neither kings nor men. In the same manner in the entire creation, the world is like a girls' college. On the stage of the world, we are thinking that some are women and some are men. This is simply an appearance but not true. All persons suffer from weaknesses like hunger, anger, jealousy, tiresomeness, etc. All these weaknesses are present in everyone and that indicates that all are feminine. There is only one who has not got such qualities and that person is referred to as Purusha and that is Paramatma.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

To be able to get a vision of the Paramatma, we should throw away these human weaknesses, like being short tempered, and angry. Particularly, you young people should be able to control your anger, your hatred, your jealousy and your lust. It is these that you must control. If you cannot make an attempt and succeed in controlling them when you are young, it will become impossible to control them when you grow older. To be able to control the senses, this is the right age. It is these sensuous urges that destroy you and your equanimity.

When you are able to control your desires, it will be possible for you to have the entire world in your palm. If you become subservient to your desires and

to your ambitions, then you will become subservient to everything around you. If you become a slave to your desires, then you become a slave to the entire world. But if you control and conquer your desires, you can conquer the whole world. If you want to keep them under control only apparently, the lasting results will not follow. If you go and beat on the surface of an anthill with a stick, will the snake inside the anthill die? Controlling desires only superficially will not be the right thing to do. The bad ideas and thoughts that come within your body have to be controlled. Mind is like the anthill. Out of the anthill of your mind, several poisonous thoughts, like poisonous snakes, will be pouring out. By using sacred thoughts of God and by using quiet and calm ideas about God, you should be able to put the snakes to sleep. Yours is an age which is a sacred age. To waste such a sacred age and not to get good results out of that age is deplorable. You should not desire to imitate or copy others in all your actions. If from today, you are able to get rid of such qualities and control your thoughts, in future you will be able to acquire strength by which you can go close to God.

If such good results do not flow from attending these classes, what is the use of having such summer classes and seminars? If a car which has gone out of order goes into a workshop for repairs and comes back to you as a car which is still out of order, what is the use of taking it for repair? In a similar manner, many damaged cars, without nuts and bolts, in the form of young students, have been sent to this workshop of a Ramayana Seminar, and they have come from all parts of our country. When these cars return to their places, they will have some value only if they are repaired so as to be in good condition. Otherwise, there is no use of coming to this workshop.

Such of those students who have come here should not go back in the same condition in which they have come here. They should transform themselves into ideal men and ideal women. I am hoping that you will thus be able to set an example to others who may follow you in the coming years.

4. Lakshmana, The Devoted Brother Of Rama

Date: **May 1977** / Location: **Brindavan** / Occasion: **Summer Course 1977**

Even if one can repeat word by word the contents of the Vedas and the Vedangas, even if one has the capacity to compose attractive poems, if he has no purity of mind, he is sure to be ruined. What other greater truth can I convey to you?

Pavitratma Swarupas:

If one wants to live a life of an animal in this world, it is not necessary for him to learn how to control his senses. But for man, to live like a human being, it is very necessary to learn self-control. Just as when the horses are attached to a chariot or a car-riage, the driver has to use the reins to control the horses so that the carriage does not go the wrong way; so also man, to go the right way, has to control his senses by using the discriminating power and his ability to know the right from the wrong as the reins in his hand.

Animals like cattle and birds cannot change the qualities which they acquire with their birth. The lion, for instance, is born as a cruel animal. It lives and dies as a cruel animal. The cat is born with the quality of trapping the rats and of killing them. It lives with these qualities. Try as they may, these animals cannot change their bad and cruel qualities. You can make a cat sit on the chair and give it sathwik food like milk, curd and so on, and try to convert the cat, but the moment it sees a rat, it jumps to kill the rat. Thus, the animal, which is born with cruel qualities, cannot change in spite of our best efforts. However, man is not like that.

Man may be born with cruel qualities; but such a person, by contact with good people, by living with good people, in a good environment, can change his qualities. It is in this context that it has been said that of all the living things

that are born of a mother's womb, to have a human birth is the most difficult thing. Even if bad qualities come to man by birth there are ample opportunities for him to get rid of such bad qualities by contact with good people. But by good fortune, Lakshmana is one who had good qualities by birth; and he so controlled his senses that he had acquired further good qualities. He was a person of good conduct and good thoughts and was always ready to obey Rama's orders. He was Sumitra's son. From his very birth, during his childhood, he never knew separation from Rama. Lakshmana was such that during the first two days after his birth, he was not taking food and was crying for the sake of Rama. Sumitra, the mother and Dasaratha, the father, wanted to know what was the reason for this incessant crying of Lakshmana. Dasaratha and Sumitra were trying to give him various kinds of medical attention. They tried many tantras, manthras and yantras; but in spite of all that, Lakshmana's crying did not diminish at all.

When this news was conveyed to Vasishta, the Guru, he thought for a moment and tried to understand the situation by his divine vision. He saw that the cause for this situation was the physical separation of Rama and Lakshmana, and he advised that they both be made to sleep in the same cradle.

Thus, when Sumitra took Lakshmana to the mansion of Kausalya and put him in the same cradle where Rama was sleeping, Lakshmana not only stopped crying, but also began to take food and began to enjoy the bliss of the company of Rama. To Lakshmana, separation from Rama was as distressing and troublesome as the joining with Rama was blissful.

From that day, Lakshmana was following Rama as if he was Rama's shadow. Lakshmana could not sleep for a moment when Rama was not present. Lakshmana would not eat if Rama was not present. Wherever he went, he was always following Rama, as if he was Rama's shadow. Devotion to Rama was so intense in Lakshmana that he filled his heart with a feeling that everything that was present belonged in reality to Rama.

When Rama was banished to the forest, Kaikeyi asked for two boons. The first

one was, Bharatha her son should become the king, and the second was that Rama should go to the forest and live there as a sanyasi for fourteen years. There was no place for Lakshmana in these two desires of Kaikeyi. But when Rama was preparing for the journey, Lakshmana also accompanied Rama. He also wore clothes of bark in the same manner. Looking at the kind of clothes Rama was wearing to go to the forest and the kind of appearance that Rama had, Lakshmana also decided that he should wear similar clothes and have a similar appearance.

For all the fourteen years in the forest, Lakshmana conducted himself, as if he was one with Rama. He was spending all his energy and time in taking care of and serving Rama and Sita. Truly, if Lakshmana was not present, how would Rama and Sita have spent their lives? This important role of Lakshmana was beautifully described by Tulsidas in his narration of the Ramayana. Tulsidas described that when Rama was returning victoriously to Ayodhya with his flag flying high, the people of Ayodhya were reverentially saluting the flag and the pole on which the flag was flying. This description of Tulsidas has a significant inner meaning. The pole here signifies Lakshmana. The pole is as important as the flag. In fact, if the pole did not exist, the flag cannot fly at all. Thus Lakshmana became the steadfast support for Sita and Rama. In this story of Ramayana, while the Lord in human form was playing the role of Rama, Lakshmana had also a very important role to play. The entire life of Lakshmana was devoted to obeying the orders of Rama. However, on two occasions, knowing that what he was doing was wrong, Lakshmana had to disobey the orders of Rama. The first occasion relates to the incident when Maricha appeared as a deer and when Maricha was being pursued by Rama, they heard the voices of Maricha asking for Lakshmana's help and calling to Sita. What were the orders Rama gave on this occasion? Lakshmana was to remain and protect Sita. On that occasion, Sita spoke very harsh words and she even threatened by saying that if Lakshmana would not go, she would commit suicide by burning herself.

On that occasion, listening to the harsh words of Sita, Lakshmana felt that if he would not leave Sita and go, some harm may come to her. In order that Sita may not harm herself, he disobeyed Rama's orders for the first time.

The second occasion: a difficult situation arose when Sita was in the family-way in an advanced stage. It became necessary for him to take Sita into the forest. He did not like to do this and yet he took her into the forest. This he did just for obeying Rama's orders. Again, on the occasion when Sita returned from Lanka and when she was preparing to jump into the fire to prove her innocence, Lakshmana was asked to prepare the fire. Although Lakshmana did not like to do this, he did prepare the firewood for the test, just for obeying the orders of Rama. Whatever difficult situation it may be, he always followed the orders of Rama.

Another occasion when he had to disobey the orders of Rama was towards the end of Rama's mortal life. Rudra, the God of Time, came to meet Rama. Before he started conversation, he said that no one else should enter the room while they were conversing. So Rama called Lakshmana and asked him to stand at the entrance and see that no one disturbed them. Rama realised that this was a difficult task, and that only Lakshmana could do it effectively. At this time, when Lakshmana was standing guard, Durvasa came and wanted to enter the room. Lakshmana, who was under orders to keep out visitors, told Durvasa in great humility that as Rama was in conversation with someone else, he should wait for a while. Durvasa, however, became very angry and threatened to destroy Rama, Lakshmana, and, indeed, the whole city of Ayodhya in a moment. Lakshmana then thought it better to let Durvasa into the room rather than invoke his anger and get the entire city into trouble. In this manner, Lakshmana spent all his life in the service of Rama and rarely disobeyed the orders of Rama; and even when he did disobey, it was only for the sake of others. All the work that he did was for the good of others.

During the battle against Ravana, the fight between Lakshmana and Indrajit lasted for three full days, after which, finally, Indrajit was killed. Rama came and embraced Lakshmana and said that he was as happy as he would be when he found Sita. In the entire battle, the most difficult thing was to defeat Indrajit. In fact, it was easier to kill Ravana. When Rama saw that Lakshmana was victorious, he was overjoyed.

To others like Vibhishana, Rama frequently stated that it is very difficult to find a brother like Lakshmana. He has been telling Sugriva and others, that the task which he has completed could be so handled only because of the presence of Lakshmana, and that he, by himself, could not have done it. If today, we want to understand the kind of relationship that should exist between brothers, we should take the example of Lakshmana from Ramayana. However, these days, the inimical attitude between brothers is indeed very bad. One brother cannot bear the pros-perity of the other brother; they become jealous of each other and go to the extent of even killing each other. The sacred and good qualities of Lakshmana are beyond description.

During all the years of his service to Sita and Rama, he was sitting at their feet and did not even look closely at Sita's face. When Sita was being carried away by Ravana over the Chitrakoota Mountain, she dropped several of her jewels so that people could find them and convey the news to Rama. When Rama and Lakshmana became friendly with Sugriva, he brought the jewels, which his followers had gathered and showed them to Rama. At that time Rama asked Lakshmana if he could recognise the jewels. Lakshmana said that while he cannot recognise the other jewels, he can certainly recognise those which Sita wore on her feet. When Rama asked how he could recognise these, he said that every morning he used to go and touch her feet; hence he was quite familiar with them.

Lakshmana was looking at the wife of his brother as his own mother and was looking only at her feet. He never looked at her face. Lakshmana would always bend his head low if he found some other woman coming in front of him. Lakshmana was a person of exemplary character. The vision and the eyes of the young people today do not bend even if we bend them by force. If they use their vision for unsacred purposes, the disturbance of the mind will surely follow. The first important sadhana is to control our vision. Lakshmana had such sacred thought and mind. If only he is taken as an ideal example and we follow him, there will be no doubt of our own elevation.

There is another example. On one night, when matters of state were being

discussed, there was delay; and Lakshmana was returning home rather late. At the mansion of Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha and Satrughna were all alone and by mistake Lakshmana walked into Rama's palace. When he saw Sita sleeping, he realised his mistake and quickly rushed out and fell at Guru Vasishta's feet and prayed to him so that he could tell him how this mistake can be corrected and atoned for.

Lakshmana had a pure heart by which he could consider entering a room where his brother's wife was sleeping as the greatest sin which one could commit. Such ideals, at the present time, would not be seen even as rare examples. If the brother goes out on camp, the younger brother will be taking out his sister-in-law to the cinema. Lakshmana was a great individual who followed a code of conduct which would set an example to others. Although Lakshmana had a spark of divinity in him, this could come out and be seen only in the divine presence of Rama. At all other times, when he was alone, he was like an ordinary person, in fact weaker than an ordinary person.

Here is a small example. There is a stone from which you can produce fire. Even if such a stone is kept under water for a long time, it can produce fire when it comes into contact with another such stone. In the same manner, divine strength which is present in Lakshmana and Hanuman blossomed forth only when they came together or when they were in the company of Rama.

When Indrajit and Lakshmana were fighting; Lakshmana fell into a swoon. Indrajit tried his best to carry away Lakshmana to Lanka. Although Indrajit had all the strength, he could not move Lakshmana even a little. Hanuman entered the scene and was uttering the name of Rama. By hearing the name of Rama, Lakshmana became so alive that Lakshmana could be carried on the shoulders of Hanuman to the camp of Rama. Lakshmana was one who had such an attachment to the name of Rama that if Rama's name was mentioned, Lakshmana's strength would reappear.

Lakshmana used to display his strength only in the presence of human beings or rakshasas, but would never display even a fraction of his strength in the presence of Rama. Lakshmana had such noble and good qualities.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

During these few days, we have recognised and understood the great qualities of Rama from the story of Ramayana. We have also seen Rama's ideals as examples for ourselves; and it is only when we have understood this that our lives can become good.

5. The All-pervading Atma

Date: **May 1977** / Location: **Brindavan** / Occasion: **Summer Course 1977**

There is only one common feature for all living things in this world and that is the eternal spirit. In all manifold forms of creation, in unity and in diversity, we find only the spirit of Atma and nothing else. It is the realisation of this aspect that constitutes the essence of all learning.

Truth is something which everyone has to respect under all conditions. Truth cannot be changed by arguments, by comments or by discussions. In the same manner, the eternal truths contained in the Vedanta will manifest themselves as if they have no relation to a particular religion, to a particular sect or to a particular community.

Vedanta stands for ultimate Wisdom. Here the words wisdom and knowledge do not refer to the knowledge about material things or knowledge about music or knowledge about any particular branch of learning, but it represents the knowledge of divinity. It is the knowledge and wisdom about Atma that will be of some use to one in one's life. It is most useful for man to know himself. There cannot be anything more useful than knowledge of one's own self. What do we mean by knowledge about one's own self? It is the knowledge of the Atma. To know the Atma and to know one's own self is the most useful aspect of one's learning.

What is this Atma? Is it identical with one's body? Is it the same thing as our mind? Is it the same thing as our intelligence? What is Atma? Can it be identified with any one of these things?

We have our eye. This eye looks at the body and looks at the various organs that compose the body. Here, it is quite clear that the organs in the body which are being seen and the eye which is seeing them are quite distinct from

each other. The eye not only looks at the body and the organs but also looks at everything around us - the table, the house and the surroundings. It is obvious here that the things which are being seen are different and distinct from the eye with which we see these things.

We have fire and that fire burns matter. It also gives brightness. That which shines and burns is the fire. This is different from matter on which it shines and which it burns. Who is this individual who looks at this matter which is being burnt and the fire which is burning the matter? We see clearly that what is being burnt is different from what is responsible for this burning. This is a table, this is a tumbler. This is a kerchief. What is it that makes these things manifest and enables us to recognise them? This is a kind of light. This is an instrument. This instrument of light is shining on these various items and makes those items visible to us. As in that analogy, we shall have to regard the eye as an instrument. When this eye, an organ, is regarded as an instrument, how can we identify this instrument with the Atma? What has been said now applies not only to the eye, it applies to the ear which hears, the tongue which tastes, the hand which does work, the nose which smells. All these organs have to be regarded as instruments. When all these organs are treated as instruments, how can the human body, which is composed of these organs, be anything other than an instrument? It becomes clear that neither the organs nor the human body is identical with Atma.

Now we shall move on to the mind and enquire if there is any chance of identifying the mind with the Atma. We can see that mind is only a device by which one can distinguish and think. Mind is only a bundle of desires. Mind, which has this form of a bundle of desires, cannot be identified with the Atma.

We now come to intelligence. We will notice easily that intelligence is also an instrument, an instrument which can be used at the command of Atma. We know the nature of intelligence. We assume that we have a knife in our hand. With this knife, we make an attempt to cut a fruit. We cut a fruit only when the knife is sharp. So, as in this analogy, we can regard the mind as a knife, and only when the mind, which is the knife, has the sharpness, which can be referred to as intelligence, can we use the mind in a proper manner.

If we have already accepted that the mind itself is an instrument, along with the mind intelligence, which is only a quality of sharpness, which we have given to the knife is also a quality of an instrument. Can intelligence be anything other than a quality? If we enquire in this manner and go step by step, it will become clear that intelligence is also like an instrument.

The next stage is life. The life, or the prana in us is such that when we go to sleep during the night, it loses all the ability to find out even whether the prana exists or not. The prana, or the life in us, does not know whether the body is breathing in or breathing out. In that state of sleep, because all the sensory organs have become passive, they are not working. In those conditions, along with the organs, even this life quality is also not working. When the master himself is not doing any work, will the servants be active at all? In a similar manner, when all the organs have become passive and are not working, can this prana remain active? Here also it becomes clear to us that the prana should be classified as one of the organs and is not the Atma.

Then we ask the question, what is the nature of the Atma? This Atma, which is present in everyone, experiences the world with the assistance of the organs. Even in the dreaming state, in a very subtle manner, the Atma experiences the intelligence and the mind. The experience, which the Atma has in the wak-ing state and in the dreaming state, is also possible in the deep sleep state. We thus conclude that the quality of Atma is such that in all the three states: the waking state, the dreaming state and the deep sleep state, it does not change.

In our description, these three states may have three different names and three different aspects; but the Atma, during these changing states, does not change in reality. It is the same in all the three states. We take the example of a small plate. The plate is a silver plate. When we do not like the form of this plate, we can give it to a silversmith and convert it into the shape of a spoon. When we do not like the spoon after some time, we can change that form also and make it into a cup. At first it was a plate, then it became a spoon, thereafter it became a cup. What has changed in it is the form and the name, but the silver, the base for all the three forms, does not change.

In the same manner, like the form and the name which have changed in the case of the plate, the spoon and the cup, we refer to the waking state, the dreaming state and the sleeping state; but the Atma (like the base) remains unchanged in all the states. It is important to recognise this permanent truth that Atma remains unchanging. When we talk of the 'I,' we note that there are two kinds of 'I.' 'I' in one sense is the recognition of your external human form and the body. This is the eye with which you experience the external aspect. There is a second 'I' referring to the inner aspect. These two relate to two aspects, the body and the Brahman inside the body. Between these two extremes, there is also an intermediate state and that is the identification of the 'I' with the jiva in you.

To say that you are identical with the jiva in the intermediate state between the body and the Brahman is like the dreaming state. To say "I am the body" corresponds to the waking state. To say "I am Brahman" corresponds to the deep sleep state. The three forms, the waking state, the dreaming state and the deep sleep state, are only different forms given to the unchanging Atma. These are, however, simply reflections of the Atma and they cannot be identified with the Atma.

There is a state which is higher than all these three states and is referred to as the Turiya state. Here is one small example. We look at our own face in the mirror. You say that that is your face. But strictly speaking, that is not identical with your face. What you see in the mirror is something distinct and different from your face. In the image, your right eye appears as the left eye and the left eye appears as the right eye. It is not possible to establish the identity between the two. One should conclude that what you see in the mirror is only an image and not yourself. The reason for this is that the instrument in which you see yourself, namely the mirror, is something different from you. Here, one who sees is different from what is being seen. It is only when what you see and what is being seen are one and the same, that you can call them identical.

The 'I,' when it identifies itself with the Brahman in you, is what you see from the aspect of Brahman. In that description, there is a description of your own

self as I. That description should become a selfless description of your self to bring about true identify. It should be a selflessness in self. That is the true self. When you identify your 'I' with your body, you are saying it with an ego or ahamkara in you. When you identify it with the Brahman in you, the identification is not complete if you say it with a selfish motive. The true identification should be above ego and selfishness.

In this context, the Atma should be regarded only as a witnessing consciousness, when alone it will be the true Atma. You are only a witness. You, through the help of your organs and your body, are witnessing all the things around you. Atma is present everywhere. There is no place in the world where there is no Atma. That kind of omnipresent Atma enters a container, a form, and through that container, the human body, it makes use of you.

In order to understand and expound the true nature of this kind of Atma, Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha and Satrughna went to Guru Vasishta and started a discussion. The kind of teaching which is contained in this exposition of Atma is called Vasishta Gita.

The first step, or the negative step, is to say that Atma is not that, Atma is not this, and in that way, we remove all possible comparisons. In their childhood, the nature of Atma was discussed in this manner by arguments and expositions between them-selves and the Guru, and whatever they had given in that form to the world is now called the Vasishta Gita.

It is in this context that Rama took truth as His very basis and in that way, He gave up the kingdom that was rightfully due to Him. He never had any aspirations for kingdoms. Ramachandra took truth as His foundation and based all His karma on the foundation of truth. It is in this context that it has been said that "Sathyam nasti paro dharmah." Different from truth, there is no dharma. There is no truth which is different from dharma.

He regarded sathya and dharma as the two foundation walls. He also regarded them as the two wheels for the chariot of His life. He propagated that with sathya and dharma, one can carry on one's life in this world. This is

why Rama has been described by saying "Ramo vighraha van dharmah." Rama is the embodiment of dharma. Rama's form is dharma, Rama's conduct is truth. Here Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha and Satrugna can be identified with the four purusharthas: dharma, artha, kama and moksha. Ramachandra has been looking at these four purusharthas as distinct ones. He took dharma as the base, moksha as the destination which we have to reach. When we have a ladder and when we want to climb to the top using the ladder, the ladder rests on the ground as the base. The ladder has also got a destination which we have to reach. This ladder rests on the ground of dharma and attempts to reach the top mansion which is moksha. In between there are two steps, the steps of artha and kama. Both these steps, artha and kama, are to be joined either on one hand with dharma or on the other hand with moksha. If one is to expound it in a simpler way, one can say that dharma and artha join up and constitute one part, and kama and moksha, join up and constitute the second part. When dharma and artha are put together, we see that by a dharmic life, one may acquire wealth or artha or you have the aspiration to acquire wealth for the sake of dharma. Do not have kama towards the world. Do not have a desire to enjoy the world but have kama or the desire for moksha. All your earnings and acquisitions should be related to dharma and your desires to moksha.

Following the promise he gave to Rama on the mountain of Chitrakoota, Bharatha was spending all his time in the village of Nandigram. None of the citizens of Ayodhya could see Bharatha who was leading a secluded life in Nandigram. The reason for this is that Bharatha took a vow to lead the same type of life which was being led by Ramachandra, wear the same kind of clothes which Ramachandra was wearing and eat the same kind of roots and fruits which Rama-chandra was eating.

After living for fourteen years in the forest and after the death of Ravana, Rama was returning to Ayodhya along with Lakshmana, Sugriva and various other attendants. On the way, He reached the ashram of Bharadwaja. Rama knew very well the agony in the mind of Bharatha. Rama knew that if He delayed even a little beyond fourteen years, Bharatha would probably enter fire and destroy himself. So, Rama sent Hanuman in advance to Bharatha to

tell him about his impending arrival. When Hanuman reached Nandi-gram and told Bharatha that Rama was coming, Bharatha was overjoyed and was in ecstasy, and he quickly made all arrangements in Ayodhya for the reception of Rama. He called Sumanta and asked for his chariot to be brought. This chariot was placed on the outskirts of Ayodhya and Bharatha was waiting anxiously for Rama.

As soon as Rama, Lakshmana and Sita arrived Bharatha prostrated before them and, as a result of his being overjoyed, he went and embraced his brother Rama and felt exceedingly happy. He made his brother Rama sit in the chariot and he himself was leading the chariot. When Rama was sitting in that chariot and Bharatha was leading the chariot through the streets of Ayodhya, the citizens of Ayodhya could not distinguish between Bharatha and Rama. The reason for this was that Bharatha was also wearing his clothes and his hair like Ramachandra. Moreover, the brilliance in Ramachandra's face was exactly the same as the brilliance in Bharatha's face. Their bodies were different but their ideas, their thoughts and their views were identical. Bharatha was continually thinking and uttering the name of Rama. Consequently, Rama's form and Rama's brilliance entered Bharatha's body.

It is said "Brahma vid Brahmaiva bhavathi." One who has the knowledge of Brahman will become identical with Brahman. As he was continuously thinking of Rama, he was transformed into Rama. Citizens who came to garland Rama could not recognise who was Rama and who was Bharatha. They put all the garlands on Bharatha thinking that he was Rama. Bharatha was quite smart and was quite alive to the situation. So, he was telling the citizens, please garland my brother and not me. Bharatha was so intensely devoted to Rama that people could not tell who was Bharatha and who was Rama. What we should notice here is that Lakshmana's devotion was apparent and was always seen easily. Lakshmana had always attributes and qualities, whereas Bharatha was attributeless and without gunas. Here the form-less and the form are like the two legs. Here is an example for this. This is a pillow. There is a cloth covering the pillow. Inside the cloth is cotton. There is cotton inside and there is cotton on the outside in the form of a cloth. The cloth is the quality and has a form. The cotton is without quality. Here we

see that the formless is contained within the form. In the outer cloth, cotton is contained. In Vedantic parlance, we can say that the cloth and the cotton are one and the same. Bharatha has demonstrated this simple truth.

They all reached Ayodhya. The citizens of Ayodhya were extremely happy. In that happiness, they cleaned up all the streets, made all preparations for the coronation of Rama. The next day Rama was proclaimed King and Bharatha was proclaimed the Yuvaraja. After the ceremonies were gone through, Rama and Lakshmana stated that all that they had done was for the prosperity and happiness of the people. While this was the situation, a king by the name Gandharva was causing a lot of trouble to the people in the two cities, Takshasila and Pushkalavati, of his kingdom. The people came to Rama and Lakshmana and described their difficulties to them and begged that somehow or other their difficulties should be removed. Bharatha, who recognised that the people's prosperity and the people's happiness is also the ruler's prosperity and the ruler's happiness, went along with them in order to remove their difficulties.

Bharatha challenged this King Gandharva and fought with him very hard for seven days and with the help of the name of Rama, he defeated Gandharva. After defeating Gandharva, Bharatha made one of Gandharva's sons Takshaka, the king of Takshasila. The second son of Gandharva, by name Pushkala, was made the king of Pushkalavati. He returned to Rama and said that he does not want anything more, and that he has no more ambition. He said that he only wanted to spend the rest of his life at Rama's feet.

Lakshmana and Bharatha were such that they regarded their entire lives as belonging to Rama and their ambition was to be nearest to Rama. All their life was surrendered for the service of Rama.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

It is very necessary for you to recognise the affection that was shown between the brothers in the Ramayana and the sacredness of such affection. At no time and on no occasion did the brothers of Rama exhibit any

selfishness. With a selfless attitude, they were regarding that service to the people was the main concern of their life. All these good qualities were acquired by them from their Guru Vasishta, even while they were young; and they shaped themselves so as to be ideals for others in the world. It is only when we can recognise and understand the true nature of sathya and dharma, even while we are young, that we can get the most beneficial results out of such an understanding when we grow older.

This age of yours is a very sacred age. In this sacred age, you must make an attempt to get such good notions implanted in your mind. It is only when the young plant is straight that the tree will also be straight. But if the plant becomes crooked when it is young, the tree will also become crooked. If the plant is crooked, how can it change into a straight tree when it grows big?

You are like tender young plants. If, at this stage, you can get rid of all crookedness, you can grow into a straightforward useful citizen of the country. It is to give you this chance that this opportunity has come your way. Truly, your body is like the temple of God. You should make an attempt to keep this temple sacred and clean and use it in a good manner. You are going to make your body the living place for the Sanathana, the age-old God.

Along with your mind, you must keep your body sacred. Along with your body, you must keep your mind sacred.

6. Atma And Brahman Are Identical With Each Other

Date: **May 1977** / Location: **Brindavan** / Occasion: **Summer Course 1977**

Being the tiniest among the tiny particles, and being the biggest amongst the infinitely large things, and being present and recognised as a witness to all the living and the non-living things in the creation, Atma is identical with Brahman and Brahman is identical with Atma.

Pavitratma Swarupas:

You cannot ascribe a time for Atma to come or go and thus place limitations on it. It is permanently present everywhere, and it has neither good qualities nor bad qualities. It is present as the smallest thing in the small things and as the biggest thing in the infinitely large things.

Like the burning power of the fire and the shining strength of the sun, Atma is all-knowing. It has no sorrow, it has no attachment, it has no special feeling like any of the five senses which man experiences. It is present in all living things. It endows all living beings with an amount of wisdom called pragnana.

Atma is not visible from outside. Atma is neither visible nor invisible. It has no special form attached to itself. It is all pervading. This cannot be something which is either seen or not seen, either experienced or not experienced. It is something which is neither manifested nor unmanifested. It is above all this and beyond all description or even comprehension.

Atma cannot be what we can hear with our ears; what we can feel with any of our sensory organs. These can only be a means or instruments, in a limited sense, for understanding the Atma.

As we can experience the presence of matter with our sensory organs, the body is experiencing all the creation around it with its senses. Like the lamp which helps one to find out things, functioning as an ancillary instrument, so also all the organs help the body to experience the surroundings.

It is not right to describe this body, which in that manner depends upon various ancillary instruments, as Atma. We now recognise that the mind, the intelligence, the body, the chitta and the Antha Karana are all distinct from the Atma. Intelligence has been given a special position, a position which is higher than those of the senses.

Here is something which can be called a clear piece of glass or stone. It is incapable of self-luminescence. Since it has no shining or effulgence of its own, it can shine only when it is close to light. In a similar manner, effulgence is natural to Atma, and when the intelligence is close to it, it acquires the capacity to shine; otherwise we see that intelligence has no shining in it.

Moon does not shine by itself. The rays of the sun fall on the moon and the moon shines by reflection. In the same manner, intelligence is not self-effulgent. As the knife can take sharpness with it, so also the knife of intelligence can take sharpness with it. Thus intelligence is also an instrument and the sharpness, which it gets, also goes with the instrument. In that context also, we cannot identify Atma with the body or the senses.

In order that we may discover and understand Atma, this container, the human body, can become instrumental and can be helpful.

We can control the desires, which arise out of the sensory organs which are present in the body, by exercising and disciplining the mind.

Prema Swarupas:

In the very first instance we should try to understand the nature and attitude of the mind. Many times, I have explained this to you. This is a door and there is a lock on the door. To open the lock on the door, we put the key inside the

lock. If we turn the key towards the right, the lock opens. If we turn the key towards the left, the lock gets locked. In the same manner, our heart can be compared to a lock. Our mind is like the key. If we put the key of our mind in the lock of the heart and turn it towards Paramatma, we get detachment; if we turn it towards the world, we get attachment. We should, in that context, make an attempt to put the key of our mind in the lock of our heart and by using our intelligence turn the key towards Paramatma.

There is no doubt whatsoever that even by remaining a part and parcel of this creation, we can experience the divinity in our heart. And as we mentioned earlier, if we get a tree, the fruits from the tree are important. While the fruits on a tree are important, in order to get such fruits we have to protect the tree, the leaves and the branches. In a similar manner, the Atma is most important for us, but we have to protect the body and the sensory organs which help us to recognise the Atma. In this tree of creation, what is it that we are looking for? We are looking for the fruits of liberation or moksha. In this tree, as well, there are so many branches and leaves in the form of our relations and attachments. The leaves which are the ideas are present in a large number on the tree. Our thoughts and our desires are like the flowers that blossom on the tree. On the same tree is also the fruit of liberation or moksha. If we really want to get this fruit of moksha, we can do so only if we protect the leaves and the branches as well. However, this is not enough.

While having the desire to reach the fruit which is visible on the tree, what we have to do is to take care of the invisible roots of the tree and we have to water these invisible roots. These roots, which are invisible, can be compared with our faith and our belief in the Atma. On the roots of faith in this Atma is based the entire tree with all its leaves and branches. It is only when we undertake to water the roots and protect the tree, will we be able to get the fruit of moksha.

The sweet rasa, or the juice that can be extracted out of the fruit of moksha, is our character. If this juice of character and the faith, which is the root of the tree, are not present, then the tree becomes useless. Young people, if this faith does not exist in the form of roots, if the character does not exist in the

form of juice, then it is no longer a tree; it is as bad as firewood. The first thing we must do is to promote our faith in Atma, faith in one's own self, and then we must try and reach the fruit of liberation.

Lakshmana, Bharatha and Satrughna regarded this as important. Faith in Atma is identical with faith in Rama, and is identical with faith in Brahman.

In the story of Ramayana, just as Lakshmana was closely following Rama, so also Satrughna was closely following Bharatha. Such was the inseparable connection that existed between Bharatha and Satrughna. If Rama was not present, Lakshmana would not be happy at all. In the same manner, if Bharatha was not present for a moment, Satrughna would be in great sorrow.

Like Lakshmana, Satrughna was also easily excited. When Satrughna saw Manthara, his anger was so much that he caught hold of her hair and pulled her towards Bharatha. Satrughna was prepared to kill Manthara. On that occasion, Bharatha advised Satrughna that if he wants to get the grace of Rama, he should refrain from doing such harsh things. Bharatha said: "Could I not have punished my mother for her guilt? But if Rama comes to know that we have been cruel to our own mothers, he would send us away and would not show grace to us." We should see here that Bharatha and Satrughna were prepared to cause hurt and harm to their own mothers, but they were not prepared to displease Rama by their acts.

Bharatha and Satrughna were always following Rama because Rama was the embodiment of dharma and they were always wanting to please Him and earn His grace. Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha and Satrughna were the embodiments of the four great qualities of sathya, dharma, shanthi and prema.

In order to experience p r e m a, man goes about searching for several methods. If we really want to experience prema we have got to understand what peace or shanthi means. If we want to follow the path of peace, we will have to accept the path of dharma. If we want to follow the path of dharma, we will have to accept the path of truth. Here is a small example. Let us take

prema as the shining light. If we want to experience this shining light, we should have a bulb. If we want the bulb to glow and experience the shining light, we should have a connection to the bulb. By just a connection of wire to the bulb, the bulb is not going to glow. In that wire, we should have an electric current. Here we see that the electric current can be compared to the truth, the wire can be compared to dharma while the bulb can be compared to shanthi or peace. If we have all these three things, then only we will get prema, the light. We may have a good new bulb, we may have a wire, are we going to get light out of that? Unless there is current inside the wire, we cannot get the bulb to glow.

That is how Bharatha and Satrughna were following Rama and Lakshmana and were demonstrating their ideals in life to the people. In this manner, when Rama became the King and when Bharatha was the Prince and while the kingdom was being happily ruled and after all the rakshasas in Lanka were destroyed, a very powerful son of Ravana by name Lavanasura was still alive. Lavanasura was the eldest son of Ravana. He had the grace of Shiva. He had acquired the Trisula from Shiva. Depending upon the power of his Trisula, Lavanasura was giving a lot of trouble to the rishis and other good people.

The rishis could no longer bear the atrocities committed by Lavanasura, and they came running to Rama and begged Him to protect them and kill Lavanasura. Rama knew that this kind of prayer from rishis would come. He looked at Satrughna who willingly accepted to go and destroy the enemies. Satrughna was a very strong person and had many good qualities. Devotion and faith were his strong points, but unfortunately, in Ramayana, Satrughna's qualities were not described to the people in a prominent manner. As soon as this was known to Satrughna, he went and touched the feet of Rama. He told Rama that by His grace, he could undertake the task and destroy the enemies. Rama knew very well that Satrughna was a powerful person and so he smilingly blessed Satrughna. Not only this, Rama explained to Satrughna the secret of the weapon, Trisula.

He told Satrughna that the Trisula was present in the house of this rakshasa.

Every morning this rakshasa goes to the forest to gather food which primarily consisted of meat. Rama advised that the rakshasa must be killed before he returns home and begins to eat his meal. In this manner, having obeyed Rama's orders and having secured the blessings of Rama, Satrughna started. Overnight he rested in Valmiki's Ashram. It may be regarded as his special fortune that in Valmiki's Ashram, Sita had just at that time given birth to Lava and Kusha.

Satrughna saw Sita and the two children. But in his mind, he thought that this news should not be conveyed to Rama as he felt that it was not proper and kept it a secret. As soon as he left, he thought of Sita and Rama in his own mind and went to face Lavan-asura, the rakshasa. In the forest; he fought Lavan-asura and destroyed him.

After destroying Lavanasura, he returned to Rama, touched his feet, and expressed his desire to spend the rest of his life at the feet of Rama. Rama did not agree to that. Rama said that he should become the king of the area that Lavanasura was ruling earlier.

For twelve years he ruled over the kingdom of Lavanasura in a manner that was giving great happiness to the people, the rishis and other inhabitants. Satrughna was unable to bear the separation from Rama for a longer period, and he was returning to Ayodhya.

Thus, while returning to Ayodhya, he again spent one night in the ashram of Valmiki. By this time, Lava and Kusha were twelve years old and Valmiki made these two boys, Lava and Kusha, sing the Ramayana in a most attractive manner. When Satrughna was listening to the songs recited by the two children, he forgot himself in that happiness. He was in such an ecstasy that he looked at Lava and Kusha with great pleasure. He could not believe that he was Satrughna. He behaved as if he was not connected with them and returned to Ayodhya.

After returning to Ayodhya he described to Rama the great peace that he experienced in Valmiki's Ashram. In spite of the fact that Rama was in a hu-

man form, He was all knowing. He knew everything. He also enjoyed and experienced the narration of Satrugna. But he told Satrugna that he should not speak about this secret in Ayodhya just at that moment.

Every act of an Avathar has to be taken into consideration in the context of the situation and the time and the happenings at the time in which the Avathar lives.

All the rishis knew that Rama was an Avathar of God; but in order that the story of Ramayana may progress, they did not give this secret out to others. Vishwamithra knew very well that Rama was an Avathar. Bharadwaja and Vasishta also knew very well that Rama was an Avathar. But if they gave out the truth, then the main purpose for which Rama had become an Avathar would not be achieved. In the same manner, it is not possible for any Avathar to proclaim to the world that the Avathar is come, and, if so, for what purpose. That is the maya of God.

Yasoda, the mother, even after she had the vision of all creation in the open mouth of Lord Krishna, yet on account of maya she forgot the divine vision and she began to think that she was the mother and that Krishna was her son. In the same manner, Vasishta, Vishwamithra and all other rishis kept the secret of Rama. But when they were alone and when they got together, they were singing the glory of Rama amongst themselves. When the rishis were sitting alone, amongst themselves they used to describe the qualities of the Lord and they said, "Can we understand you, Oh Lord? Can we explain what you are, Oh Lord? You are smaller than the smallest thing, you are larger than the largest thing, you are present in all the 84 lakhs of different living jivas. How can we understand you and explain to others what you are?" Man is steeped in maya in this manner and he cannot free himself from maya. He forgets his origin and he does not understand Brahman. However, if this situation does not exist, there is no reason why Paramatma should come as an Avathar at all. What exists as a reality is only one, but what we see is manifold. This one thing appears to us as if it is many. What is real is the Param Jyothi. This Param Jyothi is the Atma Jyothi. There is a small illustration for this.

We have a candle light here. We cover this candle light with a pot which has ten holes in it. On this we also put a thick Turkish towel. In that situation, the light that is inside the pot is not seen at all from outside. But if, slowly, we take off the towel with which we have covered the pot, uncovering each hole one by one, then we can see one light, another light, as the holes come out one by one. But if we remove the towel completely and throw it away, we look at ten different holes, and ten different candle lights. In spite of the fact that we can see ten different lights, if at that time we break the pot and throw it away, then we realise that all these ten lights are only from one single candle. Earlier we did not see any light, but once when the cover on the pot has been removed, we have seen ten lights. If the pot is broken, then we again see one light. This is the basis of your life. There is inside, as we all can see, the Jivan Jyothi or Param Jyothi. The Jivan Jyothi has been covered by the human body with ten holes in it. We have put the thick cover of worldly desires on it. If the desires of the human body should be broken, then we will have the vision of the one Jyothi, i.e., Atma Jyothi. That has also been called the Adwaita Jyothi. This Adwaita Jyothi is the Jyothi of the Atma. Atma is the embodiment of bliss. You can only experience the embodiment of bliss, and it is not possible to exhibit it in any other manner.

Many people have tried their best to find whether this Atma exists. If it exists, where could it be found? Since time immemorial, it has been the attempt to find out one's Atma and to know what Atma is and where it is? What is the evidence for us to accept the existence of the Atma?

To establish the existence of the Atma, we cannot take even the Vedas as the pramana. The Vedas have only dealt with people in certain aspects relating to the world, and have explained what they should do in this world through various karmas. This is the subject matter of the Vedas. It has not been possible for the Vedas to establish the nature of the Atma.

Here is a small story. In Ramayana, Sita, Rama and Lakshmana went to the ashram of Bharadwaja. In that ashram, following the ancient practice, the women, the rishipatnis, were sitting on one side; the men, the rishis, were sitting on the other side. Unlike the manner in which people sit together

nowadays, when Sita, Rama and Lakshmana entered the ashram, Sita went and joined the women and Rama and Lakshmana went and joined the rishis. As Rama and Lakshmana lived in the forest, they were wearing clothes suitable to life in a forest; and their shining faces were similar to those of the rishis. The situation was such that they were not able to make out who was Rama and who was Lakshmana. On the other hand, Sita could be recognised easily. Sita was alone and the rishipatnis recognised her and began talking to her. They were asking questions about her life in the forest. The men, on the other hand, went on explaining the Vedas and the discussions centred round the Vedas.

On the other hand, the women began asking questions and whispering. They came to Sita and asked her, "Has your husband also come with you?" Sita replied, "Yes, I cannot come alone, I cannot live without Him. He has come along with me and He is sitting along with the rishis." The second question which was asked of Sita was, "Who is your husband? Can you find him out among so many of the rishis?" Sita was a very noble and modest woman, and could not stand up in the midst of all those present and point to her husband and say who her husband was. She simply bowed her head down and kept quiet. Even then the women did not keep quiet. They began asking more questions such as: is that man, wearing such and such clothes, your husband? Is that man, who is having a peculiar hair style, your husband? The women started pointing at several of them and asking Sita if any one of them was her husband. But whenever a wrong person was shown, she would reply in the negative. Locating Atma should proceed in this manner.

Today, many young people may have the ambition that they should get a wife like Sita. A young man, who wants to have a wife like Sita, should make an attempt to be like Rama.

If he behaves like Ravana, he will not deserve a wife like Sita. If a girl wants to have a husband like Rama, she should endeavour to be like Sita. If she is like Surpanakha, how is she going to deserve a Rama? So, in every family, the husband should be like Rama and the wife should be like Sita. If one will assist the other, at times of difficulties as well as at times of pleasure, like

Rama and Sita, they will be happy indeed.

7. All The Characters In The Story Of Ramayana Are Ideal Examples

Date: **May 1977** / Location: **Brindavan** / Occasion: **Summer Course 1977**

There is no birth and there is no death for the Atma. There is no beginning, there is no end, there is no interval separating the beginning and the end for this eternal spirit. Atma does not die, Atma is not born nor is it killed by any one else. It will remain as a witnessing consciousness, witnessing everything that goes on in this world.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

Man must learn to face the ups and downs of life with equanimity and equal-mindedness. Then, alone, life will have a meaning for him. Forbearance and peace will become available only in the ordinary run of life. In order to promote these qualities of forbearance and peace in life, the adhyatmic way, or the spiritual path, is very necessary. Because we have forgotten the ancient traditions and the ancient scriptures outlining the spiritual path, life has become devoid of character.

Truly, by claiming that we know everything, we are bringing some blemish on our own life. We cannot find people who know everything about life. Man, who now claims to know how to fly in the sky, has no happiness in him. What is the reason for this?

This is because he does not know himself and who he really is. One may jump at the stars and fly in the sky, but if that individual does not understand his own nature, he will never be happy. If we really want to be blissful and happy, we must know the true nature and meaning of bondage. It is only when we know what bondages are binding us, can we make an attempt to find the way to break those bondages. The biggest bondage for man is ignorance because

of which he does not know his own nature. So long as such ignorance remains with him, he cannot get rid of sorrow. So long as he is steeped in sorrow, he cannot have happiness in life. It is important to get rid of the sorrow and be happy. This process is described as sadhana.

Bharatha, in the Ramayana, for the sake of bliss, was searching for the path of truth. He was in no way inferior to Rama. For the protection of truth, or for the following of the right kind of dharma, or for making sacrifices when they were necessary, Bharatha was equal to Rama.

In the ordinary sequel, we regard Bharatha as the third stage. We first take the part of Rama, then Lakshmana, then Bharatha and then Satrughna. But if we look with care at the type of faith each one had, we find that Bharatha comes second in the series. In all these four brothers, we do find some apparent changes at the time of birth. It is not possible for us to determine and say, this one is greater and that one is smaller. It is just for man's satisfaction that these minor differences are created. We are not able to recognise the divinity that is present in three brothers: Bharatha, Lakshmana and Satrughna.

When Bharatha was at his grandfather's place, Guru Vasishta sent him a letter asking him to come back to Ayodhya. As soon as Bharatha saw the letter, he felt very happy that he was being asked to return for Rama's coronation. But quickly he began wondering, because if Rama's coronation were to take place, his grandfather would also have been invited. He began worrying as to why he alone was called back. In this agitated frame of mind, he and Satrughna started for Ayodhya. They reached the entrance of Ayodhya. Bharatha was a very smart person, and he had a keen sense of observation. He noticed that at the main gate there were no fresh welcoming arches. The mango leaves were all dried up, and this was symbolic of a dreary atmosphere instead of proclaiming prosperity. He started seeing bad omens and began wondering as to what the matter was. He found all the streets littered with dirty pieces of matter and all the houses appeared very unclean. This unusual situation made him think that something was drastically wrong, and that some tragedy had come over Ayodhya.

His chariot was taken straight to the mansion of Kaikeyi. As soon as he saw Kaikeyi, he could not understand the meaning of the perplexed look which Kaikeyi had. After a few minutes, he realised that the death of his father had taken place, and Rama had been banished to the forest. Without being able to bear the sorrow as a result of the two events, he ran to his Guru Vasishtha. Vasishtha described to him, in detail, all that had happened.

As soon as he got the details of what had happened, Bharatha became very upset. His eyes became very red. He became so excited that he used very harsh words to his mother. He could not stay there even for a moment. He went straight to Kausalya. Unable to bear the death of her husband and the separation from her own son, Kausalya was in deep sorrow. Bharatha ran to Kausalya, fell at her feet and asked her to pardon him, and said that he was innocent, and that he was not responsible for what had happened. In many ways, he asked for her pardon. Both Kausalya and Vasishtha told Bharatha that he should first perform the last rites of his dead father.

It was already fourteen days after the death of his father. The body was carefully preserved. The kind of preservatives and methods by which the body was preserved in those days were not such as we have in these days. Bharatha came to the conclusion that he does not deserve to perform the last rites of his father. The first son, Rama, alone should perform the last rites. Bharatha said that in Ayodhya where Rama does not live, he cannot stay for a single moment.

Here, we should see that Bharatha even forgot the grief caused by the death of his father. Grief caused by the separation from Rama was much more to him than the death of his father. But somehow, he adjusted himself to the orders of Kausalya and Vasishtha and performed the last rites of his father. The very next day, all the necessary ingredients were collected in order to perform the coronation of Bharatha. But Bharatha would not agree for his coronation. Bharatha said that whatever arrangements had been made for the coronation should be taken along with him to the forest. He proclaimed that, in the Ikshvaku Dynasty, it is only the eldest son that had the right to the throne. He being younger had no right at all.

He recognised that this was the dharmic way of doing things, and he requested Vasishtha and others to let him go to the forest. He thought that Rama's coronation could be performed even in the forest. He always looked to the ideas of people and wanted to follow the ideas of people. So he took some of the people of Ayodhya with him. In this manner, along with the people of Ayodhya, he undertook the journey to the forest.

From some distance, Bharatha saw that Rama was having his hermitage on the Chitrakoota Mountain. His heart melted at the sight. The sorrow that came from his heart was something which he could not bear. He noticed that Ramachandra was having unkempt hair. He was shocked to see that Ramachandra, who was used to sleeping on a bed of silk, was lying on a bed of leaves, bark and the ground. Rama, looked at the sorrow of Bharatha and in many ways tried to console him. But all the attempts made by Rama to console Bharatha did not give him any satisfaction. Bharatha fell at the feet of Rama and said that he would not leave his feet until Rama agreed to return to Ayodhya and accept to become the king.

Even in that sorrowful situation, Rama was asking questions in a very peaceful manner. Is every-one well at home? Is the kingdom going on well? Are the people of the kingdom well? He was asking questions with an unparalleled peace of mind.

During that conversation, Bharatha told Rama that their father was dead. Although Rama was the in-carnation of Narayana, because he was in human form and in order to proclaim how one in human form should conduct himself in that situation, Rama also appeared as if he suffered very much at the news of the death of their father. Rama and Bharatha consoled each other.

A potter cannot make a pot with hard clay. The clay must be wet and used as soft paste. In the same manner, after creating a body, God has to put life into it. For putting life into the body, the parents are made responsible. For the birth of a human being, the father and mother are responsible. God functions only as a witness to that. To such parents, to such father and mother, one should repay one's debt of gratitude. This is the reason why we are taught

that mother should be regarded as God, father should be regarded as God, teacher should be regarded as God and the guest should be regarded as God.

Immediately thereafter, Rama and Bharatha went to the river and performed the traditional rites which they do at the death of the father. They returned home and were talking about various things. The very next day Bharatha arranged a big congregation. All the people were requested to pray. The prayers were that either Rama should return to Ayodhya and take charge of the kingdom or, since all the sons were on the same footing, Bharatha should also be permitted to stay in the forest along with Rama. Preparing himself for such a task, Bharatha was determined that by some means or the other, he should take Rama back to Ayodhya. He was repeatedly saying that for the sins committed by his mother, he was in no way responsible.

Rama told Bharatha that even his mother Kaikeyi was not responsible for this situation. In fact, they proposed to install Rama on the throne the very next day. Overnight, due to pressure, this decision had been changed. The change in such a decision overnight must be because of divine will. It was not a human decision. In this manner Rama was giving some explanation or other to Bharatha. In spite of all explanations, Bharatha did not give up his determination. When Bharatha left Ayodhya and went to the river Ganges, even Guha had some doubt about the intentions of Bharatha. Guha asked Bharatha if he was taking all the attendants with him to Rama with a view to cause some harm to Rama. Bharatha was not in a position to give any reply. Bharatha accused his mother and said because he was born to this woman Kaikeyi, he was submitting himself to all this humiliation.

From there, he went to the ashram of Bharadwaja. He also exhibited some suspicions about Bharatha's motives. Here it became very clear how much Bharatha was devoted to Rama. Bharadwaja wanted to test Bharatha. He had a big throne chair prepared and was arranging for a feast. The feast that was arranged by Bharadwaja was not creating any interest in Bharatha. When his brother Ramachandra was living on roots in the forest, he would not participate in this feast. We should recognise the close relationship and affection that existed between the brothers of those days.

Recognising the connection between Rama and Lakshmana, Bharatha felt very sorry that Lakshmana alone deserved to be close to Rama and that he did not get that opportunity of being close to Rama. In this way Bharatha's ideal was to serve Rama all the time and thereby derive the grace of the Lord. We can describe in this manner Bharatha's devotion and faith, and we can come to the conclusion that Bharatha's devotion and faith were even more than those of Lakshmana. Brothers, between whom such devotion, faith and affection exist, are very rare in this world. These brothers were serving Rama all the time, and in that service they were setting an example to mankind. In each family, how should brothers conduct themselves? How should they treat each other? Answers to these questions were being furnished by these brothers.

Students:

It is necessary for you to recognise the kind of close affection that existed between the brothers in the family of Rama. You should draw a lesson from this and put this ideal into practice. We should understand the kind of ideals that should bind a family together. We should make an attempt, to some extent, to remove our selfishness and practice self sacrifice. The main teaching of Ramayana is to ask you to throw away your selfishness and promote selfless sacrifice and good qualities in you. Every individual character in Ramayana has been preaching this kind of ideal life. Such an ideal example of life is very necessary today. In such an ideal example of life, we should give some respect to disciplinary measures. Without discipline, whatever ideal examples you may give to your life, there is no value for them.

Bharatha was not in a position to overrule Rama's orders. Bharatha did not like to become the king and rule the kingdom. In this conflict, Rama tried to console Bharatha. Vasishta then gave a small advice which would give satisfaction to Bharatha. Vasishta said, "You can take the sandals of Rama, and regarding those sandals as symbolic of Rama, perform the coronation for the sandals and carry on the rule of Ayodhya." He could not throw away the orders and suggestions given by the Guru. He could not also contradict the orders of Rama. So, with a very heavy heart, he agreed to receive the

sandals.

The people of those days were also such that they will obey good orders immediately. So, they recognised the sacred heart of Bharatha and they accepted these suggestions. He took Rama's sandals, put them on the throne, and with a heavy heart, went to the village Nandigram. In that village, he announced that he would stay without food and without rest till Rama returns to Ayodhya. He decided and began to live a life of austerity in the village Nandigram in the same manner in which Rama was living in the forest. In this context, the rishis and elders have been telling us that the attributes and aspects of Rama and Bharatha became one and the same. This exemplary conduct of Bharatha, by which he had accepted fully the orders of his brother, and was carrying on the rule of the country, demonstrates his greatness.

If we carefully look at the main characters in the story of Ramayana, we will come to the conclusion that God has put all this together as a drama on the stage of the world. People can learn from the numerous examples which God has given through Ramayana. God will also bend Himself to help His devotees. For the sake of happiness to devotees, God will be prepared to undertake any kind of trouble. Even if we blame God, He does not feel so unhappy as when His devotees are blamed. God is above gunas. He is not affected by gunas. So He does not attach importance to blemish. God is omnipresent. Because He assumes some form, we believe that God is of a particular form. That God is omnipresent is the Truth. How can we demonstrate this Truth? Here is a small example for this.

We know that earth, water, fire, air and space are the five elements. For these elements, there are attributes. Amongst these five, the most important one is earth. Earth has got all the five attributes, the qualities of sound, form, touch, taste and smell. Because of these five qualities, the earth becomes immobile, becomes stationary and heavy.

When we go to the second element, water, it gets some mobility. In water, one of the qualities, namely smell, has disappeared. Only four attributes remain. Because one of the attributes has disappeared, it has acquired some

mobility.

When we go to the third element of fire, it has got the attributes of sound, touch and form only. Since two qualities have disappeared, fire has become even lighter and fire is able to move faster than earth or water.

When we go to air, it has lost three of the attributes. It has got only two of them, namely sound and touch. It has no form. Since three of the attributes have disappeared, air has become much lighter and moves faster and freely occupies the whole space.

The last one, the fifth element is space, or akasa. This space has lost all the qualities. Neither form nor touch, nor smell nor taste are present in akasa. So it has become omnipresent. It is so light that it is present everywhere.

God has no attributes or gunas at all, and therefore, is able to be present everywhere. If space or akasa, which has only one quality, namely sound, is present everywhere, then God, who has no quality or no attribute at all, can be present everywhere. One may at this point get a doubt that if God is omnipresent and is above gunas, how is it that the gunas are not in Him but He is in the gunas?

The moment we say that He is everywhere, it follows that He is present in the gunas also. He is in the gunas, but the gunas are not in Him. How is this possible? For example the mud is present in the pot, but the pot is not present in the mud. The pot is created. The pot has a form. The form has been given in an artificial way. However, if God is in His formless aspect, it is not possible for people to easily recognise the formless aspect. So, He takes a human form, and comes to the world. In this way, He wants to demonstrate to the people the ideal path they should follow.

Students:

I am hoping that you will take at least one or two of the great ideals that are contained in the story of Ramayana and imbibe them and put them into

practice in your daily life.

8. Ignorance Is The Cause Of One's Sorrow

Date: **May 1977** / Location: **Brindavan** / Occasion: **Summer Course 1977**

A bubble of water is born out of water, it is made up of water, it ultimately mixes with water and disappears. As in this analogy, man is like a bubble and NARAYANA is like the source water. Man is born out of Narayana, is made up of Him and ultimately merges with Him. What else can I tell you? This is the simple and elemental truth.

Prema Swarupas:

The jiva has three aspects: one is the spiritual, the other is the material aspect and the third is something connected with daily life. These three aspects resemble the deep sleep state, the waking state and the dreaming state. Just as the waves are created out of water and are contained in water, so also the worldly life is contained in the spiritual life.

The sweetness and the coolness are qualities of water. These qualities are also noticed in the waves and in the foam. Sath, Chith and Ananda, are three attributes which may be noticed in an individual. Through the individual, they show up in his worldly life and they reflect the spiritual content in him. These aspects, the worldly aspect and the spiritual aspect are inseparably connected with each other.

When we talk of the individual, we have to consider the divinity in him or the Atma Swarupa. The basic content of the individual or the Atma Swarupa will remain separate and will not mix with anything else. This Atma does not need any direct evidence, and it is being felt in the world at all places and at all times.

When a child, who has not seen the ocean at all, is told by his parents that

there is an ocean, and that they have seen the ocean and have had a bath in the ocean, the child believes that there is an ocean. In what he is getting from his parents, there is no direct evidence and demonstration so far as the child is concerned. It is a matter of the child having faith in his parents.

In the same manner, men, who cannot experience Atma directly, do not realise divinity or the sacredness of Atma by themselves. To such people, divine persons, sages and rishis, who have had this experience, must convey their experience. This is not direct evidence and demonstration to the ordinary man.

As the water, the waves and the foam are all inseparably connected with each other, the three aspects, the spiritual aspect, the worldly aspect and the divine aspect, are inseparably connected with each other. But depending on the environment and the situation which exists around, man uses one word or the other with greater appropriateness. It is in this context of the triple aspect that I have often said that you are not one person but that you are three persons: the one you think you are, the one others think you are, and the one you really are. There is one small example for this. Suppose a potter goes to a place and digs out some mud and makes a heap of the mud in front of his house. After some days he uses this mud, which he has collected, and makes pots, pans, and so on. As a result of what the potter had done, there is a pit in one place and there is a mound of mud in front of his house. As he takes out the mud from the mound and goes on making pots and pans, you find that the mound is diminishing in size and the pots and pans are increasing in number. When we put water into the mud that is in the mound, it gets absorbed easily but when we put water into the pot, it remains unabsorbed. However, the mud that is used for making the pot and the mud that is heaped up as a mound are the same. But the features that are contained in the mud that comes out of the pit or that comes out from the mound are not the same as those of the mud used for making a pot. What is the reason for this? The reason for this is that the mud, used for making a pot, has been treated by putting it in the fire; and because of such a treatment in the fire, the pot has taken a definite shape and water remains unabsorbed in the pot. After using the pot for sometime, if one is careless about handling it, the pot gets broken;

and once the pot is broken, the pieces break further and are ultimately reduced to dust and mud. Our body, which can be compared to the pot, breaks into pieces and is analogous to the aspect of the daily life. The phenomenon, which we see when the mound goes on diminishing gradually, may be described as the aspect of divinity where we recognise continual disappearance. On the other hand, the mud which remained unchanged in all the three stages of: the pit, the mound and the pot, can be described as representing the spiritual life. The name and the form may be different from time to time but the essence, the basic material, remains unchanged. What does not change and continues to exist in all the forms and names is permanent, and this is analogous to Atma which is present in all the three stages. In order to recognise the true nature of Atma, we have to make several efforts. It is not as if there is no reason for our inability to recognise the form and nature of Atma. There is a small story to illustrate this.

Ten friends came together and they wanted to cross a flowing stream. As the river or the stream was flowing fast, they were somewhat confused. However, by some effort they reached the other bank of the river, and developed a doubt whether they had all been able to cross the stream. The moment this doubt entered their mind, there was also a desire to check whether all the ten people had indeed come through. One of them began counting one, two, three until nine and then he imagined that the tenth person was not present. Under those circumstances, to think that one is absent is simply the result of his own ignorance, because he was not counting himself. Not only was he under the impression that the tenth person was not present, but he also began to feel that one of the group may have been washed away in the river, and they were all in a state of mourning. The feeling that the tenth person was not present is ignorance, and the feeling that he was washed away by the river is a further step in their ignorance. To get the feeling that the tenth person was even dead and gone is complete ignorance.

At that moment another person, not belonging to the group, was moving in that direction and asked them what the cause of their suffering was. The reply was given that they were ten people when they came to the river, they were ten when they entered the river, but when they came out of the river

they were only nine, and that the tenth person has been washed away and this was the cause of their sorrow. When this person was told the reason for their sorrow, he saw that there were in fact ten people and so he asked them to count again in his presence. In the recounting, it was once again one to nine and the person who was counting did not count himself, the tenth one. He was feeling very disturbed that the tenth one was not present. The new person who came in recognised the mis take which they were committing. He himself started counting, one to nine and he pointed out that the tenth person (the person who was counting) was omitting himself uncounted. They all then recognised that the tenth person was not washed away by the river, and that in reality he did not die. Simultaneously in one moment, their sorrow was removed and they were happy. What is the reason for this sorrow which they experienced before? What is the reason for the happiness they are experiencing now? Their ignorance was the cause of their sorrow, and the removal of ignorance was the cause for their happiness.

The moral of this story is that the non-recognition or recognition of one's own self, can be the cause of sorrow or of happiness as the case may be. Here it is also established that this happiness which we experience is one's own form or one's own self. The permanent bliss that one gets by the knowledge of Atma has been described by several people by saying that Atma is all-knowing and Atma is above duality. Atma is one and not two. Atma is permanent. Atma is unwavering. Atma is above description and above suffering. There are different ways of describing Atma but these words cannot undertake to tell us the form of Atma. It is not possible for anyone to establish its form. One can only experience this for Oneself. It is not possible for others to give a description which enables another person to experience this. Here the bliss or the happiness, which can be got out of demonstration or description, will not be as good as that obtained from direct experience. Thus, knowledge of this Atma can come only out of experience and cannot come out of reading books. There is one other example for this.

There is the ocean. When we bring water from the ocean and drink it, we find that the water tastes salty. The same water of the ocean, because of the heat of the sun, is converted into vapour, forms clouds and comes down as rain

and such water will be sweet and not salty. Where has this change from salty taste to sweet taste come about? The sweetness had come when the ocean water was being changed into vapour as a result of the heat of the sun. There is a possibility, in this situation, to recognise the difference between the sweetness on the one hand and the salty taste on the other. This sweet water is something which you realise with your own experience. The knowledge that the water, which comes directly from the ocean, is salty is something which we acquire by frequent hearing. The knowledge acquired by hearing and by reading is not very satisfactory. Knowledge coming from one's own experience gives real happiness. How can we get such experience? The knowledge that is contained in the ocean of grace has to be transformed by using one's intelligence like the heat of the sun. When that vapour can be changed into clouds, it can be compared to the truth. Out of clouds of truth should form rain drops of prema. When the individual drops of prema come together to join, out of that will come a stream. This stream is the real bliss. This stream of bliss will go back again and merge with the ocean of grace. As the water, which came out of the ocean became vapour, then became cloud and rain and went back to the ocean, so also the divine grace that comes to us turns into fruits as clouds, turns into drops of prema, drops join and become stream of prema and the stream goes back to the ocean of grace.

Human beings of today are not making any attempt to get some idea of the ocean of grace. How can they transform themselves into clouds of truth? If they cannot realise the clouds of truth, how can there be drops of prema? When there are not even drops of prema, how do we get streams of happiness? The first thing which we have to accept is that there is no dharma which is different from truth.

Truth has been accepted as the very first basis. For this truth, prema should become the support. If prema is present in us, it will be possible for us to earn the grace of the Lord to a large extent. Love lives by giving and forgiving. Self lives by getting and forgetting. In this context, Dasaratha is a perfect example of one who has taken the path of truth. He has also a title called Sathya Parakrama. There was another title for Dasaratha, i.e., one who was bound by dharma. Atirathi was another title for him and this means one who

could give happiness to a large extent. He was also called a Rajarishi. A king and yet a rishi shining with brightness because of the several great qualities in him. He was a king for the kingdom and was always taking the support and advice of eight persons of his kingdom. These eight persons were such that they always practised the highest dharma. The last one of these eight persons was Somantara. He has also accepted two persons Vasishta and Vamadeva as his Gurus. In Dasaratha's daily life, he was using these two Gurus as his purohits. In addition, when Dasa-ratha had some doubt or when he found that the people's prosperity was being obstructed or when he wanted some advice, he used to have six people as his principal advisers. The first among these six people was Suyagna, the others were Jabali, Kasayapa, Pascheya, Markandeya and Gautama. These six persons were retained by him as his principal advisers. He was ruling the whole of Bharath. There was no injustice, there was no untruth, there was no crime in the whole of Bharath during his rule. At that time he had eight ministers and six advisers. The rule of that day was such that Dasaratha looked into the prosperity of the people. If we look at the situation in some depth and try to understand the significance and the inner meaning, we should note that man has got five working organs and five sensory organs. Altogether he has got ten indriyas, and Dasaratha literally means the human body which has got five working organs and five sensory organs. Dasaratha symbolises this chariot of the human body which has got ten organs. Dasaratha also attracted three gunas in the form of Kausalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi. The four Purusharthas: dharma, artha, kama and moksha are symbolised by Dasaratha's four sons. Dasaratha was one who proclaimed such a significant inner meaning to the world and urged the people to lead an ideal life.

Sita is the daughter of the king of Mithilapura whose name was Videha. Videha means one who has no body or one who has no consciousness of his human body. The capital of Dasaratha was Ayodhya. Ayodhya means a city into which enemies cannot enter. Dasaratha had such noble qualities and ideals that he was carrying on the rule of his country in an exemplary manner. Sita can be identified with wisdom, and Sita marries Rama or becomes one with Rama who is dharma. When wisdom comes together with dharma, in the ordinary course, such a good event will meet with some

obstacles. It is customary and quite natural that every good thing is met with by some obstacles. As I state often, pleasure is only an interval between two pains. If there is no pain at all, there is no value for pleasure. Sita is the embodiment of wisdom and she had been taken away by Ravana, who symbolises selfishness and ego.

If one wants his little wisdom to disappear, all that one has to do is to promote his selfishness, jealousy and ego. Ravana symbolises selfishness, jealousy and ego. To make a search for Sita, who had been taken away by the bad qualities, selfishness, jealousy and ego, Rama, in the form of dharma, along with the other Purusharthas, i.e., artha, kama and moksha, makes a journey. Here Lakshmana is to be identified with the mind. We should notice that Rama, the embodiment of dharma, combines with Lakshmana, who is identified as mind, and goes to the forest, which signifies life. In that forest of life, Rama searches for wisdom in the form of Sita. In this context, there is an argument between the two brothers Vali and Sugriva. Sugriva can be compared to the ability to distinguish between right and wrong. Here the inability or the weakness which is called dhirathwa has been destroyed in the form of Vali; and Sugriva, who symbolises the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, comes out victorious. Along with Sugriva, who symbolises viveka, or the ability to distinguish right from wrong, we have Hanuman. The combination of Sugriva and Hanuman is like the combination of viveka and courage. The viveka and courage went together in search of Sita, the wisdom. They meet with one obstacle in the form of an ocean of moha. Thus the ocean of moha had to be crossed and this crossing was effected with the help of courage in the form of Hanuman.

After crossing the ocean, they encounter the three gunas: the rajas, thamas and sathwa on the opposite bank of the ocean. They are Ravana, Kumbhakarna and Vibhishana representing the three gunas respectively. The rajas and the thamas, Ravana and Kumbhakarna, were removed from the scene and finally the sathwa Guna gets the upper hand in the form of Vibhishana. He has been crowned the king. After making Vibhishana the king of Lanka, Rama has the vision of wisdom, born out of experience in the person of Sita. Rama, prior to finding Sita, could be called a Brahmajnani but when he found

Sita, symbolising the knowledge of experience, there is a reunion of the knowledge of experience with the pure Brahma Jnana, and the culmination was the coronation, the story which we called Sahasratha Ramayana. This description which has now been given can also be called Adhyatma Ramayana. It is only when we can understand this interpretation of Adhyatma Ramayana, there is some benefit for us and a possibility of the realisation of the nature of Atma. If we keep on thinking of Ramayana in the human form of a king Dasaratha, a son Rama and look only superficially, how can we know the real significance?

Students:

Even Rama, who had established Rama Rajya on one historic occasion, had to leave this world and pass away. Everything has to pass away some day. Nothing is going to remain permanently in this world. Even the Rama Rajya had to disappear and change. Everything changes with time and nothing remains unchanged. Even Harischandra, who was an ardent adherent of truth at all times, had to pass away from this world. Nala who ruled over all the world had to pass away. Could he take even a small bit of land with him when he passed away?

Rama built a big bridge over the ocean. Do we see Rama alive now? Many people have ruled over this land, but could any one of them take away even a small portion of the land? The only thing which you can take and which you should take is the permanent grace of the Lord. A good name is all that you should aspire for during your life.

Although Rama gave up his mortal body, yet if we talk about Rama, so many years later in this yuga, obviously the good that Rama had done is responsible for this.

We should earn a good name and we should do good. We should lead a good life. We should do good to others. This is the ideal which we have to hand over to the rest of the world.

9. Sorrow Is Not Natural To Man: Happiness Is His Nature

Date: **May 1977** / Location: **Brindavan** / Occasion: **Summer Course 1977**

Every human being is born with karma, he grows in karma and gets liberation from karma. In fact, to everyone work is God, and work is the cause of his sorrow and of his pleasure. In this world all sorrows and pleasures are caused by man's work alone.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

There are some qualities which are always accompanying the jiva. His sorrows, his birth, his work, his hatred, his likes and dislikes, his lack of discriminating power and his ignorance are qualities which are always accompanying the jiva. Ignorance gets mixed with lack of discriminating power. Lack of discriminating power gives rise to attachment. Attachment gives rise to anger. Anger gives rise to hatred. Hatred gives rise to birth and sorrow. All these qualities are related to each other in an inseparable manner.

For sorrow, birth is responsible and for birth, one's own karma is responsible. However, we may ask if sorrow is natural to man or is it coming halfway through one's life? Truly, if sorrow is natural to man's life, he cannot get rid of sorrow all through his life. There is no basis for us to think that sorrow is a natural quality for a human being. If that is so, it could not be got rid of by any method.

Once we destroy the natural quality, then the very substance will also be destroyed. No man will make an attempt to destroy his own true form. For jaggery, sweetness is the natural quality and when the natural quality of sweetness disappears, will not the jaggery also disappear? When the jaggery and this natural quality both disappear, then jaggery itself will not exist.

The capacity to burn and the capacity to shine are naturally qualities for fire; and when the capacity to burn and the capacity to shine are destroyed or removed, fire also will not exist. When both the fire and its natural qualities are removed, then fire will disappear and will turn into coal. The form and the natural quality are inseparably connected with each other. By this analysis, we come to the conclusion that sorrow is not the natural quality of man. This is something which has come accidentally from outside.

There is a very good example for this. When man is happy and getting on well, nobody will go and ask him why he is happy; but when man is steeped in sorrow, others will go and ask him why he is in sorrow. Here we see that sorrow is something which is not natural. Happiness and bliss are natural to us. Truly, while being the embodiments of Atma and while being naturally wedded to bliss and happiness, yet because of our connection with the external world, we sometimes suffer from sorrow. All sorrow is something like a passing cloud.

If a mother puts the child in a cradle and if the child is playing and is happy, then the mother does not worry at all. She will go and do her work. If after a few minutes, the mother hears the cry of the child, she will come running in confusion and in haste and will look into the cradle to discover whether there was an insect or a mosquito or something which caused pain to the child. Here, when the child is happy, the mother takes it in a casual and natural manner. But if the child is crying, she immediately thinks that there is something unusual and starts searching. Dasaratha is one who recognised that happiness and bliss are natural qualities. It is because Dasaratha recognised that happiness is a natural quality of human beings, in his own home, the four Vedas in the form of Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha and Satrugna were playing happily. They are the embodiments of the Vedas. Sri Rama chandra represents Yajur Veda which says that dharma is the most important thing and the practice of dharma is necessary for us during our life. Lakshmana accepted Rama's order as final and was repeating his manthra in that manner; and thus Lakshmana represents the Rig Veda. Bharatha was always in the belief that singing the name of Lord Rama will give salvation and he thus represents Sama Veda. Satrugna followed the advice of three

brothers Rama, Lakshmana, and Bharatha and attempted to destroy all the enemies. Satrughna can, therefore, be compared to the Atharva Veda. Here Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha and Satrughna respectively represent the Yajur Veda, Rig Veda, Sama Veda and Atharva Veda. They were born as children of Dasaratha. Truly, the brilliant sunshine in the form of Rama, because it fell on the moon, the mind and the city of Ayodhya; people were enjoying the coolness of the moon and the brilliance of the sunshine coming from Rama. Citizens of Ayodhya were lucky that they were living in this scared atmosphere, playing, singing, and enjoying the sacredness.

For all work, there will be consequences and a result. There will be an echo and a reflection for all that we do. For this, a good example was being demonstrated by Dasaratha. On one occasion when he was young, he went hunting in the forest. While he was waiting at a spot during the night, he heard some sounds and being an expert hunter, he could locate the object by the direction of the sound. He shot an arrow in the direction of the sound, and soon he found that the arrow which he shot had killed the son of a rishi. He felt very sorry, and he took the dead body to the father of the boy and requested that he be excused. When the rishi realised that his son was dead, he was steeped in sorrow and was weeping with the dead body by his side. In this agony, he cursed Dasaratha and said that for this sin, he would also suffer in a similar manner and die when his son is not near him. Dasaratha recognised that whatever one does, the consequences will be inevitable and unavoidable. Dasaratha purified himself by telling himself that he must suffer the consequences of what he had done. Dasaratha was a rishi amongst the kings. He realised that sorrow is something which comes and goes and he set an example to the world by his own life.

Every individual character in the story of the Ramayana has been projecting an important ideal. Not only this, when Dasaratha realised that he was growing old, and that his strength and vitality were diminishing, then he showed to the world that he should no longer undertake the task of being a ruler.

One night during his sleep, he felt thirsty and he took out water from the jug

and tried to put it in a tumbler and wanted to drink it; but he found that when he was pouring water from the jug into the tumbler, his hands were shaking. He did not sleep that night at all. As soon as the day dawned, he sent for the Gurus Vasishta and Vamadeva. He told the Gurus that the vitality and the strength of his organs has diminished, and therefore, he cannot rule over the country. He requested them to make all preparations to install Rama on the throne. Here he established the truth that an individual who has no control over his own organs had no right to rule over the country. In the matter of ruling over the country, Dasaratha realised the proper code of conduct for the king, and the proper code of conduct for the people. Whoever the individual may be, however great he may be, he must recognise the conditions around him and adjust himself to the surroundings. But in certain instances in Ramayana, especially when Rama was going to the forest, it has been said that Dasaratha could not bear the sorrow, and that he fell down in a swoon. Here also Dasaratha was proclaiming that such sorrows are incidental, and they come because of our relationship and attachment to the human body. For an individual, there are no children before they were born. In those conditions, how does one understand either the sorrow or the pain caused by one's own son? It is only because of the bodily relationship that the father will experience sorrow. It is obvious here that any sorrow or pain caused by a son is something which comes halfway during one's life and is not natural to him.

Before one is married, one does not know anything about the attitudes of one's own wife. Prior to the marriage, whatever difficulty the girl may come across, the husband is not going to worry about it. But once the marriage is performed, even if the wife has a small pain or difficulty, the husband also suffers great sorrow. The truth becomes clear from this example that these sorrows and difficulties come halfway in our life, and that they are not natural to us. Because Dasaratha understood this truth, he could bless Rama when he was about to go to the forest. He could advise Rama not to have any difficulties in the forest, and that he should come back quickly and happily. This is the blessing which he gave because he knew the situation. Rama was adhering to truth at all times and because of these qualities he will have no problems in the forest.

Rama was an ideal son. It is often believed that if one has a son, then there will be no difficulty for the father in attaining salvation. This is not always correct. Did not the Kaurava king have many sons? What is the benefit which he got out of all his sons? Suka did not have children at all, did he not get salvation? Dhritrashtra, who had one hundred sons, did not have even one son left to do the last rites for him, while Suka attained salvation without any children. It does not follow that either good or bad will come out of the children. It is only when the sons take to the right path that good will come to the parents. The son who had enjoyed the grace and kindness of his father should repay this with gratitude by doing such good things in return. For the sacred birth of a human being, the parents are the main cause. If by securing such sacred human birth, man does not show gratitude in return to his parents, then it is a useless life.

To establish the truth of such statements to the world, it was Dasaratha who told Rama in Ramayana, "Go to the forest for the sake of adhering to truth." Dasaratha had no kind of attachment, and he had the ability to discriminate between the right and wrong. He was not an ignorant person. Dasaratha recognised that all attachments are only relationships between one body and another and such is a purely worldly attachment. On one occasion when the Sage Durvasa visited Vasishtha, Dasaratha was asking him for the chronology of his own dynasty. Dasaratha put the question to Durvasa with a view to finding out whether his family will uphold truth and dharma. Even at that time, Durvasa told Dasaratha that the sons he was going to have will be the embodiments of dharma, and that they will protect Truth and will have several good qualities. From that day, he was thinking that even if he has only one son, that will satisfy him provided that son will bring him reputation and glory. It is in that context that it has been said that it is better to be a swan and live for a short time rather than be a crow and live for a long time. What is the use of having barrels of donkey's milk? To have a spoonful of good cow's milk is better. So, even if it is one individual, if that one individual can spend all his time in serving the community around him, it is enough.

When the strength of your body, the strength of your mind, and the strength of your intelligence are good and powerful, if you cannot use your life for

helping others, what is the use of your life? It will be a waste. You cannot lead your life like the oil drop on the surface of water, without touching the water. Your birth, your life, your mode of conduct are all connected intimately with the community around you. If that community around you is not remembered by you and if all the time you think of your selfish interest, you are not going to be any good at all to anyone.

Truly, having been born in the sacred country of Bharath, having experienced the traditions and culture of Bharath, if you cannot imbibe the good in that culture, then life itself is a waste. You may listen to many discourses, you may yourself give several discourses; but if all that you hear and all that you say is not put into practice in your life, life itself will become unreal and artificial. If you simply hear about delicious food and delicious plates, is your hunger going to be relieved? Will the poverty of a poor man be removed if you tell him stories about money? If the capacity of several medicines is told to you, is your disease going to be cured? Is your poverty going to be removed if you are told about all the wealth in a bank? Sitting in darkness, if you simply talk about the brilliance of a thousand candles, is the darkness going to be removed? So also in our heart, the darkness of ignorance and jealousy must be removed not by talking but by practice of good conduct. After removing this, even if you have a tiny little bulb, it will be useful.

Young people, instead of telling a hundred things and talking about a hundred things, you should be prepared to do at least one thing and demonstrate it to others as an ideal. Truly, you should recognise the truth that sorrow, pains and losses come halfway in your life. They are not born with you. Such things which come halfway will also go away halfway, and they are not going to stick to us permanently. When we can recognise this truth very well, all the sorrows and pains are not going to trouble us at all.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

You have been listening to several stories from Ramayana. From amongst the ideals that we have found in Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha, Satrughna and Dasaratha, at least one or two must be picked up by you and put into practice

in your life. If you cannot do that, you will have wasted your time. Not only would you have wasted your time but you would have made your life purposeless and would have missed making good use of the opportunity that has come your way. Do not always seek authority. What you should try and do is service. Use your body, mind and intelligence in the path of doing service to others. You should recognise that this human body is given to you for the sake of helping others. We have been hearing day after day, the great ideals that have been taught by great religious teachers. If after listening to so many good things, there is no change or transformation in you, then all your life becomes a waste. All the religions teach only one common destination, and one good sacred path. All the religions together have taught us only good. If the minds of men are good, which religion is bad? The blemish and fault are in our minds and not in any religion. Rama ruled His kingdom in peace recognising that the people's happiness is His happiness and recognising that the people's prosperity is the primary concern of the king.

Rama never thought that He was the king and that people are under the king. He never had any jealousy or ego in His mind. He regarded Himself as a driver who had to lead the people. Rama, by His own conduct, would make the people go along the right path and demonstrate to them the ideal path. All that He had said or done was only for giving happiness to the people. For setting an example to the people and for protecting the truth, Rama sent His own wife to the forest. If it was for sticking to truth and dharma, to Rama it did not matter whether the person involved was the wife He married or the son who was born to Him.

Young people, I am hoping that you will re-establish Rama Rajya in this sacred country of ours. You must synchronise your thought, word and deed. You will be betraying your own country, if you follow a path where your thought is one and you utter words which are quite different and your action is different from both of them. If you betray your country, your whole life will become useless. If you cannot proclaim with pride that this is your mother country, that this is your mother tongue and do your duties to them, what is the use of living? It is as good as being dead.

10. Be Good, Do Good, See Good: This Is The Way To God

Date: **May 1977** / Location: **Brindavan** / Occasion: **Summer Course 1977**

Without giving up the Guna of Thamas, one can never have a glimpse of the concept of Divinity. Without giving up the Guna of Rajas, one cannot become a true devotee. By accepting the Sathwik Guna alone, can one follow the path of devotion. This is the simple truth of the world.

Prema Swarupas:

Work alone can bring out the true strength in man and show others what he is capable of. As a mirror can be used to show us the nature of our own face, so also the kind of work that a man does, will show up his qualities. Work will show whether a man has thamasik or rajasik or sathwik qualities in him. The work which man does is like a barometer. This barometer of work has the capacity to assess man's condition and the state of his mind. In this context, we can accept that there is no test of human qualities more stringent than of examining the work which man does.

From time immemorial, our ancestors have been taking to the path of work, the karma marga. By following this path of work, they have been able to understand and realise the existence of the Divine. Some people appear to be very sathwik, but when they undertake work, we may see that behind the cloak of apparent sathwik quality is present an amount of harshness. Some people in their words appear to be very harsh and cruel. But when they undertake to do some work, they become soft and kind. Here the truth becomes clear that the true human nature of man comes out in his active work and is not to be judged by his external appearance or by words alone.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

The kind of work which wise men do may appear to be the same as that done by an ordinary person. Although in appearance they may be the same, yet the result will be different in the two cases. The work done by an unwise man is always accompanied by a feeling on his part that he is doing work for his benefit and he is wanting to get for himself the benefit of that work. That kind of work is mixed up with ego, and a feeling of selfish benefit will lead to trouble and sorrow. The kind of work which a wise man does always carries a feeling which makes him identical with the divine aspect and that the work that he is doing is being done in the name and on behalf of God. He thinks that God is really doing the work, and that he is only an instrument. This will always give a good result and satisfaction to all.

Some people demonstrate an amount of synthesis between their thoughts and the work that they do. This represents the true type of good human nature. The unity and the synthesis between thought, word and deed is important. Man's ideas, talk and action must become one. This is the true basis of real human nature.

Students:

The work that you do in the spiritual sphere and the work that you do in the material sphere might appear to be the same, but in reality when we look at it in some depth, we find that they take two different paths. There is one small example for this: For a diabetic patient there appears a boil on his hand and this boil becomes worse and ultimately it leads to gangrene. In such a case, the doctor will advise that the hand should be amputated. If his hand is not amputated, the gangrene will spread to the rest of the body and will cause great harm. For the sake of safety of the total body, the patient should be prepared to get his hand amputated at that point. In another situation, when one is wearing beautiful golden bangles on one's hand, a thief may come and try to take away the golden bangles. If he cannot get them off the hand, he will want to cut the hand at a point and take away the bangles from the hand. Here we see that the doctor has used the knife to cut a hand and the thief has also done the same thing. Both of them apparently seem to have done the

same thing, but what the doctor has done is helpful and what the thief has done is harmful. There is another example for this. Owing to some wickedness, a person will go and set fire to the house in which others are living, and the house will burn down. The same kind of destruction by fire was also done by Hanuman in Lanka. He destroyed all the houses and mansions in Lanka by setting fire to them. Here the work that was done by Hanuman and the work done by a wicked individual appear to be the same, but what Hanuman had done has caused benefit and what the wicked man had done has caused harm. Although these tasks appear to be the same when we look at them superficially, yet because of the mental attitude that we have before these words are uttered and the action taken, the results may be different.

Man's mind alone is responsible both for his bondage and for his liberation. The final result of the work will depend on the attitude with which the work is done. Hanuman is one who had synthesized his thoughts, his words and deed; and he could become an important character. He was proficient in all the different types of grammar. He was a scholar proficient in the four Vedas and six Sastras. The scholarship of Hanuman made him look at everything with equanimity and equal mindedness. Sugriva and Hanuman saw that Rama and Lakshmana were coming in their direction while searching for Sita. However, Sugriva felt that Rama and Lakshmana were messengers of Vali coming to spy on him, and do him harm. On the contrary, Hanuman, because of his very great good quality and peace of mind, told Sugriva not to be agitated, and that he would go and find out who those people were and report back. He advised that whatever we wish to do, we should never be in haste. Haste is not the right natural quality of one's own mind. Haste always leads to waste, waste always causes worry and therefore, one should not be in a hurry. Hanuman was well acquainted with these maxims and so he did not make haste. He said he would go and find out and come back. When Hanuman saw Rama and Lakshmana, he met them with great humility, and with deliberate and carefully chosen words, he asked them who they were, why they came to the forest and what their purpose was. He did all that with a steady mind and without any haste. Because Rama gave an appropriate reply to Hanuman's query, Hanuman was very pleased and he offered to carry Rama on his shoulders to Sugriva. As soon as Rama and Lakshmana sat on the shoulders

of Hanuman, he felt that all his sins had disappeared. Because of the darshan of the Lord, he felt that all his past sins had been rooted out. He became very happy the moment the divine personality of Rama touched his body. At once several good ideas started sprouting up in Hanuman's mind. Hanuman was thinking within himself that Sugriva would have found good friends when he meets Rama and Lakshmana. He thought that Sugriva's desire will also be fulfilled, and he will be victorious. 'Yad bhavam tat bhavathi.' One's actions will reflect the kind of ideas which one has in one's mind. Because all these good ideas were in the mind of Hanuman, the good ideas in the mind of God also synchronized with them, and the two were in unison. Immediately, Rama, who was on the shoulders of Hanuman, signalled to Lakshmana and assured him that because they had acquired such a good friend, their efforts will also be very successful.

Amongst messengers, there are three kinds of messengers. The first kind are those who take the orders of the Lord, will not obey Him, but will take such actions as will go contrary to the wishes of the Lord. The second kind are those who will take literally what the Lord has said and will follow them without either adding something or taking away something. The results of such work will be accepted and will be carried back to the Lord. The third kind are those who will take the wishes of the Master and will perform the task in such a way that the wishes will be completely and at all costs fulfilled. He will become victorious and take back to the Master the message of victory. Rama and Lakshmana told each other that Hanuman is the third kind of friend who will see that the Master's orders are taken to a stage which will ensure victory. Truly, Hanuman at all times, would only think of Rama and in the thought of Rama, he would not allow anything else to enter his mind. Because Hanuman knew very well the power and strength of Rama, he was always following the footsteps of Rama. From the moment Rama and Lakshmana sat on the shoulders of Hanuman, he began to feel that some kind of sacred and divine strength has entered his heart and he was feeling happy. Here he has established the feeling that along with the body, the mind also becomes equally strong and powerful. Where there is a combination of a strong body and a strong mind, there is divinity and divine strength. Let us take an example.

Here is a wire and on this wire there is a plastic or a rubber covering. Inside the outer cover there is a copper wire.

There is a current flowing inside it. If we simply bring another wire and join that wire to this, then the current will not flow. It will flow only when we cut the outer cover of plastic in both the wires and join the copper. The cover of our body is like the plastic cover on the wire. Our mind is like the copper. So along with the body, when the mind also joins, then alone there is the divine strength which can flow into us. It is only when the sacredness of the body and the sacredness of the mind come together, can there be divine strength generated. With the help of the body, we should undertake to do sacred tasks. With the help of the mind, we should develop divine thought. This body is given to us and is intended for helping others. With the help of the body, we should be able to do good service and help the community. Whatever work we undertake, it should be done with a feeling that it is being done for the pleasure of the Lord. Hanuman was one who had such sacred ideas, and he always dedicated his work to the Lord and performed the task with such a feeling. After Hanuman had the divine vision of Rama, he at once undertook the sacred task of searching for Sita. With the help of the name of Rama and placing faith and belief in Rama and in the divine strength and power of Rama, he could jump across miles and miles of the ocean. These extraordinary achievements on the part of Hanuman caused great surprise to others like Jambavan and Sugriva.

Here the young people should particularly understand the implicit manner in which Hanuman obeyed Rama's orders. Hanuman's devotion and Hanuman's faith have helped him greatly to recognise the desire on the part of the master. Along with devotion and faith, Hanuman had great confidence in his own self. If one has no self-confidence, one will not be able to achieve much although he has faith and devotion. One may have confidence in one's own self; but if he has no devotion and faith, that too will not help him. Devotion and self confidence are like the negative and positive. It is the combination of these two that will enable us to fulfil our sacred thought. Here, because Hanuman had the divine notion in his heart and the self-confidence, he could have the vision of Rama, the Lord, everywhere he went. When any order was

given to Hanuman, he never questioned whether he has the strength or the capacity to fulfil the task. He had the firm faith that the very orders of Rama will give him the necessary strength to fulfil those orders.

The first thing we should do in this context is to promote and strengthen the aspect of self-confidence. This confidence in one's own self is like the foundation at the bottom. On the foundation of that confidence, we should build the wall of self-satisfaction, we should add the roof of self sacrifice. In that mansion, we should attain self-realisation. Hanuman showed the strength and necessity of self-confidence in a clear manner to the world. But today, in the context of human nature, men are conducting themselves in a manner by which we think that they have no understanding at all of the need for self-confidence. The individual human beings have become so weak that they are not able to understand their own nature, their own self, and therefore, they try to find the nature of others and find fault in others. Because such unsacred qualities have become many in number, man is suffering and he does not understand his own human nature and the quality of human life is degrading.

After finding Sita in Lanka and after returning to Rama and Lakshmana and giving them the happy news, Hanuman, Jambavan, Rama and Lakshmana were resting on one side of the ocean. Thousands of other monkeys also joined them in their march to Lanka. That night was a full moon night. The cool moon and the light that the moon was giving were showing everyone in a clear cool manner. As Rama was somewhat tired after walking, he was resting with his head on the lap of Lakshmana. That night no one had sleep or rest because next morning they all had to go to Lanka, and they all had to participate in fighting with Ravana, and so Rama and Lakshmana were giving some encouraging words to all the others. Rama who was taking rest on the lap of Lakshmana could not keep quiet. He asked Lakshmana and Sugriva what they thought about the dark spot in the moon when it shines. Each one started giving his own reply. Someone said because the moon had separated from the earth, dust that is left on the moon is showing this blue colour. Someone else said that it is the conglomeration of the moon and dust on the moon. Each one began to give his own interpretation. All the warriors in the

army, Angada, Nala and Neela, each began to give an answer of his own. Rama was in a very relaxed and pleasant mood, and therefore, all those sitting around him began to give replies in a very pleasant manner. Hanuman did not utter even a single word. In order to demonstrate to all others, who were around them, the attitude and the manner of behaviour on the part of Hanuman, Rama at the very end asked Hanuman about the dark spot on the moon. Hanuman had tears in his eyes and in the heart of Hanuman, there was nothing else except Rama's name and Rama's form. He replied that because Rama was putting his head on the lap of Lakshmana, the reflection of his face in the moon's surface was appearing like a dark spot on the moon. In this manner Hanuman's thoughts and Hanuman's words were such that whatever he spoke about, whatever he had seen or whatever he had thought about was only Rama and the name of Rama. On his body, every hair was filled with the name of Rama.

Hanuman was one who was, at all times, immersed in the spiritual and the sacred name of Rama. To think that Hanuman belonged to the tribe of monkeys and that Hanuman had a very wavering mind is very wrong. Hanuman was the embodiment of the aspect of Easwara. If such divinity comes together with another aspect of divinity, there is no doubt of redoubled strength. In every human being, divinity is present in the form of Atma. In order that we may understand the sacred Atma that is present in our body, we should regard our body as simply a container for the Atma.

We must try to suppress and control the desires that surge forth from within the body. There is a small example for this: Sometimes we go for a picnic in the garden. We create various comforts for ourselves, we cook our own food, we sit there and we eat our food and relax with pleasure. In the forest, if we want to cook our food what is it that we do? In modern times, we take a stove, a cooker and such implements with us. In ancient times, such implements were not available. They used to take only some vessels and some materials necessary for making the food. When we want to cook the food, we prepare a hearth with three stones. On the three stones, we put the pot. We pour water in the pot. In that water, we mix rice. Below the vessel which is resting on these three stones, we put fire. We put the fire so that the

water inside the vessel may boil and the rice gets cooked. The fire, which we have put between the three stones, is not directly touching the rice; but it touches the vessel and through the vessel it touches the water and through the water it goes to the rice and the rice is cooked. Here we should recognise that our life is an example in the Adhyatmic path. Life is like a forest. In this forest of life, the three stones are the gunas of Sathwa, Rajas and Thamas. These three gunas are like the three stones. In the forest of life, we put the vessel of our body on these three stones. Inside the vessel of our body, the desires that we have are like the rice. This rice is filled with prema which can be compared with water, and then we use the fire of wisdom between the three stones. That fire of wisdom will cook the rice by using the water of prema and will drive away these desires. When this rice is well cooked, there is no rebirth. When the desire is completely removed, there is no chance of getting bad desires; but one may ask the question here, is it possible to completely remove all the desires? It is impossible. But we must make an attempt to turn this desire towards the right direction. Whatever work we may do, we must do that work with the aspect of prema and love. It is only then that we will be able to obtain sacred bliss.

The secret of happiness is not in doing what one likes but in liking what one has to do. Whatever work you have to do, you should do it with pleasure and liking. Taking this kind of prema as the basis, Hanuman was the one who always took upon himself, with complete obedience, the orders of his master. He never gave room in his own mind for any doubts or any hesitation regarding the orders of Ramachandra.

Today man's life has become a bundle of doubts and hesitations. Truly, man sees things with his own eyes, but he is not able to believe his own eyes. Some-times he believes his ears but on several occasions he is also not able to believe his ears. A weak individual who cannot believe in his own ears and eyes, how can he believe and have faith in anyone else?

Young people:

You are the future citizens of this country, you should try and see and enjoy

with your own eyes and enjoy your own experience. Do not make an attempt to use Western eyes, Western ears and Western thinking. Those who are citizens of Bharath should accept and recognise the conditions in our country, and the needs of our country and follow a path which is consistent with our country's ideals. The kind of culture we imbibe and the kind of path which we accept must be appropriate to our country. What is appropriate in other countries will be suitable for those countries and not for us. Because the countries are different, the times are different and the environment is different, it is not possible for us to lay one common conduct of life for all people. There is a small example for this:

This evening, the time is 6:30 at this place and in this country. You will make an attempt to go to a club; and because one of your friends is living in America, you want to talk to him; and you telephone to him at 6:30 p.m. by your time; but there is no response of any kind from him because at that time he is sleeping in his bedroom. At this point of time, when it is early morning in another country, it is evening in this country. That is why the appropriate conduct will depend on the context of the country and on the time that prevails.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

We should recognise the sacredness of our country, Bharath; and accepting the sacred culture of this country and remembering the sacred traditions, students must be prepared to put into practice the ideal example offered by our sacred traditions. Truth is our life, Truth is God for us, Truth is everything for us. But if, for the sake of some selfish reason, we undertake untruth, and behave in an unjust and unkind manner, will one's life have any ideal to show to others?

Students:

The kind of ideals that are contained in the story of Ramayana are very necessary for every individual, for every country and for every group of people. Either for one's sorrow or for one's degradation, the kind of work

which we do, the karma that we indulge in is responsible. This is why we say, "Be Good, Do Good, See Good." This is the way to God. Do good work, see good things, live in a good manner and die as a good man.

11. No One Can Separate A Real Devotee From His Lord

Date: **May 1977** / Location: **Brindavan** / Occasion: **Summer Course 1977**

Children who have no good qualities, education which has no purpose, a community which has no morality in it are all perfectly useless. In the same manner life in which there is no peace of mind and a night when there is no moonshine are equally useless. Listen to this truth, Oh! courageous sons of Bharath.

Students:

For all people in this world, there is a common thought freely expressing itself in their minds. They feel that one should not commit sin, one should not speak untruth and that one should not harm others. But mere feeling and not putting into practice has become a feature characteristic of them. Knowing that to speak untruth is going to cause harm, yet people speak untruth. What is the meaning of this? Even after recognising that causing harm and hurt to others is going to reflect back on him some day or other, people cause harm and hurt to others. What is the inner motivation which makes one do these bad things even after knowing that they are bad? Not only this, man desires to get good fruit by doing punya and yet in actual practice, he does only papa. Man does not want to get the result of committing a sin, yet he undertakes to commit a sin. What is it that is inside him which promotes such action? In general, there are three kinds of qualities namely Sathwa, Rajas and Thamas. Amongst these qualities, Rajas and Thamas are difficult and very harmful. The quality of Rajas has a son who has demoniac features in him. His name is Kama or lust. This son, who goes by the name of Kama or lust, enters the minds and hearts of several people and makes them do all kinds of bad things. He has a quality by which he can destroy many people by going near them. If this quality of Kama comes close to a person, even his

good qualities will be removed and subdued. Ravana was a great sage. He was a devoted person. Towards the end, because of the bad quality of Kama or lust, he had done things which destroyed his entire dynasty and all his friends. Not only this, the third quality, namely Thamas has also got a son. He is a very cruel person. He is one whom we can call Anger. The moment Kama gets hold of the mind of man, this other son Anger, will also get hold of him and will break the pot of wisdom which is contained in a human being. These qualities, lust and anger, do not promote good human nature. On the other hand, they destroy human nature and they take man to the very depths of destruction and barbarity.

The quality of lust has no satisfaction under any circumstances. This quality of lust has often been compared with fire. Fire has also got another name called Anala. Anala means something which has no sufficiency at any time and which is insatiable. The meaning of this is, however much you may experience and enjoy, there is no satisfaction. You will always want more and more. As you put more and more fuel into the fire, the fire goes on increasing. The fire can never be extinguished by adding fuel. In the same manner, by your trying to satisfy your desires, the desires will go on increasing. They will never decrease by satisfaction and appeasement. Without submitting himself to this kind of lust, Hanuman earned the grace of Rama.

In the search for Sita, he entered Lanka, and he started searching for her in several mansions. If he wants to find Sita, he should look for a woman, and he has to search for her amongst women, and not amongst men. Not only that, Ramachandra gave some description which could be used by Hanuman for the purpose of identifying Sita. He was looking for those features amongst several women. He was looking at the eyes and ears of women who were in the king's apartments with a view to see if the features given to him by Ramachandra could be found in the eyes and ears of those women. But after some time he found some disgust in his own mind. He came to the banks of the ocean. When he came to the ocean, he told himself how much sin he should have committed by having to look at the faces of all those women. Having looked at the faces of so many women, he was wondering how he could go back to Ramachandra. He preferred to commit suicide by drowning

himself in the ocean rather than go back to Ramachandra.

For some time he thought of the sacred name of Rama and repeated the name of Rama and purified his own mind. Recognising that Rama was present as the self, as Atma, in everybody, if he committed suicide, it will be committing suicide of his own self, of Rama as the Atma. He satisfied himself by thinking that he was only obeying the orders of Rama when he entered Lanka. He had the courage to make such a decision that all things done by him, only to obey the orders of Rama, will never hurt him. Then he entered Ashoka Vana. He was such a clear-headed person that he was quite sure that if he obeyed Rama's orders, he will not have committed any sin.

It is necessary for the young people of today to recognise and understand the path taken by Hanuman so that no faults could be pointed out at the work that they do. When he looked at a woman, the feeling in him was of her being his mother. He asked himself the question, could this lady be my mother Sita? That was how he was looking at any women. It is this sacred idea in the mind of Hanuman that kept him away from all sins.

Not only this, in the story relating to Hanuman there are several incidents which are ideal examples for us. Rama wanted to proclaim Hanuman as an ideal person to the world. At the time of the coronation of Rama, he was giving presents to various people. Although he had given presents to everyone, he did not give any present to Hanuman. This caused some trouble in the mind of Sita. Sita was directly involved in the life they led in the forest, and she saw how Hanuman was always fulfilling Rama's orders. So she was wondering why Rama had not given any present to Hanuman, and she was sorry for this. She could not bear this injustice to Hanuman. She quietly and slowly told this to Rama; and Rama said that if she felt so strongly, she could give Hanuman any present which she liked. She had a very valuable necklace of pearls around her neck. She removed it and gave it to Hanuman.

Hanuman held this very valuable pearl necklace in his hand, began to remove all the pearls, one by one, from the necklace and break them. He put each pearl near his ears and began throwing it away. In this way, he was throwing

away all the pearls of the necklace. Looking at this sight, Rama and Lakshmana were very surprised. Sita became somewhat angry, but she knew very well the situation. She called Hanuman with a view to proclaiming to the world Hanuman's nature, and she asked Hanuman why he was throwing away the pearls and thus behaving truly like a monkey?

Hanuman told Sita that he was examining if by breaking the pearl, he could listen to the name of Rama out of each pearl. He said that if he did not hear the name of Rama, the pearl was of no value to him and so he was throwing such pearls away. Hanuman said, even if it be a pearl, if there is no sound of Rama in it, the pearl is no better than a stone for him. Sita asked if he could hear the name of Rama even in lifeless matter. Hanuman said that he did not want anything to remain on him if it did not produce the sound of Rama. Sita asked, in return, if he meant that his entire body is filled with the name of Rama. Hanuman then plucked out one single hair from his body and put that hair at the ear of Rama and Sita. Sita found that even that little bit of hair was uttering the name of Rama. Here we see that Hanuman's entire body was filled with the name of Rama and so where was the room for kama on the body of Hanuman? It is an established truth that where there is Rama, there cannot be kama, where there is kama, there is no place for Rama.

Hanuman established and proclaimed that to look at other women, and to talk to other women was a great sin. When Hanuman was moving about in the Ashoka forest, all the rakshasas caught hold of Hanuman, tied him up and took him to Ravana. Ravana then asked a series of questions. However, Hanuman did not answer even one of them. The moment he looked at Ravana, Hanuman became very angry. Even there, under those circumstances, Hanuman undertook to tell Ravana what good qualities are and how one should strive to have good qualities. He addressed Ravana and he asked him to realise at least then that what he had done was wrong. He told Ravana that in bringing Sita, he brought the mother of creation herself into Lanka and kept her imprisoned in Lanka. He threatened to destroy the whole of Lanka and teach Ravana a lesson.

Women can be compared with mothers of creation. We call our country

motherland, we do not call it fatherland. Here Hanuman is teaching young people how they should treat women as mother. This kind of attitude is very essential for young people today. It is only when we promote such qualities amongst us that we will be able to resuscitate the glorious culture of Bharath. If we have no good quality, our entire life becomes useless. For the good of the world, people with good qualities are very necessary. As one of the speakers told you this morning, you may acquire several degrees, you may acquire first ranks and first classes, but what is the use of all these degrees and these ranks? Whatever education you may have, if you do not have the good qualities and the morality and the ethical attitude, all your education will become quite useless. Truth and morality are the things which make man's heart sacred.

In the world today, there are several kinds of powers which we see. All power that we generally come across is the worldly power, material power and the power connected with politics. But of all types of powers, the most powerful one is the political strength, which is the strength to be acquired by ruling a country. In that context, we are apt to think that dharmic strength or spiritual strength is not good enough. Students, for us to think that political power, power based upon politics is even stronger than the adhyatmic strength or the dharmic strength is not correct. We should have the attitude that all these worldly types of powers are derived from divine strength. The political powers can cause changes only on one's body. But the spiritual and the dharmic powers can transform and will have an effect on one's mind. Without transformation of mind, any change in the body is not sufficient. The change of mind today is very necessary. The political power is like the bush coat which you wear on yourself. You may wear the bush coat today, and you may take it off tomorrow.

On one day when you wear a particular bush coat, you may feel that it appears very nice on you. The next day when you remove it, you may feel that it is ugly. Such bush coats are not permanent. But because the effect of dharmic power and spiritual power is on the mind, whatever transformation and effect it has produced is going to remain permanent.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

People like Lal, Bal and Pal had taken part in politics in many ways, and they served the country through politics. But how long will their reputation or the value of their work remain in this country? Of these people, because Balgangadhar Tilak, whom we refer to as Bal, had translated Bhagavad Gita, and had written commentaries on scriptures, his name has remained, to some extent, in this country. However, Buddha and Ramakrishna Paramahansa are the names which have remained permanently because they followed the spiritual path. Persons like Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind have helped the country to become prosperous and also gave spiritual strength to the country. This is the reason why they are so much respected. Jesus Christ, too, worked for the prosperity of the entire mankind and gave happiness to the people. He sacrificed his very life and that is the reason why the name of Jesus Christ has remained permanently. You must recognise that all our education should not be concentrated only on worldly matters. It should also contain spiritual and ethical aspects. It is only when all these three aspects, the worldly aspect, the spiritual aspect and the ethical aspect come together that education will acquire some meaning. To make out that education is only for acquiring degrees is not correct. Do not be ambitious to get only these cheap degrees. You should work for the prosperity of the country. You must have these degrees and yet work with your own hands for the benefit of the people. A BA degree is like a begging bowl. Instead of holding the begging bowl in your hand, going from office to office, begging for a job, if you can work with your own hands and help yourself as well as others, it will be more useful.

The purpose of establishing the present system of education by the foreign rulers of this country was to make us serve those people and to make us follow and imitate their methods and their ways of living. The objective of this education, which was given to us by foreigners, was only to fulfil their selfish needs but not for the good of our country. Education should not result in the slavery of one's own thought and mind. Real education, which has significance for our country, is that education which gives you the courage by which you go and act wherever there is injustice, unkindness and untruth. Our education, connected with the culture of Bharath, is one which should enable

you to stand on your own legs.

We should make an attempt that, in education which is appropriate to us, the aspect of kama or lust does not enter our mind but the aspect of prema or love does enter. With the aspect of prema, we should enter the society in this country; and we should be able to do service to the society with prema.

One of the speakers this morning said that since 1000 students have assembled here, you should trans-form yourselves into 1000 messengers. Truly, all the students should be able to proclaim the ideals that are being taught here and put them into practice. You should show others the path of truth and prema. You should promote the aspect of prema in yourself, and that will itself improve the relationships that should exist truly between man and man.

To propagate such a path of truth, the story of Ramayana will help us very much. On one occasion Kausalya, mother of Rama; Anjani, mother of Hanuman, and the mother of Rishi Agasthya were all sitting together and were conversing with each other. Here the mother of Hanuman began to ask if the others had recognised the power and strength of her son. She said that her son has been able to cross, in one leap, miles and miles of the ocean. The mother of Rishi Agasthya said that while Hanuman jumped over the ocean, her son had swallowed the entire ocean in one gulp. Kausalya, mother of Rama, said that Hanuman jumped over the ocean in one leap, and Agasthya swallowed the ocean in one gulp, and that both these things were done by their constantly uttering the name of Rama. She said that with the help and power of the name of Rama, Agasthya could swallow the whole ocean and Hanuman could jump over the ocean.

Hanuman was a very innocent person. He had no deceit in him. Today human beings are covered by considerable amount of deceit. We think that such people are very clever people. One who takes to the path of truth and one who does not know how to practise trickery is an innocent person. However, today we regard all such innocent persons, who do not know trickery, as people who are not clever at all and who do not know how to get on in the

world. This is not right. An innocent person is really a very strong person.

On one day, because it was Rama's birthday, he invited a number of people for a feast. On that day, Hanuman was very close to Rama. The dinner was over and the conversation was pleasing to everyone and they left for their respective homes in a happy mood. Hanuman was always living with Rama. He had no house of his own. On that day, he had the desire to stay with Rama and Rama agreed to this. As the time was getting on and the night came, Sita was taking a jug of water and was proceeding to her bedroom. Afterwards Rama also entered the room. Behind Rama, Hanuman also entered the room. Rama told Hanuman in a soft language that he can go and rest. Hanuman asked why he should not come into the bedroom? Sita had come. When Sita had come, why not Hanuman? Rama then pointed out the sindura, the red paint that Sita was wearing on her head, and said that this entitled Sita to come into Rama's bedroom. This implies that Rama is showing the feature which indicates that Sita is as much as half the body of Rama. Hanuman, realising the situation, went out into the town and looked for shops in which he could get the red paint, and he emptied all the red paint in the shops and put the red paint over his entire body and went back to Rama and said, "If a small amount of red paint on Sita's head could entitle her to enter your bedroom, I have now red paint all over my body, and why can I not enter your bedroom?" Here is to be seen the intense desire to be close to Rama at all times, and it is this that made Hanuman innocent.

There is another incident which shows Hanuman's devotion. Because Hanuman's devotion and faith were very sacred, whatever work he did, he was always victorious. Because Hanuman was all the twenty-four hours with Rama, he was attending to all the services which were needed for Rama. Sita, Bharatha, Lakshmana and Satrughna found that there was no service left by which they could serve the Lord.

Lakshmana, Bharatha and Satrughna one day went to Sita and made a complaint and said that Hanuman was with Rama all the twenty-four hours, and that he is not giving them any opportunity for doing service to Rama. They requested her to arrange that whatever services have to be done to

Rama, be distributed equitably amongst them. Then they made a long list of services to be rendered to Rama from the morning till the next morning. They also prayed to Sita that all these services be approved by Rama. Rama looked at the list and approved all the services and suggested that they be distributed amongst themselves. He suggested that they go and tell Hanuman that nothing is left so far as Hanuman is concerned. When these brothers met Hanuman, they told him that the entire list of services has been drawn up and that they were distributed amongst themselves. They said that no service was left for him and that he would have nothing to do from the next day.

Hanuman thought for a little and thought of the name of Lord Rama and then he asked Lakshmana that if any other service was left over, it may be allotted to him. The three brothers looked at the list very carefully and came to the conclusion that nothing was left. They agreed that if anything is left, Hanuman may take the service. Hanuman said, there was one service, which was left over and he requested that this be given to him. When kings or elders or wealthy people yawn, at that time it is customary to make a noise with the fingers in front of the mouth. Hanuman asked that this service be allotted to him. From that time, Hanuman insisted that wherever Rama went, whether it is in his bedroom or in the bathroom, Hanuman must be present. Thus he insisted, because one does not know when Rama will yawn. When Rama yawns, he should be present there. Thus, it so turned out that the little service which was left to Hanuman necessitated his continuous presence and made Hanuman stay close to Rama always.

What we should see here is that in spite of all the attempts made by Lakshmana, Bharatha and Satrughna not to leave any service for Hanuman, it is the sacredness of Hanuman that has resulted in his getting a service by which he can be with Rama at all times. No one can separate a real devotee present from his Lord.

12. Ravana's Proficiency In The Vedas Was Of No Avail Because Of His Bad Practices

Date: **May 1977** / Location: **Brindavan** / Occasion: **Summer Course 1977**

When a sinner finds prosperity coming his way, he feels like challenging even the Lord. But when his prosperity disappears, he will become humble and will begin to see the truth.

Prema Swarupas:

If an individual wants to become an important person in this world, he should have three good qualities. The first is to have firm and unwavering faith in the need for being good. The second is to be free from hatred, jealousy and ego. The third is to be able to appreciate and enjoy when he sees another individual or the society around him doing good work. It is through these three qualities that a person's greatness will come to be known.

The ancient traditions of Bharatha have always been recognising and proclaiming the greatness of these three qualities in an individual. Not only does the individual's importance get established through these three qualities, but even the country's reputation will become known through the individual citizens who possess these three qualities. When we want the country to become great and the greatness of the country to be known and recognised outside the country, it is necessary that the rulers of the country also possess these three qualities.

Unfortunately today, people who cannot recognise the truth in our ancient culture have been proclaiming that such good qualities are not essential. Such people, who are unable to recognise the values in our culture, keep on saying that our traditions are shackles to our progress and they act as a hindrance to the freedom of one's own mind.

They keep on saying that pilgrimages are unnecessary and to visit great saints is only a sign of mental weakness. All of you may not be aware that such statements are merely platform speeches made by persons who are in a position of authority and power. Sometimes, they are also politically motivated. Such words are uttered very superficially, without any depth of investigation or thought behind them.

Young people should not pay much attention to such superficial statements but should recognise the value of the truth that is contained in our ancient culture and follow the same. Wise people do not become slaves to their desires and do not, without thinking, accept the material path which science and technology have provided for fulfilling their desires. The individuals who have succeeded in harnessing atomic power are beginning to think that even their discriminating power is being swallowed up by their own inventions. They are unable to recognise the truth that the very machines they have created and the very weapons which they have constructed are going to swallow their very lives. They are thinking that to spend their lives and resources in pursuing matters which have no relation to their real well-being is right. They do not realise that in so doing, they are wasting their lives.

Prema Swarupas:

In order to recognise man's divinity, we must learn to respect service. Man's duty is to serve the society of which he is a part. It appears today that all our ideas and thoughts have been borrowed from others. They appear to be all transient. It looks as if there are no permanent values at all.

It is true that today Westerners have made considerable progress in science and are acquiring mastery over the material world. In spite of all that, they are not able to give any reply to the challenges posed by the sacred texts like the Upanishads. Because we have such total belief in worldly experience and things that are based on such experience, we are unable to know ourselves. Every individual thinks that he has achieved some great things, and such achievements are used for the purpose of proclaiming his own greatness and enhancing his own reputation. Truly, without using our strength and our

intelligence in the right path, we want to use them for the purpose of selfishly proclaiming our own greatness. We should undertake to promote the total good, the good of the community in a selfless manner with love and prema.

Today, people who are giving support to various things which science produces are themselves confused whether all those things are for the good of the people or whether they are going to cause hurt and harm to them. It is only when one has complete control over one's own mind and one's own intelligence and when one believes in the truth that divinity is present in every human being can this scientific knowledge be of some use to him. One may possess considerable amount of strength in the material sense of the word, but if he does not have the adhyatmic or the spiritual power, there is every chance of losing all that he has. Ravana did possess a considerable amount of worldly power and even moral power, and was a devotee of God. Yet, he fell to the lowest depths because of some of his bad qualities like jealousy and anger.

It is a sacred quality for one to be able to enjoy and appreciate the good in other people. Even greater than this is the quality by which we get rid of selfishness and spend all our resources for the purpose of doing good to others. Truly, people like Hiranyaksha, Hiranyakasapa and Ravana had many great qualities and considerable amount of courage. But there was something lacking in the type of devotion and faith they had. So they suffered.

Whatever learning and education one may acquire, it is only when one can recognise that all learning is to enable us to earn the grace of God that our education becomes useful. What is the use of learning several branches of knowledge? Is it possible for any one to change the destiny which has been given to him? When bad ideas fill your head, your thoughts and your intelligence will become blunt. Because Ravana had the three bad qualities of jealousy, anger and ego filling his head, he was deprived of all chances of success, although he had several powers. For one who is suffering from ego, the power to discriminate between what is transient and what is permanent will be missing. One who develops jealousy will lose kindness and the ability to give freely. One who develops anger will lose all opportunity for reaching

the heights of glory, and his own possessions will disappear. His reputation and his strength will disappear at the moment when they are most needed. Those who are near to him will become distant from him. For one who develops pride, everything will become bad. Those who suffer from anger cannot achieve any result. They will also feel ashamed at the crucial time.

Ravana was ruling over a kingdom and his capital city would compare well with heaven. But because of his bad qualities, he lost his own happiness, his kingdom, and everything that he had. In fact, he destroyed his own dynasty and family. He knew all the codes of conduct of a king, and he knew everything, and yet he was behaving like a monkey. He knew several things but because he was not putting his knowledge into practice, he became worse than one who has no knowledge at all.

When Hanuman entered Lanka, as Rama's ambassador, and spoke to Sita, Ravana came to know of this and he ordered that Hanuman be punished. This is quite contrary to the accepted code of conduct of a king. To kill an ambassador or to punish one who has come as a messenger on behalf of someone else is not the right code of conduct for a king of the country. Vibhishana tried to explain to Ravana this principle by which he should not punish one who has brought a message and Vibhishana tried to get Hanuman released. Ravana, in fact, had so many other bad qualities and bad ideas in him, and he often undertook to do things which he should not have done. Many times, he made attempts to kill even Sita. Mandodari, the wife of Ravana, tried to teach Ravana that to kill a woman is very wrong, and that he was committing a great sin. The bad qualities that were in him made him take always the wrong path and subjected him to many difficulties. On one occasion Mandodari went to her husband and asked him, "You know all the dharma, and all the codes of right conduct. With all your wisdom, why is it that you are doing wrong things? What is the matter? How can you explain? What is the inner meaning of your behaviour? Not only this, you have all the capacity and you have all the strength to assume any form that you like. On the day when you brought Sita to Lanka, you were in the form of a sanyasi and you deceived her. Why are you taking all this trouble in order to win over the sacred Sita? If only you assume the form of Ramachandra, then Sita

would be yours. Why did you not adopt that path?" Then Ravana replied that Ramachandra's form was a sacred and divine one. If he really took that form, how will he have bad qualities at all? This means Ravana knew very well that the qualities which one will have should be appropriate to his form. Because he had the form of a rakshasa, the qualities of a rakshasa were showing up. Today, people have a human form. They appear like human beings but behave like rakshasas. There is some contradiction in this situation. Since we have taken the human form, sacred qualities which are appropriate to a human being should thrive within us. In words we may say that we are human beings, that we are devotees, that God in the form of Atma is present in us, but to put these statements into practice has become very rare. The first thing we should do in this context is to correct our practice. Through our efforts, we can achieve any great thing. The kind of conduct which we accept and go through in our daily life will only be reflected by our life.

There is a small story. There used to be a music scholar. Daily he used to gather a few children and teach them music. In his house there used to be a good custom. This was that his wife would not eat until he came into the house. And after he came to the house, they would eat together. But as the examinations came near, he used to spend more time in teaching music to the students and giving them practice lessons. The teacher who normally would come back at 2 o'clock did not turn up till 4 o'clock on one day. The wife was hungry. However, she would not like to break their usual tradition. In this process she also got a little excited. By about 4:00 o'clock, as the husband returned home, she kept a little water and soap, a bowl and a bucket and asked him to have a quick wash and come so that they could eat food together as usual. In the hurry which the wife was indicating, he took a pot of water, washed his face and put the soap on his face. When he put soap on his face and without knowing put the pot into the well, the pot slipped and fell into the well. Somehow he cleaned his face and opened his eyes and found that the pot and the rope were both in the well. As soon as the pot and the rope fell into the well, he began to sing, and appeal to the Lord by saying, "Oh Lord, the responsibility to look after me is Yours." The wife went there to remind him that he should come quickly and he continued to sing without paying any attention to the wife, again saying, "Oh Lord, the responsibility to

look after me is Yours." When the wife saw that the pot and the rope were both in the well, she reprimanded the husband and said, "If you keep on singing in this manner, without making any effort to retrieve the rope and the pot but putting the entire responsibility on the Lord, how is the pot going to come out? You must make your effort to get the pot out of the well." Although man has got certain types of strength and abilities in him, he should not depend solely on worldly power and strength. He should make his attempts and seek to strengthen his attempts by winning God's grace for himself.

Ravana knew all dharma, but without putting them into practice what is the use of having known them simply through the texts? All dharma, which is not put into practice, is just as bad as adharma, so also all knowledge which is not put into practice is as bad as ignorance. Today, many young people know what good work is, and they have to make an effort and participate in it. They do not make any effort. The first thing we should do is to put into practice the good things which we believe are good. By simply believing that something is good, by having faith in being good and yet not putting into practice, how can one get any result in that manner.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

Ravana had expertise in all the branches of learning. He also knew very thoroughly the four Vedas. He was fully aware of the contents of the six Sastras. His knowledge of the six Sastras and his knowledge of the four Vedas (together ten) is the inner meaning of the belief that Ravana had ten heads. It is a symbolic way of saying that he was an expert in all the ten branches of knowledge. Ignoring this inner meaning, if we simply keep on saying that Ravana had ten heads, in ordinary daily parlance, we have to ask how he is going to sleep with those ten heads? How is he going to do his daily duties with those ten heads? This is the shortcut to making things appear ridiculous. The writers and the historians may simply have described him as a person having ten heads, but the inner meaning of such a description is that Ravana was having such knowledge and deep wisdom. He, with all this strength and knowledge, was not minding the people's security and people's happiness. To him, his own enjoyment, his own safety, his own pleasure were all that

mattered. We should note here that, in spite of all great and good qualities, he was behaving in a bad manner. Towards the end of his life, he realised that all that he did was sin; and the paths he had adopted were bad paths, and that whatever Vibhishana had told him was right, and that he could not follow the advice given to him by his wife Mandodari.

However much we may repent towards the end of our life, it is very difficult for us to realise that such repentance comes to us in a manner in which it cannot atone for our sins. After indulging in sins and doing bad things all through one's life, even if one repents towards the very end, that repentance is not of much value. It is not correct to keep on repenting and thinking that repentance will redeem us from all our sins. Alas, repentance always comes much after the event and too late to do any good to any one.

Many people in the world today are in this situation. They commit sin, commit wrong and ask for pardon and then again commit sin, commit wrong and again ask for pardon. In this way, if you add and sub-tract, add and subtract all your life, how are you going to reach your destination with any credit balance in your favour?

Sacred-minded young people,

Once you understand and recognise that a certain thing is wrong, that it is a sin, then you should never knowingly go and commit a sin for a second time. Only when you can conduct your lives along a path where there is discrimination between right and wrong, will your life take a purposeful course.

During the last fifteen days, you have been listening to all the good things that are contained in the individual characters of the story of the Ramayana. We should believe that Rama signifies the divinity that is established within our own hearts. We should think that our own minds symbolise Laksh-mana. Our intelligence and our chitta should be identified with Sita. The bad qualities which lead us to commit sin should be identified with Ravana. Anger, jealousy and hatred, are the qualities from which sin starts. They constitute

the birthplace for sins. We should make an attempt, by using sathya, dharma, shanthi and prema to destroy the Ravana in us exemplified by the bad qualities.

When we give room to jealousy, anger and ego, we become a Ravana. When we follow the path of truth and the path of dharma, we become a Ramachandra. Good and bad are results only of the way we conduct ourselves. Rama and Ravana are not separate people. They are in us and they make us look like one or the other according to our deeds. It is in this context that it has been said that both for good and for bad, our own mind is responsible. If we conduct ourselves badly, we will be like animals. If our conduct is good, we will be like a divine being. Young people should therefore, guide their conduct and daily behaviour along the right path.

Students:

You are the future citizens of Bharath. Whether it is a worthwhile example that you are seeking for your everyday life or whether it is an ideal that you are searching for in your heart and mind, if only you can introduce an amount of sacredness, then we can say that you are seeking Yogakshema. It is not a great thing to acquire good qualities, but real greatness lies in keeping and preserving the great, good qualities you acquire. Making a conscious effort in acquiring what you should acquire, namely good ideals and good thoughts, has been referred to as yoga and then a conscious effort to retain and use what you have acquired is called Kshema. This is Yogakshema. But today, we attach too much importance to our body. This body which is transient, which is uncertain, which is going to fall down one day or other, looms large in our view and we think that the good of such a body is Yogakshema. You may protect it as long as you like but when the time comes, this is going to drop down and die. It is better to live for three years or even for three days as a good person, rather than live a hundred years as a bad person. Do not be a crow and go about living for a long time. Be a swan and live for a short time.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

You must acquire good and sathwik qualities. You must also control and regulate the type of food you eat. The bad qualities and the bad nature which Ravana had can be traced to a large extent to the kind of food he ate. It is in the context of the food that one eats, that one's own conduct and daily life are determined. We should make an attempt to take in sathwik food only. What is sathwik food? Do fruit and milk constitute sathwik food? No, if you drink too much milk or too much curd, or eat too much fruit, Thamo Guna will increase and they cannot be described as sathwik.

Today it is difficult to define the true meaning of sathwik food. We talk of taking food. How do we take food? Amongst the five sensory organs the tongue is the one through which we taste and take our food. It is not enough if we take in sathwik food through one of the five organs, namely the tongue only. There are four other organs through which also we should take care to accept only sathwik food. With the help of our mouth, we may take only limited amounts of milk or fruit. There are other organs. What you see with your eyes must also be sathwik. We should not look at bad things. Bad vision will become bad intake through the eyes. There is a third organ, the ears. What goes inside through the ears is also food. We should listen to only good things. This kind of food should be rendered sathwik by restricting the ears to listen to only good sounds.

There is a nose as well. Through the nose, you should accept only good and clean air and not foul air. The latter constitutes bad food. There is the skin with which we touch other things. The skin should not be allowed to contact whomsoever and whatsoever it wants to. All these senses, the sense of sound, the sense of touch, the sense of taste, of smell and of listening, should take in good food only. Only when all that you take in through these five organs is good, can you say that you are having sathwik food. If with the mouth alone you take good sathwik food like milk and curds, but you see bad things with your eyes, listen to bad things with your ears and touch unpleasant things with your skin, how can you then call yourself a sathwik person? If you take care in regard to all the intake, not only will this be called sathwik food, but it will also be good for health. There is one example. A good feature of sathwik food can be described by referring to the light manner in

which we go and sit down to take food. After taking food, we should be able to get up in the same light manner. But today we call it sathwik food, we go light and sit for our meal. At the end of the meal when we get up, we are so heavy that we cannot get up easily. This will be called thamasik food.

You should eat only a limited amount of food. That will also be responsible for your good health. Limited amount of food gives us great ease. Unlimited food causes great trouble. In this world, there are many people who are continuously loading and unloading their physical system. They give no thought to enquire into the purpose of their life. Ravana belonged to this class of people. Not only this, towards the end of his life, when he was threatening Sita, he told her that he will give her two months time and if in that period she would not change her mind, he would cut her head, cook and eat the flesh out of her head. Ravana was one who did not at all understand what food meant. His food consisted of unsacred meat and drink.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

Since you are going to become the leaders and important persons, it is necessary for you to keep your health in a proper condition through regulating your food habits. It is necessary that in order that we may do good work our body should be in a healthy condition.

This is the reason why it has been said that if you want to accept the four Purusharthas: Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha, a healthy body is necessary. When you take care to see that what goes inside the body through your five sensory organs is good and sathwik, there is no room for bad ideas in you. If you want to get rid of all bad ideas, you must control your food to a large extent. This is a good lesson which the life story of Ravana should teach the people of the world.

13. Talking Too Much Harms One's Memory And One's Strength

Date: **May 1977** / Location: **Brindavan** / Occasion: **Summer Course 1977**

One's chitta is in the form of a root for the tree of his life. When that becomes rotten, the whole tree will fall down and become useless. Even the sacred desires which constitute the branches of this tree will dry up in that condition and cannot be fulfilled. What other truth can I tell you, Oh! brave children of Bharath.

Pavitratma Swarupas:

Every human being in this world is born with three debts. The first one relates to his being indebted to the devas, the second one is being indebted to the rishis and the third one is being indebted to the parents or the Pitru rina. In order to keep the body from becoming infirm and weak, devas in different parts are protecting the human body. Devas in the form of rasa, in the form of vitality and strength are flowing in every organ of the human body. In this context, they are also described as Angirasa. Only when we can use such a human body for the purpose of doing sacred work, will the devas, who are protecting our organs, be satisfied.

If we can participate in good work which is useful to the society, we can please the devas who are protecting the organs of our body and repay the debt which we owe them. The next one is our being indebted to the rishis. In order that human beings may experience happiness and pleasure in a worldly sense as well as in a spiritual sense, the rishis of ancient times have shown many ways in which this can be achieved. Because of this we are indebted to the rishis. So that we can understand what righteous conduct is, the rishis have given us from the ancient times many Sastras.

The rishis were such great saints that they could show us the great ideals that are contained in the Vedas and the Sastras. By following in their foot-steps, by accepting the examples which they showed us and by imbibing the teachings they had given us, we will, to some extent, repay the debts which we owe them. Even if we do not follow and obey their orders, at least to recognise the greatness that is contained in what they have given us by way of the Sastras is, to some extent, tantamount to repaying the debts we owe them.

The third one is the debt towards one's parents. You are born through your father and he has protected you throughout your life. You have to repay the debt you owe him. Not only that, when a son is born to his father, the son should make an attempt to maintain the dignity, the honour and the reputation of his own father. We should make an attempt to preserve the faith which our forefathers have earned. It is with a view to repaying these three categories of debts that Dasaratha undertook to perform the Aswamedha Yagna and the Putra Kameshti Yagna. In the Aswamedha Yagna, the sacrificial horse is a very sacred element. That should be a pure white horse without any dark patches on it. The ears should protrude out in a beautiful manner. The hair on the neck of this horse should also be very attractive and straight. The tail of that horse should be so long that it touches the bottom of the feet. In the attempt to look for and locate such a sacred horse which satisfies the requirements, some effort is required. During the period of Vasanta, such a horse is let out, and by the time the horse goes round and comes back to the place where it was left, one year will be over and the next period of Vasanta comes in. We should notice here that one Vasanta time has to be spent in searching for the horse, one Vasanta time has to be spent in letting the horse go, a third Vasanta time has to be spent in the horse returning to its original place. Thus the Ramayana tells us that three years have been spent in the Aswamedha Yagna.

After spending three years in performing the Aswamedha Yagna, Dasaratha undertook to perform the Putra Kameshti Yagna. The meaning of the word Dasaratha has been told to you in the past few days. Dasaratha here signifies the ten organs and the body which contains the ten organs. Here, the city of

Ayodhya, in this story, has got three main entrances. These three main entrances to the city of Ayodhya are to be taken as the Sathwa, Raja and Thama gunas.

While the Yagnas were going on in this manner, we must realise that the Brahma Muhurtha which is being described as Vasanta consists of two months in the year. The two months have got two names, Madhu and Madhava. During these two months Madhu and Madhava, the sun enters the two rasis and they are Megha and Vrishabha. In the two rasis, Megha and Vrishabha, the sun shines very brightly and it is usually quite warm. We can recognise the period by noticing that the sun is quite strong and fierce during the midday and that all the water that is on the surface of the earth is changed into water vapour by this heat.

The nature of the sun during the Megha rasi in the Vasanta time has been compared with one's own heart. The primordial sound that comes from one's own heart has also been called Viswadhara. During that time, the sun takes the form which consists of five different apartments. In the story of the Ramayana, the sun has always been identified with Rama himself. These five apartments, or five layers, which we refer to in the case of the sun during that period, have been named the Annamaya Kosa, the Pranamaya Kosa, the Manomaya Kosa, the Vignanamaya Kosa and the Anandamaya Kosa. The word Annamaya Kosa refers to the material human body. This material human body builds itself on food material, grows out of food and decays when there is no food. The next layer that gives strength and protects the external human body is the Pranamaya Kosa, or an inner layer. This part of the body is called the maya deha. The Pranamaya Kosa is dependent upon the heat created in the body and enables heat to flow in the body and thereafter blood starts flowing into the blood vessels.

The next layer is called the Manomaya Kosa related to the mind. If the Manomaya Kosa is not there, then the Pranamaya and Annamaya Kosas cannot exist. The Manomaya Kosa is responsible for all kinds of thoughts and desires. One's mind is really a bundle of desires. To some extent, this mind or the Manomaya Kosa helps and becomes a support to the Pranamaya Kosa.

The next layer is the Vignanamnya Kosa. The Vignanamaya Kosa has the function of enabling man to get the discriminatory power by which he distinguishes between good and bad. If there is no Vignanamaya Kosa, the other layers Manomaya Kosa, Pranamaya Kosa and Annamaya Kosa will be lifeless and will not be able to function. This Vignanamaya Kosa enables us to learn the nature of matter and how matter functions. We shall here give an example by which we will understand the inner meaning. This is a table and is made of wood. I am making an attempt to hit on this hard matter. When I describe this act of mine, I say that I have hit the table with my hand. This is not a full description. The table has also hit my hand equally strongly. The quality in you, which enables you to recognise the conduct of the table in this act, is the Vignanamaya Kosa. This Vignanamaya Kosa enables us to recognise whatever reactions and resounds exist in all the material world. We can take another example for this. When we open our eyes and look at the external view, we see so many people and so many heads. We ask if it is the eye which enables us to see all this or whether it is the light in the eyes that enables us to see all the heads? No, the light that exists outside the eye is helping the eyes to see all this. It is the joining together of the light that is present in your eyes and the light that is present outside your eyes that enables you to see all the things. We may ask, just because there is some light, does that enable us to see all this matter? It is not so; even if there is light outside the eyes, if you close your eyes, then you will not be able to see the matter which lies outside your eyes. If we regard that the external light is important, by closing our eyes we cannot see the matter. If we regard that the light in our eyes is important, if we extinguish the external light, we cannot see the matter. It is only when both are present that we can see the form of man. In this manner, the inner vision and the outer vision are together responsible for our vision. This is the function of the Vignanamaya Kosa. Truly, if we are perceiving all the creation with our eyes, this creation is being seen because of our eyes. There is no creation separate from our eyes. What we see in the world are all reflections of the forms that are formed inside by our own inner vision. If an artist is painting a picture, he is not painting the picture straightway on the canvas. He first forms this picture in his mind and then he puts it on the canvas with paint. If a director of a cinema directs various actors to do this and to do that, he takes the

preliminary steps by which he thinks of this picture in his own mind and then brings the actors into the picture. Similarly, every writer thinks of the theme in his own mind before he writes and then begins to write out the play. So, these thoughts and ideas, which emanate within oneself, have been called Vignana.

All these things have, for their source, the life-giving treasure. This has been referred to as the Anandamaya Kosa. We can conclude that all the four superficial kosas, the Annamaya Kosa, the Pranamaya Kosa, the Manomaya Kosa and the Vignanamaya Kosa are all arising from the base Anandamaya Kosa. The spirit of Atma, which is the base for all these things, is the ananda which is at the bottom of all these other kosas.

Vasishta was a great saint who had a vision of this ananda. He experienced this ananda and knew what bliss was. This is the reason why Vasishta was always described as a Brahmarishi. Vasishta had the great good fortune of performing the naming ceremony of Ramachandra, of giving Him the first morsel of food, of initiating Him into studies and of performing His Upanayanam. Such a great saint with such good fortune will be recognised as one who has had the direct vision of ananda and experienced the bliss of ananda.

On many occasions Vishwamithra showed a considerable amount of jealousy towards Vasishta. On some occasions, Vishwamithra also tried to kill Vasishta. Still, Vasishta was so generous that he treated Vishwamithra with great kindness. Such peace and such prema and freedom from hatred and jealousy can come only to great saints who had a direct vision of ananda.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

You should not think that maharishis and yogis are ordinary people, who are only putting on an external appearance for some selfish purpose. You should understand the significance and inner meaning of Vasishta who had all kinds of strength and powers in him, conducting himself as an ordinary purohit in the house of Ramachandra. Vasishta remained as a purohit in that household,

not because of the wealth of Dasaratha, but because he was fully aware of the fact that Narayana Himself came in the human form of Ramachandra. He was desiring the company of Ramachandra and such sacred thoughts took him to the household. Vishwamithra was also like that. His great achievements and his courage are indescribable by ordinary words. He had very many potent weapons with him. He never cared for the great weapons which he possessed in his own house. He knew that Narayana, Himself, came as a young boy and was born in Dasaratha's household. So all that Vishwamithra did was based on this knowledge. All the great saints knew very well that Ramachandra was the incarnation of God. Yet they would not communicate this information to others. They were conducting themselves in a manner which indicated that Ramachandra was an ideal human being, who came for the purpose of teaching ideals to people. These great saints were regarding Rama as an ideal human being, but knew very well that He was God, Himself. In such circumstances, it is not possible for any human being today to discuss the right and wrong of what took place at that time. Divinity is something which one cannot establish or understand easily.

It is not possible for us to describe our ancestors who were born earlier than us. It will not be possible for a grandson to describe where and how his grandfather was born. So it is with regard to great people, who were born and who lived much before us. How can we describe their faith in God and their relationship with God? There is one parallel for this. When we ask the question, who is your father? You give a reply that so and so is your father. How do you know that person is your father? You have accepted it because your mother has told you so. If you have no trust in what your mother has told you, there is no chance of your believing that that person is your father. Just as your mother's evidence is useful in recognising and accepting a certain person as your father, in order to recognise and accept the existence of God: Veda is the authority. Further, if you are asked when you were born, you give the reply giving the time, the date and the place. How do you know the date when you were born? For this also, the elders, your father and mother tell you the date of your birth and you accept it. In all these matters, only such statements made by people who lived earlier than you can be taken as authority. You yourself cannot constitute an authority in such matters.

When we take the people who lived before us as authority for this purpose, similar authority in the matter of God can be given only to people who understand what divinity is and who have the divine aspect in them. Only that person who has tasted the juice of cane sugar can describe the taste of the juice. To some extent, by experience, one can describe the taste, but one cannot describe its form. When we ask the question, how is sugar? We can say sugar is like white sand. But if someone asks you to describe the nature and the form of sweetness in the sugar, it is not possible to do so. In a similar manner only those people, who have immersed themselves in the experience of God, can even have the right to attempt to describe anything about God. Others cannot do this. God is present everywhere in the form of Atma. His effulgence is shining in every heart. If such effulgent Atma is not present, man cannot live in this world even for a moment. It is present in all of them and is at the same level in all the human beings. It is possible to establish and describe that kind of divinity only when we identify ourselves with divine features. Our names, our forms, our tastes, our likes and dislikes may differ from one person to another. These are simply differences which arise out of our desires. There is one small example for this.

We prepare Mysorepak, gulabjam, barfi, kheer and so on. While we have prepared so many different sweets and we enjoy them in different forms and tastes, yet we know that what is contained in all these different forms is only sugar. That is the spiritual aspect. Because of taste, you say that you want such and such a sweet and you eat it. The sugar in all the sweets is one and the same. It is only the form that differs. In the same manner, although God is present everywhere yet in some circumstances, at a certain time, in a certain place, in a certain person, He gives a particular experience. In a human body, we have a hand, a cheek, a tongue, and a nose. Through the nose, the hand, the cheek and the tongue, it is the same blood that is flowing. Although the same blood is flowing through all these limbs, if you take a laddu and put it in your hand, will the hand be able to taste the laddu? No. While it is the same blood everywhere, it is the same heart that is pumping the blood, yet depending upon the place, each component of the body experiences the same thing in a different manner. In the same manner, although in all human beings there is the same Easwara, the same divinity that is present, yet

depending upon that individual's karma, he will experience it in his own way. To enjoy such experience, one should make an effort, one should do sadhana. It is not right to feel jealous when we look at someone experiencing some joy in life. Such bad qualities will cause harm only to ourselves. No good comes out of feeling jealous. The tongue eats iddies, sambar and various other types of food. If the eye feels jealous and tells itself that it is also an organ of the body, and that it should also enjoy the iddies and sambar and if you put iddies and sambar into the eyes, there will result a great deal of harm. The eye has the right to see, but it should not attempt to eat. On the contrary, thinking that the eyes have the great capacity to see, if the mouth wants to see and begins to see, it obviously cannot do so.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

It may appear to us that the eyes are different and the mouth is different, but we should be able to recognise the common divine spirit which is in the eyes and in the mouth. We must understand the internal connection between these organs. We are walking on a road. The eye locates a thorn on the road but the legs avoid the thorn and jump over it. The eye has not gone and told the leg and warned it about the thorn. As soon as the eye sees the thorn, the leg takes care to avoid the thorn. The eye may take the attitude that, after all, the thorn is on the road and, if some-thing happens, it is the leg that is going to be hurt. Why should the eye worry about it? However, the eye does not take this attitude. It helps the leg immediately to locate the thorn. We can look at it in a different way. The leg has got a thorn into it. As soon as the thorn gets into the leg, it causes pain and the eye begins to water. The pain is on the leg but tears come out of the eye. If only we look in some depth at this inextricable connection between the eyes and the legs, we will recognise divinity commonly present in all our limbs.

In the same manner, certain connections which are coming out of the spirit of Atma are present without our knowing them. So we should never hate this spirit of Atma, which is present in every human being.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

We may listen to many discourses and may read several books, and we may hear about divinity in so many different places. Unless your heart is pure and clean, all this is not going to bring you any benefit. All this will amount to putting valuable material into a pot which has several holes in it. What you put in will go out of it. By a conscious effort, we should try and put into practice at least one or two things which we learn. Just by hearing words, we are not going to have the vision of divinity. If you have potato and chappati on your plate and keep on repeating the words potato-chappati, potato chappati, that is not going to come into your stomach. If you want to get this potato and chappati into yourself as food, then you must make your mouth and hand do some work. If you want to really enjoy the bliss of divinity, then you must give work to your hands by which you do bhajans and work to your mouth by which you sing the glory of the Lord or you must undertake such work which may be useful to others or do service which is free from selfish interests. You must utter words which are happy and blissful. Even if you do not have the right to understand and experience Divinity, at least a good word must be uttered by you. You cannot always oblige, but you can always speak obligingly. It is only when you can utter sacred words with your mouth and do useful work with your hands, that you will be in a position to understand divinity.

Students:

By simply uttering unnecessary words and talking too much, you are only causing harm to your own memory and to your own strength. In the olden days, the rishis used to observe complete silence because of this. By adopting complete silence, the rishis were promoting divine strength in themselves. We can certainly talk when it becomes necessary, but it is not necessary to talk and use words when it is not required. Sound is a form of Brahman. Of all the eight qualities which have been associated with Brahman, the first one is the quality of sound, Sabda Brahman. To some extent, if you undertake to put this into practice and not go on talking unnecessarily, then there will be a definite improvement in you.

Great sages like Vasishtha and Vishwamithra, by observing silence, could enjoy and have the vision of the Anandamaya Kosa and they could set good examples to the world.

14. "Thath Thwam Asi": Thou Art That

Date: **May 1977** / Location: **Brindavan** / Occasion: **Summer Course 1977**

Wherever there is smoke, there should be a source in the form of cinders and burning coal; so also for a running train there must be someone called a driver who is responsible for the running of that train. Even for the traffic lights, which come up automatically, there must be a source which makes those lights function. While this is so, should there not be one who is responsible for all the creation we see around us?

Pavitratma Swarupas:

"Ayam Atma Brahma" means that this very Atma is identical with Brahman. Atma is not some-thing which is distinct from us. This Atma is present in everyone, in all living beings and in all things. That Atma is identical with Brahman and has got a form which is indestructible; it is filled with sabda or sound. Om is the ekaksharam Brahman. The one single letter 'Om' is Brahman. This has, associated with it, four aspects. These four aspects are: the waking stage, the dreaming stage, the deep sleep stage, and the turiya stage.

The first aspect, in the waking stage, one is fully awake. The waking stage is usually accompanied by the gross phenomenon, by desires connected with the material aspects of the world. This waking stage has got a gross form and is connected intimately with our desires of the material world and is promoted by the five working organs and the five sense organs which we have together with the five pranas and four other features like chitta, Antha Karana and so on. These are all present in the waking stage. This stage is also referred to as Viswa.

The dreaming stage has got a subtle form. This stage is called taijasa.

Whatever one has experienced when he is awake, during the waking stage, attaches itself in some form with the mind and continues to appear in the dreaming stage. In this stage, all the nineteen aspects, which we have mentioned earlier, will still appear as subtle forms with a subtle phase.

Mind, in the Manomaya Kosa and intelligence in the Pranamaya Kosa, play an important role. Both the waking stage and the dreaming stage are somewhat on the same footing and are equally important. The other two stages are quite different, the difference being one of essence. The third one is the deep sleep stage. This is also named as pragna. In this stage of deep sleep, there is no connection whatever either through the gross form or through the subtle form, with the material world. Here we can take the example of reflection of the sky in a pot. Once that pot is removed, the reflection disappears and the sky in the pot becomes identical with the original big sky. So also in this state of deep sleep, we lose all connection with the material world, the gross and the subtle forms; and we are independent of them. In this stage of deep sleep, the nineteen facets, which have been mentioned, are neither in the material form nor are they in the subtle form. The deep sleep state is quite distinct and separated from them. In this state, various organs of the body do not function at all. This is a very surprising situation which causes us astonishment. This has also been referred to as Purna Thathwa.

The next stage is called the stage of turiya. The aspects of turiya are indescribable in ordinary words by any one. This state of turiya, in its totality, reflects the spirit of Atma. As we cannot see our own eyes, so also Atma cannot see itself. There is a small example here: if we take a doll made of salt and ask that doll to go and experience the taste of the ocean, how is that going to be possible? This salt doll will go into the ocean and will get lost by dissolution and merger. As in that analogy, if the jiva is looking for the Atma, he will completely merge into Atma when he gets close to it. Thereafter it will not be possible for the jiva to separate himself from the Atma. That aspect is described as omnipresence. This is also another feature of Atma and it is able to be present in all the living beings. This state has been described as pragnanam Brahma. It has also been described as "Thath thwam asi" or thou art that. It is also "Ayam Atman Brahman" or Atma is Brahman. This is the

same as saying "Aham Brahmasmi" or I am Brahman. These are the four mahavakyas which constitute the spirit of the Vedas.

There is a small example for this. From a big hill, we pick out one rock and an artisan chisels out of this uncut rock a beautiful figure of Krishna. After some effort, he will produce out of this rock a very beautiful figure of Krishna. Choosing a proper and auspicious time, he will take this figure of Krishna and install it on a pedestal in the temple and will go on worshipping it. Here we notice that a part of the rock has been taken out and has been installed in the temple and is being worshipped by various people. The little remnants, the pieces of stone which are left in the rock after chiselling the figure of Krishna, are left in the same place as the rock. No one cares for those remnant pieces of rock. Nobody worships them and nobody thinks of those pieces as of any importance. Here, in our thought, this portion of the Krishna figure becomes one which can be worshipped as God, whereas the rest of the rock from which it has come is looked upon as useless pieces. But these pieces of stones and their background is not like that. The remnant pieces of rock will keep on proclaiming, "Thath thwam asi" and seem to say, "That figure of Krishna which you are worshipping is me, I am that." A portion of the rock appears to us as if we can worship it, and the other portion of the rock appears to us as valueless. What is being worshipped as deity is something which has been created by you. The true form from which it has been created is the original piece of rock. As in that analogy, what we see in this world as a form is something which has come out of the source rock. The form of Krishna in this case has been formed from a rock. But the essence, the basic substance in the form-less, is the same in the source rock as in the figure. Whether you take the formless rock, the source of the idol of Krishna, or the idol itself and beat it, the kind of sound that will come out is exactly the same in both cases. So Atma, which is the form of sound or sabda, and the sound, the Omkara, are both one and the same. Those who propound Vedanta have been explaining this truth by saying that the combination of "Akara Ukara Makara" is AUM, and is nothing but Brahman. Either in the gross form or in the subtle form, or in the supreme form of the Turiya, what is contained is the same and it is Omkar.

Vishwamithra recognised that this Atma, which is identical with divinity, is present in everyone. It takes the form of pragna in the created form in order to establish the identity between the Jivatma and Paramatma. When we look at the story of the Ramayana, we find that at a certain point, Vishwa mithra comes to Dasaratha and requests him to send his sons for the specific purpose of protecting his yagnas in the forest. During the journey, he taught Rama and Lakshmana two manthras, Bala and Atibala. Not only did he teach these manthras, but he also gave them all the weapons that were in his possession and taught them how to use those weapons. After giving them all this training, he took them to Mithilapura after the yagna was over. It is not as if these manthras, Bala, and Atibala have something special in them. By making appropriate changes in the Gayatri Manthra, we can get these manthras.

While taking them to Mithilapura, he also undertook the task of getting Rama to remove the curse on Ahalya. After reaching Mithilapura, he gets Ramachandra to break Shiva's Bow and marry Sita. After the marriage of Sita, Vishwamithra disappeared that very night and was not to be seen thereafter. Thus we see that the story of Vishwamithra begins with taking Rama and Lakshmana with him and performing the marriage of Sita as the foundation for the ultimate destruction of Ravana. When he came to Dasaratha, he was in the first stage. When Vishwamithra taught the manthras Bala and Atibala to Rama and Lakshmana, he took the form of Taijasa. When he undertook to perform the marriage between Sita, the Jivatma, with Rama, the Paramatma, he took the form of Pragna.

When we look at these three stages of Vishwa-mithra, we understand that no one can live without being dependent, to some extent, on the material creation around him. At that time, he is in the first stage or the waking stage, which is described as Viswa. Later when we can acquire faith in the Divinity, then we transform into the next higher stage described as Taijasa. If we do not stop at this stage, and if we develop the next higher stage and identify ourselves with Atma, that can be described as Pragna. Because Vishwamithra reached this sacred stage of Pragna, he could realise that Rama was the incarnation of Narayana Himself, and in that context he was in contact with

Rama. In this stage of Pragna, there will be a commendable determination to fulfil a task. That determination is permanent and unwavering. In this stage Vishwamithra developed some kind of enmity with Vasishta because Vasishta was being described as a Brahmarishi while he himself was described only as a Rajarishi. He was determined to see that he was also addressed as a Brahmarishi by Vasishta himself. Withstanding all kinds of difficulty and never wavering from his determination, Vishwamithra went into a very severe penance. He could withstand all the tests to which he was subjected by God Himself. In the end he succeeded in being called a Brahmarishi by Vasishta himself. Because he took such a hard and difficult vow and succeeded, we call him Brahman. Thus, if we want to achieve anything, we should go into the state of an unwavering mind and a determination without swerving from the objective. Vishwamithra demonstrated such sacred truths.

Amongst the lessons which Vishwamithra gave to the world, Gayatri manthra is an important one. This manthra teaches that there is equal opportunity of spiritual achievement for all religions, for people of all countries and people of all communities and all places.

This manthra has something to do only with intelligence. It has nothing to do with religious activity. We say "Dhiyo yonah prachodayath," and this portion of Gayatri means, "Blossom my intelligence, give importance to my intelligence, remove the dark-ness of ignorance and let the Pragnana in me blossom out." It prays to the Lord who is present at all time, (past, present and future) and who is present at every place, to come and burn away the darkness of ignorance and give the brightness of knowledge. In man's life, there is his childhood, his youth and his old age. These three stages of man are not distinct and different, but they are simply changes of one and the same basic content. In the childhood there is youth, in the youth there is old age. This aspect of unity can be referred to as the aspect of Pragnana, and Vishwamithra was demonstrating this. With the help of this Pragnana, Vishwamithra could even create a new universe. That is referred to as Trishanka. Ability to create something totally new is an aspect of Pragnana.

Not fully understanding and knowing the significance of Mahavakyas from the

Vedas - "Aham Brahmasmi, Thath thwam asi, Ayam Atma Brahman, Pragnanam Brahma," we are misinterpreting them, and we are not able to derive the full benefit out of them. When we try and interpret them in as easy a manner as possible, we realise that they are only telling us what the nature of our own self is. Pragnana enables you to stand out only as a witness and experience everything around you. We say, this is my hand, this is my head, this is my tongue, and we begin to claim all this, but who is this claimant? For every one of these things, Veda has been telling us the answer by saying: That is you, thou art that, I am Pragnana and I am Brahman; in that way it makes you stand out as a witness and not become identical with your body or hand.

Students:

There are many such sacred statements in the Vedas, but we are not making an attempt to understand these sacred statements. Prakruthi, the material creation around us, is our friend. We can interpret this by saying that if we have faith, we can achieve any difficult task. For both these, our prema is the main cause. If there is prema between you and me and even if we come to blows with each other, then you will interpret that it has been for your own good; those blows have caused your blood to circulate more freely. If there is no prema, if there is no understanding between us, even if I throw a good rose flower at you, it will be misunderstood and you will interpret it by saying that the rose has got a thorn and I have thrown the rose so that the thorn may hurt you. Here the good way in which you interpret it, or the bad way in which you interpret it, is determined mainly by the presence or absence of prema.

If you want to promote the aspects of faith and confidence, you must promote prema in the first instance. The duty of every human being is to develop faith and prema, and perform one's duty with care and responsibility. On the contrary, we are wasting our lives, filling ourselves with ignorance and not making an attempt to understand the purpose of life. In one's own childhood, one mixes up with a number of other children and spends time playing games. When he gets into his youth, he spends his time attracted by women.

In adolescence he will spend his time trying to earn money. When he is in old age, he will begin to think of God. He keeps on saying that he has not achieved this or that, and he keeps on feeling sorry. In the end, without being able to give up these desires, without knowing what his true form is, he spends his life in a wasteful manner and ends it in sorrow.

Students:

To be born as a human being is not so unsacred as all that. Amongst all the things that are born, to get a human birth is very difficult. Not realising that and acquiring bad qualities will be making our life unsacred. No life is always and at all times filled with troubles and pains. Difficulties never come one after another. The interval between one sorrow and another can be described as pleasure. Thus pleasure is always an interval between two pains. On the contrary, we treat this period between pain and pain as a period of leisure and rest.

Truly three-fourths of our life is filled with happiness and only one-fourth is filled pain. But we do not take our life in that manner. We think that three-fourths is filled with sorrow and one-fourth is filled with happiness, and we get vexed and disgusted with human life and say that this human life is full of sorrow. This simply reflects man's mind in a weak state. With a view to making such a weak mind strong enough, we have to accept the path of spirituality.

There is a small example; we eat rice. In that process, thousands of pieces of rice cooked as food are taken inside. We do not pay attention to the large number of pieces of rice that go inside. But even if there is one piece of stone, which comes into our mouth, we say that the rice is full of stones. This means that when there is pain, we give a lot of attention and spend a lot of time thinking about the pain.

We can take another example. Suppose ten years ago, one of the children got fever and as a result of that he died. After all that time, today another child gets fever. Looking at this child who has fever now, we recall to our mind the

fact that one other child had fever ten years ago and died as a result of that fever. We feel sorry and add that sorrow to the present sorrow and we become more and more sorrowful. Why are we recollecting and recalling sorrow that we experienced ten years ago? Why do we not think of the happiness and the good that we experienced in the past? We always recall the pain and the sorrow that we had experienced. At this present time of trouble just as we remember the pain and sorrow of the past, if we can recall the pleasure and happiness of the past also, then, to some extent, we will be relieved of the pain at the present time. The true nature of Atma should be such that we recall the happiness and pleasure that has gone by and not sorrow and pain. The reason for this is that Atma has the form of ananda. Atma which is the embodiment of God is beauty and happiness.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

Beauty is not present in creation, beauty is present in us, in the nature of Atma. There is one example. Sita's mind was filled with sorrow when she was in the Asoka Vana and Ravana tried to show her many beautiful things and attract her. However, all that beauty caused no attraction to Sita. To make Sita forget her sorrow, he created several attractive things. But on the last day, looking at a monkey who was sitting on a tree and uttering the name of Rama, Sita found great beauty and attraction and she began to enjoy the beauty of the monkey. Is a monkey beautiful at any time? But the name of Rama which was enshrined in the mind of Sita, joined with the name of Rama uttered by Hanuman, and the two together created the attraction and beauty, and the beauty was not in the monkey. When there is prema, whatever we may look at, it will be beautiful and good. The young crow looks attractive to the old crow. We will be disgusted with the sight of a crow, but the mother crow will always be happy when looking at the young crow. It is only a contact with our own prema that will make us appreciate and be happy. Vishwamithra always proclaimed that these two aspects, beauty and happiness, really come out of our own mind.

In the story of the Ramayana, every character, including that of the rakshasas as well as of the monkey, has been proclaiming suitable ideals to the world.

After killing the rakshasas, Tataki and Subahu, Maricha was allowed to go free, and we must examine the inner meaning of this situation. If Maricha was also killed and was not allowed to go free, there would not have been the possibility of Ravana taking away Sita. If Ravana did not take away Sita, there would not have been the killing of Ravana himself. Thus, there is always a master plan behind every act in the Ramayana.

Students:

In this context, you should realise that for every act of yours, you should take great care. "Sraddha van labhate jnanam," one can get wisdom by paying sufficient attention. The letters contained in this statement should be understood carefully. To promote this kind of sraddha, we should also think of another eight-letter statement "Samsayatma vinasyate," you must remove all doubts from your mind. On the one side, "Sraddha van labhate jnanam," and on the other side "Samsayatma vinasyate." If we have these two statements as the two limits between which our stream of life should flow, we will be happy. If one has sufficient care and sufficient faith even if he gets a tiny spark, out of that spark he can generate a huge fire. If one is not careful, even if you give him big burning logs, he will push them aside; there will be no fire. For a student who has sraddha, who has a desire to learn, even if you give one sacred sentence, it will be enough. We do not have to read many books. If we want to tell others, we have to read books. If you want to realise for yourself, even one sentence is enough. To kill others, you want swords, weapons and guns. If you want to kill yourself, even a needle is enough. So also if we want to realise the nature of ourselves, one sentence with prema and confidence is enough. For us to read many books, to listen to many statements made by others and enter into argumentative conversation with each other will mean a waste of time. When you enter into such argumentative talks, the pragnana in you will lose its vitality. Your steadiness also will disappear. Arguments and counter arguments will always weaken a man. To some extent, one will lose his reputation as well.

Students should quietly and silently debate within themselves and understand their own true nature.

15. The World Is An Illusory Projection Of The Substratum Of Brahman

Date: **May 1977** / Location: **Brindavan** / Occasion: **Summer Course 1977**

A zero will get its value only if it is placed after an integer, so also, a jiva will get some value only if it is placed in conjunction with Divinity. This is the simple truth. What other truth can I convey to you?

Paramatma is one who is infinitesimally smaller than the smallest thing. Paramatma is one who is larger and bigger than the infinitely large things. Paramatma is the totality of all the small and all the big things in this world. It is not possible for anyone to describe or understand the fullness and the total aspect of the Lord. Four blind people, who wanted to know the form of an elephant, began touching each one of its organs and were thinking that the elephant has the same form as the particular organ which he has touched. Human beings are not able to understand and grasp the infinite aspect of the Lord. Each one of them gets only a limited experience of the Lord, and he think that God is limited to his experience only.

The leaders of various religions have been describing this totality of Divinity in an incomplete manner. The Charvakas have come to the conclusion that there is no strength at all in this aspect. The Jains and the Buddhists have not been able to grasp the really true form of this aspect. But Sankara has been describing this by words (chinmatra) indescribable, incomprehensive and so on. He has been establishing that the self-effulgent Paramatma is no other than the basic truth. He has been propagating that the illusion which man often suffers from is not separate and distinct from, but is only a projection of, Brahman, the true substratum. He has been teaching that one should believe that whatever is present in all the living beings is simply Brahman and nothing else. The aspect of Brahman is something which is eternal, is unchanging and has not got any blemish in it at all. When we say that it is

unchanging and eternal, we also imply that it has neither birth, nor an end. There is also an implication in its description that the qualities and the gunas of the aspect of Brahman cannot be described and understood. There is also another inner meaning in Sankara's description that Paramatma or Brahman is something which does not depend on anything else; it is perfectly and totally independent. It has no parallel and you cannot point at something else and say that Brahman is greater than this or equal to this. There is nothing equal to or greater than Brahman. This is the aspect of the Paramatma.

Just as it is quite common knowledge in the world that milk changes into curd easily, so also this indescribable Sakthi, or power of Paramatma, has changed itself and projected itself as creation. We should realise that the strength of Paramatma, which has changed as a result of maya and projected itself as material creation, is symbolised by Sita; and the divine strength of Paramatma is symbolised by Rama. The marriage between Rama and Sita is really the confluence of Purusha with Prakruthi. As was mentioned yesterday, since Vishwamithra understood very well the meaning of the Turiya state, he has also understood the symbolic meaning of creation, which is Sita, and he described Sita in this manner. The state of Turiya can be regarded by us as literally the form of Atma. If a piece of salt went into the ocean to find the ocean, it gets dissolved in the ocean and cannot come back in its original form. So also, we learn that the jiva which wants to learn the nature of Atma, when it goes there, it will get completely merged in the Atma and cannot come back. Here, it has been established that the nature and meaning of Rama is the silent interval that exists between two primordial sounds of Om. The meaning and the aspect of Rama should also be recognised by us, and it conveys to us the kind of connection that should exist between one human being and another. Here we can take the example of Divinity, the Brahman which is a single entity and which has no parallel. Its manifestations are in the form of so many different human beings. If we take a piece of glass prism, we will notice that light appears through this prism as being made up of so many different colours. The seven colours that we see through the prism are not different and distinct. What basically exists is one single ray of light that is being broken into seven different colours because of the existence of the prism. It is not the natural form of the original ray of light. When we light the

wick of an oil lamp and try to look at it from different angles, we can see that the light appears to us in a totally different form. All these different forms can be seen in the light of the wick. They are not different. They are coming from the same source. It is in this context that in Vedantic parlance, it is said that if you take out fullness from what is already complete and full, then what remains will also be full. Infinity, subtracted out of infinity, leaves infinity as the remainder.

There is a small example: we go to a shop and we wish to buy a kilo of jaggery. From the stock which the shopkeeper has, he will cut a small piece and will give it, after weighing a kilo. The sweetness in the kilogram of jaggery which you have purchased is in no way different from the sweetness in the same block. The difference is only in the measure. We bring it home, we make small pieces of this jaggery, we put it in water and make it into sweet juice and drink it. Even when small pieces are made out of this kilo of jaggery and put into water, there is no change in the sweetness of jaggery. The big block, the kilo of jaggery, and a small piece of jaggery may differ in the quantity and measure but the taste has not changed. Thus the source is full, from that we have removed fullness, and we have experienced this fullness and what remains is also full. If you take fullness out of a full thing, what remains is also full. Thus the name of Rama demonstrates to us that man's aspects are all divine aspects. They are closely connected with the aspect of divinity.

The Ramayana has been establishing that all living beings have their origin in God. The Upanishads have taught us the same thing by saying that Easwara is the source of every being. By taking these examples from the Ramayana, Vishwamithra tells us that Sita should be regarded as the symbol of creation and Rama should be regarded as Divinity, or the Atma, and the marriage between Rama and Sita is the confluence between Divinity on one hand and the essence of human beings on the other. Vishwamithra also showed us that sorrows and pleasures are simply the results of union or the breaking up of such unions. The Ramayana has also taught us that the spirit of Atma is contained in understanding truly the result of coming together or being separated. Here when Vishwamithra was taking Rama and Lakshmana for the

purpose of killing Tataki, halfway in their journey they heard a big noise. Rama and Lakshmana asked Vishwamithra how, in a forest, where there were not many people, such a big noise had come. Vishwa-mithra told them that amongst the Himalayas there is a particular mountain called the Kailasha and on that mountain of Kailasha there is a lake by name Manasarovar. The river Sarayu flows out of the lake Manasarovar. An ancient king who belonged to the Dynasty of Rama was responsible for bringing this river down to the plains, and his name was Bhagi-ratha. Vishwamithra stated that Bhagiratha brought down the river Ganges as well and the Sarayu was joining the river Ganges, and therefore, the noise was so loud. Vishwamithra had implied a good spiritual inner meaning for his statement. He regarded the word 'Kailasha' as symbolic of a pure mind. Our mind has been compared to the lake Manasarovar. The outflow of several ideas from the pure and clean mind had been compared with the outflow of the river Sarayu from lake Manasarovar. He imagined that these ideas are springing as if they had pure white foam in them. When these sacred ideas are emanating from Manasarovar in the form of river Sarayu and when they are touched by the rays of sun, they produce a sound, the primordial sound, OM. This sacred sound Om, or the pranava, is emanating from the heart of every individual. Vishwamithra explained that this is the origin of the noise. You can hear this sound of pranava only in a place which is pure. For this reason, the rishis of those days used to leave the cities and towns and go to the forest which was pure and silent, for the sake of hearing this primordial sound of Om. Truly, the sound that is contained in silence is to be identified with God.

After walking some distance, they also heard a sound which was not very pleasant; that was causing some fear also. Rama asked Vishwamithra what that fearful sound was? Vishwamithra told Rama that the fearful sound was made by Tataki, a rakshasi who was causing havoc and trouble to all rishis in the forest. He also explained that Rama was brought there to kill Tataki. She was called a yakshini. Since Rama knew all the dharmas and all the secrets of things, he asked Vishwamithra, how a yakshini, which cannot exercise its own will, could cause such harm and suggested that Tataki is only a yakshasi.

Vishwamithra gave an interesting story in this context. He described the story

of Suketa who was a yaksha, who was praying to the Lord because he had no children. As a result of this, he was blessed with a very strong daughter by name Tataki, the rakshasi. This Tataki married a person by name Sangalu, and after the marriage she had two sons by name Subahu and Maricha. After some years, the husband died. Unable to bear the death of her husband, Sangalu, she became very much excited; and in great passion she developed anger; and with the help of her two sons, she has been all the time giving pain and trouble to the rishis. Realising this anger and bad conduct on the part of this woman, Agasthya cursed her and said that she will thereafter conduct herself as a rakshasi.

Vishwamithra narrated this story and said that originally she was a yakshini; but as a result of the curse of Agasthya, she became a rakshasi. Now she can exercise her will over human beings. After telling Rama about this power of the yakshini, he took Him to Mithilapura. Vishwamithra had also been establishing the truth that is contained in the statement that sin is not something distinct and unconnected with one's actions. Sin arises only from the kind of work and action that you do. God is not found elsewhere. God can be found only by the good deeds and good actions that you do. When we talk of rakshasas and wicked people, they are not to be found elsewhere as separate entities; they are living in our own hearts and arise from our own actions. It is in this context that the devatas described Ravana as having ten heads, symbolic of anger and sin, and removal of anger and sin means removal of Ravana or demoniac qualities. Here we can interpret this by saying that wickedness and anger in the form of Ravana will be present in us unless we take care. Sita's aspect is symbolic vignana and pragnana or knowledge and wisdom. She is the embodiment of Sakthi. Vishwamithra, who realised and recognised this sacred aspect of Sita, was wanting Rama, the Divinity, to secure this aspect of Sita. The story of Ramayana teaches us the confluence or the coming together of these two divine aspects. Such a confluence is for the prosperity of the world.

All the great and divine ideas that are contained within us feel exhilarated when we look at the coming together of these two aspects. All the good qualities that are contained in Sita were being described in terms of beautiful

gems, diamonds, pearls and flowers. Everyone was anxious to go and see the marriage of Rama and Sita. They believed that Rama will look after people with greater joy and bliss and will give them all kinds of weapons and strength during the marriage. When we see the meaning of the words that have been used on that occasion, we realise that creation, with all its beauty, with all its attractiveness is in the form of Sita, who is born out of the earth. This beauty of creation is being described by Vishwamithra in this story. The marriage ceremony of Rama should not be regarded by us as a simple marriage where Rama married Sita on his own; but we should regard it as a confluence of all the noble qualities that are born with us, with the divine spirit of Atma which is Rama. We call this moment an auspicious moment, and that is the moment where the aspect of jiva is brought together with the aspect of Paramatma. When our mind can get fixed on God, that is also referred to as an auspicious moment. Many people ask the question, why is it, Swami, that my mind is not getting fixed on Divinity? When we look at it from another angle, say we want to get a girl married to a boy, we talk of issuing an invitation which is called a Lagna Patrika. The word lagna truly means confluence, the coming together of the jivatma and Paramatma.

On the night when that lagna, that confluence, took place between the jivatma and Paramatma, Vishwamithra disappeared from the scene. Till that merger took place, Vishwamithra was keeping the divine aspect of Rama a secret. Not only Vishwa-mithra, but also all the rishis kept it a secret because they wanted the destruction of Ravana to come about with certainty.

If, even before the marriage of Sita and before the destruction of Ravana, they told everyone that Rama was an incarnation of God, marriage of Sita would not have taken place; Sita would not have been stolen and the death of Ravana would not have come about. This is the reason why from the very birth of Rama, He was conducting Himself and appearing to people as if He was an ordinary person. At no place, at no moment and in no circumstances did Rama proclaim that He was God in human form. The secret of Divinity is always like this and is hidden until the task, which God undertakes, is completed successfully. When the time comes, when the appropriate situation arises, then the divine strength will also become apparent to the

world. Rama and Lakshmana were accompanying Vishwamithra and they came to Mithilapura.

King Janaka knew the greatness of Vishwa-mithra, and he realised that Vishwamithra brought some princes for the sake of handling the Shiva Dhanu, and he gave them a very good reception. Rama was giving the impression that He was an ordinary human being because He came walking from a long distance.

In Mithilapura, He was sitting alone in a room and was trying to press His feet and relieve the pain due to walking. The doors of the room were nearly closed, but there was a small opening. Narada, who knew all the time what was happening, came there and looked through the opening in the door and found that Rama was pressing His own feet. He loudly exclaimed, "Oh Paramatma, what has happened? Why are You pressing Your own feet!" Vishwamithra appeared on the scene immediately and told Narada that this secret of the incarnation of Rama must be kept carefully. He requested Narada not to bring about a catastrophe by announcing it openly. Vishwamithra said that if this is done, then the marriage of Sita will not take place and the destruction of Ravana will not come about. All the rishis, who were really liberated people, had no selfish motives. This kind of conduct on their part was intended to give happiness and prosperity to the people.

Students!

To regard the qualities of the rishis as being cheap is due to our own ignorance. Because we are unable to understand the inner meaning of what they have left for us and are unable to recognise their greatness, we are thinking that these people were ordinary people. When we look at great people from our own inferior position, we think that their dhyana and their achievements are very small. This is so, only because of your inability to grasp the greatness in them. The divine aspect is present in all human beings. If you regard the little spark which is in you as very great and are conceited about it, you must also feel how great the same spark, which is present in everyone like you, can be. You may feel that you are a very big

person. But this is looking at it from your own position. When you look at the ocean from your own position, it looks like a big thing. But when you raise your own position higher and higher, then look at the ocean, then you think the ocean is also small. Only when you yourself can rise to a higher position, will you realise that all the living things in the world are very small.

It is in this context that Vishwamithra was teaching the people the great truth - Brahma sathyam, jagat mithya. The one and only truth is Brahman. Because it is being projected as this material creation, we see by illusion the world around us. Without milk, you do not get curds. Without curds, you do not get butter. Without Brahman, you do not get the projected world.

16. God And Dharma Should Be The Two Wheels For The Chariot Of Your Life

Date: **May 1977** / Location: **Brindavan** / Occasion: **Summer Course 1977**

Whether you take the pot to a well or to a big lake or even to the ocean, the amount of water you can bring will be only all that it can contain and no more.

So, also, wherever you may go, what you can achieve, will be only what you deserve and no more.

This is the truth. What other truth can I convey to you?

Pavitratma Swarupas:

It is not possible to make any noise with one hand only. In the same manner, if man wants to achieve something higher, without making an effort, it is not possible. If man wants to get the fruits without making any effort, this signifies weakness on his part. In order to achieve any result, some attempt has to be made. It is man's duty to put in his best efforts and the success or failure will be decided by God. By making an effort, we will be able to achieve many things and good results. Creation and God are not two distinct things. In our ignorance, we regard what really is a projection of God's maya as the world and material creation. It will appear as the manifestation of the spirit of the Divine if we act wisely and with knowledge. It is only when we can think of both and discriminate between them, will we see the difference.

There is an example for this. Suppose we have learnt that, in the markets of Bangalore, there are some very sweet and juicy mangoes. Just by listening to that statement can we get the experience of eating the mango? We should go to the market and see those mangoes. Merely by looking at the mangoes, the juice is not going to enter our mouth. In order to experience the sweetness of the juice, we will have to take it in. In the same manner, the first step is to

understand. After understanding, we also have to go and see. After seeing, we have to experience. As in this analogy, when we hear the words jiva and God, it is only when we see it, go near it and experience it, can we understand their aspects. We should also recognise the truth that God, alone, cannot be separately existing without His own creation; and without creation, there is no God.

By our external understanding, we call this a piece of cloth. But by some thought and understanding, we can call it a conglomeration of pieces of thread. Without the threads, we cannot get a cloth. Without the earth, we cannot have a pot. Without the gold, we cannot have any ornaments. Without Brahman, we cannot have any creation. Here we must recognise the inseparable connection between the creator on the one hand and creation on the other hand. We should try and understand, make an examination of the meaning of the words "I, World and God." In the market of this world, we will be able to collect the fruit of jiva. Our attempts should be to reach the market of the world and find the fruit of jiva. In the aspect of jiva, we should experience the Brahman or the God in it. You must recognise the oneness of the Brahman that is present in all of us. You may have many different vessels of different colours, of different forms and made up of different metals, but the reflection of the sun in all those vessels is of the same sun. In the same manner, we should recognise that what we find as reflection in all the jivas is the reflection of only the one Paramatma. By entertaining different ideas, which are incorrect, we are making our own life very artificial. We should make an attempt to recognise the oneness of all that is present in everyone. Here, in this group, we call out the name of Ramudu and the one with that appropriate name will get up and respond saying, "I am Ramudu." One other name is called out as Krishna and another individual gets up and says, "I am Krishna." While the names and forms of Rama, Krishna, Lakshmi, Narayana and Madhava look different, yet in all of them, when they say, I am so and so, I am so and so, the common thing is the I. This aspect of I, which is present in everyone, is the aspect of Brahman. When we ask the question, "who am I?" it will be right and appropriate to give the answer, "I am I." This is the correct interpretation of Adwaitha. Contrary to this, even if we say "Aham Brahmasmi," I am Brahman, we see an amount of duality. In that statement,

two things appear to us. One is the I and the other is Brahman. It is this dualistic concept in man that gives rise to several misinterpretations and several doubts.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

The knowledge of Atma, the basic spiritual knowledge, is the one which enables us to recognise the oneness of all human beings. In human beings, there are four distinct varieties which are to be recognised. The best among them are those who can recognise the faults in themselves and the good in others. The second category are those who recognise only the good in themselves and the faults in others. Worse than these are the people who proclaim the good that does not exist in them and find faults which do not exist in others. There is the fourth category, worse than all the other three categories, of persons who will always talk about the non-existent good in themselves and will always praise themselves and do not recognise anything else. This can also be called praising one's own self. When we talk of praising one's own self, one can understand praising one's own self where the praise is rightfully due; but if you talk of this with ego (ahamkara), it is equal to blindness. Ravana was suffering not only from this ego but he had also other bad qualities like jealousy, anger, lust and had power based on wealth. Ravana was born to parents by name Brahma and Kaikasi. He had two brothers, with names Kumbhakarna and Vibhishana.

Since the time of his birth, Ravana was a great devotee and was also habituated to perform thapas. By continuous penance, he earned the grace of Easwara and secured boons from Him. On one occasion when he was engaged in deep penance, Brahma appeared before him and asked Ravana what boon he wanted. Then Ravana asked of Brahma to grant him a boon by which he will not be killed by any human being or animal. At that time, there lived a rakshasa by name Mayura. He had built a beautiful city for himself. That city was more beautiful than the city of Indra. The daughter of Mayura was Mandodari. Ravana married Mandodari. She had many good qualities like shanthi, kindness and prema and Ravana never had any one of them in him.

This daughter of Mayura, Mandodari, with all such good qualities, was married to Ravana. From the time of marriage, his wife Mandodari tried her best to communicate her good qualities to Ravana and save him, but Ravana made no attempt to change his bad qualities. As a man reaches his end, his bad qualities will also go on increasing. So also Ravana's bad qualities began to increase. His brother Vibhishana also tried to teach him several good ideals. Ravana also knew all about good conduct and dharma. What is the use of knowing what good conduct and dharma are if it is not to put into practice?

Whatever one may learn, it is no use unless one puts it into practice. Ravana was proficient in all the different branches of knowledge. What is the use of having all these things if he cannot use such knowledge to reach the Lord? If bad ideas enter one's head, his wisdom and knowledge will dry up. In the end, Ravana lost his kingdom and ruined his entire family.

Ravana's brother, Vibhishana, was a great sathwik individual. From the time of his early child-hood, he was spending all his time in thinking of the name of the Lord. When Vibhishana was in penance, Brahma appeared and asked him what boon he wanted. Vibhishana, in turn, said that he only wanted to have his mind fixed at the lotus feet of the Lord. He prayed that he be given the strength by which he will always be at the feet of the Lord. Because Vibhishana had a sathwik mind and a sathwik heart, he could reach Ramachandra. Vibhishana gave up and broke his connections with his brother, his property and his wealth and reached the feet of Ramachandra. He decided that all his wealth and all that belonged to him could be sacrificed for the purpose of getting the grace of Ramachandra. If one has complete faith in God, one can achieve any difficult task.

Students:

In our daily life, we follow so many different paths for the purpose of getting some happiness and pleasure. In this world, there are many rich people, there are many wealthy people, there are many strong people and there are educated people; but we do not find any amongst them who enjoy peace of mind. The Kauravas had any amount of wealth, physical strength and

weapons but still they never derived any benefit from all that. If man makes himself distant from God and from righteousness, in what manner can he get this peace of mind?

Students:

The true strength which one can have is the strength which comes from God and righteousness. You should adopt the two wings, namely the aspect of God and Dharma. Our movements in this world should be on a chariot which has two wheels, the wheels of God and of Dharma. We should experience these two, God and Dharma, as ideals in our life. Dharma alone is like the heart of our life. Forgetting this sacred dharma and taking to unjust behaviour will be ruining our own lives. We should pick out all the bad habits in us and abandon them. In their place, we should take the good from the characters in the Ramayana and put them into practice. We should try and understand the good qualities of even Ravana. It is not as if there are no good qualities in Ravana. When he was fully immersed in the thought of God, he was prepared to sacrifice even his entire body. He was truly a follower of dharma and protector of dharma. The bad qualities of Ravana did not come as natural qualities to Ravana. All the bad qualities and bad thoughts came to Ravana because of a certain curse to which he was subjected at one time. For such a curse, his own karma was responsible. The kind of work and karma that we do will determine the consequences. The kind of seed that we put in will determine the tree and the fruit that we can get out of it. Unknowingly, and in some ignorance, we do some bad things. Whether we do such bad work either knowingly or unknowingly, the consequences are inevitable. This is the nature of karma.

Here is a rose flower. There is a very nice fragrance coming from this rose flower. Whether this flower is held in the left hand or in the right hand, the fragrance that we get is exactly the same. This fragrance is being given not only to us but to all other people around us. If we hold in our hand a flower which gives a foul smell, that bad smell will be coming not only to us but to everyone near us. In the same manner, the bad qualities that were in Ravana were spreading and giving their evil results to the entire Lanka and they

spread even to Vibhishana who was a sathwik person. When Vibhishana went to surrender to Rama and seek his protection, people like Sugriva, Angada and others, who were with Rama, asked whether Vibhishana, who was the brother of Ravana, would also not have the same bad qualities which were characteristic of his brother. The reason for this suspicion and for getting a bad name was the company in which Vibhishana lived. In this context, we should take great care in choosing our company. We should take care to see that we will absorb the good qualities from the society in which we live. If we join bad people and keep company with bad people, in a few days we will also get into bad habits. When we join good people and keep company with them, we will also absorb good qualities from them.

The hearts of young people are tender and clean. They are like white pieces of cloth. On this white piece of cloth, whatever colour you may put, you will immediately see the colour. You must make an attempt to keep your heart sacred and join such company which is sacred.

Students:

Having been born in this sacred country of Bharath, calling yourselves sons of this sacred country and belonging to the Hindu religion, accepting Indian culture and Indian traditions, if you only talk of them and do not practice them, you will be doing great injustice to this sacred country. All the young people should accept these good ideas and communicate them to others by their practice. This is the proper time. Your age, at this point of time, is the correct age. If during this age of yours, you acquire sacred ideas, there will be no difficulty in putting them into practice, when you get into your age of adolescence and later.

Students:

You are the future citizens of this country. You should show your good and sacred ideals not in words but in action. Instead of telling a hundred things, try and show by practice at least one thing. It is to enable you to see the importance of practice that we have organised this summer course. If, after

experiencing this sacred opportunity for a whole month, you cannot use this opportunity in a good manner, you should call yourselves very unfortunate. Many elders and many experienced persons are teaching you every day about the good and sacred ideals. You should try to absorb the good ideas that are contained in all these teachings and put them into practice. You must be such that you will use this sacred opportunity in a sacred manner. Your capacity for digestion must be protected with great care. Many people are giving you a big feast. From this daily feast, you must try and digest at least a small portion and after digesting, you must get the strength therefrom into your body and put it into practice. After listening to these discourses here, when you go back to your lodging, you should not spend your time in unnecessary conversation. You should recapitulate and recollect what you have listened to. It is not as if you should only utter the words that are contained in the manthra. Mere uttering the words and reading are not sufficient. You must try and recapitulate and digest it, every word and every sound of your Omkara. All people are manifestations of Paramatma. When such a sacred opportunity has come your way, to misuse it is also a great misfortune.

Students:

The bliss that you are enjoying and the experience which you are having should not turn out to be a passing one. This should change and transform into a permanent bliss. Man is always seeking happiness and bliss. He is the embodiment of happiness. Man should never give rise to any sorrow or pain. In the young age, sometimes you may get excited or angry. When such a situation comes to you, you should try and sit alone and give some thought to it and find out what is right and what is wrong. When some thought comes into your mind, you should not immediately act with excitement. That kind of action will take you to great sin. Take time and discriminate; find out whether it is going to lead you to a good act or a bad act, is it going to give you reputation or push you down? This discrimination is very necessary for all people.

You may read many Sastras or many Puranas, but if you do not acquire the

capacity to discriminate between right and wrong, all these things will become useless. In our daily life, we should conduct ourselves in an appropriate manner. We should promote a sacred life. We should establish true human nature. We should also absorb the nature of the Divine. It is for this reason that it has been said that of all things that are born, to be born as a human being is sacred. After being born as a human being, to conduct yourselves like animals is bringing disgrace to the human birth itself.

Students:

You should entertain sacred ideals in your mind and take care to see that in your daily life, you accept them and put them into practice.

17. Start Early, Drive Slowly And Reach Safely

Date: **May 1977** / Location: **Brindavan** / Occasion: **Summer Course 1977**

To begin with, white ants appear little by little, and they grow slowly. However, in good time, the whole piece of wood will be completely eaten away. Similarly bad qualities start in a small way; in good time, they will destroy the individual completely.

Students:

It is very necessary that you control your mind. Man should give up comparing himself with others.

The hands of the clock keep on moving and we hear their ticking noise. This sound of the clock goes on continuously. Between one tick and another, there is an interval. Man's life is also like this interval. Through man's heart and through his blood vessels, his life stream is beating. This beat will come to an end at sometime. Truly birth is followed by death, and death again by birth, and so on. We should try and understand the secret of this life. As a man who is swimming and moving forward in a river, we should also forget the experiences through which we have gone in the past and swim forward. Only if the swimmer throws back the water which is ahead of him will he move forward. If he does not throw back the water that is ahead of him, he will stay where he is. As in this analogy, only if man attempts to throw back the experience which he has gone through, will he be able to move forward. If one follows such a path, one will find that in man's life there is no place for anger, no place for jealousy and his life will move on pleasantly. Because man wants to go through the same experience which he has already experienced in the past, he enters the region of hatred, because he accumulates around him many attachments. If man really makes an attempt to understand his own nature and the comparison between the clock and his heart, it will be

possible for him to experience truth. Even after experiencing so many things, if man does not understand his true nature, he will feel very unhappy. He wants always to be happy, but he does not ask the question whether one can get happiness in this world? Man has great faith in collecting, acquiring and amassing wealth; but he has not got the same faith in giving up and sacrificing. But he can make an attempt to develop faith in the act of giving and sacrificing. When man can develop faith and recognises the joy of giving away and of sharing things, he will enjoy his life. If man really wants peace and happiness, he must be prepared to sacrifice. The Vedas have told us that what cannot be acquired through hard work, through learning, through any other means, can only be acquired through sacrifice. We should also understand the inner meaning of sacrifice.

If the food that we eat is not excreted out and is not sacrificed, our health will be spoiled. If we do not exhale the air that we take in and send it out, our lungs will get spoiled. If the blood does not keep on moving but stays at one place, then there will be a boil at that place. It is very necessary for us to recognise the happiness that is contained in the spirit of sacrifice. But man always wants to have the same experience again and again everyday before he learns a lesson; and because of such bad desires, man has become so unfortunate that he cannot even have a peaceful death, not to talk of a peaceful life. If man wants to lead a peaceful life, he must realise the importance of sacrifice. The truth that is contained in the statement, that immortality can be obtained through sacrifice alone, should be understood well.

In our daily life, we exhibit several bad qualities like anger, jealousy, and comparing ourselves with others. These bad qualities should be given up and sacrificed. Because Ravana had these qualities which go contrary to the purusharthas, he became a rakshasa. Ravana may have been a devotee, may have been a very learned person, but in spite of this, because he had these four bad qualities which are contrary to the purusharthas: dharma, artha, kama and moksha, he became a sinner. To such people, whatever dharma you may preach, it will appear as if it is wrong.

Ravana was the son of Brahma, had many great qualities, was a great devotee, earned God's grace by his penance; and in spite of all that, he had no peace and he did not secure a good end for himself. He could invade the city of Kubera, defeat him and take away the Pushpaka Vimana. This shows that, in him, there was the quality of jealousy. He could not bear Kubera being greater than him. Not only this, he invaded the city of Mayura, his father-in-law, defeated him, took away all his attendants and annexed his city which was the principal city of Lanka. Here one should recognise that if there is room for such bad qualities to grow, even though they begin in a small way, in the end, like white ants, they will destroy the entire life. Sometimes, because of weakness, or in a state of excitement, one does things which one should not do and, in the end, he will have to repent.

Ravana, in the story of the Ramayana, is teaching a lesson to the world that no one should have such bad qualities as he had. Ravana was a wicked person and he adopted several trickeries. He spoke un-truth and told Rama that he brought the head of Sita while he actually brought only an artificially created head of Sita, a deceit. He told that he killed Sita and brought the head. Since Rama was all-knowing, he realised that this was a trick and told Ravana that it could not be the truth. Similarly, he did the trick of getting the head of Rama and showing it to Sita and telling her that he had killed Rama.

Ravana could not bear the happiness of other people. The normal human nature should be to become happy by looking at the happiness of others. There are many people in the world who, like Ravana, take a lot of interest in any happiness that may come in the way of other people and who cannot bear others being happy.

Yugas have gone by, worlds have changed, times have changed, but the ideas and the behaviour of individuals have not changed. Even if one idea and one thought change, we can accept the trend as a sacred trend. In the Kali Yuga, there are many gurus, many groups, many organisations, many ideals and many religions who are preaching the need for such a change. In spite of listening to all that and reading all that, if one's conduct and mind have not changed even an inch, it simply means that stagnation is the result of our

Janmantara Karma. Ravana had a guru called Sankaracharya who taught him the conduct of a king. Ravana was one who acquired proficiency in all different kinds of action. His warriors and the leaders of his army were very strong and proficient in the art of warfare. His wife was a very good lady with good qualities. In spite of the fact that he had such good teaching from such a guru, and a good wife, and a strong army, he did not change his methods, and this simply means that it is a result of his own Janmantara Karma. He was living in utter foolishness. In his foolishness, he would not accept any advice from anyone else. This foolishness is something which is a great enemy of a human being. We must also remove this aspect of foolishness in us. On certain occasions, Ravana used to appear as a good sathwik person and on other occasions, he used to appear as an innocent person. Sometimes, he would pretend and appear as a great devotee. In reality, there is no one greater than him in the matter of wickedness. He would not hesitate to harm even his own wife or son.

Vibhishana, his own brother, was a sathwik person. Yet he showed no kindness to him. He simply drove him away. The wife of Vibhishana touched the feet of Ravana and begged him in many ways to save Vibhishana. This lady, who was the wife of his own brother, should be like his daughter, yet he gave so much trouble to her. The significance of all these things is that we should not simply think that Ravana was just a person with that name. The bad qualities and the cruel ideas that are in us are symbolic of the aspect of Ravana. The good in us is symbolic of Rama. It is only when we can let these two aspects confront each other and get Rama to defeat Ravana, that we can imagine that the coronation of Rama within us is possible and has taken place.

We should not think that Ravana was a person or character only in the story of the Ramayana. Our whole life is a Ramayana. Our heart is a meeting place for the good and the bad. Without there being some bad, there cannot be good alone. By the presence of both bad and good, bad will try to suppress the good to some extent. We must make an effort to see that the good in us is not suppressed that way.

You are listening to so many good discourses everyday. Those who are giving you the discourses are doing so with a pure heart, and those of you who are receiving them are also receiving them with a good and tender heart. But what is the result of all this? When we ask such a question, one does not find a good answer. During the period in which you listen to these discourses, they look very nice and attractive. But once you go out after listening to them, they do not appeal to you and you do not want to put them into practice. It is only when we can digest the food that we have taken on a particular day, can we again eat food the next day. If you eat something today and do not digest it till tomorrow, you will suffer from indigestion. Just as we should make an attempt to digest the food on the same day that we eat it, so, also, whatever ideas you listen to on a particular day should be absorbed and put into practice the same day. It is only when you take to such a path that you will be able to have a body and mind which are strong and sturdy.

Students:

In that context the story of the Ramayana, which you are listening to everyday and the ideal characters that appear in the story, offer you important examples and you should try to put those ideals into practice. Then, only, the purpose of your joining the Summer Classes for a whole month in Brindavan will be fulfilled. Whatever is heard and absorbed must be put into practice. Whatever is over and has become the past should be forgotten. You should not carry it with you. You should not bestow your thoughts and waste your time on things that have gone by. Only those which are ideals and which have to be remembered as ideals should be kept with you throughout your life.

The pains and sorrows that come during one's daily life must be forgotten, and you must leave them behind. Only when you make an attempt to lead such a life will it become fruitful. Our excitement and agitations should be suppressed in the very first instance. When your heart is free from such agitations and excitement, the ideals that have been given to you can enter your heart. I have already mentioned to you that if your heart is full of various things, it will not be possible to put anything more into it. If the head is

empty, then some good things can be put into that head. Similarly, if your heart is already full of ideas, how can any one provide you with ideals when there is no room in your heart? If bad ideas are in you and if your ears are constantly listening to bad things and if your mind is already full of bad thoughts, then dharma cannot come anywhere near such people. If you really want dharma and God to enter your heart, you must take care to see that your heart is not already filled with bad ideas. Where there is dharma, God will be present. Where there is no dharma, the devil will be present. We should not give room to the devil. We should become deserving of the grace of God. What we have learnt from the Ramayana and the ideal characters that we come across in the Ramayana should enable us to take to a dharmic path and to a life as an example to others. For all these things, devotion is essential. If you have no devotion, it will not be possible for you to achieve anything, nor will you have the right to achieve anything.

Whatever Vedas we may study, whatever Sastras and Puranas we may read, it is only when we can understand the aspect of prema that is contained in them that we will have the right to deserve the grace of God.

When Vibhishana came to the feet of Rama and asked to be permitted to surrender, Rama called the attention of those who were with Him, namely Sugriva, Angada and Jambavan. Vibhishana was coming from a distance, loudly proclaiming that he was coming with a view to surrender to Ramachandra. Rama told others that no matter who Vibhishana was and what his motives were, since he was coming to surrender, it was His duty to protect him. Once you decide and say that you belong to the Lord, then what does it matter who you are or where you come from? It follows that the Lord is yours.

Then Sugriva asked, if Ravana himself came and asked for pardon would Rama do the same thing? Rama said that if Ravana did get such a good idea in him, He will surely protect him and make him the king of Ayodhya itself. For us, to think that this aspect of surrender is appropriate only to the older people, and that young students do not have to concern themselves with it, is totally wrong. This is the appropriate age when you should surrender to God. When you grow older, you will then be able to achieve great things with

God's grace.

Here is a small story. The husband and wife in a family were doing their daily household duties in the normal way and fulfilling their obligations in this world. The wife was a very good devotee. She used to get up early morning, pray to the Lord, do her puja and in many ways served her husband by attending to whatever was needed by him. The husband was not given to such good habits. He used to get up late, he would not wash, he used to take his coffee without washing and used to go to his office, do his work and was always thinking that duty is God and that there was no need to do any puja. But the wife, during her prayer everyday, used to pray to the Lord, that somehow or other He should instil some devotion and faith in her husband and make him utter the name of the Lord, at least, occasionally.

One day, when her husband was in a happy mood, she went to him and she said that life was a very sacred thing, but they were living like animals. She asked if, at least once a day, they could not think of the Lord. She further told her husband that human life was not necessary only for earning a living.

She asked if the animals and birds, in order to earn a living and eat their food, are going to the universities and getting educated. She said that human birth is intended for promoting devotion and prayed that he change his way of life. He did not like all this and told his wife that she was an innocent woman. He said, "You think I have no devotion? I have great devotion to God, but while I am in service, I am not able to spare the time for the thought of God. After I retire, after the children get married and after they settle down, I will begin to think of God." She thought that there was no use arguing with such a foolish person, and she just thought of the Lord and kept quiet. After one week, there was some dangerous disease which took hold of her husband. She was taking all pains to call a doctor and give some medicine and get him cured of that disease. The disease became a little less virulent after a few days. On the third day, the doctor came and gave him a mixture and instructed that the mixture be given to him once in the night, once in the morning, and once in the afternoon as three different doses. The lady thought that this is the proper occasion to teach him a lesson. In the morning, even after breakfast,

the wife did not give the dose of mixture to her husband. It was lunch time and even after lunch, the wife did not give the dose of mixture to her husband. Then the husband asked, "What is this? Two occasions have passed and you have not given me any medicine at all." Then the wife said, "Why worry about taking the medicine now? You can take all that medicine after you are cured of the disease." Then he asked, "Why should I take the medicine after being cured?" She then said that in the same manner, "When this human body is with you, and when you are still well, and when you are suffering from the disease of the worldly attractions, you should take the medicine in the form of devotion and faith in God. What is the use of taking the medicine when you become old and decrepit?" When the messengers of Yama come and tell you that your time is over and that your end has come, that you have to die; when your wife and children are weeping that you are at your very end, is it then possible for you to think of the Lord? When you have entered your old age, after retirement when the hands are trembling and when you have become old, is it possible for you to sit in prayer and dhyana? In order to follow the spiritual path and to be able to get some proficiency in the adhyatmic way of life, this young age is the most appropriate age. It is in this context, it has been said, "Start early, drive slowly, reach safely." Since this is the correct age, you should start from now and you should experience peace and happiness and put into practice slowly and steadily. If we begin sufficiently early without any agitation, we can peacefully move the boat of our body in the river of our life. We can also reach the destination very safely. On the contrary, if we start late and if we begin to move fast, there will be a danger in the journey.

There is one example for this: if we go early in the morning to a hotel and buy a ticket for our lunch, it does not matter when we go for lunch. Even if you go a little late, you will have your lunch ready. On the other hand, if you go to the hotel only when you feel hungry at 12 o'clock, it may so happen that there is no lunch for you. Thus, if from today, you begin to put into practice your devotion, you will be like a person who has purchased his lunch ticket in advance in the morning. In this age of yours, you should really book your ticket for the grace of the Lord.

Students:

This is the right age, you should make an attempt to see that the thoughts in you do not cause agitation and excitement. With the thought of God, you should lead a peaceful life. I am hoping that you will drive the ship of your life in a peaceful manner.

18. Clean Food Enables One To Develop Good Qualities

Date: **May 1977** / Location: **Brindavan** / Occasion: **Summer Course 1977**

How can a dog realise the value of fasting during the day?
How can an ox realise the taste of parched rice?
How can one who cannot smell appreciate any fragrance?
How can a blind man realise the beauty of moonshine?

Students:

The great rishis of ancient times have handed over sacred ideals to us. From the culture and traditions of Bharath, we should pick out some aspects which are applicable in our daily life. The statements made by such great rishis were the result of their own personal experience in a life full of happiness and bliss. The path that was taken by them can be described as a golden path. The words they gave to us were words of truth. Their experience was such that whatever they did was only promoting the prosperity of the world and the happiness of the people. Unfortunately, it appears that man today has taken a path which is quite the opposite. We think that all the injunctions that are given to us by our ancestors are full of superstitions, and that they are based on foolish and weak ideas. If there is truly a blind faith or a superstition and if one can establish it to be so by proper reasoning, everyone will agree to that. Contrary to this, if people give a name, blind faith or superstition, to everything which they do not like and which they cannot understand, this is simply to be traced to the excitement in their own minds and such statements can be only selfish words uttered with a selfish motive.

Students:

Today I am only going to tell you what the proper conduct in your daily life

should be and how your manner of eating and living should be regulated. Many people, particularly those who are believers in God, think that at the time of their food, they should repeat the 15th Chapter of the Gita and by so repeating, they think that they will be first offering the food to the Lord and then partake of the food that has been offered to the Lord. The students who have come to participate in the Summer Classes know that in our hostel, prior to taking food, the students usually repeat some verses and make an offering of that food to the Lord and then eat the remaining food. We should not dismiss this as a foolish faith. We must try and experience the meaning and the contents of the verses.

In the old days, one of the kings was performing a yagna and he assembled a number of pundits during that yagna. Amongst pundits assembled by the king, there were two people who were accustomed to observing certain traditions. In the ancient days, the traditions were such that while travelling they would not agree to take their food in some house or other. In the early hours of the morning, they used to collect some food and used to carry the same in a bundle, and they would eat this food during the journey. When it became midday during their journey, they reached a river and found out a tree with a good shade. They sat under the tree for their afternoon meal. It was their habit that everyday they would think of God and they would offer the food to God and then, only, partake of the food. On that day, too, they started reading the twenty-fifth verse in the Fourth Chapter of the Gita which commences by saying, "Brahmarpanam ," (I offer this food to Brahma). When this verse was repeated by them, they heard some noise from the Banyan tree under which they were sitting. They thought that on account of the breeze, one branch may have rubbed against another branch and noise may thus have been produced. They were not disturbed by the noise. They were continuing their prayer. They started repeating the 14th verse in the 15th Chapter of the Gita. While repeating that verse, they were totally lost and completely absorbed in the thought of God and they were thus repeating their prayer. When this verse was repeated in that manner, they found that a Maha purusha, (a great saint) came and stood in their presence. They got up and paid homage to that great saintly personality and asked him who he was. He revealed his identity and said that he was a Gandharva and that he was

subjected to a curse by a rishi several years ago and he was living on that Banyan tree. He was now liberated from that curse by the prayers uttered under the tree.

This Gandharva then paid homage to these two pundits and said, "I know where you are going and I am fully aware of your mission. You are going to participate in a meeting which the king is convening. I have to repay my debt to you for having relieved me of my curse. I will enter into the mind of the king and I will see that you are benefited in many ways." The scholars entered the congregation arranged by the king, but they found that the place was packed with many people, and they could not reach the king. So they were sitting in some corner and were looking at the king. The words uttered by great saints can never become untrue. Because of the promise made by the Gandharva, the king, of his own accord, looked at these two scholars. The king came to them and made obeisance to them and requested them to come to the front row and be seated. He also asked them to exhibit their scholarship. The congregation came to a close on that day and the king was immensely pleased with the scholarship exhibited by them and gifted them with several villages and saw to it that they lived happily for the rest of their lives. Here we notice that this great saint taught these two persons how to get over many worldly troubles and obstacles which they came across and also showed them how to acquire spiritual blessings. Thus, if one wants to take the path of spirituality, one will find that many worldly troubles and obstacles come in the way. It is only when we can overcome these worldly obstacles that are in our way, can we take the opportunity to benefit from the spiritual path.

Because the pundits could get over the troubles and take to the spiritual path, they returned to their own village and were experiencing happiness through the gifts they received. The purpose of our thinking of this particular verse in the 15th Chapter of the Gita is to get success in worldly matters and to get over the obstacles in the matter of pursuing a spiritual path. Here, the food we eat determines in many ways what we are going to get in future for ourselves. The food we eat will determine the type of ideas that sprout in us.

While taking our food, if we use exciting words, such ideas which are related to these exciting words will sprout in us also. The lesson that we should learn is that when we take our bath, when we sit for dhyana or when we take our food, we should not think of other activities and other ideas. Too much talk, while we take our food, will also cause harm to us. We should not give room to any kind of talk when we take our food. With a happy heart and with a sacred word, we must undertake to utter this particular verse and then take our food. In this way, whatever has been offered to Brahman will become the prasad which comes to us as a gift of Brahman.

The meaning of the verse is that God Himself, who is in a human form in you, is taking the food. Therefore, this changes our food into food for God. While taking food, we should not be excited, and we should not get into passion, but we should eat very peacefully. Even if we cannot perform japa, thapa or yagas, at least if we take care to see that we eat in this manner, we will develop good ideas. The nature of the fire will determine the type of smoke that comes out. The kind of smoke that comes out will determine the type of cloud that it forms. The type of cloud that is formed will determine the type of rain which the cloud yields. The type of rain determines the harvest. The kind of harvest determines the food that we get out of it. The kind of food we eat will determine our ideas. For all our ideas, it is our food that is responsible. If we eat sathwik food, sitting in a clean place, we will have clean ideas by eating that food. There will thus be a good possibility of our getting spiritual ideas.

In the matter of food, there are three aspects regarding the cleanliness of which we should take great care.

One is the cleanliness of the material which we use for cooking the food.

The second is the cleanliness of the pot in which we want to cook the food. We can certainly clean the materials which constitute the food and also clean the pot in which it is cooked.

The third aspect relates to the cleanliness of the process of cooking. This is

not easily possible. Until the material gets cooked to its final stage, our ideas should be good for this to be achieved.

Even if there are lapses in these aspects of cleanliness, namely the pot, the materials used for cooking and the process of cooking, if we offer the food to the Paramatma before we eat, then the food will become clean. By thus offering to the Lord the food that we eat, we introduce these different kinds of cleanliness; and so our ancestors have told that these are the steps which we must observe regarding our food.

Unfortunately, today when one is hungry, one does not care about what he eats, in what hotel he eats nor what kind of food he eats. He will eat anything.

We do not see the rishis of the ancient times any longer. We see people who only pretend to be sacred. This is the reason why their condition is going down, day after day, to the very depths of degradation. It is only when we can follow the path that was laid down by the ancestors and accept the Vedic dharma that there will be no doubt whatsoever for us to rise high. All the gifts of villages, which were given by the king to people in return for specific services rendered, are disappearing these days. What is the reason for this? The reason is the change that has come about in the mode of life. Civilisation and borrowed traditions which we have accepted are showing their consequences and results. Selfishness is growing while selflessness and help to others is diminishing. The heart is becoming harsher and harsher. Intelligence is on the rise but good qualities are diminishing. Thus all the agitation and lack of peace in the world may be traced to our own food habits.

You may be hungry. In spite of your hunger, you must make an attempt to get a clean place and clean food to eat. When such clean food is available, you must first offer it to God and then eat it. Not only here, wherever you may go, when you take your food, you should remember these three verses, utter them, offer the food to God and then take the food. If there are some amongst you who do not know these three verses, you can write them down so that you will be able to recite them and become worthy citizens of Bharath.

19. As The Sweetness Of Sugar Is The Same In Sweets Of All Forms And Names, Divinity Is The Same In People Of All Forms And Names

Date: **May 1977** / Location: **Brindavan** / Occasion: **Summer Course 1977**

In the course of a life where there are no clouds, how can we find anything special? In a life which is full of prosperity, nothing can come which is surprising or unexpected.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

The devotees who recognise God, the jnanis who recognise wisdom and the sakteyas who recognise eternal truth, are all one and the same. This is what the Upanishads have described by saying that truth is one, but the people who have described it in many ways are different and diverse. When our mind contemplates on a situation, the mind itself gives it many different forms. So, also, the primordial power which is the basis of this world takes many different forms. Vedas have described this situation by saying that what exists is only one, and that is recognised by many people in diverse ways.

In the night, during a dream, we feel that we are travelling in a dense forest, and that we have slept on a hard rock. At that time, what you see appears to be truth to you. You wake up from that sleep, the entire world of the dream disappears altogether. The experience which you have during the dream is a truth at the time of the dream. The experience which you have during the waking state is a truth during the waking state. In a dream, it is not possible for us to recognise anything relating to the waking state. In the waking state, it is not possible for us to recognise anything relating to the dreaming state. In the waking state, there is no dream. In the dreaming state, there is no awareness of the waking state. But in both these states, the dreaming state and the waking state, the life-force in you, which is described by you as 'I,' is

commonly present.

Not only this, during your dream, you see many things, mansions, trees, fruits, and so on. Where have these mansions, trees, rocks come from? It is the life-force in us that creates these mansions, fruits, and rocks and gives them a form. In the same manner, the Creator puts His creative force in all the things that He has created. This sacred aspect has been mentioned in the Vedas by saying that the aspect of Narayana is present inside, outside and everywhere. All the five elements and all the materials that come out of the five elements depend upon this one primordial strength. In all the things that we see around us in the creation, the power or the Sakthi is one and the same. So, in that context, if we can enter deeply into dhyana and think of something, then the Sakthi in that life force, which is the object of your dhyana and the Sakthi in you come together and merge into each other. The names and forms of different things may appear to be different from one another, but the life-force or the Sakthi which is present in all of them is really one and the same.

There is one small example for this. By using melted sugar, we prepare many different kinds of sweets. We can make it into the shape of a fox, a doll, a box, a horse, and so on. The names and forms appear to us to be different, but the content of all these names and forms is one and the same, and the common factor is sugar. From any one of these forms, we may break a small bit and put it in our mouth. What we experience will be the sweetness of sugar which has nothing to do with the form from which this bit has been taken.

All religions will ultimately teach this aspect of oneness. While the teachings of all religions are one and are sacred, yet those who taught and preached these aspects of different religions, have created some differences because of their attitudes being different. To hate other religions or to look down on them is a very wrong thing to do. Creating differences by stating that one religion is at a lower level and that another is at a higher level, simply shows your ignorance. People who have such ideas, will begin to strengthen their faith in differences between these religions rather than their faith in God.

You should not enter into arguments, which go into the nature of different religions, but you should recognise the essence and the commonalty between all the religions and the main goals that they point to. All the religions come together to teach one thing and that one thing is good. If your mind is good, how can any religion be bad? Remember that all religions teach only good things.

Today, if people are taught that human nature is quite different from divine nature, man is simply creating these differences; and since he has not got the discriminating power, he believes them to be different. Man is God, nara is Narayana, people are Divine. Some day or other, it is inevitable that nara will become Narayana and Narayana will come as an Avathar and will become nara. In that confluence of nara and Narayana is the manifestation of all creation. It is this confluence that has been described to us in three different ways, namely dualistic philosophy, non-dualistic philosophy and qualified non-dualistic philosophy. Here, the dualism recognises two distinct things and says, "I am in the light," whereas the qualified non-dualism says, that "Light is in me." Adwaita, the highest form of non-dualism says, "I am the light." This Divine spirit which is omnipresent is seen by different people in different ways because of their varying degrees of attachment to their own human body.

Truly, when we look at it from the aspect of the human body, we only think of a name and a form of that body. Depending upon one's own background, we also decide what is good and what is bad. To both good and bad, the Atma is only a witness. It is in that context that it has been said that you are not one person but you are three different persons, namely: the one you think you are, the one others think you are, and the one you really are. These are the three different aspects. When once we recognise the totality of truth and the totality of divinity, then we will experience the identity of all these three aspects of human personality.

Today, the reason for our getting these different ideas and different opinions is that there is no co-ordination between our thoughts, our words and our deeds. The preaching is on one footing and our notions are quite different. We teach and we believe that these qualities, the quality of truth, the quality of

prema, the quality of ahimsa are very great and very strong; but in our daily life we conduct ourselves in a manner very different from what we say. Not only this, we believe that truth is our sacred religion, but we are ready to dispense with all this and what we do not seem to need is truth itself. Man is not making an attempt even to find what is good relating to himself. Man utters the word 'truth' repeatedly, but he is not able to establish the truth relating to himself. This is the reason why he is not becoming a total human being. When he himself is unable to become a total human being, how is he going to rise to the level of God?

This morning, one of the speakers told you that man is God and that the Lord is present in all human beings. He mentioned that from the position of being a gorilla, one could rise to the position of being a human being. Here, we should recognise that the world has disappeared from being in the form of a mineral and reappeared in the form of a tree. The creation again disappears from being in the form of a tree and reappeared in the form of an animal. Again the creation disappeared from being in the form of an animal and reappeared as a human being. In that evolutionary series, one should disappear from being as a human being and reappear only as God. The upward evolution is from a mineral to a tree, from a tree to an animal, from an animal to a human being, from a human being to a divine, each stage improving and learning from its previous state.

Thus, today, if man can rise to greater heights, he will become a divine being; but if he slips lower down, he will become an animal. We should always try and take the path of promotion and not demotion. In every human being, the aspect of divinity is present. The aspect of Atma is much closer to us than all friends and relations. This kind of consciousness in regard to the relationship of the A t m a to us should be promoted. All our ideas should be so refined that they are not narrow but are broad enough. We should not take the view by which we are concerned only with our family, our home and our self. This will be too narrow an approach to life. Our ideas should be so broadened that we move from home to one village, from one village to one district, from one district to one province, from the province to the country and from the country to the world.

In the same manner, in our dhyana, we should broaden it so that we regard the Param Jyothi which is present in ourselves as the same Param Jyothi, which is present in everyone else, and that is the same Param Jyothi which is present everywhere in the universe. By that feeling, we will be able to broaden our ideas and realise the meaning of the statement that there is only one truth that exists, and that this one thing is being seen by many people in different forms. We are always looking at things which keep on changing. We are looking at creation which is not permanent, and we make the mistake of identifying such creation with Divinity. We do not realise the truth.

The world is only an illusory projection and God is the basis. But to understand this situation, one has to make an attempt. This auditorium is now visible to us with all its nice windows, all the good carpets; and it presents a beautiful appearance to us. The roof is resting on these walls as a support. Looking at the roof and looking at the walls, we think that they are the important constituents of the auditorium. This is not correct. We should realise that the foundations, which we do not see, are really the basic support for this big auditorium. So, also, for everything that we see, there must be some basis which we do not see. In order to realise and understand that basis, which is not visible externally, we should adopt the path of adhyatma. Such people who do not recognise the existence of the very basis and who only confuse the external appearance, which is a consequence of that basis, as the truth, are really ignorant people.

Today, people only see the consequences of the existence of Sakthi and argue that there is no Sakthi and say that there is no basis for what we see. This statement is like saying that, in the ocean, there are waves because I see the waves and that there is no water. They are unable to recognise the basic truth that is contained in our ancient Vedic statements. If we examine this carefully, it will then become possible and, in fact, quite easy for us to see the oneness of Divinity.

What we have to establish today is not a new society, not a new religion nor a new organisation. What we have to do is to recognise the contents of what we have already had in our ancient times and bring them up to the present day.

Young people, who are capable of making sacrifices, are very essential today. Not only this, we need very urgently, courageous young people who can proclaim to the world the Omnipresence of Divinity. It is necessary to have young people who can face, and fight with courage, situations arising from injustice, unkindness and cruelty. It is necessary to have young people who will not depend only upon worldly and material benefits, but will give sufficient importance to the ethical and spiritual aspects; young people who are prepared to give up imitation, give up selfish ideas and be able to serve the community in a selfless manner. Young people who can, by their own experience, proclaim and tell others that Atma is the most important thing, are very necessary.

The divinity that is present in everyone is one and the same. Divinity is not present only in Sri Sathya Sai Baba. You are all divine. Divinity is present in everyone. The fact that divinity is present in millions of people has been conveyed to us by our Vedas in a slightly different manner by stating that God has thousands of eyes, thousands of legs and thousands of heads. It has also been said that you will find Him wherever you look for Him. This is why we say that God is always available to you, is behind you, is with you whenever you are in trouble and pain. To save you from trouble and pain, He is with you, behind you, in you and is looking after you.

One individual, on being told that God is with him and behind him, turned back and looked for God behind his back; found none and was very much disappointed. This ignorant and foolish person, thinking that God will be behind him, turned round to find God. Alas! he does not understand that when he turned round and looked, he was not looking behind him and that what was behind him has now become his front. When he turns round, God is still behind his back.

It is in that context that you must first strengthen your faith that God is behind everything. There are various steps to be taken in this context. The first thing is self-confidence, next comes self-satisfaction, then follows self-sacrifice, then self realisation. In everyone the principle of 'I' is self-effulgent. He is in the form of the self-effulgent Atma in every human being. There may

be millions of people in one place. In all of them, Paramatma is only one. In this apparent diversity, we must make an attempt to recognise the Unity.

There is a small arithmetical example for this: one plus one plus one plus one plus one becomes five. This is the correct answer in common parlance. But you can put a number of 'I's,' I+I+I+I+I and the net result will be only one I. In this divine way of thinking, you should try and search for the 'I' in each heart.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

A man is not able to promote in himself the kind of broad ideas that we can find even in insects and animals. There is one small example for this. If an ant locates sugar in some place, that ant is not going immediately to eat the sugar and fill its stomach in a selfish manner. This ant which has located the sugar will go round and collect ten more ants and all of them together will go and eat that sugar. Look at the broadminded nature of even a small creature like the ant. See, how selfless the ant is and how it tries to help other ants. Not only this, when we look at a crow, we generally feel disgusted. We take a stone and throw it at the crow. Such a crow, if it finds food anywhere, immediately begins to call other crows; and they will all join together and eat that food. Even a crow, when it locates some food, it wants to share that food along with other crows, its friends and its relations. But today, if man finds anything which he can use he wants to leave others out. A husband leaves out his wife and thinks that his own pleasure is the most important thing. A mother leaves out her son and wants to be so selfish and acts for herself. Because of such broad and sacred ideas, the ants and crows are reborn as human beings and the human population is thus growing from day to day.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

You should not misunderstand and misinterpret what I say. It is my duty to convey to you the truth as it exists. Today, the reason why the human population is increasing is because of the attitude of the people. For man to eke out his living, to fill a small tummy of his, God has created plenty in the world. God has created a large amount of rice, a large amount of fruit, a large

amount of wheat. While such good food has been created by God, yet we go and eat meat and fish. And all the fish which we kill and eat are reborn as human beings.

I want to give you another instance. Even a hard stone can melt and can flow and can ultimately take the form of a human being. Here is one example. There is a big huge rock. If in that rock, you can bore a hole and put a seed, that seed is not going to sprout and become a tree. After some time, the rock gets dried up by the sun and gets soaked in the rain water and gradually crumbles and becomes dust. If in that dust, which has come out of that rock, we put a seed, that seed will sprout and become a plant. The plant will become a big tree. From that tree, we will get fruit. Man eats that fruit. The food that has thus gone into him again becomes a source of a new human birth. Here we see that a hard stone changes into soft dust. Out of that soft dust, came a plant. The plant became a tree and the tree gave fruits. Fruits were eaten by man and out of the co-ordination came another human being.

Thus, if we enquire in some depth into these things, we will realise that whatever the nature of that material may be, the divinity that is contained in man can transform that material into another human being. As has been said in the Bhagavad Gita, in addition to recognising that one God who has no second parallel is manifested in different ways. He has also declared that He is the seed for all creation. All the branches, the leaves, the fruits and all that we see on the tree have come from one single seed. In the same manner, all the forms that we see in the creation have come from one seed of divinity. The individual who recognises this truth becomes wise and becomes one with divinity. The individual, who is ignorant and who does not recognise this truth, goes down to the depths of ignorance.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

Man wants to get happiness, peace and bliss. But he is not making efforts consistent with what he wants to have. How do we get bliss and happiness? It is only possible when we know and understand what we should know and understand. We will get bliss only when we give up what we should give up.

We will get bliss and happiness only when we reach the destination which we should reach. What is it that we should know? We should know the truth about the creation around us. What is it that we should give up? The feeling that the human body is real and permanent. What is the destination. that we should reach? We should reach divinity which is the permanent state of Atma. It is only then that we can experience true bliss. That is the reason why it has been said with Upanishadic prayer:

From this world which is untrue, lead me to truth. From this darkness of ignorance, lead me to light From death, lead me to immortality.

What does that mean here? Death here means moving to rebirth and immortality connects freedom from rebirth. What is the way to immortality? Removal of mortality is the only way to immortality. Narrow and immoral ideas like being unjust and unkind, causing harm to others, must be set aside. What is the reason for this? One should accept that whatever exists in another person is also the same divine spirit which is in you. How can we then have jealousy or hatred towards another?

When sometimes other people conduct them-selves badly, then you should pray to God that they be purified and they should not conduct themselves badly. But do not subject yourself to jealousy and bad conduct. I am hoping that you would recognise the divine aspect of Atma, the one aspect for which there is no parallel and that you will promote your sacred ideas.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

You must all make an attempt with determination to co ordinate your thought, word and deed. It has been said that the proper study of mankind is man. It is only when you do that and it is only when you recognise human nature, will you be able to understand true divinity. But today there is no proper study of mankind. This is the reason why human nature has sunk down to the very lowest depths and man is notable to live like a human being.

20. Wealth And Authority Do Not Give Peace Of Mind

Date: **May 1977** / Location: **Brindavan** / Occasion: **Summer Course 1977**

When clouds gather in the sky, in the vicinity of those clouds, there also appears a lightning. So, also, where there is proper education, in the vicinity of such education, there should appear wisdom.

Students:

If one wants to liberate himself and reach God, or if he wants to bear the burden of life, one should see that his education and his thapas become strong. The combination of education and thapas makes man strong. Vidya, which man will get and thapas joined to vidya will together make him useful. In this world, Vidya is of two kinds. One is the material vidya and the other is the spiritual vidya. What we call material vidya is one which enables you to learn successfully what is taught in the colleges, acquire positions and be successful in the worldly life. This type of vidya enables us to move from one position in life to another. This really relates to the present-day world and gives you happiness in the material world. What all people do during their daily life is related and connected with this type of vidya. All that they do, from the sweeper upwards to the Prime Minister, is connected and related to this material vidya.

This type of vidya will help man to acquire comfort, to lead an easy life and to feed himself and keep him going in a smooth manner in this world. It is not appropriate to describe this type of learning by the name of vidya. It is not correct to use the sacred word vidya to describe this kind of worldly learning. We should accept that true vidya is Brahma Vidya. There are two parts in this word vidya and they are 'vid' and 'ya.' When the two root parts of this word join together, we get the word vidya. 'Vid' means brightness or light. 'Ya'

means that which hands you. That which hands you brightness and light and opens your eyes to wisdom is called vidya. Vidya is not that which hands you darkness or ignorance. Avidya denotes darkness. Absence of wisdom means darkness. Vidya denotes light. Absence of light is darkness. Darkness covers this light of Vidya. So, to some extent, we must use Brahma Vidya to remove this cover. Material Vidya is really a branch of Brahma Vidya. Vidya when related to the worldly matters will be used for worldly affairs and comes from Brahma Vidya itself. Just like the ash that comes out of fire, covers the fire itself, so also this material vidya which comes out of Brahma Vidya covers Brahma Vidya. Like the green precipitate which comes out of water covers the surface of water as a thin layer; like the frost that gets its origin in ice, covers the ice and makes it frosty, like the clouds that come from the rays of the sun cover the sun itself, in the same manner, this material vidya which has its origin in Brahma Vidya covers Brahma Vidya itself. Brahma Vidya is solely connected with the knowledge of Atma.

Brahma indicates Omnipresence, Brahma also indicates totality and completeness. In its aspect of totality, Brahma Vidya deals with the present day material world, the spiritual world and all the ethical aspects of our life. Brahma Vidya is one which also enables us to see the true form of creation. Citizens of Bharath today have forgotten the power of this Brahma Vidya which can also be referred to as Atma Vidya. They have developed faith in Avidya or ignorance and they are bringing this into their daily life. We have to make several concerted attempts to understand the nature of this Brahma Vidya.

In man, both divinity and animal nature are co-existent. We should make attempts that will enable us to separate the divine nature from the animal nature in us and experience the divine nature to some extent. Sometimes when matter, which has no value at all, goes and joins with some valuable matter, it also acquires some value.

In this garland, there is a thread. If any one tells you to take this thread and put it in your hair or to put it round the neck of God, you will see no meaning in doing such a thing. Only because this thread is joined and is associated

with the flowers having a fragrance, we take it while it is so associated and offer it to the Lord or use it to decorate our hair. So also, because the animal nature in man is coexisting along with the divine nature, the animal nature also gets some elevation. Here we note that this useless animal nature is getting some value. But we must also enquire to what extent the value of the divine nature is being pulled down.

If we offer a tumbler of water and ask any one to pay, nobody will pay half a rupee for the water. But if with half a tumbler of water we mix another half a tumbler of milk, then we will be able to get a good price. Here, the value of water has gone up and the value of milk has gone down. In the same manner, by keeping good company, it will be possible for us to get rid of our bad qualities and acquire good qualities. But if we go and join bad people, we will also have to accept their bad qualities. If we wear white clean dress and if we sit with a person like a goldsmith who works with smoke, our dress will also become dark. Here we see a chance of our strength becoming weak if we go and sit in the wrong place. This is the reason why it has been said that out of good company will arise detachment. Out of detachment will arise our ability to understand truth.

Sometimes, by the strength of the place and the environment, even a poor and weak thing will acquire great strength and value.

On one occasion, Vishnu wanted to send a message, and He asked Garuda to go and deliver the message to Easwara. On the body of Easwara, serpents are used as a decoration. In view of the enmity between Garuda and the serpents, the serpents would normally run away as soon as they see Garuda. But in this situation, something opposite had happened. These serpents, which are on the body of Easwara, behaved in a different manner. As soon as they saw Garuda, they began to hiss at Garuda and show some amount of superiority. Garuda saw this and said, "You are getting all this strength because of your position. Leave your position and step aside. I will show you what I can do to you." So, also, ignorance and avidya, by joining with Brahma Vidya in this world, are trying to elevate themselves and proclaim to us their greatness. We should try and change this avidya into a thapas. Thapas here

does not mean standing with your body upside down. Thapas here does not mean running away to the forest, closing your eyes and ears and sitting in silence. Thapas here really signifies giving up your Thamo Guna or the quality of thamas. This thamas, the quality of being idle and lazy, is wide-spread and is dancing on the head of every human being.

Here is one example for this. It is common practice, in Andhra Pradesh and other parts of India, for several people to go on pilgrimages to holy places and offer their hair to the Lord. What is the meaning of giving this useless hair on one's head and in return seeking God's grace, which is something much more valuable? Is this because God has not got this kind of unsacred and bad hair? It is not so. It is necessary for us to look at the inner significance of this act. The hair on one's head is dark and symbolises this lazy, sleepy quality, or the Thamo Guna in him. The significance of this act is to declare, "Oh, God, I want to give up Thamo Guna and go back as one who is free from this quality of laziness." In this manner, ignorance and darkness are growing enormously among people. Mere acquaintance with the contents of several books is being given more importance and the practice thereof being neglected. This must be called avidya. This will not give us true vidya. The true vidya which we have is the Atma Vidya and by using this, one should make an attempt to understand his own inner self and the significance of his life. For this, some amount of thapas is very essential. Thapas here signifies your ability to convert your actions into sacred ones by relating all work with God. We must try and make an attempt to give up the Rajo Guna and do sathwik work with the body, and also to do sacred service to the community around you. Such a change with the body and also to do sacred service to the community will be valuable. Your body should undertake such work which the sacred thoughts of your mind will direct it to do. If your mind at any time cautions you that what you are thinking is wrong, then you should not allow your body to do that particular work. Also, there are the thoughts which come to your mind, and are connected with the Thamo Guna. All your thoughts should be sathwik in nature and the words you utter should be synthesised with those thoughts. The meaning of thapas is that what-ever thoughts enter your mind, whatever words come out of you, whatever action you undertake to do should all be in complete harmony. When your vidya joins your thapas defined in this

manner, then, only, your life will become fruitful and useful.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

Whether it is the Vedas or the Sastras or the Ithihasas or Puranas, they are always telling us things which are good. They have also some ability to tell you what is on the side of bad aspects. Just as the light, which we use for looking at material things, becomes instrumental in your looking at those material things, so also Vedas and Sastras are to be used as only instruments by you, which will help you to see the divine aspect. All the Vedas, Sastras, and Puranas are like signposts, which are present in your path. These signposts will only direct you. The signposts will only tell you, if you travel this way, you will reach Madras, if you travel another way, you will reach Bombay or Prasanthi Nilayam. But those signposts are not going to take you to Madras or Prasanthi Nilayam. You have to make the journey and not look at the signposts. Therefore, you must depend upon your human endeavour, and you can only draw from the spiritual knowledge what path to take. But make the journey yourself.

Here, you should undertake the task seriously and realise the objective with patience and with effort. But if we simply use words, it will become a wordy description of the divine aspect and no result will follow. You may hear many things, you may see many things, but it is only when you follow in practice what you have learnt from seeing and hearing, will you be able to get the results for yourself.

On the tree of human life, everyone is bringing out the fruit of prema. There is no life of a human being which is without a fruit of prema. But if one wants to really enjoy and experience the sweetness of this fruit of prema, he has to remove the skin which is on the surface of the fruit, has to throw away the seeds which are inside the fruit, and then only can one enjoy the fruit. On the fruit of this prema, the skin, in the shape of ahamkara (ego), is covering it. The bad ideas are like the seeds in the fruit of prema. It is only when you throw away these seeds and the skin, will you be able to enjoy the sweetness of the juice in the fruit.

Unfortunately, today we do not take to the easy and clear path. We want to take to the difficult path. We have the ambition to experience it, but we do not take the proper path.

When you listen to Vedanta, it looks as if it is quite simple and easy, but to put it into practice is a difficult matter. It is only in this difficult path that you will be able to enjoy and experience the good aspects. In daily life, you always want to take an easy path and reach the destination in a simple manner. But you are not recognising the kind of obstacles in the path which you choose. We are not ready to put our life and our body into the path of spirituality. Whatever wealth we may have acquired, whatever position of authority we may have occupied, whatever great things we may have done in a worldly way, we are not in a position to acquire peace of mind; and this is mostly needed. Dhritarashtra had all the physical strength, had all the wealth, and although he was resting on a soft bed he was feeling that he was resting on fire. This was because he did not have the spiritual strength in him. To understand this aspect of Brahman, we should take the necessary care. We can get such knowledge only when we have sraddha, or determination. We sometimes think that knowledge is simply the power to discriminate between truth and untruth. That is not so. True knowledge should recognise the oneness of what is present in everyone in this world and we should experience this oneness. I am hoping that the students will learn this and will also put this into practice.

Students:

It is true that the education that you are getting is necessary to eke out your livelihood from day to day or to meet the responsibilities that come to you in your ordinary life, but you should not think that this is the end of education and the aim of all your life. Just to eke out your daily livelihood, it is not necessary to acquire higher education. By doing manual work of some kind, you can eke out your livelihood. We should not feel proud that we have reached the heights of achievements or that we have got higher education. The education that you are getting is not something which you should be proud of. These are very poor qualities. If we can understand and acquire the

essence, Atma Vidya, then every other vidya will become available to you. All these material vidyas, that we learn for the sake of the material world are like individual rivers. But the Adhyatmic Vidya is like the ocean. These different branches of education, which are like the rivers go and join the ocean of spiritual education, and they lose their individuality. That is why it has been said, "Adhyatma vidya, vidyanam." Amongst all vidyas, Adhyatmic Vidya is the only true vidya. We should try and promote the sacred prema in us if we really want to take the spiritual path and enjoy the bliss which the spiritual path will give us. In this process, the first step is to make an attempt to please your parents. There is a very moving story to illustrate this important aspect.

After the battle of Rangoon, it so happened members of each family got separated from each other. Mother and son, husband and wife were separated as a result of the war. They were all having to move on their own. In such circumstances, when the husband took one way, the wife took the two children and had to take another way. One of the children was two years of age and the second one was five years old. Somehow, or other the mother was looking after these two children and she reached a village on the border with great difficulty. Since that place was filled with refugees who came from the battle area, they were not even able to beg and feed themselves. The mother used to go round and beg for some food. She used to bring the little food that she gathered and feed the two children and used to starve herself. After some time, when things went on in this manner, the mother became very weak and that itself became a disease for her. The mother had no strength to go out and beg for food. One day, the five-year old boy went and took the hands of his mother and said, "Mother, you are too weak to go and beg. You need rest. You sit under the tree. I will go and beg for food and bring it and feed you." When some days went on like that, whatever food this elder boy could get, had to be used for feeding the mother and feeding the younger child; and he himself had to starve. The mother used to insist on knowing what the truth was, but the boy would say that he already had his food. In truth, he was starving. Mother used to believe in his statements and take her own food. After some time, even this boy lost the strength by which he could go and get some food. One day he went to a house, he found that master of

the house was sitting in an easy chair and reading the newspaper. The boy said, "I have come for the sake of begging; "Bhavati bhikshan dehi." The master of the house recognised the condition in which this boy was asking for food and took pity on him and said, "You come and sit here. I will bring a leaf and some tiffin and you can eat here only." The boy did not agree to that suggestion. The boy said, "I want the food to be given in my hand. I want to take it with me." The owner of the house was very surprised. He said, "You are very hungry and when I want to give you food, you say no, what is the meaning of this?" When the owner of the house was questioning the boy in this manner, the boy lost all his strength and fell down. When the boy fell down in a swoon, the master of the house went close to him and he found that the boy was uttering some words which were barely audible. The master tried to understand and listen to what the boy was saying. He understood that the boy was saying, "I do not need food. Do not give me food. But give whatever food you can to my mother." So saying, he lost his life.

Look at this! Even at the instant of giving up his life, he said, "Give the food for my mother, not for me." Do you see such a son these days? In this country of Bharath, there have been mothers who were prepared to give their lives for the sake of their sons, and there have been many sons who were prepared to give up their lives for the sake of their mothers. But today, in this age of modern civilisation, we do not find either such mothers or such children. If the mother does not give food to his satisfaction, the son is prepared to ask her to sell her jewels; and he is prepared to make her work or beg; and he will have his own way of life.

In our country today, the students do not recognise and do not understand how much trouble their parents are taking in order to see that their children are properly educated so that they can come up. When the students go home from their colleges and when the mother and the father are taking a lot of trouble, they would simply look at them as if they are not concerned. They would not make an attempt to help them and relieve them at all. If the mother or father is suffering from some sickness and if the son is in the house, he would not hesitate to run away from the house, and go to see a picture.

Students:

The first thing we have to recognise as a part of your education is to know that the father and mother have given you this birth and this body. We owe a debt of gratitude to them and we should repay this debt. If today you do not respect your father and mother, in due course, your own children will treat you exactly in the same careless manner. The kind of seed that you put in today will determine the fruit that comes out of that seed tomorrow.

If, in future you want to do good, you want to experience peace and happiness, at least once now you must undertake to do good work. In this young age of yours, you must acquire some sacred and good qualities. You must learn to respect elders. You must learn to be useful and do some services to the elders. As days go on, you should try and understand the nature of Brahma Vidya and learn its sacred contents. It is even more important to learn how you can put these into practice.

Just as when we want to build a building, we gather the cement, the bricks and we lay the foundation; so also, I have been explaining to you in the past few days the nature of a human being and have been collecting the materials necessary for you to go through your daily life in future. I will explain what the nature of Atma is in the following days.

21. When Wisdom Dawns, Ignorance And Illusion Disappear

Date: **May 1977** / Location: **Brindavan** / Occasion: **Summer Course 1977**

The reputation of our motherland has been known all the world over from time immemorial. That reputation is now being sharpened by the Sai ideals and the Sai teachings. You young people should give it a further shining with your care and attention.

Pavitratma Swarupas:

Amongst the four Purusharthas: Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha; Moksha takes the most important place. The other three take a subsidiary place. They are only steps to reach moksha. The bliss that one aspires for by doing yagna, punya and various other types of rituals is transient and temporary. When the good and the punya earned by any individual get exhausted, it becomes inevitable that he returns back to human birth. This is the reason why man should attempt to reach what is permanent, and sustaining.

Our Sruthis have taught us that only people who know Paramatma can reach Paramatma. Only those who can understand Brahman will become identical with Brahman. The meaning of this is that only such people, who acquire familiarity and expertise in the Brahma Vidya can attain moksha or liberation. When the moonshine is somewhat dull and when one cannot see clearly, it is quite natural that one looks at a rope and thinks, in illusion, that he is seeing a snake and gets afraid. Although what exists is only a rope, his own illusion makes him think that it is a snake and he gets afraid. In the same manner, although Atma is not bound by connections and attachments in the world, yet it is natural to reflect and think that there is something material and worldly about the Atma. Our ignorance is responsible for our not being able to recognise the elementary truth that is contained here. This ignorance is

described by several names. It is sometimes called thamas and sometimes called moha. These are different names for this ignorance. There are many other names like avyaktha, maya, and so on. These are words used to describe this state of ignorance. It is in the context of such ignorance that man tries to create an illusion in his own mind about what does not really exist. Man also tries to forget what really exists. The creation of something which does not exist is described as Vikshepana. This is also to forget what really exists. In these two things, man experiences illusion. Just as in the case of a rope mistaken for a snake, the rope constitutes the basis, so also for all the creation we see around us, the basis is Paramatma, the Lord.

One aspect is to find that reality is covered by something called Avarana. For this process, there are three states of our body: one is the gross body, the other is the subtle body and the third is the causal body. In creation, there are two methods. One is the individual purpose and the other is the collective purpose. A tree represents an individual form and the forest indicates the community, the totality of trees. The house is an individual form. A village consisting of several houses is a total form. Without a tree, we cannot have a forest and without a house we cannot have a village. Here, one human body becomes an individual form. The combination of several such individual forms becomes a total community. Without an individual form, we cannot have a total group form. The most important characteristic of the human form is the blood; the life blood that flows from head to toe. The total life flow that is contained in all the individuals that make up the community gives you the total group form.

The causal body is the third aspect of the body. The totality of all such forms constitutes the jiva. The totality of the subtle forms is called Hiranyagarbha. The individual form of the subtle is called the taijasa. The totality of the gross body is called the virata. The individual gross body is Viswa. Here, we have indicated the individual gross body as Viswa, the individual subtle body as taijasa, the individual causal body as the Atma. This aspect of Atma has been taught to us by presenting one and the same individual in three different forms: the gross, the subtle and the causal form.

It has become common for us to hide the connection that exists between the five elements that constitute the basis of creation and of the Atma. Because ignorance covers the reality here, it has been called avarana. This avarana is of two kinds. One is called asat, related to untruth, and the other is called abhava related to wrong ideas. The idea that sprouts from the feeling that the particular thing does not exist is represented by untruth or asat. If there is a feeling that one does not know whether that particular item exists or does not exist, it is referred to as abhava. This type of abhava is responsible for samsara. Vikshepa is the main path for liberation or moksha.

Manana and nididhyasana are two other processes by which this ignorance of asat can be got rid of. Manana consists of thinking over or contemplation of what you listen to, and nididhyasana consists of digesting what you have taken in the form of the listen-ing. This implies that we will not get the result just by listening. By this process, one can understand the nature of a particular aspect. Vikshepa denotes recognition of these two and getting rid of them. In avarana, there is something that is being covered due to ignorance in us, and that is the aspect of asat. What arises out of untruth can be got rid of by listening to truth. The best way in which we can remove a doubt is to listen to people who know the truth. When such people come and tell us the existence of that truth, we can get rid of our ignorance. By listening to others, who know the reality, there is a possibility of our being able to get rid of this ignorance of asat.

By using two other processes, (manana and nididhyasana) that is, to contemplate and digest what you have listened to, abhava can be got rid of. This implies that we will not get the result just by sravana or listening. By just listening, one can understand only to a limited extent the nature of the item. But to experience it fully, two other stages, manana (that is to contemplate on what we have listened to) and nididhyasana (absorbing what you have listened to) are necessary. It is only after going through these three steps: sravana, manana and nididhyasana that one can remove this ignorance of asat.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

Because of our illusion, we are creating in our mind things which do not exist. By lack of belief and faith, we are forgetting the existence of even what exists. Although, what really exists is the rope, by imagination we think that it is a snake. What is the reason for this? The reason is the darkness which arises in you out of your ignorance. Because of this thought that the rope is the snake, several consequences follow. The fear that is not in you, enters you; and also you run away from the situation. These consequences follow. There is no snake there. The fear that comes into you is simply illusory and running away from it is also the result of illusion. Truly, if with the help of a light, you remove this illusion and this ignorance and you discover that there is no snake there, then you go close to it and fear will disappear. In fact you will handle it with your hand, take it and throw it away. In the whole world, what really exists, is only the aspect of Brahman. Because we do not believe in this aspect of Brahman, creation, which is only a projection on the substratum of Brahman, appears to us as real. By proper experience, we can make an attempt to understand this myth. Truly, once we understand the nature of Brahman, and once we get the meaning of that word, then we will be in a position to use the right word to describe a particular situation. In a given situation, when we do not know the correct meaning of the words and when we are ignorant of the aspect of Brahman, then we begin to give a misrepresentation.

There is one small example for this. One uneducated and unsophisticated person joins an army. By joining the army, he learns something by practice and moves forward. One day, the General, who is commanding this army, comes to inspect the camp. On that day, the person who is the local Commanding Officer of that group was giving certain instructions to the member of the group. This particular person does not understand English. The language known to the cadets in the camp is not known to the General. Nobody knows what kind of questions the General will ask each one of them. But the one who is in charge of this particular group has been trying to explain to the cadets and train them in a general way. When the group leader came to this uneducated person, he tried to tell him that the General may visit the camp and ask him, "How many years have you been in this unit?"

The cadet has been asked to reply that he has been in the army for two years. Maybe, the second question will be about his age. The cadet was told to say that he was twenty-two years old. The third question he may ask will probably be whether the cadet is feeling happier in his home or happier in this unit? This uneducated person was told that he should say that he feels the same in the camp as well as at home. Unfortunately, the General came to the individual and the very first question he asked was, "How old are you?" He replied that he was two years old. The second question was, "How many years ago have you joined this Unit?" The reply was twenty-two years. The General thought that he was in great confusion and he asked, what the matter was? "Are you mad or am I mad?" The cadet then said, "Both are mad, both are the same." The lesson which we have to get from this conversation is that in the presence of an educated individual, an uneducated person can only follow his symbols and signs. Unless the second person is also an educated person, there will be no rapport between them. There will be confusion and any question will only lead to a wrong and confusing answer.

As in this analogy, if one wants to learn Brahma Vidya, one has to have a deep desire for that. It will be wrong for us to think, that Brahma Vidya is like ordinary worldly education. If we look at it from one point of view, Brahma Vidya is really easier to learn than some of the things which we learn in the worldly sphere. If we can recognise this properly, then it will provide an easy path for us to learn. On the other hand, if we take a superficial aspect, that will create great difficulty for us.

Today, the tendency to make comparisons between various things has increased. A very bad quality, by which you present the faults of others, is becoming widespread. If we can get rid of these two things, then it will be possible for us to understand this aspect of Brahma Vidya. What we are experiencing usually relates only to the material world around us. It is necessary for us to interpret and see what the subtlety that is contained in our experience is. On the same occasion and at the same time, both the aspect of varana and vikshepana may come. In the illusion by which we called the rope a snake, what really has happened is, the existing rope has disappeared and a snake which does not exist there has appeared in our mind.

Here two things have hap-pened. The rope that exists there is not seen by you. The snake that does not exist there has come into your mind. Today every human being is getting into trouble by the presence of both these illusions. He is unable to recognise the truth that, in the very individual of a human being, there is the community aspect as well. This individual aspect of a human being has become permanently fixed in his mind.

There is one small story. A great devotee, who was a very wealthy person, took a lot of gold and out of that gold he had prepared several fine items, each of twenty tolas of gold. He made a fine idol of Krishna, a seat for putting that idol, an umbrella and also a cow to go along with Krishna. Each one of the items weighed twenty tolas, the total being 100 tolas of gold. In this way, he was experiencing Divinity of God in the forms made of gold. Time is such that things continu-ally go on changing; and with the passage of time, misfortune came to him and there was poverty in his house. A time had come when he did not have food to eat. He was driven to sell away the gold things which he was worshipping. He went to a person who would buy these items, and he wanted to get each one of them weighed and find out what price he would get for each item. The other wealthy person who was to buy the items, weighed the idol of Krishna. After finding the weight of Krishna, he offered to pay Rs. 10,000 for it. After that, he weighed the pedestal and he said that he would pay Rs. 10,000 for that. Then he weighed the cow and he said that also will fetch Rs. 10,000. The devotee was in great pain. The devotee asked how it is that Krishna, the pedestal and the cow will each fetch the same Rs. 10,000? The person who was going to purchase them was obviously not going to pay more money because it was the figure of Krishna. He will merely pay the cost of the weight of gold in each one of the items and not value the idol of Krishna differently from the cow. So, also, in the case of an individual, his value will depend on the Divinity that is in the individual and not on his wealth or his appearance, or his material possessions. The cup, the cow, the pedestal and the figure of Krishna are only different in their forms and in their names. The man who is going to value them, will value them on the basis of the amount of gold which is contained in each of them, and this is the same in all of them. The basic content of all these things is gold; and although each has a different form, it is the same gold. In the same manner, in this world many

things appear to have different names and different forms and may create different impressions on different people. But what exists as a common base in all these things is the aspect of Brahman.

Divya Atma Swarupas,

It has become common to recognise each body and its form separately, and the common divine content is not seen by anyone. We are only looking at those different bodies and forms in an external way, but the real connection and comparison between one and another is through the Atma.

There is one other small example here. There was a father who had an only son. His only son was looking after the father very dearly and was serving him with great affection. In his 61st year, the father passed away. This son was sitting by the side of the dead body of his father and was crying, "Oh father, you have left me and gone. Who else will look after me in this world?" We should examine this carefully. When he says, "Father, you have left me and gone," for sixty years he has been calling that body his father. The body, which has been described as his father, is still there. What is it that has gone away? Truly, if that body was his father, the body is still there and he can retain that body as his father. No, it is not right.

What has left and what he was regarding as his father is the life-force that was in the body and this life-force has left the body and gone away. What has left the body is his father and the dead body that is remaining there is not his father. It is the life-force, or the chaitanya which entered the body that gives him the illusory feeling that the body was his father.

We see here that so long as there is life in a body, we promote the connections and the relationships with that body are experienced, but the moment that life goes away from that body, we will hesitate to keep that body in our home. We will have no attachment or affection to that body once the life-force has gone away. This body has taken a form which is made up of all the five elements. This is only a casual and artificial appearance. There is a distinct difference between this body, which is composed of the five

elements, and the Atma which is in the body. We should get the knowledge by which we can recognise the distinctive difference between the body and the Atma.

This human birth has come to us with the purpose of establishing to the world the oneness that exists in all the creation. The nature of this oneness can be recognised by promoting the two qualities sama and dama. By promoting the qualities of sama and dama (control of mind and of the sensory organs), it is possible for us to recognise divinity in the various chakras that exist between the muladhara and the sahasrara. When we understand the nature of these six chakras and also understand the importance of these two qualities, sama and dama, we will know the nature of Brahman.

Students:

To some extent this difficult aspect which you cannot easily understand may create some impatience in you. If you take some care and try to understand the meaning of this aspect, then you will become successful. You have been given a human birth to enable you to understand your own nature. When you do not know the nature of yourself, how are you going to know the nature of the world? The aspect of divine creation is spread and present all through the world. The life force in this world and the life-force that exists in you are inseparable aspects of one and the same divine aspect. Although air is present every-where around you, yet we do not see it. So also, this life-force, though present in the whole world, can be recognised only in some places and by some human being.

It is in this context that the Bhagavad Gita pro-claims that divinity is everywhere in speech, in action, in words, and in all places. In the presence of an individual who goes on praying and asking God, "Oh God, are you listening to my prayer?" God will exist by his side listening with His ears. For one who prays, "Oh God, are you always with me and accompanying me?" God will always be by his side and the devotee can listen to the footsteps of the Lord. For one who prays, "Oh God, are You looking at me?" God's eyes will always be with him. Everything is a result of your own devotion and faith. But in

God's view, there is no difference between one devotee and another. "Yad bhavam tat Bhavathi," whatever your ideas may be, they are merely reflected. All blame and blemish are in you and in your ideas. It is not right to ascribe any blame or blemish to God. It is not possible for any insect to survive in fire. While the blame and blemish and all contradictory ideas are really in you, to attribute them to God is a weakness. When the capacity to experience these things becomes weak, then you take recourse to an alternative and put the blame on God and begin to find fault with Him.

There are some proverbs appropriate to such a situation which are used commonly. For instance, if one cannot sing well, one will find fault with the person who is the drummer. Like that, in order to condone and justify the faults and weakness that are in you, you put the blame on God. This is the way of the world. This is not right. It is man's duty to try and search for the fault in him, to remove the fault and increase the sacredness in him.

22. Do Not Get Attached To This World Through Your Desires

Date: **May 1977** / Location: **Brindavan** / Occasion: **Summer Course 1977**

There is a God who will answer all your prayers. Having obtained what is most difficult to obtain, namely the birth as a human being, your main objective now should be to find Him.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

The three gunas: sathwa, raja and thama, are the three weapons which God has specially given to us in this world. Presently, because man does not know how to use these weapons properly, we are getting into all kinds of difficult situations. There are various circumstances which make these three qualities manifest themselves in different ways. The first one is the creation around us. It is the nature of creation that it continually changes. This has been used as the main instrument in the hands of God. The creation is also called Prakruthi. Prakruthi is that which continually changes.

The second is avidya or ignorance. It is the opposite of vidya or knowledge. This promotes the Thamo Guna in man and gives rise to his likes and dislikes. This will drive man to justify the faults that are in him. This Thamo Guna has got the quality by which it can make man recognise the truth and un truth, and sometimes make the mistake of recognising untruth as truth. It is the duty of man to remove such ignorance by various methods.

The third one is maya. Maya creates all kinds of surprising things and illusions. There is nothing which maya cannot do. Maya has the strength to create the entire world and to make the world play the drama by which even to destroy the whole world. Maya is responsible for man's birth as well. Foolish people are born in maya, grow up in maya and end their life in maya.

Their lives are totally steeped in maya. Why seek such a life which is full of maya and which ends in maya? Because God wears Prakruthi as His clothes, Paramatma is also called maya. Paramatma's own maya is His cloak. This is the reason why we refer to Parameswara as one who is having maya as His face. Depending upon the circumstances, we come across these three different forms. The three different forms are called Prakruthi, avidya and maya. These three - particularly avidya and maya - differ only in degree and not in essence, only in name and not in the end-result. They are inseparable from each other and are indeed connected with each other. If we can understand divinity and how it works, we can make an attempt to get rid of these illusions in our life.

There are four different kinds of sadhana. By using four methods of sadhana, we have an opportunity to conquer them. The first is to discriminate and distinguish between things which are permanent and things which are transient. By having such capacity, we can achieve a lot of good. By listening to the sacred Sruthi and Puranas, we should be able to understand the meaning of "Brahma sathyam, Jagat mithya." If we get our belief in Brahman being the truth only by reading books and by attending discourses and not by our own personal experience, it cannot have a lasting effect on us. In our daily life, we are always seeing changes coming about. What we now regard as truth, becomes untruth after some time. What we now regard as untruth, after some time may turn out to be the truth. Depending upon the situation and the environment around you, truth can change into untruth, untruth can change into truth. These changes are only characteristic of man's mind and arise out of man's behaviour, but they cannot be characteristics of truth.

Truth is One and will never change with time. All those that change should be regarded as untruth. Some things come and go but these things which come and go are neither sath (truth) nor asath (untruth), but they are called sath-asath (truth and untruth). Why do we call such things sath-asath? Because, when they come, we think they are true, and when they go, we think they are untrue. This combination of truth and untruth is called sath-asath. Another word for it is mithya, and this is the characteristic of many things in the world.

Here, we see that the basis is the unchanging truth, and what has appeared to us as changing is un-truth. To this world, everything changes from moment to moment. All these are coming into the world and going out of the world. The only thing which has neither to come nor to go is the aspect of Brahman and that is the basis. It is possible to recognise this basic truth and to experience it by learning from those who know or from elders who had experience of such aspects. The second one is to give up the enjoyment of the consequences of your actions. The essence of this statement is to tell us that the events, which we consider as pleasures, are transient under all circumstances and the enjoyment of such material pleasures is likely to cause an illusion in you that they are good, but in reality they lead you to sorrow and pain in life.

Man always wants to experience pleasure which he has already experienced once. At all times, and as long as one wants, if one wants to experience the same pleasures which one had already experienced before, this would surely lead him to sorrow. All the worldly pleasures and enjoyments are transient. It is not right on our part to submit ourselves to such transient and temporary pleasures. Our ancestors thought that this was like eating stale food. To eat stale food that has been vomited by someone else is the quality of a dog and not of a man. Similarly, the desire to want to experience the same material pleasures again and again is the quality of a dog. To understand this and try and give up such desires becomes the sacred quality of man. It is very essential for us to understand this aspect of experience in this world and make an effort to reach a stage of desirelessness.

The third one relates to the sama and dama, i.e., control of working and sensory organs. Sama will imply that you do not turn your thoughts towards the organs and sensory pleasures, but try and direct it towards knowing the significance of Atma. The world you see around you is a creation of your own vision. Your vision should be used to see and realise the sacred Atma. This also means a change of external vision into internal vision. It is only when we can develop an inward vision that we will achieve detachment from the outward vision. Dama represents your having a control over your internal sensory organs and thus a control over all your actions. It is only when you

have no control over your internal sensory organs will your external organs become dominant. To be able to control these outward working organs, we should de-velop the necessary strength to control the senses as well.

If the inward sensory organs get the control over you, they become excited; and it will not be possible for you to control the outward working organs. The true sadhana, in this context, is the effort undertaken to control the inner sensory organs. If we make an effort to control directly the outer organs, this cannot be the correct and right way of doing it. We must try and understand the nature of the inner organs. If the inner organs are excited to a large extent, we develop defective vision, defective hearing and faulty thinking. When your thoughts are such that they are going to excite the inner sensations and your working organs, you must make an attempt to ask, whether the consequence is going to be for your good or for your bad. You should constantly introspect and ask if this act is worthy of being undertaken or not. Having obtained this sacred birth of a human being and having truth in you in the form of Atma, you should conduct yourself in a manner consistent with your status as a human being.

The third sadhana is uparathi. The meaning of this uparathi has been given by several people by say-ing that it connotes giving up the world and becoming a sanyasi or doing only such work for which there can be no consequences. The true meaning of this word is to recognise that the mind is responsible for exciting the inner sensory organs. Mind is the master of your inner organs. When the mind, in the position of a master, can put these organs along the right path, it will be possible to control these organs by controlling your mind. Either to excite the organs or to keep them cool and relaxed, mind is responsible. If the mind, which is in the position of a controller, is not going to control these organs, the blame rests on the mind. This is why it is said that mind alone is responsible both for the bondage of man and for the liberation of man, because mind alone controls the inner organs. Thus, to be able to control the inner organs, we should try and put this mind of ours along the right path.

To be able to put your mind along the sacred path, we must first understand

the significance of sadhana and of good company. For this purpose, we shall have to undertake such things as japa and thapa, sadhana, yagna and yaga. If you cannot do such things, you must at least make your mind take the path of service to the community in the name of God and for the pleasure of God. The mind should be told that all aspects that are present in everyone is the same aspect of Atma. The truth that divinity is omni-present should be impressed on the mind. To our mind, some things may appear to be trivial and look as if they are tiny things. We should make the effort to elevate things to a higher position. But God, who is in a high exalted position, should not be brought down to the level of these little things.

The kind of sadhana which we would do is to elevate things from a low level to a high level. You must worship a picture as God but not worship God as a picture. This means that this piece of paper is God, this tumbler is God, this microphone is God, every-thing is God. You must attempt to take these things from a low level to the status of God. Unfortunately, today, people regard God as paper, regard God as a tumbler, and so on. Thereby we are bringing God from a high position to the position of these trivial things. We should be able to recognise that in every human being, the aspect of Easwara is present, and this aspect is one and the same in all. In all these things, you should try and get the vision of your own Atma. This is the good which uparathi can do for you.

The next sadhana is called tithiksha. In this sadhana, we should try to regard all things as the creation of God and develop equal-mindedness. Whatever the material may be, whatever the object of your attention may be, we should not show any distinction. We should be able to accept contrary things like darkness and light, heat and cold in an equal minded manner. These opposite qualities are simply coming out of changes in time. Such changes which come about only by a change of time are regarded as inherent changes and they do not exist permanently. Although what we see is one and the same, we regard it as good or bad depending upon the time.

Well-prepared and properly-cooked food today will become poison after three days. We need not go so far. We can take an example which we see in our

daily life. If we eat fresh food today, by tomorrow it gets changed into excreted matter. We may think that the food that we are eating is good. What we excrete tomorrow is bad. Both good and bad are thus really the same, but the time and circumstances are different. In this manner, by change of time, we are calling things good and bad; but there is no intrinsic difference.

Every event will give us some pleasure and happiness and sorrow. Pain and pleasure always come together. It is not possible for anyone to separate them from each other. Pleasure alone, isolated from pain, is never possible. When pain fructifies and gives its fruit, it becomes pleasure. Pleasure has no separate form of its own. We should promote the strength in us by which we can accept both pain and pleasure with an equal mind.

It is by sraddha, or care that one can become wise. If you have sraddha, it will be possible for you to acquire any amount of wisdom. What kind of sraddha should we promote? Sraddha in vairagya, sraddha in sacred things and sraddha in how to help the community. We should also develop this care and sraddha in selfless work, in doing things which will give pleasure and happiness to others. On the other hand, it will become dangerous to us, if we develop sraddha in bad ideas and bad conduct. Here sraddha has been interpreted by saying that listening to Vedanta itself is sraddha. Vedanta means to acquire wisdom, the wisdom relating to Brahman, to be able to recognise what Brahman stands for, and come to the conclusion that what is omnipresent is Brahman and to understand the truth that there is no place where Brahman is not present. If we can recognise this truth regarding the omnipresence of Brahman and that there is no form which does not belong to Brahman, then we shall be able to rest in equanimity and equal-mindedness.

Pavitratma Swarupas:

The word samadhana means that whatever you may do, it should be such that it causes satisfaction in you, samadhana in your mind. If there is no satisfaction in your own self, there is no use doing that work. Unfortunately today, although there is no satisfaction in one's own self, in order to cause satisfaction to the community around, several ways of doing things are being

followed. In this process, one's whole life is being changed into an artificial life. What is the use of undertaking such actions that do not give satisfaction to your own self? The desire should sprout from within you. In that context, with a peaceful idea, with a sacred heart and with a clean mind, you should try and plan your action. Your thought, your word, your action should all be synthesised properly and be in harmony. After acquiring a human birth, having been told to behave as a human being, if we cannot understand the meaning and the need for this harmony, one's life will simply turn out to be useless.

The word manava means that you should be-have in a manner which does not connote ignorance on your part. The feature that is characteristic of this ignorance is avidya. All the learning that we acquire these days can really be called avidya. What you are acquiring is all for the sake of eking out a livelihood in this world. At least, some part of your learning should be such that it will enable you to understand yourself.

The fourth type of sadhana is called mumukshatwa. Mumukshatwa has been explained by some people by saying that while one's own house is burning, all attempts on his part to save himself from the burning house will be called mumukshatwa. This means that when one is burning in the fire of his karma, entangled in the cycle of birth and death, to be able to rescue himself from that fire and save himself is called mumukshatwa. If you are able to have detachment and not think that some people belong to you and some people do not belong to you, and recognise that the only truth is the Atma and get out of this fire of samsara, it is mumukshatwa. The sadhana which enables you to decrease your attachment and your moha is called mumukshatwa. To give up one's desires and experience and enjoy the bliss of detachment is called mumukshatwa. One can also explain mumukshatwa by saying that it is to get rid of your sorrow and to enjoy bliss. How do we attain this? There is an easy path. Truly, when you have an intense desire to achieve this, there is no other path easier than this. It is difficult for us to get attached to things. It is easy to give up things. You feel that the world is attaching itself to you and because of this attachment, it causes pain to you. If you think that while you make an attempt to detach yourself from the world, the world is not getting

detached from you; it is wrong. You have attached yourself to the world. The world has not attached itself to you.

There is a small story. In this country, it has been the tradition for some people to trap monkeys. What they do is to take a big pot with a narrow mouth and put something attractive into that pot. They put the pot where the monkeys move about. The monkey easily puts its hand into the earthen pot. The monkey gets the material that is in the pot into its hand by clasping it. Its fist is full of that material and the fist gets bigger and is blocked. The monkey cannot remove the hand. The monkey then thinks that someone in-side the pot is catching hold of its hand. There is no one inside the pot holding the hand. What is holding the food inside the pot is the hand of the monkey. The moment it can give up what is in its hand, the hand can come out of it. Alas! the monkey does not realise this.

In the same manner, this enormous pot of the world has got what may be called a selfish mouth. We enter into this pot through this selfish mouth of the world in order to satisfy our desires. For that reason, we are getting caught in it. If we simply give up what we have caught, then there is no bondage. This is called vairagya. Vairagya does not mean giving up your home, giving up your wife and children and going to the forest. To make an attempt to decrease your desires is called vairagya. This has also been described by saying less luggage and more comfort make travel a pleasure. If we can decrease the luggage of desires, then our journey of life will become a pleasure.

Our life is a long journey. In this long journey of our life, we get attached to many desires in the form of luggage and the journey becomes a long and weary one. Less luggage or decreasing this luggage of desires has been called vairagya in the parlance of Vedanta.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

Our ambitions and attachments should be decreased to some extent. Better than promoting your desires, promote your sacrifice. By more desires, more

attachments will come to you but satisfaction will not come. These things always keep on adding as plus, plus, plus. By decreasing our desires and by promoting sacrifice in us, we will be able to rise to the heights of glory and do good to our country.

Those of you, who are young and youthful, should promote these sacred ideas and do service to the country and to your parents. You should resuscitate the ancient culture of Bharath. You should, by practice, become examples to others. If you take such steps, very soon it will be possible for you to raise this country to the very heights of glory, to take it back to the time when it was known as a Thyaga Bhumi and a Yoga Bhumi. You must do that.

23. Book Learning Is Useless: Practical Knowledge Is Useful

Date: **May 1977** / Location: **Brindavan** / Occasion: **Summer Course 1977**

Oh man! Just as you cannot see the stars during the day, you cannot see God in the midst of your ignorance. Because of that, do not say that He does not exist. With faith, you can earn His grace and become prosperous.

If you do not have the necessary patience and control, what can come out of any karma that you do? What can come out of the yoga you undertake? What can come out of even japa if you do not have the peace of mind during your japa? What can come out of salty land, even if you cultivate it and sow seeds into it.

Prema Swarupas:

Between God and God's words, there is an inextricable connection. God and God's utterances are not different things. They are one and the same. When you have faith and belief in God, it follows that you accept God's utterances and put them into your mind. Having believed that persons like Rama and Krishna are Avatars in this world, if you do not pay any attention to the injunctions they gave us, it is disrespecting them.

In the case of God and in the case of mantras and places of pilgrimage, the amount of faith that you develop, as in the case of the doctor that treats you, will determine the nature of the results that you can get out of them. The amount of confidence that you have in the person, who is teaching you what you are learning, will determine the manner in which what you learn will imprint itself on your mind. In trying to absorb the essentials of a spiritual path, the body that absorbs the same should be clean.

When the mind is attracted by so many different worldly matters and gets entangled in them, the good things that you listen to may not enter your mind freely. In that context, it is necessary that in the first instance, you turn your mind away from worldly matters and turn it towards spiritual and Godly matters. In your daily life, at all times, you are attracted by worldly matters and worldly issues. Sometimes you may have the opportunity of listening to sacred things, but it will not be possible for them to enter your mind because of the prior presence of worldly issues therein. In the world today, there are many people who are believers in God and who have studied texts like Bhagavad Gita, Puranas, Ithihasas, Vedas and Sastras. But how many of them have been able to put into practice what they preach? How can one expect to experience the bliss simply by preaching and not practising what he preaches?

Divya Atma Swarupas:

We do not find even one of that kind in a million. Many people who continuously perform japa and meditation and who read such spiritual texts do not appear to have any practical experience of this at all. Truly, practices, which we only listen to and text which we merely read without any practical experience, are all a waste of time. It is not possible for us to purify ourselves merely by reading books. Today the book and the head appear to have become one. You are learning how to convert your head into a book, but you are not learning how to convert the narrow ideas in your head into useful practical knowledge. The words that one utters are very peaceful words, but the actions that one indulges in are very violent actions. Such people who deceive others have become very large in number and this is the reason why our motherland has been suffering.

Saying one thing and doing yet another thing is deceiving one's own Atma. Such actions bring disgrace and shame on human beings. Just by listening to things, we are not going to get any benefit. What we listen to, we should carefully recapitulate. What we have recapitulated, we should digest and absorb. Mere listening is like cooking in the kitchen. Just by looking at the food that has been cooked in the kitchen, our hunger is not going to be

satisfied. We should eat that food. Just by eating that food, the substance that is contained in the food is not going to strengthen the body. You should also digest the food that you have taken. Sravana, or listening, is like cooking the food. Manana, or recapitulating, is like eating the food and nididhyasa is like digesting and absorbing the food. It is only when we can co-ordinate these three processes that we get the best out of the situation, and benefits will come to us.

Young people should make attempts by which the essence of the three stages in the process are not missed so that what we do is of service. Today, just listening has become a disease. Man has become proud and thinks that he knows everything no sooner than he has listened to something. This is wrong and as long as such pride and ego exist in you, you become unfit for learning spiritual matters. The heart of the individual, who makes an attempt to put into practice the good things he has listened to, becomes the temple of God.

Krishna and Arjuna, ever since they were born, were living together, playing with and talking to each other. This process continued for nearly eighty years. However, the sacred Bhagavad Gita was taught to Arjuna just at the time of the battle of Mahabharatha and not earlier. It is not as if there were no occasions before that, when Arjuna and Krishna were spending time together. We must understand the reason for this. Arjuna's mind was not prepared, and he was not very deserving of such a preaching earlier. During the battle of Mahabharatha, Arjuna said that he was not interested in the pleasures of the kingdom and fell at the feet of Krishna. It is only at that instant of time when Arjuna sought saranagathi that he deserved to be taught the Bhagavad Gita. It is only then that Krishna was prepared to teach the Gita. We must acquire the right for receiving a particular thing before aspiring to receive the same. Today, in the moral sphere, ethical sphere and political sphere, people are wanting to enjoy positions even if they have no right to enjoy such positions. They are only looking at the authority and power that go with the position, but are not giving the slightest thought to whether they deserve to occupy and have the right to occupy that position.

Students:

In respect of anything that you want to do, you must first of all be prepared to ask the question whether you have a right to do that. It is only when you clean your mind and prepare it to accept sacred things, should you undertake to put sacred things into it. You may have read many texts but so long as you do not put into practice what you have learnt, all your learning becomes useless. Whether they are the words that you utter or actions that you indulge in, they will all look as if they are emanating from a gramophone record or an automatic machine.

It is the duty of young students to take care that even one or two things that you learn are put into practice, and you should become ideal examples to others by practising what you preach. Good things which you do not put into practice, even after knowing them, will become useless. Why do you feel proud that you have read books, that you have gone through the Sastras and that you have acquired education? What is the use of all these if you cannot put their essence into practice? If you do not put your hands together and pay homage to God, what is the use of being born as a human being in this world? Having been born, you should take care to see that some use comes out of your birth in the world.

From the time you get up from your sleep, till the time you go back to sleep again, you spend all your time, all your resources merely for eking out a livelihood. In this way, by forgetting all things about God, by forgetting what is most important, what is it that you have acquired?

As mentioned in the story of the Ramayana, one should become an ideal human being, an ideal king, an ideal father, an ideal husband, and so on. It is only when you can demonstrate an ideal life, can you say that you have justified having been born as a human being. On the other hand, if you become a slave to your senses, you become a slave to the whole world around you. Even if you live a short life, lead a good and ideal life. A long life with contaminated and impure thoughts is no good. It is very necessary that you recognise that real education means development of character.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

During the past one month, from several people and several scholars, you have acquired education that is necessary for understanding the spiritual traditions of this country. You should make an attempt to experience and enjoy the bliss that is contained in what you have learnt. Our wealth is knowledge. Our prosperity lies in the good qualities that are in us. Our riches are our dharma. An individual who has got faith in God must put his faith into practice. By believing in God and yet by ignoring God's utterances and commands, you are contradicting yourselves. Faith is not a cloak that is worn outside for deceiving others. Such people are deceiving themselves.

The essence of education is to recognise the truth. All branches of learning are like the rivers. The spiritual learning is like the ocean. All rivers go and merge into the ocean. When they merge in the ocean, the rivers lose their individuality completely. Under no circumstances should we give room to excitement, to ego and to anger.

There is one little example for this. In one village, there was a village head who did not like Buddha. The moment he heard any words uttered by Buddha, he used to get angry. He was always suffering from uncontrolled anger. One day, he learnt the news that Buddha was coming to that village with his disciples. Since he was the head of the village, he issued a certain order. The order was that when Buddha came asking for alms, no one should give him alms and all should close their doors. Following this order, all the people in the village closed the doors of their respective houses when Buddha came. The head of the village also closed the doors and was sitting in the veranda outside the door.

Buddha was all-knowing and he knew what was happening. With his disciples, he came to the very house in which the village head was living. Great people will never be affected either by praise or by blame. Such people, having developed equal-minded-ness, will go right in front of those who are suffering from jealousy and ego. This village head was suffering from such ignorance and pride, and Buddha went straight to him and asked for alms. The village

head, who was waiting for such an opportunity, became even more excited. A person who is sick will always want to take several medicines. Certain birds will always be wanting to look at cool moonshine. Good people will always want to help the bad people and to see that the badness in them is removed and they are cleansed. It is only one who has a disease and is sick, that wants a doctor. A healthy man does not want a doctor. Similarly, people who are suffering from the disease of disbelief can be cured by good people.

With such noble ideas, Buddha, along with his disciples, went to the house of the village headman and said, "Bhavati, bhikshan dehi," I have come to ask for alms. When he saw Buddha and the disciples accompanying him, the headman became very angry. He addressed Buddha and said, "You lazy man, you have collected all these people in your company, and they have become lazy. You are taking them round because they do not want to work. Not only are you ruining your own life, you are also ruining the lives of your disciples. This is wrong. In that manner, he abused Buddha and the disciples who came with him.

Buddha smiled at all this, and smiling, asked the head of the village if he could clarify a doubt for him. The headman said in a very loud voice, "What is your doubt? Let me know." Buddha said, "I have come to ask for alms from you. You have brought something in order to give it to me. If I do not accept what you wish to give to me, where will it go?" The village head-man laughingly replied, "What a big question have you asked! If you do not wish to take what I have brought for you, I will take it back myself." Buddha said that he was very happy. "I have come here along with my disciples for taking alms from you. You have brought abuse and you want to give it to me as alms. But I have not accepted the bhiksha you brought for me in the form of abuse. To whom will it go back?" With this, the ego of that village headman subsided. In this manner, great people and great saints go to several persons, and with a view to enlighten them, adopt different methods. By such things, we should not let our mind become impure. At all times, we should make an attempt to cleanse our mind and make it pure. The house which we use everyday, we undertake to clean it day after day. So also if this mind of ours, which we have to use every moment, is not cleaned often, great damage will result. Our

mind is like a copper vessel. This copper vessel will gather rust from moment to moment. We are using it every moment. We should make an attempt to use the water of repentance to cleanse this pot of our mind from time to time.

If anyone abuses you or accuses you, you should not get excited. With equanimity you should be prepared to take what they give you. In this sacred age of yours, excitement is a very harmful thing. If you think of the Lord for five minutes, all that excitement will vanish. These states of excitement are transient and temporary and are not permanent. If anyone amongst you, with an inimical feeling, accuses others, you must be prepared to repent. One can also think of another method of understanding this situation. Suppose some friend of yours sends you a registered letter through the post. According to the rules of the postal department, if you wish to receive it, you have to sign on a receipt. If you do not agree to sign, where does that registered letter go? It will go back to the address from which it has come. In this manner, whatever others may say, yet, if you feel that they are not for you, and if you are only a witness, then nothing will come to you.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

You are truly only witnessing persons. Not only in regard to worldly matters but also in regard to spiritual matters, you should remain as witnesses only. But you should ask the question, such of us who are only to witness, wherefrom have we come? Where do we go? If you cannot obtain an answer to these two questions, then what is the purpose of this life? We post an envelope in the postbox. On that envelope, either there must be a from address or the address to which it has to go. If both of them are not present, where will the envelope go? It will simply be removed from the postbox and burnt. As in that analogy, if we do not know from where we have come and where we have to go, we will be discarded as useless and thrown away. If any group teacher comes and asks one of you, wherefrom have you come? If you are not in a position to reply, then he asks you, where are you going? And if you are not in a position to reply to that also, what will then happen to you? We have come into this world which is a mithya. Everything in this world is asking you, "Wherefrom have you come?" All the Upanishads are asking you,

"Where are you going? What is your destination?" The Upanishads tell you that you are the child of immortality. You must have a firm belief that you have come from the aspect of Atma, and that you will be going back to immortality.

Students:

In order to cleanse your minds, you should promote sacred prema in yourselves. To just keep talking of devotion does not fulfil the purpose of devotion. It is a mistake to think that you can control your future and go on praising yourselves that you have devotion. Love of God is the main symptom of bhakthi or devotion.

The love between a mother and her child has been called vatsalya. The prema you have between each other can be called anuraga. The prema that exists between a husband and a wife is called moha. The attachment which you develop towards your material possessions has been called iccha. The same prema towards God is called bhakthi. In all these aspects, what is common is prema, but all of them cannot be called bhakthi. There may be love or prema towards a son, towards a husband, towards friends, towards God. If you can spread the prema that you have for God and widen that prema towards all human beings, this will enable you to develop equal mindedness towards all human beings. This is what has been described by saying that the entire creation you see around you should be covered by iccha. This iccha by which you can spread your prema towards every individual must be developed by you. If you keep on talking of prema and devotion and direct them towards unholy objects, you will be deceiving God. Students should realise this.

Students:

It is not as if you do not know the situation in which our country is today. The train of our community has become very large and is moving fast. In this train, there are several different people, old people, young people, and they are all a part of it. The older people drop out at the next railway station

because of their old age. The young people undertake a long journey. All the pains and pleasures that are consequent to such a long journey will be experienced only by the young people. You must, therefore, recognise the problems that will be caused in this train and solve them for yourselves. Then only you can travel in this train with some comfort.

Students:

You are truly the future citizens of this country. If at least ten or twenty from amongst you, who have joined the Summer Course, can get good ideas and put them into practice, there is no doubt that this motherland of ours will enjoy great glory. The great things that you are listening to, and the sacred ideals that you are absorbing should not be forgotten when you go out of this hall. Imprint these ideals permanently in your mind and I am hoping that by so doing, you will serve the people and regard service to the people as service to God.

24. Live And Work For The Good Of The Community Around You

Date: **May 1977** / Location: **Brindavan** / Occasion: **Summer Course 1977**

How can we describe the great good fortune of people who are born in Bharath? God in human form is being born in this country again and again, and He is teaching Divinity and the Divine aspects to the people who live in this country. He has been treating them like His friends and relations. Do you not feel this truth around you?

Pavitratma Swarupas:

Man can be equated to the mind and mind can be equated with something which has the capacity to understand. If, today, we feel that the country is not what it should be, we should conclude also that man and man's knowledge are not what they should be. The country is in a bad shape, because man's ideas and thoughts are not the right and appropriate ones. If one can know the answer to the question, "For whose sake are we living?," then we can certainly rectify matters in this country. To this question, the answer that usually comes is, "I am living for my sake, I am eating for my sake, I am drinking for my sake, I am sleeping for my sake, I am reading for my sake." Not only this, you often say, "I am taking medicine for my own dis-ease, I am putting on a bandage on my own broken leg." In all these statements, it becomes quite clear that this individual is living for himself, for his own good and not for others. Not only this, if ten persons are sleeping in one room, each one has his own dream. The dream which is dreamt by one, is for himself. All the ten people are not having the same dream. Here it becomes quite clear that whatever you see, whatever you experience is for your own self, and not for others.

If a wife addresses her husband and says, "Now that we have come to the

decision to admit our son in the Sathya Sai College, should we not make some clothes for him?" If, at that moment, the husband has no money, he decides to borrow some and get clothes prepared for his son. For whose sake has he borrowed the money? For whom has he got the clothes prepared? He has done all this for the sake of his son. After some time, a few of his friends come to him and tell him that Summer Classes are being conducted in the Sathya Sai College and advise him that, if necessary, he should take a couple of days' leave and go and listen to those lectures. To this, the individual may give a reply and say, "I cannot get leave even for half a day and how can I go and listen to the discourses in the Summer Classes?" If the next day, his wife gets some incurable disease, then he takes leave, takes his wife to a hospital, admits her there and goes on leave for a number of days. For whose sake has he taken this leave? That is for his wife. After a few days have passed again, an incident may occur by which he has prepared some very good food which he likes, and while the food is in his plate, he gets the news that his son fell under a car and met with an accident on the street. Then he will give up the food that he likes. Although he is hungry and wants to eat, he will run for the sake of his son on the street. He has given up the food which he very much likes to eat. For whose sake has he done this? For whose sake has he run into the street? That is for his son. Thus, we see that when one sees his own people, who are dear to him, suffer from pain, he is willing to sacrifice everything. We come to understand that he is doing nothing for him-self, but that he is doing all these things for people who are dear to him. Will he have complete satisfaction if he and the close members of his family are well? Will it be possible in those conditions for him and the members of his family to live in peace? This will not bring him complete peace because he lives in the society. A human being who is born in the society, who grows in the society, and who lives in the society, cannot for a moment abandon the society. He may say that he is doing his work for promoting his own prospects and for looking after himself and that he has nothing to do with the society. But who has given him his job, and who is paying him his salary and looking after his comforts in life? It is the society around him.

If you are under the impression that you can truly lead a happy life, with your own family, without having anything to do with the society around you, why

do you and the family not go into the forest, get away from the society and live happily?

In reality, man cannot cut himself away from the society. When the village in which he lives gets into some trouble, he feels that he is a part of the village. If there is a disease like cholera or plague, then he will also be affected by all the consequences. Why and for whom is he doing this? This is because he has got some connection with the society around him. When the neighbouring house catches fire and is burning, he will go and make an attempt to put out that fire. If there is no village, there is no house of his own. The village is sustained by the society. It becomes necessary to recognise that he is a part of the community and that he is doing things for the sake of the community as well.

Today, because the individual interests in a family have taken the upper hand, man is unable to recognise the importance of the family in which he lives. The welfare of the entire country depends upon the states that constitute the country. The welfare of the states that constitute the country depends upon the welfare of the cities in that state. The welfare of the cities, depends, in turn, on the welfare of the villages around each city. The welfare of the villages, in turn, depends upon the welfare of the houses that constitute these villages. The welfare of each house in the village depends upon the welfare of the members of each family. Thus the total welfare of the whole country ultimately depends upon the welfare of each one of the individuals. If there is no individual, there is no family. If there is no family, there is no village. If there is no village, there are no cities. If there are no cities, there is no state. If there is no state, there is no country.

We will take here one small example. In a big city like Delhi, we have what are called social clubs. In these clubs people of different avocations, people who are in positions of authority, people who are not in any position of authority, and various components of the society will all be moving together. When people from different strata of life are moving in the club, spies on behalf of the state will also be moving amongst them in order that they may collect some information from various people. These spies will be prepared to

spend any amount of money in order that they may get access to the secret information. Some people will be prepared to give away secret information that is required, because they are in need of money.

They have an idea that by acquiring money by this process, they and their families can live happily. But can they be really happy after divulging such secret information? No. In that context, they are causing great harm to the country. Here we see that individuals who have the selfish idea of making them-selves and the members of their family happy, will undertake such mean work. If they realise that there is a community which has got to be looked after, in addition to themselves as individuals, they will not do such mean things.

Today, many people, in spite of their being educated, care for only one individual and the members of his family. They do not think that there is a community which has to be taken care of.

Students:

You should recognise that along with you as an individual, there is also the society and the community. We are not living solely for ourselves. We are not living solely for the sake of our family. We are living for the sake of the world. Even before you were born, your father and mother were there. Your father and mother were part of the society around you. Having been born into the community, how can you go away from the community? This is the right opportunity for you to regard that service to the community is service to God. We must push away the selfishness in us and undertake the task of helping others.

You would have read stories in which the moral is: that God will like those people who like the people around them. On one occasion, Abu Ben Adam was returning to his home, when he found that there was some light coming out from the window of his bed-room. When he looked through that window, he saw that an angel was sitting in his bedroom and using a golden pen for writing in a book. Gently, Abu Ben Adam entered the room and asked,

"Mother, what are you doing?" He got the reply, "I am an angel, I am a messenger of God. I am writing a list of names who have shown affection to God." Abu Ben Adam asked if his name was there in that list. She said, "No, it is not here." Abu Ben Adam told himself, "I am not loved by God. Have I not been devoted to God? What is my limitation?" He just left it at that and went to his room.

On the next day, to meet some people, he went out of his house. When he returned back, he found again the same light shining out of his window. He again asked, "Mother, what is it that you are writing today?" The angel replied, "Today I am making a list of people who are loved by God." He asked, "Does that list contain my name?" The angel replied, "In the whole list, I find only your name." He again asked the question "For what reason is God loving me?" This angel, who is the messenger of God, replied, "You believe that service to the people is service to the Lord. You are finding God in the people and you have identified people with God; so God loves you because you feel that God is omnipresent." In your daily life, you are saying that God is omnipresent, but you are not putting it into practice. What you should do is to regard God as being present in everyone, everywhere and you should love everyone as you love God. The right thing is to have a broad vision of God and regard Him as being present everywhere. To think that He is confined in some small place is to bring down the whole status of God Himself. Because your ideas are narrow and are very small, you are thinking that God is narrow and small.

Students:

Do not have such narrow ideas and narrow views. You must broaden your vision and regard God as being present everywhere; and in that context, you should serve and love everyone. In developing such broad ideas, young people should put in all the effort possible. The young people are the saviours of the world. Swami's ambition and hopes rest on the young people. The future of the country depends upon the faith of the young people. If you turn out to be good people, the country will turn out to be good. If you promote your narrow ideas and keep them narrow for all the time, you will harm this

country.

Students:

Your hearts are sacred, your ideas are pure and you should strengthen these qualities in you and serve the people. This is what you should follow.

This body of yours is weak. It is made up of the five elements that make the world. You do not know when you have to abandon this body. People tell us that this body will live for a hundred years. Do not believe in that statement. This body may disappear at any moment - maybe in your youth, maybe in your adolescence or maybe in your old age. It may drop down in a forest, or in a city or on water. When and under what circumstances the body will drop, no one can say. The only thing which is certain is death. So long as the body is with you, good use must be made of it. You must use it only for good and sacred purposes.

You have participated in sacred meetings. You have listened to the sacred discourses from various experienced people. I am hoping that you will use all your energies in future for serving the people. That is the best way to earn the grace of God.

25. True Yoga Should Enable You To Control Your Mind

Date: **May 1977** / Location: **Brindavan** / Occasion: **Summer Course 1977**

Will the tanks get filled if there are a few showers? Will your thirst be quenched if you swallow a little saliva? Can we bloat our stomach if we hold breath for a little while? Can we get coal by burning a few bits of hair?

Pavitratma Swarupas:

In this country of Bharath, from time immemorial, many Maharishis did several things to understand the secret of Atma. Karma, bhakthi, jnana and yoga are the four major approaches in this search for the Atma. The paths of karma, of bhakthi and of jnana are such that ordinary people can also follow them. There are other paths which can be described by different names like dhyana, upasana, thyaga; but all such paths are contained in the path of karma. The path of yoga is not easily accessible to common people. Scholars have been explaining the path of yoga in different ways, and they have been propagating this path in diverse ways. For most of them, what is available is only acquaintance with books and actual experience is lacking.

Many people have been following the path of yoga by vairagya or detachment and have been experiencing some happiness. These days, several people are explaining and teaching the methods of yoga. However, in no way could they experience for themselves, in practice, the results of yoga. It is easy to talk, but it is difficult to practice what you say. We must try and understand whether the difficult path of yoga can be followed by ordinary people at all.

If we accept and follow the Sutras of Patanjali, it has been said that yoga will lead to chittavrithi, that is control of your mind. Were there such great people in this world who have been able to control their minds? Yes, there are such

people, but they are not moving amongst ordinary persons in the ordinary way. They are concerned with their inner self. They are concerned with promoting their inner vision. To say that there are people amongst ordinary persons who can explain the true meaning of yoga is to state an untruth.

People, who truly want to understand yoga, should detach themselves from all ordinary worldly action. Yoga connotes having a confluence with divinity and the sacred aspects of Atma. Like the river, when once it enters the ocean, loses its name, its form and its taste; so also a human being, once he joins the Atmic spirit, he will have nothing to do with the world. If we send a doll of salt into the ocean, can it come back again to us? This doll of salt, though it has come out of the ocean originally, once it goes back to the ocean, it will merge into it and become identical with ocean. In the same manner, for people who understand completely the meaning of yoga, there will be no further opportunity to have anything to do with the worldly bhoga.

Here all the four kosas, the Annamaya, the Pranamaya, the Manomaya and the Vignanamaya, are born out of the Anandamaya Kosa. The primary objective of the Anandamaya Kosa is iccha or sankalpa. This iccha or sankalpa is merged with the Atma and is contained inside as Atma. Therefore, sankalpa loses all its manifestation once it merges with the inner self or the Atma. The entire world is only a projection or an image of this sankalpa. It is not possible for this sankalpa to get into an illusion by looking at its own image in the material world. If any one utters any word, we say, by way of explanation, that the word is coming from one's throat. This is not the truth. With one's throat, one can utter a sound, but one cannot utter a word. The word does not come from the throat; but it starts from the mooladhara chakra, goes up to the agneya chakra and then it touches the Atma and gets its true and proper tone from the base of the Atma and then comes out as sound. Here, in the Prana Kosa and the Mano Kosa there are certain strings. These strings can be touched at certain places where there are bridges on these strings. Because those are being touched, sounds are produced and those sounds go to your heart. Then, the sound will emanate as a word. The bridges on these strings come to the notice of the mind. People who know how to play on a vina can understand the steps easily.

When one plays on the strings and touches the bridges below the strings, each word and each sound take special forms and tones. Depending upon the strings on which one is playing and depending upon the bridge which one is touching, the kind of sound that emanates will be determined. While playing on one string, if one touches the bridge relating to an-other string, one will not hear any particular sound. The life-string that starts at the mooldhara chakra and goes up to the agneya chakra must be made to join our mind. Here, the purpose of the mooldhara chakra is to make the body keep erect and in good condition. This is something which protects the body. It is also referred to as Annamaya Kosa.

The second one is the swadhyaya chakra. It has got the duty to deal with the Pranamaya Kosa and give it the much needed heat. Because of the heat that is supplied to the Pranamaya Kosa, the body survives and is protected. Not only this, the different organs that are contained in the body are maintained by the heat that is generated.

The third one is the manipuraka chakra. This is in the nature of a fluid. This enables the blood to flow; and after enabling the blood to flow out of the Annamaya Kosa, it takes out all the fluids and hands them to the body. Because of this flow of blood in the body, it enables the body to keep healthy and passes the blood to the Pranamaya and Annamaya Kosas.

The fourth one is the annahata chakra. This is in the nature of air. Not only does it enable people to breathe in and breathe out air, but it also makes them think about various matters. Since this has got the property of breathing, it can show its nature by way of air, heat, and dust. At this stage, the aspect that is contained in the Pranamaya Kosa enters the inner string and presses the inner string.

The next one is the visuddha chakra. The visuddha chakra is described as having the aspects of space and of time. The sounds that emanate from us are described as words.

The next one is agneya chakra. This agneya chakra makes you feel your

existence. Not only this, it enables you to recognise your true form. This works in the field of pragnana. It enables you to fix the five vital airs in you and enables the aspect of five pranas to shine. The purpose of the agneya chakra is to enable you to control the five pranas.

The next one is the sahasrara chakra. The sahasrara chakra has got an important function of being the very base of all the vital points in you. This enables your iccha Sakthi to function. Yoga has been teaching us that the vital aspect of life exists from the 9th ring to the 12th ring in the spinal column or the backbone.

The Vedas have described that this force of life is like what we see when lightning comes in the clouds, and is between the 9th ring and the 12th ring in the spinal column. A man can live even after losing his leg, even after losing his hand; but if his spine is broken, he cannot live. In the spinal column, what exists between the 9th ring and the 12th ring is the essence of life. This is called annahata chakra. The passage of air through this annahata chakra, while breathing in and breathing out, sustains life.

When the rishis did not know this basic truth that life really exists between the 9th ring and the 12th ring in the spinal column, they were trying to control each one of the chakras starting from the mooladhara, going right up to the pragna. They were doing such sadhana by which they could understand and control each one of the rings in the spinal column. We should recognise that by wisdom, one gets two kinds of pragna. One relates to the world and the other relates to the spirit. One that relates to the world enables you to understand what you see around you and how the material world goes on. We should take this to mean that even before we understand the form and the meaning of the external things, they are already contained within us. This knowledge which relates to the Atma, with which you have already seen and known in some form within you, is now being seen as an external thing.

I am now looking at this piece of cloth, but the form of this piece of cloth has already been imprinted in my mind even before I see the cloth. Thus, that which establishes the true form of what already exists as inner knowledge is

the first kind of pragna.

The second type of pragna is that which enables you to see the aspect of Atma in all living beings as one and the same. This has been proclaimed by the rishis by saying "Pragnanam Brahma." This aspect of pragnana, which is identical with Brahman, is present in every individual. For man to promote himself and his knowledge, control of senses and control of mind are very necessary, and those are not easily done. What we should do today is to see that the mind does not take the wrong path but is diverted to the right path. Many people who want to control their senses and their minds, make several attempts; but having become unsuccessful in their attempts, they even lose their faith in the spiritual path. Some of them become atheists.

By the paths of sama, dama, upeksha, tithiksha, sraddha and samadhana, we will be able to understand the divine aspect. We have been believing that these different paths are worldly paths. We have been explaining sama to mean control of the external organs, and dama to mean control of the inner sensory organs. We have been uttering them only as words but have not been practising them. We do not see the right type of practice of yoga in our country today. Simply by learning some kind of physical exercise relating to the human body, we call it yoga. That type of yoga is simply physical exercise and will result in better health of the body. This is not going to give you the health of the Atma. We are calling these physical exercises yoga asanas. All these aspects relate to the body which consists of the five elements. When the today itself is transient, how can the work which you do with the body or the results thereof become permanent?

As a lamp helps you to see the material around you, so also, all our organs are simply instruments with which we see the external world. The items that are being shown to you by your organs are impermanent. The eyes with which we see impermanent things are also impermanent, and even the mind which looks at these organs also keeps on changing. Intelligence enables us to oversee the mind and this becomes an instrument. Intelligence, too, has no self-effulgence like the moon. Only the light shining on the intelligence from the Atma can show something. Because intelligence is very close to Atma, it

is able to receive so much light. If we want to reach and understand the aspect of Atma which is the basis of all life, we can do it only through prema. Like the strings of the vina, it will enable you to hear the tune and the tone which control the swara; so also the strings of life will enable you to understand the aspect of Atma. To try and investigate the origin of the very origin will only be a waste of time. We are unable to find people who have had practical experience of the mooladhara chakra and the agneya chakra; and it is not possible to try and learn these things for one's self. Even if there are some people who have the knowledge, they will not undertake to teach this knowledge. They will enjoy the bliss and happiness coming from such knowledge, but they will have no words to teach others. They can only experience but cannot express.

The ichha Sakthi refers to the capacity in a human being by which he transforms what exists in the chakras into the aspect of Atma.

Pavitratma Swarupas:

If you really want to elevate the human nature to the level of the divine nature, it is very necessary for you to have the qualities of morality and truth. We should understand how we can live with these qualities and practise what shines as permanent truth in our life. We should co-ordinate the permanent truth with the times in which we are living. We need not change the essence or the contents, but there is nothing wrong in changing the thoughts with which we live. We should only change the container, and not try to change the contents. In this manner, if we want to cool the organs when in excitement, the only path that is available is the path of prema.

We have been hearing that the dawn of wisdom is identical with the vision of Adwaita. Any wise man, however wise he may be, when subjected to opposites, like pain and pleasure or loss and gain, is affected differently. Gandhi was teaching the aspect of ahimsa to the people in many ways. The meaning of ahimsa is that neither in thought, word or deed should you cause harm to anybody. Gandhi took a vow that till the end of his life, he will follow this. But on one occasion, when he saw a cow suffering from pain, he could

not bear it, and he advised the doctor to give an injection and end the life of the cow. Thus, in order to help the suffering individual, we may sometimes have to harm him. The only way in which one can take the path of ahimsa is to recognise the oneness of the Atma that is present in all living beings and regard them all as equal.

A devotee came to a guru and requested that he be given a mantra. The guru gave him an ashtakshari, "Om namo Narayana," and asked the devotee to go. After he had gone some distance, the guru called him back. The guru said that there is no use repeating the mantras verbally and advised him to think of the form of Vishnu and then utter this mantra. This individual agreed and was going back. After he had gone some distance, the guru called the devotee back again. He cautioned him that he should have the form of Vishnu only in his mind and think of the mantra, and that he should not allow the form of a dog or a monkey to come in his mind. As soon as he sat down for meditation, he began to think that a dog should not come into his mind and a monkey should not come into his mind. Thus, all the time, he was thinking of the dog and monkey, but Vishnu never came to his mind. In this disturbed situation, he asked himself, why the guru told him at all of a dog or a monkey? Is it because of the mistake of the guru that the dog and the monkey are haunting his mind? So he went back to the guru and fell at his feet. He said that the mantra which was given to him, and the form of Vishnu suggested along with the mantra, gave him great happiness, but when he was told about the dog and the monkey, he was continually being haunted by them and was not having any peace of mind.

The guru told the devotee, "I have asked you to think of the form of Vishnu. What does the form of Vishnu mean? Vishnu is omnipresent and if you think of Vishnu, various things can come to your mind and there is nothing wrong. Even if a dog comes to your mind, it simply means that Vishnu is omnipresent. If the monkey comes to your mind and you think of it in the omnipresent aspect of Vishnu, there is no harm. I mentioned these two things to you so that you can realise the oneness of Vishnu and his omnipresence." Here, there is a human body. In this, you find a hand, a nose, a face, and so on. All these are the components of the body. If you separate all these things

and pull them apart, where is the body? All the components and the organs together make up the body. The aspect of Vishnu is one in which all these forms are combined. The rishis of ancient times had been teaching to their disciples this oneness by several methods and means.

Students:

Truly if you have the sacred idea of acquiring this knowledge, you must enter the society, see the oneness in society, realise that what is present in any-one is one and the same spirit of Atma. You must establish that the faith that is in you is also the same faith that is in everybody else. We should not be discouraged by the thought that it may not be possible and not make an attempt at all. It is by sadhana and repeated effort, that one can achieve things. By a conscious effort you must undertake sadhana. We are wasting time in several different ways. Even if we use a fraction of the time we waste, for the purpose of sadhana, there is no doubt, whatsoever, that we can improve our life.

As the wall that is being built by a man goes up continuously, the one who does s a d h a n a will keep continuously rising higher up. The one who does not do sadhana lives like a man who goes on digging a well and goes on continually going deeper and deeper. It is only when your mind is not pure that it will give place to such doubts. If you have a pure mind, there will be no room for such doubts. On the basis of the doubts that you have or on the basis of the unwavering mind that you have, you can decide for yourself how impure your mind is. Gradually, you must give up your doubts, you must give up your hesitations and establish some firm truth and belief in your minds. Have there not been many rulers who have ruled on this earth and who have felt proud of their glory? Where are they? Do you see them now? Have there not been people who have done many great things? Where are they? Do you see them now? From time to time, if we depend upon this body, whose life is becoming less and less, day after day; and if we do not use time in a good manner, we will be wasting our lives. Man is forgetting his true nature by wanting to fulfil his sensory desires, depending upon this human body which is going to drop down at some time or other.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

As you know, a drop at the end of a leaf on a tree can fall down at any time. Similarly, our body can drop off at any time. The moment life disappears, this body will become like a hollow bamboo. Young people should necessarily understand the truth and follow the aspect of Atma. You should certainly acquire the knowledge that relates to your daily life. So long as one lives, food is necessary. So long as one lives, one has to do some work. But this cannot be the end and aim of your life. You may acquire many things during your lives, but when you leave this body and go, not one of those things will come with you. Fixing such ideas in your mind from moment to moment, you should recognise that the body has been given to you in order that you may do some good work and help others.

This body is an instrument. Using this instrument and depending upon this instrument, you should reach your destination. This body is a temple. It is a chariot for the jiva that is travelling in it. If we want to use a car, we think several times whether the road on which we are driving is a proper one. In the same manner, before putting the car of this body on the road of your life, you should examine the nature of that road.

This chariot is a sacred one and is to be used for travel on a sacred path and to reach a sacred destination. If we have firm faith in this aspect, we will not agree under any circumstances to take our body along the wrong path.

In order that you may achieve the four puru-sharthas: dharma, artha, kama and moksha, you must have a healthy body. To have a healthy body, you must put yourselves on a proper diet. But with some vague idea that you will acquire something, do not enter into this world. For the sake of a good life and good health, you can, in your ordinary daily life, undertake physical exertion. Do not enter a path which you do not understand. It will ruin your life. You may undertake any task, but do it in the name of God and for His pleasure.

26. Good Company Enables You To Retain Your Goodness

Date: **May 1977** / Location: **Brindavan** / Occasion: **Summer Course 1977**

Just as a rat gets trapped in the cage because it is unable to resist the temptation of the bait in the cage, so also man loses the great happiness and bliss that comes out of the knowledge of Brahman, unable to give up his wanting to enjoy the many sensuous attractions of this world.

Prema Swarupas:

A human being is like a seed. As a seed grows into a plant after sprouting, as the plant becomes a tree when it becomes bigger, so also a human being is born, then he grows and changes and transforms, acquires the fullness of human nature and ultimately, through various stages, will reach his destination.

Man has got two kinds of knowledge. One type of knowledge is that which relates to the day-to-day world. The second type of knowledge relates to the higher world, the world of spirit. The first has been described as that which helps you to carry on your daily life or earn your livelihood. The second one takes you to the ultimate destination, the objective of all life. By using the knowledge which relates to the world, you can carry on your daily life. By such a process, you generally enhance your reputation and your position in the society in which you live. You also use this knowledge in order to fulfil your responsibilities and your duties. It can also be described as the knowledge which enables you to live peacefully in the surrounding world. By this means, you can acquire the ability and strength to live well.

The second type of knowledge which relates to the higher world, the world of spirit, enables you to answer questions like, Who am I? Why have I come

here? What is the basis of life? What is the secret of my birth? and so on. To enable you to answer such questions, we use the second type of knowledge. To answer these questions, you have to see the oneness in all creation. The worldly knowledge and spiritual knowledge are really one and the same and are inextricably connected with each other. They are like two faces of the same coin. They are like two wings of one bird. They are like the two wheels of a cart, and you must understand that these two are not distinct or separate. We should co-ordinate these two branches of knowledge and see the connection between them and conduct our life accordingly.

Although we are deeply involved in matters relating to the day-to-day material world, we should remember always our connection with the world of the spirit, and carry on our work with full knowledge of the world of the spirit. Several times we see a woman who returns home with a pot full of water on her head, yet keeping her balance. So also man, although involved in fulfilling his daily commitments and duties in the material world, should keep his attention, at all times, fixed on the matters of spirit and maintain his equanimity.

While a dancer is dancing, she carefully moves her limbs according to the rhythm and yet she pays great attention to the essentials of her dance. So also, man, fulfilling his daily duties and doing his daily work, must yet keep his attention fully focused on spiritual matters. That kind of attention has become very rare these days and we do not find it even as an example to cite.

Even an individual engaged in dhyana begins to think of so many things, and cannot concentrate his attention on the objective. His attention wavers. This is simply the result of weakness in one's own devotion. If one's faith is strong, there will be no doubt whatsoever in being able to acquire such concentration.

The citizens of Bharath have learned to worship people. They have not learnt to understand them. They are worshipping Avathars like Rama and Krishna, in the faith that God is born in human form in this world when such an Avathar

appears. They have not understood that Rama, Krishna and Avathars like that are only ideal examples of human individuals. Such divine people who are born in the community constitute ideal examples of human beings, and the moment we learn to practise what they demonstrate, we should have learnt and understood them. A weak person who is not in a position to understand even human nature and human aspects, how is he going to understand the aspects of divine nature? It is only when we can understand Rama, Krishna, etc., as ideal human examples, can we elevate them to the position of divine Avathars.

Today, we are worshipping such Avathars in the form of idols and photographs; but we are not following the ideals they gave us. As we have learnt to accept that the Avathar and the Godhead are identical, so also we should accept that the ideals they have set for us should be practised.

Unfortunately, today we are addressing an Avathar as God. We keep on repeating the word 'God' and we worship Him, but we do not accept His commands and His statements. We simply keep them aside. That kind of worship, which is not accompanied by practice, should be regarded as mere exhibitionism and not devotion.

In this world, a large proportion of people want to look for an easy path. They want to enjoy happiness without any effort. Without making any effort and without practising true sadhana, nothing can be achieved. They are unable to recognise this basic fact. Like dogs which compete with each other and run away with a small quantity of food, these opportunists compete with each other, and they do everything to snatch an opportunity and run away with it.

Man has lost the ability to discriminate between the permanent and impermanent things. Because of the absence of such discriminating power, man simply gets excited and acts in a state of excitement. They are not even able to recognise that excitement is a weak-ness in them. If their desires and their ambitions are fulfilled, they are happy and contented. If their desires and their ambitions are not fulfilled, they get excited. They do not even try to find out the reason why their desires have not been fulfilled.

At first, they should enquire whether the desires and the ambition which they have, are those which they need and are good for them. Unable to have the discriminating power, they develop desires which they should not develop. When such desires are not fulfilled, they begin to accuse God and put the blame on Him. Such people feel very happy if they get what they want and are constantly giving trouble and harm to other people. Such people always look down but they never look up. Without taking any trouble and without making any effort, they want to get things which do not belong to them. How can people, who have such bad qualities, ever take a path which is beneficial and healthy? Truly, young people like you should recognise the two great and sacred qualities of morality and sacrifice. So long as we hanker after things which are material and which are around us, our condition will be like what it is. We should make an attempt to understand and enquire into questions like, who is man? What is the purpose for which he has come into this world? We keep on talking about sacrifice. We repeat the words prema and ahimsa, but do not really practise them. We pretend to have faith in God. We keep on expressing and announcing that we have faith in God. If really you have faith in God, you will not do such things. Whatever one does, appears to be done only for the purpose of promoting his own selfish interest or the selfish interest of his own family. He has a narrow mind and has not got in his mind the aspect of selfless work and wanting to do something useful for others.

There are many unfortunate people who are not able to utilise the sacred opportunities that come their way. For one who cannot enjoy happiness and bliss, what does it matter what opportunity he gets? For a dog which can only lap out water, what is the use of a river with a large quantity of flowing water? We really get many sacred opportunities on occasions in our life. Without using those opportunities and discussing their values, we waste our time and our life.

Students:

For the past one month, you have learnt many things which are necessary for a man to live happily. Things that you have listened to in the past one month, and situations that you have now come across and seen, should get imprinted

in your minds permanently. Only then, will you be able to follow the sacred path; and your life can be an ideal example to others.

There is a small example for this: It is quite common that either in excitement or in a state of temporary happiness, people take a different view at the moment. This can be called a temporary or transient type of vairagya. There was a person in Northern India who was running a flour mill. Once he went to a place where a good Hari Katha was being told. The author of the Hari Katha, the story of devotion to God, stated in the very beginning that there is no gift greater than the gift of food. He also asked, is there a God who is greater than mother or father? Is there any moral conduct nobler than following truth? Is there any dharma greater than you showing kindness where it is needed? Is there anything more profitable than keeping company with good people? Is there a greater enemy than anger itself? Is there a disease for a human being worse than being indebted? Is there any wealth which is better than continued reputation? He further stated that the consequences of giving food to a hungry man will be such that great good will come out of them.

The owner of the flour mill, after listening to these statements, returned home and thought that by giving food to needy people, he will benefit by some good consequences and started action that very day. While doing this, he had a very narrow and sinister idea. He had a lot of wheat flour which was rotting for several months in storehouses. He started taking out that wheat flour and making some bread out of it so that he can distribute it to poor people. The rotten flour was so bad that even ants and insects would not care to eat it. The wife of the owner of the mill was a very good lady. She was also a very devoted person. She, in many ways, was telling her husband, "What is the use and what is the purpose of distributing such wheat flour? We have so much flour in our mill. Why don't you take the good flour and feed only a few people? Why give bad flour to many people?" But these words did not make any impression on the householder.

She was waiting for a good opportunity to teach her husband a lesson and when the opportunity came one day, she prepared bread with the same rotten wheat flour and put it in her husband's plate when he came to eat. He

was very angry and very excited. She used good and soft words and she explained to her husband by saying that whatever work is done, the consequences of such work will have to be accepted by us either in heaven or in hell. The kind of seed which we plant, will determine the nature of the plant that will come out. She said, "The kind of gift which you are giving these days is very bad, and the consequences of such wicked acts of yours will take you to hell, and there they will undertake to give you this kind of bread. When such a situation comes about, you will have to eat such rotten bread for the first time. It will be difficult for you to do so, and it is better to accustom yourself to eating rotten bread from now on. For you, to get good bread at that time will be impossible. In order to give you that practice, from now onwards I am giving you such bread." The work that we do today will determine the consequences that we will enjoy in the future. You must do good work and get good out of it. Can we plant the seeds of lemon and expect to get mangoes? Can we expect to plant the seeds of mango and get lemons out of that tree? It is right conduct for a human being to recognise this and promote sacred ideas, sacred thoughts and do sacred work now, so that he may reap the sacred fruit in future.

Students:

By tomorrow, all our programmes will have been gone through and you have to return to your own places. When you go back to your places, in order that you may be able to show your life as a sacred ideal example, you will have to collect and acquire the strength here. If your thoughts remain sacred only so long as you are here and when you go back, depending upon that environment, if your thoughts and ideals change, truly you have not acquired anything of a lasting nature.

When your parents see you, they should see the transformation in you and be very happy. All the bad ideas and the old thoughts should have left you. If damaged and dilapidated cars go to a workshop and return from the workshop in the same dilapidated condition, what is the use of taking them to the work-shop? At least from today, all the bolts, nuts and screws that have ceased to work in you should be left in Brindavan, and you should reappear

outside with new bolts, new nuts and new screws. By such a change of ideas in your heart, you should set an example so that people with whom you come in contact should also be able to change their habits.

Students:

What we talk of as a present-day world is not permanent. This is purely a mithya. We do not know when and at what moment and in what way, our end will come. For the satisfaction of such a transient human body, we are devoting all our resources, all our energies. Whatever we may acquire, all those acquisitions have to be given up some day or other. Whether we live or whether we die, we should carry a name which is full of reputation. What remains permanently in this world is only your name and reputation. Do not let yourself be subdued by the thoughts. I will do this, I will do that, I will acquire this and I will acquire that. These are simply imaginary words spoken in the air. You must make good use of the time that has been given to you by living in this society and by doing service to the people in the country.

For having joined the Summer Classes and for having spent your time in this sacred environment, the sacredness of the environment should permanently get imprinted in your mind.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

There is no need to establish a new society. It is our duty to recognise what good already exists in us. Sai organisations have no selfish interest in them. They want to help all religions and all jivas. They are acceptable to everyone. They have not been established for the sake of promoting a name. It is not as if there are no individuals in the organisation who are selfish. But you should not care for such people and such ideas. You should become selfless and should join the organisation with a selfless spirit. So long as you are in this environment, you may feel that these are very sacred and good ideas. The moment you go outside and enter the external world, it becomes different. Your ideas are bound to change when you go out. But when the company outside is also good, then it is possible for you to retain these sacred ideals

for longer periods.

There is a small example. If you have a pot made up of mud containing water and if you store it for sometime, you will find that in a few days, some of the water will get evaporated. The reason for this is that this pot of mud will exude the water to some extent. It exudes the water because the external environment of this pot is very dry. On the other hand, if this pot which is full of water is stored in an environment of water, this water is not going to be exuded. In the same manner, when you have filled the pot of your heart with spiritual essence, even though you were non-believers in the beginning, because of that spiritual essence in the pot of your heart, you have enjoyed an environment which is full of spirituality. If you then go into an environment which is full of spiritual essence, your faith and belief will not get evaporated. If this can be done for a few years continuously, thereafter, there is no danger of the essence in your heart being diluted.

You are still young. In your young minds, there is a tendency to waver a little. If one wants to explain the nature of a young man, it can be compared to the behaviour of one hundred monkeys. Taking this into consideration, when you go back, you should join the Sai Organisation and in that good company, you should do good to the rest of the world.

27. Do Not Forget God; Do Not Believe In The World; Do Not Fear Death

Date: **May 1977** / Location: **Brindavan** / Occasion: **Summer Course 1977**

Like good food that comes to one who has been fasting for the past ten days, like a heavy downpour of rain that comes to fill the dried and empty tanks, like a child coming into a family which has for long been yearning for children, like a shower of wealth on a very poor man, has come Sri Sathya Sai in Puttaparthi, when there is a total decline of Dharma among the people. What better can I tell those who are assembled in this congregation?

Students, boys and girls:

Time is fleeting away as if it is being blown by a strong wind. So also, the life span of each one is melt-ing away like a block of ice. However, man is simply moving forward without recognising his duties. Is this the destination of man? Is this the ambition of man? Is this all that he is going to fulfil in his life? Having been born in this sacred country of Bharath, having attained a human birth which is not easily attainable, is man going to spend his life in this manner?

To dream is just a play of one's own mind. To be awake is again a manifestation of one's own mind. Both these things are untrue. Man, unable to recognise this truth, mistakes truth for untruth and untruth for truth. Truly, this human body is one of ananda and bliss and has been given to us in order that we may have the vision of the Paramatma. The main task of man is to recognise the secret and the truth behind life. We are wasting our time like a man does when he cuts out sandal wood for burning and using it as coal. With a golden pot, we are trying to cook something which is very inferior. The body that has been given to us for the search of truth is being used for inferior

objectives. Truly, we have to search for and find a precious stone in dust. A precious stone cannot be found on the top of a tree. In the same manner, the pearls of wisdom can be found only by searching for them in the human body which is just dust. Dust thou the art and to dust thou shalt return.

In this world of unrest, if we want to establish peace, we have to purify our own minds. People talk words of peace but in action they show violence. They hold an atom bomb in their hands and they keep on loudly proclaiming the need for peace. Even if you reach the moon, you are not going to have peace and happiness. In such a restless world, instead of having total devotion to God, we are trying to establish further restlessness.

Students:

All my hopes are resting on the youth. The youth of today are the future citizens and will be responsible for the well-being of Bharath. The good or bad of a country depends upon the youth.

These thirty days, you have been living in Brindavan and spending your time in a heavenly man-ner. We are thinking that the Summer Classes have come to an end today. But our Summer Classes do not come to an end on any day. Till today, you have lived in Brindavan and you have experienced joy in Brindavan. But from today, you must make Brindavan live in your heart. Till today, you have been sitting in the auditorium. From today you must take all the people and all that you have learnt in the auditorium into your heart. If you can promote such an attitude in you, there will be no room for differences amongst yourselves.

Students:

Any individual, who is completely healthy, will not want to go to a doctor. A person who is healthy and who knows that he is well will not want to have a checkup by a medical doctor. Only when one has ill health, he will go to a doctor and ask several questions about his health. Unless there is some fault in a man, he will not want to meet another individual. If today all of you have

come here, it means that in each of you there is some fault. You want to get rid of those faults and acquire peace of mind. You have come here to shed your mean ideas and your impermanent thoughts and carry with you the permanent truth. You have come here with a view of acquiring new ideas, to acquire good ideas and make the path of your life a rosy one. You have been on that task for the past thirty days.

Many of you are not willing to go back, but remember that Swami is with you. You should not have the feeling that to go back is an unwanted imposition. Sai's ideals are like this. As a diamond has so many different facets, Sai has so many different facets. He is in all of you. Although the diamond has many facets around, it is the central portion of the diamond that is connected with all these facets. So boys and girls, all of you should develop into rays that are emanating from the centre. You should go and establish the form of seva that you have opted to join.

The lotus has many petals in it. But all those petals are connected with the central portion of the lotus. For Sathya Sai who constitutes the central part of the lotus, you are all like the petals connected with the centre of the lotus.

Young people, you should develop the spirit of sacrifice. Having developed the spirit of sacrifice, you should feel that there are no differences which are of religious origin. You should be able to establish the oneness of all religions. At all times, you should attempt to be of service to others. You must establish and maintain the sacred culture of Bharath. By accepting the sacred essence of our culture which you have learnt during the past thirty days, you have experienced a kind of bliss. In the future, as well, you must try and continue this. To forget what you have listened to, as soon as you leave this place, is unbecoming of human nature.

Students:

You must exercise great control over your mind. You must see that the mean desires of your mind do not get control over you. You must serve your parents, your society and then your country. This is the true form of yoga.

You must experience this kind of yoga in your daily life. You must acquire for yourself several things, in the dharmic field, the religious field and the spiritual field. It is not possible for an individual to practise all those things; but you must choose a few out of them and put them into practice in your daily life. Most important is that daily, from morning till the night, you must think of the three essential things, namely: Do not forget God, do not believe in the world, do not be afraid of death. These three things are essential in your life. You must forget any harm done to you by others. So also, you must forget any good you may do to others. If you keep on thinking in your mind the harm done to you by others, you will in return attempt to harm them. To harm them in return is a sin. You should not undertake to commit such a sin. By forgetting the good that you may have done to others, you will not be expecting them to do good to you in return. If you are expecting to get something in return and do not get it, you will have to take birth again.

You should strive not to participate in trans-actions connected with the cycle of birth and death. Unfortunately, today, several people take the spiritual path as if it is a path of business. I am hoping that you will not do such a thing. You will recognise the truth and make your lives fruitful and purposeful.

Divya Atma Swarupas:

The bliss and happiness that you experienced here should inspire you to give the same kind of bliss and happiness to your friends at your place. You should not become selfish. What you cannot get either by work or by your birth, you can get by sacrifice.

We must also recognise the meaning of the word dharma. We are thinking that our duty is our dharma. This is not so. To do something which will give pleasure and happiness to others is our real dharma. Whatever we do should not cause any curtailment of the freedom which others enjoy.

We should see that what we regard as bad in others is not done by us. We should also see in what manner others are being respected and are conducting themselves, and ourselves do only such things which are regarded

as respectful.

Man, today, is protecting his own dignity and his own self-respect. He does not deem it necessary to protect the dignity and self-respect of others. We are trying to locate the faults in others with a hundred eyes. We are not making any attempt to locate the faults that are present in us. When we can search for the faults that are in us and find them, then we will experience the right kind of bliss. By looking for the faults in others, our minds becomes unsacred.

The heart is like the lens of a camera. Our mind is like the plate in this camera. The thoughts that enter our mind will get imprinted on that plate. For this reason, we must not allow any bad thoughts to enter our mind.

I am hoping that you will fix your attention on such sacred things, and you will thereby enjoy yourself. What you should know, you have known. But if after knowing this, you do not make any attempt to experience them, the knowledge becomes a waste.

One individual came to Socrates and said, "You are one who knows everything." Socrates replied, "I do not know everything. I know only one thing." The individual asked, "What is the only thing that you know?" Socrates replied, "I know one thing and that is that I do not know anything." You are thinking that you know everything and when some people come to you and say, "You have been attending Sathya Sai Summer Classes, do you know everything?" At that moment, you should conduct yourselves in a manner that you do not know anything. It is only when we put these things into practice, we may develop the feeling that we know all these things. If we have such a feeling that we know everything, then it will appear as if it has come from books; and it had better remain in books. I am hoping that what you have learnt from the books, you will be able to put it back into your head, and after putting it back into your head, you will be able to practise it.

Students:

When you go back to your respective places, you should try and promote some connection with Sri Sathya Sai Organisation. The important changes that have come about in your conduct in life should be demonstrated to your parents.

In the old days, when the students were return-ing to their homes after completing their education, the rishis used to tell them various good things like, "Respect your mother as God, respect your father as God, respect your teacher as God, tell the truth, follow the path of dharma." They were protecting these statements as if they were precious gems given to them. Throughout their lives and till the end of their lives, these statements remained as their weapons and they were safeguarding them.

These days, as well, I am hoping that you will have these sacred statements in your mind. Take them as important and develop yourselves into future citizens working for your motherland. The first step is to love your father and mother. As soon as you return from here, you must start accepting the orders of your parents. It is only when you respect your parents, that your children will respect you as parents in future. If you slight your parents today and do not respect them, exactly the same kind of neglect and lack of respect will come to you in future from your children.

Students:

While the parents have given you all kinds of protection, sacrificing their comforts for looking after you, if you in turn show a disrespectful attitude to your parents, God, also, will be displeased with you. Parents fulfil your material wants and desires; and if you cannot respect and love them, how are you going to respect and love God? How can you please God if you cannot please your own parents?

I am hoping that you will not forget what you have learnt here, that you will recapitulate them and keep on thinking of them. Animals have no inner vision. They have only external or outward vision. But we are not animals. We should develop the inner vision. Even an animal, which has no inward vision,

comes back to its resting place and begins to ruminate and digest its food after it has taken its food. If we human beings, who have both inward and outward vision, do not recapitulate and digest what we have listened to, we will become worse than animals. What you have learnt should enter into your blood vessels, and all the time it should manifest itself from your interior. I am hoping that you will remember all the good things that you have listened to during your stay here and put them into practice in your daily life and enjoy the bliss thereof and be of some service and help to the community around you.