



Summer Showers 2000

Divine Discourses of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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1. Seek Educare Instead Of Just Education

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Vidya nama narasya rupamadhikam pracchannaguptam dhanam
Vidya bhogakari yasah sukhakari
Vidya bandhujano videsa gamane, vidya gurunam guruh
Vidya rajasu pujiyate na hi dhanm, vidya vihinah pasuh.

True education is grand,
A rare beauty, A hidden Treasure, And an unfailing companion.
It is the supreme teacher, and that which commands real respect.
Fool is he that spurns such knowledge.

Students, Boys and Girls, Teachers, and Patrons of Education!

To begin with, students must appreciate the greatness and the grandeur of True Education. Such education alone is real beauty, a hidden treasure of mankind, and an unfailing companion when one travels overseas. It is also the Teacher of all teachers. In the Court of Kings, it is knowledge and not wealth that commands respect. He is a pitiable fool, who does not aspire for such Eternal Knowledge.

Embodiments of Love! You have no idea of the anguish your parents feel if you are backward in your studies. In the same way, Bharat Mata, the mother of this land, will feel very sad if you do not make progress in the fields of morality and spirituality.

Janani janmabhūmisca svargadāpi gariyasi.
One's mother and motherland are greater than the very Heavens.

Students must firmly resolve to spare the motherland of Bharat from the pain and the agony caused by spiritual backwardness.

Students of today are not making any efforts to understand the sanctity of education. What precisely is the type of education that students must acquire? What is it that contributes to true progress and the real prosperity of mankind? What is it that one expects from educational establishments? It is the foremost duty of students to enquire into all such questions and share their findings with others.

Mere bookish learning and the acquisition of information cannot by themselves earn for you respect and esteem in society. For that, culture and the associated refinement are also needed.

Routine scholarship is negative, whereas culture is positive; both are required. Whereas bookish knowledge equips you with facts, culture refines and transforms your inner being (for the better).

Education bereft of culture is like a field without water, a wire without current, a house without a lamp, and a temple without a deity. Pursuit of such education makes youth totally rudderless.

In the past, several committees were appointed to suggest various reforms in our educational system. However, the recommendations of these committees were not implemented. Under the circumstances, youth must follow the examples set by noble elders. After deep enquiry, rishis of yore discovered sacred Truths, abided by them and derived Bliss therefrom, which they then shared with others. Students must emulate the glorious example of our ancients and not be content with learning by rote; mere bookish knowledge is of little value.

What is Educare?

The word Education, especially as used today, is related to bookish knowledge. It is derived from the root word Educare.

What is Educare? It is that type of learning that brings out the purity latent in the Heart, confers Bliss, and allows one to spread joy and happiness among others. Education is associated with knowledge pertaining to the ephemeral world, and can at best lead only to worldly pleasure that is invariably transient. Educare, on the other hand, confers inward Bliss, which is eternal in nature.

The (spiritual) Heart is the fountainhead of all Bliss. All the powers and the potentialities present in the external world are already present in your heart. Unaware of the immense power within, man today is preoccupied with exploring the outer world.

However, all that is seen in the external world is merely a reflection of the Inner Being. Therefore, man must direct his vision inward, experience the unbounded joy within, and then radiate that joy to the outer world. Instead, man is frittering away his time in acquiring worldly knowledge, and in exploring the outer world.

Secular knowledge is no doubt necessary, but its acquisition must have a fundamental (spiritual) basis. Investigations and enquiries lacking a fundamental outlook are totally meaningless.

Here is a silver tumbler. Besidesthis, there are other objects here like the spoon, the plate etc., also made of silver. The metal silver has been used to make all these objects. Silver can be used to make other objects as well. Further, one can convert a silver plate into a silver tumbler and so forth. In this example, silver is fundamental and the objects made of it are secondary. Likewise, there is a Fundamental Knowledge, which is the fountainhead of all other forms of knowledge. Called Atma Vidya, this Fundamental Knowledge is latent in the Heart. It is the Knowledge of the Self.

Our ancients said,
"Vidyanam jnanasaktih"
meaning that Atma Vidya is synonymous with power.

Acquiring Atma Vidya confers the power of wisdom. You must try to comprehend the tremendous power that lies behind the Knowledge of the Self and not waste your life by merely hankering after worldly knowledge all the time.

The Real Purpose of Education

There are crores of highly educated people in this country. But what is it they have contributed to the world and to human welfare? In what way are they helping the community? In no way at all! Instead, they are totally preoccupied with the pursuit of their own selfish interests; no one works for the benefit of the community. This should not be; you should work for the welfare of Society. You should be guided by three cardinal principles:

Sarve loka hite ratsh
Sarve samudita gunaih
Sarve jnana sampannah

All must enjoy prosperity.
All virtues must be cultivated.
All Knowledge must be acquired.

Your first objective must be to work for the welfare of society. Next, you must try to make others happy. Last comes the acquisition of the wealth of spiritual

wisdom. Therefore, first and foremost, you must strive relentlessly for the progress of society.

You must work hard and incessantly to promote the welfare of the community. You are a part of society, and your individual welfare is intimately tied up with the welfare of society as a whole. Hence, you must study not for making money but for the sake of serving society. Unfortunately, these days education has been reduced to business, greedy business in fact. What you have received from society must be returned back to society, and in greater measure. You are able to study because of the infrastructure provided by society. Having been benefited thus, is it proper to forget what you have received and focus only on making money? To do so would be immoral, indecent, and totally against man's basic nature. As the Vedas emphatically declare, sacrifice is man's principal characteristic:

Na karmana na prajaya dhanena tyaganaike amrtatvamanasuh.

Neither action, nor progeny, nor wealth, but sacrifice alone can lead to immortality.

The Vedas further assert: Sahasrasirsa Purusah.

God pervades the universe in diverse forms, providing thereby an undercurrent of unity to apparent diversity of the phenomenal world.

Eko' ham bahusyam

There is only One, but the deluded mind perceives it as many. In other words, the apparent plurality of creation is really an aspect of unity. The Vedas also say:

Saha Na-vavatu. Saha nau bhunaktu. Saha viryam karavavahai.

It means that we must live together, work collectively and in unison, be in harmony with each other, have understanding for each other, and thus attain illumination.

These declarations are the corner stones of Bharatiya (Indian) culture. You must absorb the lessons they convey, follow the dicta, experience the Truth they imply, and share that experience with others.

See God in all, and the Universe as one Family

Students! While studying, you should set aside all thoughts of jobs and income. What is so great about income? Even a beggar is able to get money. Do you think that making money is a great achievement?

Money has become God,
Pomp has become a creed,
Selfishness has become a fashion,
While righteousness has declined.
Money power has become mighty.
Selfishness has become a fashion, and everyone is after it.

Students! Give up selfishness; instead, foster unity, develop Love, and go through life with a spirit of sacrifice. Your life would then be on an even keel, and you would automatically enjoy happiness.

Do not make creature comforts the goal of your life. What is so great about these comforts that everyone is craving for? They are all transient - today's

comfort becomes tomorrow's discomfort.

Food appears very tasty when you are hungry but once hunger is satiated, you no longer feel like eating that very same food.

Ask yourself what is it that is responsible for desire, craving, frustration, and failure?

Mana eva manusyanam karanam bandha moksayoh.

All feelings spring from the mind, which alone is responsible both for bondage as well as liberation.

In fact, the mind is the cause for everything. Where exactly is this mind? You think it is within you. No!

Mano mulam idam jagat.

The mind pervades the whole world, encompassing you also.

There are many bulbs here, and every one of them gives light. The bulbs may be different but the same current flows through them all. The individual bodies are like the various bulbs, and the Atma is like the current and is all-pervasive. It is present in all.

The Governor (Smt. Rama Devi, the chief guest on the occasion) said earlier that God resides in all.

Āṁsavasyam idam jagat.

Isvarassarvabhutanam.

God is present in all beings, but are you experiencing this all-pervasive divinity? Swami has told you on many occasions:

Deho Devalayah prokto, Jivo Devah sanatanah.
The body is the temple, and God is the Indweller.

If this body is a temple, so is that body and every other body. All bodies are temples, and the same God resides in every one of them. Therefore, does it make any sense to say that you like so and so and do not like so and so? The same God is present in all. Hence, regard the entire universe as one big family and love all without exception. If you hate anyone, it amounts to hating your own self.

So, hurt never and help ever.
There is no God beyond Love.
God is Love and Love is God; live in Love.

Love alone is important and not Degrees

Students! Do not give room for undesirable traits like hatred, jealousy, and anger. Instead, assiduously cultivate the feeling of Love in such a manner that you radiate its effulgence all around you.

Start the day with Love!
Fill the day with Love!
Spend the day with Love!
End the day with Love!

This is the way to God!

You must develop this Love Principle. Education must transform you into an embodiment of compassion. What is the use of education if it does not foster compassion? Once, Gandhi was feeling very depressed. When an Englishman asked about the reason for his gloom, Gandhi replied, "I am disturbed by the fact that education today is making people hard-hearted." That is the problem; instead of breeding compassion, education these days is making people stonehearted. True education must touch the heart, release a torrent of selfless love, make a person compassionate, and foster divine feelings. Such education alone is the need of the hour.

People are proud about their educational attainments, but degrees are not that important.

Do the skills of reading and writing alone make one educated?
Do mere degrees confer education?
How does one become learned without goodness and wisdom?
If making a living is the hallmark of education,
Then what about the birds and the beasts?
What degrees have the birds and the beasts received? Nothing!

Education must not be for making a living but for guiding your life along the right path. However, people these days think of education as a passport to jobs and comfort. This is a colossal mistake.

The unholy connection between learning and employment must be totally eliminated. Everyone is clamouring for work.

Work, work, work! Does anyone understand the real meaning of the word work? All activity including household chores can be described as work.

Therefore do not think of employment alone as work that you have to do. Hold a job by all means, but at the same time, do not forget to serve your parents and society.

Remember, your welfare is intimately tied to that of society. Hence, do not think you are studying merely to get a good job; you must study so that you may discharge various responsibilities in an effective manner. True education is that which helps you to transform all work into worship. Duty is God. You may be engaged in any activity but you can transform it into worship by regarding that work as action performed for the pleasure of God and as an offering to God.

Love and serve your Motherland

These days, students rush to the passport office even before they have their degree on hand! They are all so crazy about going abroad. Going abroad has become the fashion of the day. What is it that you find abroad that you cannot find here?

Yanna Bharate tanna Bharata.

What cannot be found in India cannot be found anywhere else in the world.

People have become blind to the glory and the sanctity of Bharat. This country Bharat is tyaga bhumi (land of sacrifice), yoga bhumi (land of yoga), and karma bhumi (land of sacred action). But today, people are trying to convert this sacred land into a bhoga bhumi (land of trivial pleasure). Bhoga is not pleasure as people imagine but roga or disease! Therefore, do not get swept by this craze to go abroad. Instead, stay back and serve as well as protect your country.

This is my motherland,

This is my mother tongue,
This is my religion;
Is there a man without a soul to fail to proclaim thus?

There is no country greater than your Motherland Bharat. What a sacred land it is! There was a time when India was a beacon to the whole world. It was foremost in all spheres of human activity - political, ethical, moral, and spiritual. How can you think of abandoning a country with such a glorious heritage? If you do not have love for the land of your birth, how do you think you are going to love the land you wish to migrate to? This being the land of your birth, you must love it, serve it, and strive hard to improve it. This is the way you must find fulfilment in life.

Cultivate Proper Discrimination

Students! Secular education is no doubt necessary; but along with that, you must also imbibe spiritual learning. A community or society bereft of moral and spiritual values will never have peace. Secular and spiritual learning are complimentary; one is negative and the other is positive. But, unfortunately, students of today are quite content with just the negative part alone. This is not good; if you neglect spiritual learning, you will be like a kite that has snapped; no one can say where the kite will fall. Hence, you must approach education in a balanced manner and with a total perspective.

Students! You are all good. Youth is a sacred period of life, and all of you are filled with sacred feelings. But before you do anything, pause, take time, think, and reflect on what you are about to do. Never be in a hurry. Remember, haste makes waste.

Avoid impulsive actions; instead, pause and ponder. Whenever a thought arises in you to do something, take time and ask yourself:

"Is it good or is it bad?" It is very important to exercise your discrimination

properly. It is fundamental discrimination that you should apply, not individual discrimination. Your action should benefit others - that is what fundamental discrimination is all about. Avoid haste, be patient, decide carefully on the basis of fundamental discrimination, and then only act.

The 'I' Principle

The governor gave you a lot of sound and good advice, based on her rich and varied experience. Among other things, she referred to self-confidence. You must all have self-confidence.

Self-confidence will lead to self-sacrifice, which in turn will lead to self-satisfaction. Capping it all will be self-realisation.

Self-confidence is the foundation, self-sacrifice is the wall, self-satisfaction is the roof, and self-realisation is the living being in the room. Is it possible to have a room with just walls and a roof alone, and without any foundation? Not possible. Therefore, you must first build up Self-confidence.

Now what is this Self in the word self-confidence? The Self denotes God [Swami often uses the word Atma Viswasam to denote Selfconfidence].

Self also means I. I, I, I - everyone uses the word 'I'

while introducing oneself. Vedanta gives a clear explanation of what precisely this 'I' means. Vedanta says, "Know thyself first".

There is not much point in knowing about other things without first knowing something about one's own self. People say: "This is my body, this is my mind, this is my hand, this is my leg, my eye, " and so on. When you say "my", it clearly implies that you are distinct and separate from the object referred to. This brings one to the fundamental question of Vedanta: "Who am I?" You say, "My hand"; who is it that is associated with the word "my"?

You must appreciate the difference here; when I say, "This is My kerchief," it

means that the kerchief is separate from Me. "This is my tumbler," - it means that the tumbler is separate from Me.

In the same way, when you say, "My body," it means that you are not the body but distinct from it. Then who exactly is the "Me"?

If in this manner you investigate in depth, you will ultimately realise the answer to the question, "Who am I"?

Let us say you address the following question to the audience:

"Who is Ramayya?" One person will get up and say, "I". Similarly, if you were to ask, "Who is Venkayya?", "Who is Lakshamma?", etc., the concerned person would rise and say, "I". Everyone says "I". The names are different and the people also vary but everyone says "I". The answer "I" is common and therefore fundamental. Therefore, if you know the answer to the question, "Who am I?" you will know about all others as well and in fact about the whole world. This is because everything is contained within the "I-Principle". This is the essence of advaitam, the philosophy of non-dualism. The scriptures declare:

Ekam sat viprah bahudha vadanti.

Truth is only One but scholars refer to it with varied names.

Education must ennoble the Mind

Who is a man? One endowed with a mind is a man. A person without the thinking faculty can never feel kind or compassionate.

He alone is a true human being who impulsively assists those who are in distress and cry for help, and who is eager to wipe the tears of others. Therefore, you must always endeavour to help and give relief to those who

are suffering.

Students! All of you are eager to study and acquire advanced degrees. Irrespective of the formal qualifications that you may acquire, never forget your motherland and its glorious culture.

Bharatiya culture is based on the noble and exalted principle of seeking Unity in diversity; it has no room for fragmentation or divisive tendencies. No matter what walk of life you enter, make sure that your education benefits others. The knowledge you have acquired must be offered in service to the world at large.

These days, engineering and medical education have become roaring business. To secure a seat in a medical college, one has to shell out a hefty capitation fee of twenty lakh rupees. What do you get by spending twenty lakhs and earning a degree? It is far better to invest that amount in a fixed deposit and live comfortably on the interest accrued! If one spends a huge amount to get a medical degree, then all the subsequent attention would be on recovering the investment by any means, fair or foul.

Exorbitant fees are the main reason for the deterioration of values in education. One should not spend huge amounts in search of degrees. It does not matter if one does not secure admission to the course one wants to study. Students in the villages when asked, "What are you doing?" reply, "Nenu chaduvukontunnanu," (I am purchasing education) instead of saying, as they ought to, "Nenu chaduvukuntunnanu" (I am studying). These days, even primary school education has become very expensive and one has to deposit twenty thousand rupees in advance. Education is sold for money at all levels, from the KG (Kindergarten) to the PG (postgraduate), and indeed even to the Ph.D. level. How can one expect people who have thus bought learning at enormous price to ever think of using their learning for the benefit of society?

Such people invariably argue that having spent huge sums of money and having placed heavy financial burden on their parents, they perforce have to make all the money they can to recoup the original investment on education.

It is neither necessary to spend like this in the first place nor to indulge in undesirable practices later, using the excuse of recovering the money spent. No matter how limited your education, can you not feed yourself? God has given you one stomach but two hands. Can one stomach be filled by working with two hands? Is human birth necessary for filling the stomach? Do not the birds and the beasts get their food without the benefit of education? Make not the stomach an excuse for seeking education! You must study so that your mind becomes sacred and your thoughts become noble.

Realisation must be the Goal of Life.

All this is just the beginning, and there are fifteen more days in this summer course! Many scholars will be addressing you and sharing their experiences, just as the Governor did this morning.

Experience is what you must learn from; you must digest them and put the lessons learnt into practice. You must be careful and exercise discretion as well as proper discrimination before doing anything; otherwise, vidya (education) runs the risk of becoming avidya (ignorance).

Modern education is highly artificial. What you need is not this type of education but educare. The latter is what addresses the heart whereas education [as presently imparted] pertains solely to the head. From the heart alone spring human values that are everlasting - compassion, forbearance, tolerance, truth, sacrifice; all these flow only from the heart. Modern education deals almost exclusively with worldly matters and entities, and its content and nature both change with the passage of time. But the values associated with the Heart are eternal.

The heart is referred to as hrudaya (hrud + daya = hrudaya), meaning that the heart is the seat of daya or compassion.

The head, on the other hand, can be the source of conflict and confusion.

Real education is that which fosters virtue, morality, truth, compassion,

discipline, and duty.

It is not enough to be merely intelligent. You may be very clever but so is the fox! Has the fox received any education? So, just becoming clever is not the purpose of education. What education must confer is wisdom that flows from the heart and not just knack or cunningness. Let your heart alone be your guide, especially while dealing with others, no matter where or when.

You all know very well about the system of education adopted in our Institute. Education in Swami's institutions is totally free, all the way from KG to PG and even beyond. What is expected of you in return? Simply this: When you go out into the wide world, conduct yourself as an ideal citizen. Share with others freely and with joy, whatever you have learnt here. Having acquired learning here free of cost, it would be improper for you to later cash on it and market it. Such an act would be most unethical and not expected of you. Do not stray into such improper paths. Share what you have with love, not just occasionally but all the time. It is only when you do so that you can claim to have received real education.

Do not become a mere bookworm and remain immersed in studies all the time. When you return to the hostel from the college, relax for a while, play some games or sing. Also, set apart some time for service. But be balanced; you should neither study all the time, nor play all the time. And, after your studies are over, don't pack your books and set them aside or throw them away!

Preserve them and continue to derive benefit from them. In short, maintain balance. Swami has on an earlier occasion drawn your attention to the example of Napoleon, a perfect model of strict discipline.

Napoleon had complete mastery over both hunger and sleep. You too should be like that. Do not slide into lazy habits, the moment you leave the Institute.

Laziness must be avoided at all cost. Laziness is rust and dust while Realisation is best and rest!

Realisation must be your goal in life, and laziness can make that goal elusive. Excessive talking must also be avoided. Too much talk diminishes memory and dulls intelligence. Therefore, do not talk much.

Others may try to drag you into pointless conversation but deftly dodge them. You cannot always oblige but you can always speak obligingly! Talk only when you must, speak sweetly when you do, be ever courteous, and never fail to respect your parents. It is only when you conduct yourself in this manner and base your actions on love that you can truly be called an educated person.

Embodiments of Love! In the days to come, Swami will tell you many more things. You must listen carefully and absorb the lessons taught. Later, you must recall and reflect on the teachings imparted. Just as the cow after first grazing withdraws to a quiet spot and then chews the cud, you too, once you are back in your room, must ruminate over what you have heard. What you take in with your ears is education; but it is only when you absorb and put into practice what you have heard that education transforms into educare. Therefore, education here and educare in your room! Only when you digest the lessons and practise them can you enjoy pushti (health) and santhushti (happiness).

At the end of the divine discourse, the National Anthem was sung as per Bhagavan's command.

2. The Sanctity Of The Five Elements

Date: 15 May 2000 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 2000

Present in the smallest of the small,
As also in the largest of the large,
And, shining as the all-pervading Witness,
Is the Immortal Self.
Known as the Atma in the individual,
And as Brahman in the Cosmos,
Atma is Brahman and Brahman is Atma.

Embodiments of Love!

The five elements of which the entire cosmos is built up, are present also in the human being. These five elements, namely, pruthvi (earth), jala (water), agni (fire), vayu (wind), and akasa (ether) are cognised by us through the sensations of sabda (sound), sparsha (touch), rupa (sight or the perception of the form), rasa (taste) and gandha (smell). Krishna addressed Arjuna as Partha since the latter was the very son of Mother Earth. Indeed, every man can be called Partha, being the son of Mother Earth.

The nature of the Elements

The first element earth, can be cognised by all the five sensations of sound, touch, etc. Every one of the five elements of which Nature is constituted, is very powerful. Thus, the earth has the capacity to move very fast in space [around the Sun] and also to rotate rapidly about an axis. It has various qualities and attributes.

On its surface, the earth supports numerous objects and entities like mountains, forests, cities, villages, oceans, rivers, and so on.

Ignorant people wonder: "When the earth rotates, why do not these objects slide and move?" The answer to this apparent paradox lies in the fact that the earth is not independent but subservient to the latent divine power within. Mountains, cities, forests, and all the rest of them are held firm and secure by that unseen power and not allowed to slide, notwithstanding the rapid rotation of the earth. Trains speed on railway tracks. Imagine the fate of passengers in the train if the tracks also were to move fast like the train! The tracks do not move because they have been secured.

All the objects on the surface of the earth, from mountains to the oceans, are firmly anchored by the unseen force of gravity. This gravity is the result of the will of God. The earth thus provides a good example of the subtle aspects of the Master Plan of God.

Since the earth is suffused with divine power, it is nothing but an anga or limb, of God. In our body, we have many limbs and organs like the hands, the feet, the nose, the eyes, the ears, etc.

Likewise, every individual is a limb of society or community. The different communities are all various limbs of mankind, which is a limb of nature or creation, which in turn is a limb of God. That is why it is often said that God pervades the entire universe in a subtle form.

The earth is very big but God who is infinite and the subtlest of all, suffuses the entire earth with His divine power. Since the earth has gunas (attributes), it is not independent. As long as gunas exist, one cannot talk of independence. As the attributes diminish one by one, the subtlety of the entity concerned and its vastness increase. Earth has all the qualities of sound, touch, form, taste and smell. It is therefore finite. Moreover, the attributes together produce a binding effect that makes mobility difficult (one cannot move mountains, for example).

Water is the next among the five elements. It is present everywhere on earth, though its presence (especially as vapour or moisture) is not always visible or directly evident. Compared to the earth, water lacks smell; it

therefore has one attribute less, making it both light and mobile - water can flow easily.

The third element is fire. It has two attributes less compared to the earth (taste and smell) and is therefore capable of spreading in all directions, including the vertical. Fire in a subtle aspect, is present in humans and even in water. In humans it is known as Jataragni - this is the name for the 'fire' of digestion. In water it is known as badabagni. Fire is latent in wood and stones also, which is why sparks are produced when wood is rubbed against wood and stone is struck with stone.

Air, the fourth element, has only two attributes, sound and touch. Air is present everywhere, and is most essential for life.

Last in the list of elements is akasa or ether , which is truly all-pervasive; it extends far beyond the earth. It has this capacity to spread everywhere because it possesses only one attribute, namely that of sound. Many think that akasa means the sky; this is wrong. Akasa means ether, and it is present even here (Swami taps the table before Him) and also here (shows the mike). Sound is the sole characteristic of akasa, and wherever there is sound there akasa exists. It is said:

Akasam gaganam sunyam.

It means that akasa is the emptiness of space.

Though present everywhere, it cannot be seen.

Reverence for God and Nature

Far beyond all the five elements and completely devoid of any attributes whatsoever, is Paramatma (God Almighty). Being totally attributeless, Paramatma is more subtle than anything we can imagine; and He exists beyond space and time also. The Vedas say:

Sarvatah panipadam Tat sarvatoksi siromukham.
His hands and feet are everywhere in Creation.

Though God is beyond everything, He nevertheless suffuses all the five elements, investing them with appropriate aspects of His divine power. He Himself is without attributes; but He is immanent in all entities with suitable attributes. Thus it is that the Gita declares:

Mamaivamso Jivaloke Jivabhutah sanatana.
All beings in Creation have originated from Me and are nothing but aspects of Me.

Hence, all the five elements are aspects of God, His Divinity, and His supreme power. It is for this reason that our ancients worshipped the five elements, revering them as aspects of God Almighty. They worshipped the earth as Mother Goddess, the rivers as various goddesses, and the elements as various deities.

The earth has always been worshipped by the ancients of Bharat as Mother Earth, since it is the earth that, in some form or the other, provides food and sustains life. Most gratefully the ancients said: "O Mother Earth, I am able to have food on account of your kindness." Without the earth, we cannot have grain, and that is why earth was given so much respect and was accorded the position of a mother. However, scientists regard worship of the elements as superstitious behaviour, and those who worship thus to be fools. Those who worship the elements are not fools but those who criticise are. These critics have no idea of the inner significance of such reverence. Modern scientists are concerned only with the material and inanimate aspects of nature, being completely ignorant about the principle of reflection, reaction, and resound. If you strike the table, your hand feels hurt. Why?

Because of reaction. You act, and the table reacts! There should be no surprise in this. Reflection, reaction, and resound form the three cardinal principles guiding the functioning of Creation.

Man is born of the earth and therefore these principles are built into him also. When you stand before a hill and shout, you get an echo - that is resound.

The Divine Principle is latent in a subtle form in every entity and every being in Creation; however, it is very difficult to cognise.

Everything is divine, and no one can assert that this is divine and that is not. Sunlight exists because the Sun exists. In the same way, we have Creation because there is a Creator. Just imagine:

If the five elements in the universe have so much power latent within them, how much more powerful the Creator must be!

Fire is powerful, the mind is very powerful, and so on. If every component of Creation is endowed with so much power, then is it not evident that the Creator must be infinitely more powerful?

But man is not able to see this obvious truth. People are afraid of bombs but not of the individual who makes them. In fact, they generally do not even know who designs and manufactures such deadly weapons. The object instils fear but not the person who created the object. So it is with nature and God. Man is petrified by the powerful forces of nature but has no fear of God.

The Subtlety of God
Wonderous are the glories of the Lord,
For they sanctify all the three worlds;
Like the sickle, they sever worldly bondage;
They are also noble companions,
And like the temples

Where sages worship.

It is impossible to describe completely the glory of God. All the praise one can sing would be far from adequate. In fact, it is pointless to try and describe something that is indescribable.

Instead, one must, to start with, try to understand the lessons that nature teaches. What a tremendous load the earth carries! Some people say: "Swami, I do not wish to be a burden to Mother Earth.

Please grant me death." Will the burden of the earth decrease just because you die? Your death will not make any difference to it. The burden carried by the earth will diminish only when you lessen your own burden. What is the true burden you bear?

Desires are your burden! If you put a ceiling on desires, you become lighter and come closer to God. That is why Swami often says: Less luggage, more comfort, make travel a pleasure. You must therefore sincerely try to decrease the burden of desires. If you do so, you will also cease to be a burden to God. Increase in your burden means more work for God! However, God being subtle, He does not directly carry your burden. Instead, He makes each person to carry their weight in such a manner that the person believes that it is actually God who is carrying! This is the subtlety of God. Though present in the five elements, He makes it appear as if the elements carry on all by themselves.

The gopikas (cowherd maids) have sung beautifully about the subtlety of the Lord. They said:

O Krishna! Can we ever know You

Subtler than an atom and mightier than the mightiest,

You are the One that sustains all the eighty-four lakh species!

Can we ever know You, O Krishna

It is impossible for anyone to fathom the depths of Divinity.

The Deeper Significance of the Elements

Arvind [the student who spoke before Bhagavan's discourse] prayed to Swami to explain the nature of the five elements.

In this universe there is nothing apart from the five elements, because every entity is composed only of them and them alone.

There is no place where the elements are not present; they are all-pervasive. The human body too is one particular combination of the five elements. The almanac is called panchangam because it gives information about the heavenly bodies, all of which are made of the five elements. It is therefore important to grasp the meaning and the full significance of the five elements.

Consider first the ether, which has sound as its only attribute. Although an innumerable variety of sounds are possible, the basic one is the primal sound AUM. This sound Omkara is what you must really concentrate on. There are three syllables here - A (akaram), U (ukaram), and M (makaram), which together fuse into AUM. The human being is an embodiment of the three constituent symbols of AUM. The primal sound Omkara is the very form of akasa, and man must resonate with it.

Vayu or wind/air that comes next, sustains life. Without air, life is impossible. The breathing process consists of inhalation and exhalation, symbolised by SOHAM. SO is associated with inhalation and HAM with exhalation. Since we take in oxygen and give out carbon dioxide, SO is associated with the life-giving oxygen and HAM with the contaminant carbon dioxide. What is the

inner meaning of the breathing process? Simply that we have to take in what is good and give up what is bad. This is the lesson that the element air conveys to us 21,600 times a day, through the SOHAM principle. The body also takes in food and expels excreta or faeces.

God has blessed us with limbs and organs so that we may accept what is good and reject what is undesirable. However, no one is making any effort to comprehend this basic truth. Even if the principle is understood, it is being treated rather casually and is often ignored. This is not correct; summary rejection of all that is harmful must become a priority.

Consider trees. We seldom appreciate that they are living entities. They not only live but also teach us a noble and important lesson about sacrifice. They take in carbon dioxide (which we reject) and willingly part with oxygen for our benefit. Does man have the intelligence or the sensitivity of the trees? Though born a human, man is inferior to trees in the matter of sacrifice and in returning good for bad. This will not do. Man who has been blessed with so much skill, intelligence, and diverse capabilities, must scrupulously practise sacrifice. He must ever remain pure, firmly rejecting what is bad and accepting only what is good.

After the ether and the air comes fire. It has the capacity to burn anything that comes in its way, without any distinction whatsoever. This characteristic of strict impartiality is the basis of jnanagni or the fire of wisdom, which burns away all worldly attachments. No one is making any attempt to understand the various manifestations of fire, including jataragni, pranagni, and badabagni. Latent in man are various treasures but he is totally unaware of them because he lacks the Knowledge of the Self.

This Atmajnana is True Knowledge, and it is sorely needed today.

Man has mastered worldly knowledge, secular knowledge, and material knowledge, but is totally ignorant about the Knowledge of the Self. With its brilliant blaze, agni proclaims the virtues of Atmajnana. The scriptures say:

Tamaso ma jyotirgamaya.

From darkness, lead me to Light.

Agni teaches us that the fire of wisdom will lead us to Light.

The sacred name Rama has the potency to lead us from darkness to Light. The word Rama is made up of three syllables: Ra, A, and Ma. Ra signifies the fire principle. A represents the moon, and Ma represents the sun. The fire principle Ra destroys all evil and sin. The moon principle A stills passions and brings peace.

The sun principle Ma confers effulgence when evil is destroyed and peace reigns. Thus, the name Rama compactly embodies the whole of wisdom. It has the power to destroy evil, to bring peace, and to confer effulgence. This is the inner significance of the name given by Vasishtha to the first-born son of Emperor Dasaratha. The fire principle thus has deep meaning.

After fire comes water. It is most sacred and vital for life; there is life giving force in it. That is why water is sprinkled on a person who has swooned. Before eating, you offer the food to God by chanting Brahmaṛpanam. What happens to the food you eat?

Who is present within that extracts vitality from the food you eat and distributes it to the various organs of the body? That deity is Vaishvanara who says, "O man! Realise that I am the force within that attends to digestion and assimilation." This is the "Aham Vaishvanara" Sloka.

As for the earth, it helps us in innumerable ways. It is the basis for the bricks we use and it provides the platform for the mansions that we build. It supports trees and supplies grain. And it gives us a place to rest. There is nothing that it does not give. Despite providing so many bounties, it expects nothing. But man is not learning the lesson.

External pollution is a reflection of internal pollution

It is said that the Kali Age provides the easiest path to liberation. However, man is ignoring the golden opportunity offered to him.

Man today has become very clever or intelligent (in a purely worldly sense). Secular education has become widespread and schools are to be found in every street corner. A million ways have been discovered for making money. A cunning fellow once inserted an advertisement in papers, announcing that for a payment of just one rupee he would disclose a sure method for eliminating mosquitoes from the house. Lots of people were taken in by the advertisement, and he collected plenty of money.

When these people asked him for the promised remedy, he simply said, "Take a stone and crush every mosquito you see, wherever it is!" Is this a meaningful solution to the mosquito problem? Yet, the trickster was able to hoodwink a lot of people. Numerous strategies of this kind have been devised to cheat gullible people and to extract money from them.

Man has no doubt mastered many ways of accumulating wealth and amassing fortune. Yet, happiness eludes him. Why? Because his conduct is not proper. For good conduct, virtues are most essential. A virtuous person can accomplish anything. A son lacking in virtues and a life without a meaningful goal are of no value. Without virtues, life ceases to have any meaning.

Good conduct should be the real basis for life. However, modern man is totally lacking in character and virtues. No wonder both peace and happiness elude him. Because of man's misconduct and immoral behaviour, there is pollution everywhere - in air, water, land, and food. All the five elements have been severely contaminated, consequent to man's unbecoming behaviour. If man behaves properly, is pollution of the elements conceivable?

It is all due to the extensive prevalence of immoral feelings and improper behaviour. The sharp decline of virtues like love, compassion, and

forbearance is directly responsible for the widespread pollution that one sees today. In fact, one might even say that the five elements are afraid of man! The five elements as God created them are all pure and sacred. There is nothing wrong with them whatsoever. It is man's misconduct that has caused them all to become polluted. Impurity within gets reflected as pollution without. Here is an example.

The water of river Ganges is pure. However, if you fill a coloured bottle with the water of Ganges, it would appear coloured. If the bottle is red the water would seem red while if the bottle is blue the water too would appear blue. Where does the colour come from? From the water or the bottle? Ganges water is intrinsically pure; the colour is therefore due to the bottle holding the water.

The human being is like a bottle. If evil thoughts dominate, the body indulges in bad actions; if good thoughts prevail, the body performs good actions. The body is not responsible for the actions; the thoughts that propel the body are. Bad feelings, bad thoughts and bad company provide the stimulus for bad actions.

You must understand this basic fact.

You should have good thoughts and aim at purity in character.

Recognising the five elements as God's gifts, their sanctity must be preserved. They must be made use of in a proper and befitting manner. Why do you sing bhajans? Enquire deeply into the meaning of this practice. Bhajan singing provides an opportunity to chant the Lord's name in a sweet and pleasant manner. The vibrations associated with the divine Name then suffuse into the atmosphere and cleanse it; the pollution present is wiped out.

Thus, the basic purpose of bhajans is to convert bad into good.

Students!

As is the flame, so is the smoke.
As is the smoke, so is the cloud.
As is the cloud, so is the rain.
As is the rain, so is the crop.
As is the crop, so is the food.

Therefore, if the food has to be pure, then smoke must be the starting point, i.e., the flame. When trash is burnt, the polluted smoke percolates all the way to food. And when such food is consumed, diseases result. Contaminated food is thus responsible for most of the bad thoughts and actions one sees today. Seawater is salty but when it evaporates, the vapour is free from salt.

Subsequently, the vapour becomes a cloud, which too contains pure and sweet water. The rain that comes down brings this pure water to the earth. This is God's Love manifesting as rain, bearing water as pure as that of Ganges. In a similar manner, buddhi (intellect) the blazing sun must distil away all bad feelings. What results would be the vapour of good qualities. When sufficient vapour accumulates, there results the rain of love. The cloud from which the rain comes is truth. Thus, truth is the source of the love drops. The rain of love ultimately gives you the crop of divine Grace. Therefore, all your thoughts and actions must be pure and sacred.

If you constantly chant the name of God, the polluted atmosphere would automatically get purified. The divine vibrations originating from the chant of the divine Name mix with the atmosphere and spread everywhere, indeed throughout the world.

A radio programme is broadcast from Delhi but in a fraction of a second you can hear it here. How? Because of the propagation of vibrations. Therefore, good sounds and holy vibrations generated by bhajan singing will propagate, purify the atmosphere, and help in the production of good food. In addition, when you breathe purified air, it also helps to keep out bad thoughts.

God's Love is Omnipresent

Embodiments of Love! You should all live in Love. If everyone does so, the whole world would be enveloped in Love. Swami is the living proof of this statement. Swami is ever the embodiment of Love, and there is never any trace of anger whatsoever. At times Swami may appear to "hiss" but even this springs from Swami's Love! Sometimes, hailstones fall when it rains. The ice pieces may be hard, but they too are made of water. In the same manner, Swami's reprimands also form a part of the incessant shower of Love. Never forget that even if Swami appears to scold you, it is only a part of His Love and it is for your own good. Swami is nothing but Love from top to toe. It is so always. Follow the principle of Love. Look upon the five elements as being saturated with Love. Always do your duty and perform sacred acts. Your spiritual evolution is your own responsibility.

Uddharedh Atmana Atmanam.

One has to work for one's own upliftment. This should be your approach to understanding spiritual philosophy.

In the Vedas, there are many references to the root word vid. This root word is common to all forms of learning. The Vedas represent a comprehensive consolidation of all Truths, as discerned by the ancient rishis and as practised by them. The Vedas confer bliss and happiness to those who follow the teachings contained therein. There is not even an iota of anything bad in the Vedas. Their teachings, if followed, lead only to good.

God is everywhere, though He may not be directly visible to the eye. God is present even in air, but you cannot see Him there.

Syrup is sweet; why? Because it contains sugar. Can you see the sugar in the syrup? No. Just because you cannot see it, can you deny the fact that there is sugar in syrup? To do so would be stupid. How then do you know there is sugar in the syrup?

Through experience. Just as sugar is the basis for sweetness of syrup, God is the basis for Love, which is omnipresent. God is all-pervasive, and His presence is nectarine. If your heart is full of Love, then you will unfailingly experience His nectarine presence and sweetness everywhere. Life will be ever sweet for you and you will always be able to share that sweetness with others.

The child drinks mother's milk and finds it to be sweet. Did the mother add sugar to the milk? No; mother's milk is sweet by nature; that is the way God made it. In the same way, God's Love is sweet and is present everywhere. It is up to you to extract that sweetness and enjoy it, just as a baby sucks milk from its mother and even as bees suck honey from flowers. Do the flowers invite the bees? No, the bees go to the flowers spontaneously. In the same manner, you too should seek noble souls and absorb good things from them.

Satsangatve nissangatvam, nissangatve nirmohatvam,
Nirmohatve niscalatatvam, niscalatatve jivanmuktih.

Tyaja durjana samsargam, bhaja sadhusamagamam, Kuru
punyamahoratram.

Give up bad company and join good company. Do good day in and day out.

This is the way to sanctify human life. Although numerous opportunities exist for following the correct path, people miss them all and instead waste their time. People seem to revel in seeking bad company, even if they have to pay for it.

Why do you have to go in search of bad thoughts and company? Instead, why don't you receive the good that is offered to you free and at no charge? It is a grave mistake to reject the good and accept only the bad. Only a fool who is unable to distinguish between the bad and the good would behave in this manner.

Creation is Perfect

Embodiments of Love! You should always dwell in Love. Love has no form. It has no desires. It does not demand interest or give interest. It does not indulge in buying and selling or in any other kind of business transactions. Love stands all by itself as Love, and can be secured with Love alone. Therefore, you who are the embodiments of Love, must see everyone else also as the embodiment of Love. Man is made up of the five elements every one of which is divine in origin. They are all sacred and there is nothing bad in them. If they are polluted today, man alone is responsible for that foul act.

There is a story that illustrates this point.

Once, Narada went to have the darshan of Lord Vishnu. The Lord smiled and asked, "Narada, where are you coming from?"

The sage replied, "Swami, I have neither a home nor a family. I am all the time on the move. I wander over the three worlds, incessantly singing Your praise."

Vishnu said, "Is that so? Very good. Now tell me; have you understood the mystery of My Creation?" Narada replied, "Lord, are You suggesting that I do not? Of course I have understood it."

Vishnu then continued, "Then you must have appreciated that there is nothing bad in My Creation. Have you ever seen anything bad?"

Narada thought for a while and replied, "Lord, forgive me but I have seen one thing that is bad."

Vishnu exclaimed, "What! Something bad in My Creation? Impossible! There is absolutely nothing bad in Creation." Narada hesitantly said, "Lord, there is one thing that is foul." Vishnu then demanded, "What is it?"

Narada whispered, "It is faecal matter. It is absolutely foul and no one can go

near it. Why did You create such a thing?" Vishnu said, "Narada, you are wrong. Go and ask that faecal matter who created it?" Narada resisted and protested that he could not go near that foul matter. But Vishnu was firm and commanded Narada to do as instructed. The Lord's command cannot be disobeyed, and reluctantly Narada went toward the waste matter.

Even as he was approaching, the faeces said, "Stop! Don't come near me. Stay away." Narada was utterly surprised and angrily demanded, "What? You foul object asking a sacred one like me to stay away?" The faeces replied, "Yesterday at this hour, I too was sacred. I was good food in the form of tasty dishes worthy of being offered to the Lord. Then I came into contact with a human being and this is what happened to me! Once bad is enough; I do not want your company again!" Evil is thus born of the bad company one keeps. This basic fact is not properly understood and appreciated these days.

There was once a man whose only son was one day stung by a scorpion. The boy cried loudly with pain and the anguished father rushed for help to a doctor. He told the doctor, "Sir, my son is stung by a scorpion and is crying pitiably. Please give some pain-relieving medicine." The doctor gave an ointment and said, "Apply this on the spot where the scorpion stung him." The man ran back home and asked his son, "Where did the scorpion sting you?" Pointing to a corner of the room, the boy said, "Over there."

The stupid father then applied the ointment to the corner!

This is the foolish manner in which most spiritual aspirants behave today. You have to carefully identify the source or the origin of evil and then take proper remedial action. Do not blame others. The fault lies in you, your gullibility, your susceptibility, and your willingness as well as eagerness to tread the evil path.

Therefore concentrate on setting right your feelings, thoughts, and actions, instead of accusing others of spoiling you. Understand the spiritual basis of the five elements and the five life principles (pancha pranas). A proper understanding of these alone will guide you to the right path and remove your

miseries. The five elements are most precious and sacred, and have to be used as well as experienced reverentially.

Embodiments of Love! There is nothing bad in Creation. If some things appear so, it is due entirely to faulty vision. The latent bad feelings within create the impression that certain things are bad. That is why it is important to develop pure and loving feelings. Always be immersed in the thought of God and constantly chant His Name. Be ever saturated with the divine feeling. If dutifully followed, such practices are guaranteed to remove all the contamination within you. Never indulge in bad actions, never criticise others, blame others, or accuse others.

Bad thoughts pollute the air and also infect others; this is the way bad vibrations spread. Hence, scrupulously avoid bad company and bad behaviour. Don't have bad looks; they will lead to harm.

Keechaka entertained lustful looks and paid dearly for it; he was crushed by Bhima. Don't ever heed to bad advice. Kaika listened to such words from Manthara, and what happened to her later?

No one ever thinks of Kaika in a pleasant manner. She has gained such notoriety that no girl is ever named Kaika! Bad advice also ruined Duryodhana and Dussasana. They incessantly abused the noble Pandavas, and in the end met their doom. Therefore, never listen to bad things.

Cultivate Equanimity and the Spirit of Sacrifice

Swami wants to give an important advice to students. People may tell you various things that cause pain to you. Forget them and do not repeat them to others. If they caused pain to you, they would do so to others also. Why then repeat? Let us suppose somebody accuses you of something you have not done. You feel hurt. If now you report this to your parents, they too would feel hurt.

Therefore, learn to ignore bad and improper remarks by others.

Sometimes, one cannot help overhearing what others say, but let it not register. Just let it pass and forget about it. Always avoid bad thoughts, bad looks, bad feelings, and bad actions. Instead, be ever sacred and do only good.

Do you know why God has given you eyes? Is it for feasting them on everything and anything? No! God has given the gift of sight so that you may have His darshan and feel blissful seeing His beauty. Eyes are sacred; they must be used only for sacred purposes.

All five elements and indeed the whole of Creation is sacred. You are a part of Creation, which is a limb of God. Therefore, you too are sacred. Everything in Creation is an aspect of the divine.

Develop that feeling and awareness. You will then certainly experience God. Nothing is bad in Creation. Narada thought that faeces was bad. If the faeces remains for ever inside the body, will it be good for the body? Obviously not. That is why God has arranged for its expulsion - it is for your own good. Everything that God does is for good and good only.

Regard everything in Creation as good. Suffering and pain are also good! If you happen to experience pain or suffering, tell yourself: "This is good for me, this is good for me," Treat praise and criticism the same way, and be calm even if people abuse you. This is the recommended yoga, and sacrifice is the recommended path. There is no yoga superior to equanimity and there is no path better than sacrifice. This is the best way of achieving purity and sanctity.

Enquire deeply into the meaning of the five elements, and realise that you yourself are made of them. Make every possible effort to venerate and revere the elements in a suitable manner. Your breath must always resonate the chant of God's Name. Always be singing His Glory.

Bhagavan concluded the discourse by singing the bhajan: Hari Bhajana Bina Sukha Shanti Nahi.

3. The Trinity Within

Date: 16 May 2000 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 2000

Evil thoughts make a person ignoble,
Good thoughts make him noble.
But if thoughts are completely quelled,
Then the person secures peace.
This is the word of Sai.

Embodiments of Love! Boys and Girls!

Man is the crown jewel of this vast Creation. Among the living beings, he is the highest and the noblest. Human birth is the greatest of all. It is therefore imperative that life is lived properly.

Wherefrom does human life derive its sanctity? Wherefrom does it derive its value? Is it the body or the human form that confers value to human life? No! The body is made of the [perishable] five elements. From this point of view, the body can be regarded as made up of flesh and bones, having within it foul, un-excreted faecal matter and urine. However, this very same body is also the residence of the Atma; that is what makes it so valuable.

The Three Principles represented by the Trinity

Embodiments of Love! Deepak Anand (a student who spoke earlier) asked the question: "Who are the parents of Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwara?" No one knows the answer to this question. Neither the Upanishads nor the various other scriptures throw any light on the subject. Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwara have no physical form. However, they are Gunaswaroopa, that is, they represent specific qualities and attributes. Their presence within the body, along with the latent gunas and intrinsic tendencies of the individual,

motivates all feelings, thoughts, speech, and actions. Man today does not even understand the correct meaning of a human being. How then can he comprehend that he is divine in origin? Your first task should be to understand that Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwara are immanent in you.

Āṁsa vasyamidam jagat.

God pervades the entire universe and dwells in all beings. He is your Indweller. He is the Atma. Sruti or the sacred texts have a special name for this Atma that exists in all. It is hridaya.

Hridaya refers to the (spiritual) heart. The Atma or the hridaya is also known as Ishwara. The mind is born of the Atma and is the embodiment of Vishnu. The Vedas say:

Visvam visnumayam jagat.

Vishnu pervades the whole universe. The mind does likewise.

Manomulam Idam jagat.

Since the mind also pervades the whole universe, it is identified with Vishnu. Thus, Ishwara and Vishnu are present in all individuals.

Isvarassarvabhutanam.

Ishwara dwells in all beings. The Vishnu Principle is born of the Ishwara Principle.

Next we have Brahma. Traditionally, Brahma is pictured as being seated in a

lotus that emerges from the navel of Vishnu.

In the individual, Brahma is associated with speech. He is Vakswaropa, i.e., He manifests as the spoken word. This is because the mind is the origin of word.

The scriptures describe God as follows:

Sabdabrahmamayi, Caracaramayi, Jyotirmaya, Vanmayi.
Nityanandamayi, Paratparamay, Mayamayi, Srimayi.

God Almighty is the Primordial Sound, the Immovable as well as the Movable,
the Divine Light, the Word, Eternal Bliss, the Supreme, the Illusion, and Ultimate Wealth.

This is a comprehensive description of God. This Divinity manifests in the individual as three Principles: The Principle of the Atma, the Principle of the Mind, and the Principle of the Word. Maheshwara, Vishnu, and Brahma are associated with these three inter-related Principles. Brahma, Vishnu, and Ishwara have no specific form but manifest in the individual as the three Principles mentioned.

Give expression to the divine principles through pure feelings, thoughts, and words
What is the form of the Atma? What is the form of Ishwara?

Atma is Pure or Absolute Consciousness, and Consciousness does not have any form. In the individual, Absolute Consciousness functions as the

conscience; its residence is the heart. From the Atma is born the mind, which has cognitive power. It is the mind that enables us to cognise both the outside world as well as the world within. And mind in turn is the fountainhead of word and speech. On occasions, Swami reminds you that you are not one but three.

You are not the one you think you are.
You are not the one others think you are.
You are the One you really are!

This basically implies that you are three principles, all rolled into one. You are a composite of the heart, the mind, and the body.

And Ishwara, Vishnu, and Brahma provide the subtle basis for these three aspects of yourself.

Swami told you earlier that Vishnu is all-pervasive. Thus, in one sense, Vishnu represents vastness. The mind too is vast and all-pervasive; it pervades the entire world.

Manomulam Idam jagat.

The mind is bound neither by space nor by time, and can go anywhere at any time. You know that at the cosmic level, Ishwara, Vishnu, and Brahma are not only all-pervasive but transcend time and space as well. They are present everywhere as Pure Consciousness, as the Universal Mind, and as the Primal Sound, respectively. This very same Cosmic Trinity are also immanent in the individual.

Anoraniyan Mahatomahiyan.

He who pervades the cosmos is present also in the tiny atom. The divine Power that animates the cosmos also controls the atom. It is not possible to directly see the Trinity in the cosmos. However, if one is able to understand the Trinity Principle within oneself, then it becomes easier to comprehend the Trinity in the cosmos.

The (spiritual) heart symbolises Ishwara. One who regards the heart as Ishwara, will never entertain bad feelings. God is described as, Nirgunam, Niranjanam, Sanatanam, Niketanam, Nitya, Suddha, Buddha, Mukta, Nirmala Svarupinam.

It means: He is beyond all forms, devoid of all attributes, Eternal, the very Essence, Primordial Intelligence, Pure, and Unsullied.

How much man is misusing the divine Power latent in him! Though gifted with a pristine heart, like a fool he is behaving as if he is heartless. Man must remember that the heart is the very seat of God and live constantly immersed in the thought of God.

God no doubt transcends thought but in a human being He manifests as thought and word also. What kind of word? Word that is sacred, auspicious, sweet, and kind. If our words are of this nature, how sweet would our talk and conversation be!

Embodiments of Love! Just as God silently controls the world, we too must have total control over thought, word, and actions. Sweet words or Brahmavak must come out of us. If we experience Ishwara in the heart, such words would automatically flow from us.

What about Vishnu? In what form is He present? Swami has already told you that He is embodied as the mind. The mind is extremely powerful and the most important instrument of man.

It must therefore be unsullied and nectarine in nature. Vishnu is ever calm and smiling. Reflecting these aspects, the mind must be ever calm, serene, and radiate joy.

God only wants that you think of Him

Once, a group of rishis (Sanaka, Sanat Kumara, and others) went to have the darshan of Lord Vishnu. The popular feeling is that on such occasions, one must go in sober and dignified attire.

However, these sages went unclad and in the form of new-born babies. They did so because babies are pure and without bodyconsciousness.

What is the deeper meaning of what the sages did? It means that to experience the pure mind, one must shed all body-consciousness. Vishnu represents the pure mind, and that is why the sages went the way they did.

Just as there are volunteers here, there were two guards at Vishnu's doorstep, Jaya and Vijaya. Seeing that the sages were unclad, they protested strongly and denied entry. They said, "You cannot go to see God like this!"

The Sages replied, "God is Pure, Unsullied, Pristine, and beyond all attributes. To have the darshan of such a Lord, one must go in a pristine form, and that is precisely what we are doing."

The guards refused to accept the argument and the altercation became fierce. The sages cursed Jaya and Vijaya to be born as rakshasas (demons) on earth. "O Lord! We have no desire except to derive Bliss by seeing You. Your darshan is our joy, Your sparshan is our food, and Your sambhashan is our very breath. We constantly yearn for Your darshan, sparshan, and sambhashan." What will be our fate now?"

Vishnu replied, "You cannot escape the curse and must be born as demons. You must take nine births. However, you will be good and devoted to me in all your births. That will earn for you My Grace and in due course both of you will come back to Me."

The guards cried, "O Lord who moves in the minds of sages, this will keep us away from You for a very long time!"

The Lord replied, "Well, I can give you a choice. Instead of nine births, you need take only three, but in these three births, you will hate me, constantly abuse Me, and be My enemies! Are you ready for that? The choice is yours." Jaya and Vijaya said, "We do not care whether we have to praise You or abuse You. All we want is to get back here as early as possible."

Sarvada Sarvakalesu Sarvatra Hari Dusanam.

At all times, at all places, and on all occasions, God shall be abused!

This is what Jaya and Vijaya did, and they did not hesitate to resort to the path of abuse because that gave them a chance to get back faster to the Lord.

If someone were to call Krishna a thief, devotees would instantly object and pounce on the person who speaks thus. But when you sing with love and devotion, "Chitta Chora Yasodha ke Bal Navaneeta Chora Gopal (O one who steals the mind), everyone joins the singing and marks time by clapping. Does it not mean calling Krishna a thief? But the devotional music lends sweetness to the song and the abuse disappears.

Subdue the mind and talk less

Vishnu is Manasswaroopa or the One who manifests as the mind. He is not, as often imagined, the One bearing the shankha (conch), chakra (discus), and

gada (mace). Such popular images are conjured up by painters, principally the famous Ravi Varma.

Vishnu is embodied in the Pure Mind. That is why when Swami gives diamond rings, He sometimes says: "Diamond means DIE MIND!" It means that worldly thoughts must be annihilated. How?

By withdrawing the human mind that is fickle and constantly wavering, and replacing it with the divine Mind, which is pure, always steady, and full of Love.

Just as the human mind is the manifestation of Vishnu, word or speech is the manifestation of Brahma. Therefore, be very careful not to slip into improper talk. The best way of being careful is to practise mounam or silence. This precisely is what our ancient rishis did. Talk leads to more talk, and eventually one runs the danger of speaking falsehood. Excessive talk can also trigger undesirable actions. That is why our rishis preferred to be silent most of the time. Silence does not mean mere cessation of talk or conversation. For the sages, it also meant cessation of the thought process. Thought is a ripple in the mind. A series of thoughts can become a wave, and many waves become a storm. Therefore, it is best to be in a quiescent stage, devoid of thoughts. This was the feeling in those days. Today, the mind is characterised by excessive thoughts.

What is this? [Swami shows a kerchief to the audience]. You would say it is a piece of cloth. It is in fact a bundle of threads.

If the threads are all removed, there would be no cloth left. In the same way, the control of speech and the removal of thoughts would help to subdue the mind. One must talk less in order to be able to experience Vishnu.

You are capable of speech, thinking, and feeling. The word represents Brahma, the mind represents Vishnu, and the heart represents Ishwara. Thus you yourself represent the divine Trinity!

Tridalam, Trigunakaram, Trinetram Ca Triyayudham,
Trijanma Papa Samharam Eka Bilvam Sivarpanam.

Offer the trifoliate bilva leaf to Lord Siva, the Three-eyed One, who bears three weapons, and has the power to wipe out the sins committed in three births.

Forget the past, live in the present, and ensure a good future

It is said that Ishwara has three eyes. People say, "How is that possible?" Here, the word eye does not refer to the physical eye but to the ability to perceive various periods of time. One eye refers to the past, the second eye to the present; and the third eye to the future. Every person knows the past as well as the present.

So one can agree that man has two eyes. No one knows the future but God does; so it is said that God alone has three eyes whereas man has only two. However, if you have had full control over yourself in the past, and do have it at present also, then your future would be entirely in your hands.

Man today is all the time thinking about the past and worrying about the future. Always it is: Past, future; past, future; past, future; Brooding over the past and worrying about the future, man loses track of the present. You must not forget that the present is a product of the past; it is also the seed for the future. The past and future are thus embedded in the present. Man does not seem to appreciate this basic truth. If you want a good and bright future, then make proper use of the present. The present is a tree that has sprung from a seed called the past. This tree also has the seed for the future. Thus, the future is already here!

The best way to take care of the present is to ensure that your talk is always

sacred. Where do the words originate? From the mind.

Therefore, good talk implies that the mind also is good. The mind being the form of Vishnu, if you enjoy His Grace, your words would automatically be pure and sweet.

God's Will always prevails

Embodiments of Love! All of you are really the embodiments of the Trinity, the three attributes, the three eyes, and the three periods of time (the past, present, and future). You must be ever in harmony with God and always obey His command scrupulously.

Never go against it. There is a small story to illustrate the point that no matter what, God's will always prevails.

Once, Parvathi said to Lord Siva, "You are all the time wandering across the worlds while I am but here. There is no place for me to stay. There is no place we can call our home. There is not even a shed where we can take shelter when it rains. Moreover, so many sages come for Your darshan. We do not have a place where we can receive and accommodate them. So let us build a house; it will serve many purposes."

This is the housewife asking for a house; such a desire is natural for all women!

Siva replied, "Parvathi, building a house would mean the beginning of all problems. First, we will have the company of rats. To check the rats, we have to get a cat. To feed the cat we have to get a cow. Next, to look after the cow we have to engage a servant; and so on it will go! Can't you see that our problems will simply multiply? I don't think we need a house."

An argument followed, with Parvathi firm in her demand and Siva refusing with equal firmness. This is what happens in every house - yes, no! yes, no! Finally, in exasperation, Parvathi said, "Why are You so stubborn? After all, I

am not asking for my sake but for the sake of Your devotees. How can we extend hospitality to the devotees without a house?"

Siva replied, "Yes I know you need a house but this is not an auspicious time to build one. If you build a house now, it is destined to get burnt down, no matter what. I know for sure that this is what Agni the Fire God would do. I can see the future but you cannot."

Parvathi said, "Lord I follow what You are saying. But then, all powers are in You; moreover, You preside over all the deities including Agni. If You order Agni not to burn our house, can he refuse to obey?"

Siva now had no option but to agree to let Parvathi start the construction of the house. He also agreed to meet Agni and tell him not to burn down Parvathi's house.

Just before Siva left, Parvathi said, "I will not allow Agni to burn down the house I have built. It would be a great insult for me. If by chance Agni refuses to oblige You, give me a signal by sounding your damaru (drum). I shall then immediately burn down the house myself, denying Agni that pleasure."

Siva agreed and went on His way to meet Agni.

Agni was delighted to see Siva. Welcoming Him said, "Lord, I am so happy You have come to see me. Pray, what can I do for You?"

Siva replied, "I have no desires of My own. But Parvathi has built a house and she wants your promise that you will not burn down that house."

Agni readily gave that promise and then said, "Lord, for a long time, I have been yearning to see Siva Thandavam (Cosmic Dance). Please would You dance for me?"

So, to please Agni, Siva commenced His Thandavam. In the process He necessarily had to play the damaru and, hearing the sound, Parvathi

immediately set fire to the house she had built!

[At this point, Swami sang a most beautiful and lilting melody. Since it cannot be translated without spoiling the grandeur of the original, the song is not reproduced. The song was greeted with a thunderous applause.]

Siva returned and saw that the house that Parvathi had built was in smouldering ruins. He said, "Parvathi, what is all this? Agni had given me a promise not to burn down your house but I see it reduced to ashes."

Parvathi replied, "I set fire to this house; Agni did not. If Agni had given you the promise I wanted, why then did You play the damaru?"

Siva smiled and replied, "Oh that was because Agni, after giving the promise, prayed to Me to perform the Thandavam. I had to oblige him. How could I say no? When I performed the Cosmic Dance, I forgot and played the drum. That is all."

After a pause He added, "Well, I told you in the first place that this was not an auspicious time and that the house would get burnt down. But you would not listen!" The message is clear: The will of God always prevails, and no one can come in the way.

Sanctify time

The will of God emanates from the heart and always finds fulfilment. When the heart is pure, the thoughts and the actions too would be sacred. Therefore, the heart must be kept ever pure; this is the essence of the Siva Principle. The heart is intrinsically pure, sacred, and auspicious and must never be allowed to get polluted.

Embodiments of Love! Always maintain the purity of your heart. Don't abuse any person, don't criticise others, and don't ever accuse any one. Then Siva will be seen in your heart. From the pure heart emerges a pure mind.

Swami is not referring to the monkey mind but the unsullied mind that is symbolic of Vishnu. Such a mind is saturated with Love, is filled with compassionate thoughts, is always blissful, and ever radiates joy. Thus, the effulgence of Vishnu can be seen in a pure mind. Likewise, Brahma shines as Truthful Words. There is nothing beyond Sathya or Truth.

Creation is born of Truth,
And it dissolves finally in Truth.
There is no place where Truth is not,
O man! Witness the glory of Truth!

True word is Brahma, pure mind is Vishnu, and pure heart is Ishwara. Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwara do not have specific forms but represent specific divine attributes, all of which are latent in you.

God is Love but at times He appears to be angry. He does so in order to teach a lesson. The Vedas speak of these two aspects in terms of Rudra (the angry One) and Bhadra (the One who saves).

God fulfils those desires of yours that will result in good but if they spell harm, He will not grant them. Either way, He is doing only good to you. If you repose full faith in God, He is ever ready to help you in every possible way.

You all know the story of Markandeya, the boy who was granted a life span of only sixteen years. Markandeya did not know about this but his parents did. They spent fifteen happy years in the company of their son. The sixteenth year started, and the day of doom approached. The mother and father were seized with gloom and began weeping bitterly.

Puzzled, Markandeya asked, "Mother, why are you suddenly so sad?"

Calling the boy near the parents said, "Son, today is the last day of your life. It is our misfortune". They then narrated the story that explained why his life span was curbed. Markandeya was shocked.

He instantly understood the situation and declared, "Thus far I did not know this secret and I frittered away my time. From now on I shall not waste a single moment in unsacred action. Whatever is left of my life will be spent entirely in worshipping Ishwara."

So saying he ran to the local Siva temple, hugged the Lingam in a tight embrace and called upon the Lord in various names. Meanwhile, the hour of death approached, and Yama the Lord of Death came to the temple armed with the yamapasa (noosed rope) he uses for dragging away life. He saw that Markandeya was locked in a tight embrace with Siva and began to wonder: "How am I to cast the noose of death on Markandeya alone?"

It was not easy to bind the boy alone but the moment of death had arrived and something had to be done immediately. So Yama cast the noose and it circled both Markandeya and the Lingam.

Siva manifested instantly and said, "O Yama! You have now dared to cast the noose of death on Me too?!" On the spot Yama was cursed and Markandeya was granted Immortality.

What does this story teach? **It says that if you have full faith and are determined, then the Lord will be ready to even cancel pre-ordained destiny. Grace received is in proportion to the intensity of one's prayer.**

Recognise this truth and maintain the purity of your heart. Be firm in the faith that a pure heart is Ishwara, a pure mind is Vishnu, and pure speech is Brahma. Rooted in this faith, make proper use of your God-given faculties. Good results would inevitably follow, and in the end you are certain to merge with the Lord. The pleasure and pain that people experience in life are entirely the result of their good and bad actions, respectively.

Today, Deepak Anand provided you with the opportunity to hear Swami discuss the subject of Latent Trinity. This is the first occasion when Swami has revealed how the darshan of the Trinity can be had within one's own self. Like this, there are so many subtle secrets not known to you. Unaware of the nuances of the divine Mystery, people waste their time in frivolous activities.

Embodiments of Love! Time is highly sacred and most valuable. God is worshipped as Time with the words

Kalaya Namah, Kala Kalaya Namah, Kala Darpa Damanaya Namah, Kala Svarupaya Namah, Kala Niyamitaya Namah.

All these are descriptions of God in His aspect as Time. Even so, God also transcends time and space. Time is life, and it must therefore be sanctified with good words, good thoughts, and good feelings.

4. The Human Body And Its Importance

Date: 17 May 2000 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 2000

Punarvittam, punarmitram, punarpatni, punar mahi.
Etat sarvam punar labhyam, na sariram punah punah.
Wealth lost can be regained;
If friends are lost, new friends can be acquired;
If wife is lost, one can marry again;
But the body once lost never comes back.

Embodiments of Love!

Wealth, friends, property, and even wife, if lost, can be acquired again, but the human body is not like that; once lost, it can never be got back, no matter how hard one may try. Human life is most precious, highly sacred, beautiful, and invaluable.

It is, therefore, the prime duty of every individual to take the greatest possible care of the body. The body is an indispensable vehicle for experiences. Without it nothing can be done, not even a simple task. The human body is, therefore, more precious than worldly wealth and such other material acquisitions. Life must be sanctified by making proper use of the body and engaging it in sacred actions. Time gone will never come back. Once the Ganges merges with the ocean, you cannot get back even a drop of its sacred water. Likewise, once life ebbs out and the body is gone, it cannot be recovered.

Body is gifted for service

Men are more valuable than all the wealth in the world. How does money acquire value? Who is the one who confers value on money, diamond, gold,

and land? It is man who is responsible for this. If man does not exist, wherefrom will all these get their value? From nowhere. Human life is very rare and precious. That is why the Vedas declare, Jantunam nara janma durlabham.

Human birth is a rare gift. Extraordinary things can be achieved with the human body. Yet, there are times when one must be ready to sacrifice life itself, in order to achieve great goals.

Embodiments of Love! It is most important to understand the role and the value of the human body. It is the body that shelters the Divinity within. The body is like an iron safe used for storing jewellery and other such valuables. In the case of the body, the valuables stored are good feelings, good thoughts, and virtues. If lost, they cannot be recovered easily. Only virtues lend value to human life, and it is qualities like compassion, forbearance, and sacrifice that make human life precious. But man today does not have the faintest idea of what is meant by human values.

The human body is also a clock marking time and the passage of life. It ticks away the seconds, minutes, days, weeks, months, and years. Man knows that life is ticking away but he does not bother to enquire about the real purpose of life. No one can say when the clock will stop. It is, therefore, most essential to make proper use of life while it is still available. The body is the vehicle for the journey of life. If the vehicle is not properly maintained, then one would have to face serious problems on the way.

Man must contemplate on the importance of virtues. He is ignorant about the answers to questions like: "What is Divinity?", "What is unity?", "Steadiness?", "Selfless-ness?". Without knowing the answers to important and basic questions such as these, man, driven by greed and selfishness, is grossly misusing the body. God has not gifted the body for this. The Vedas declare:

Paropakartham idam sariram.

The body is gifted to serve others. You must firmly resolve not only to take

care of yourself but also others. Unfortunately, man today does not know what service means. The essence of all the eighteen Puranas can be summarised in two short sentences:

Help ever. Hurt never.

Though God has given the body for service man does not seem to understand what 'help' means, being ever immersed in selfishness.

Every thought, every word, and every action is driven by selfishness. Man has become a puppet in the hands of selfishness and self-interest. How can a puppet be ever called independent?

Selfishness must, therefore, be totally rejected and selflessness must be whole-heartedly embraced. Then alone would the real purpose of the human body and human life be realised.

The 'I' principle

In addition to the body, the mind too must be used properly in order to derive Bliss. There are three important entities in the body; the heart, the mind, and speech. The Vedas refer to the heart as Atma. Swami has already told you that Ishwara is represented by the heart. Likewise, the mind is the embodiment of Vishnu, and speech is the embodiment of Brahma. Man is therefore verily the form of the divine Trinity. One is not able to understand why man does not recognise his intrinsic value and the divinity latent in him. Only one who knows himself can know others. One must endeavour to understand the meaning of 'I'.

Everything is contained in the words that we speak. Once a devotee told Swami, "I want peace." Swami replied, "Why are you suffering so much? Do

you know the meaning of the word 'I' in your prayer? It means ego. Similarly, 'want' means desire.

Remove ego and desire, and what remains is peace!" Every effort must be made to conquer ego. People think this is very difficult but it is a big mistake to think so. Actually, it is very easy to get rid of ego. Why at all should you have ego in the first place? There is an easy method to remove ego. You think that 'I' is associated with the name given to you at birth, and regard it as permanent.

In the process, you have forgotten your original name. It is the original name that is permanent and not the name given to your body at birth. The given name serves only as long as the present body exists. When the body perishes, the given name ceases to be significant. How long will the body last?

Composed of the five elements and devoid of strength,
When this body will go no one knows.
Though a hundred years is said to be the life span,
One cannot be sure when death will overtake.
It may be in childhood, youth, middle age, or old age;
But certain it is that death will one day come.
He alone is intelligent who realises his true nature when alive.
This truth one must definitely know.

Who is this 'I'? Who am 'I'? This 'I' is not the body (deham) nor the mind (manas) nor the intellect (buddhi) nor the inner senses (antahkarana). I is just I! This primordial 'I' came along with the body; in fact, 'I' is your correct name. There are so many 'I's in this world. If you know yourself, then you will also know all the other 'I's. This is why the question "Who am I?" is important.

Embodiments of Love! No one is making any effort to know about the

mysteries of human life. There are many secrets associated with life. There are many treasures within you. All the power and potency found in nature are also latent in every human being.

That which cannot be found within a human being cannot be found anywhere else in the universe. Our ancients said to those who went overseas, "O fool, why are you becoming a vagabond, wandering over various lands? What you are looking for outside is already within you. You are not able to recognise the treasures hidden within you."

The Vedas explained clearly the meaning of 'I'. This 'I' is also known as vyakthi. Who is this vyakthi? Vyakthi is that individual who is able to cognise the subtle and the hidden. He is the one who has realised that Divinity is latent within him. He who does not know of the innate Divinity does not merit being called a man. You must understand the identity of the individual with God. Adherence to sathya and dharma alone would enable one to become a yakthi. Hence the twin dicta of the scriptures:

Satyam vada, dharmam Cara.

Always speak the truth and always tread the path of righteousness.

God has gifted you the human form to enable you to follow such a sacred path. Therefore, every effort must be made to bring out the latent human values. One does not become a scholar or a learned person as soon as one is born. These qualifications are acquired over many years and after much effort. Educare is the name given to this process that brings to the surface the latent virtues and values. The secular instruction that is currently offered everywhere is education. Dealing as it does exclusively with the phenomenal world, it is artificial. As Swami often says, "Art is outside while heart is inside." Therefore art is education while heart is educare. There is no person in the world today who can be said to be truly learned in the sense of educare.

He has studied everything,
And mastered all;
Yet a fool he remains,
Not knowing about the Self.
No matter how advanced the learning,
Or how high the position held,
A mean person will ever remain mean.
Too much scholarship
Promotes only argumentation.
No matter what the attainments,
The scholar too one day has to die.
Hence seek that Knowledge Supreme,
Which alone leads to Immortality.

It is this Supreme Knowledge that you must really acquire. What is it that is deathless? The primordial 'I' alone is Eternal and Immortal. It has no death. Mind, the form of Vishnu, is born of 'I', and it too has no death. The Trinity Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwara are all ensconced within the human body. They are the embodiment of Truth. Thus, when you say 'I', it refers really to the name of God, the God within you. It is therefore a mistake to identify 'I' with the body, as is invariably done. 'I' is that is within; it is the name of truth when it manifests in a human body.

Always think of God; do not put it off!

Man is conscious only of the inert body, which is just gross matter. All that you can physically see in the external world also consists only of gross matter.

Yaddrsyam tannasyam.
All that can be experienced with the senses is ephemeral.

We mistake the transient to be the truth. Indeed, the whole of creation would one day disappear; so, it also is temporary. Nevertheless, the body has a role to play. Sight, for example, has been given so that you may see the external world. True, but you should not stop with just seeing. Your vision must be sacred, which means being aware that God is immanent in all the things that you physically see.

You must make an effort to realise that the body is just an instrument given to you for a specific purpose, and you must understand that purpose. Adi Shankara has highlighted this. Once when Shankara was going along with his disciples, he noticed a man vigorously committing to memory the rules of Panini's grammar. Shankara went to that man and asked, "Why are you struggling so hard to master grammar?" The man replied, "Because I wish to become a scholar." Shankara's next question was, "What will you gain by becoming a scholar?" The man said, "I can get appointed in a royal court and earn a lot of money." Shankara continued, "What will you do with the money?" The man had a ready answer, "Oh, I can keep my family happy." Shankara then said, "What happens after that?" The man thought for a while and said, "Well, I suppose I will die." Shankara pressed on, "What happens after death?" The man said, "I do not know." Shankara then advised that man:

Bhaja Govindam Bhaja Govindam,

Govindam Bhaja Mudhamate.

Samprapte Sannihite Kale.

Na Hi Na Hi Raksati Dukrn Karane.

"O foolish man, always be chanting the name of the Lord.

Scholarship in grammar would be of no use when the call of death comes. It is God's name alone that can secure redemption."

The body may live long but one day or the other it has to perish.

When the end has come,

And death has arrived to take you away,
When relatives abandon hope and get ready for your demise,
When your wife and children are crying piteously,
Is it possible to suddenly think of God?
Is it of any use if you cry for help at the last moment? No!

The proper thing is to prepare for the inevitable right from the beginning by constantly remembering God. He alone can liberate you. Besides singing the glory of God, you must also engage in proper action. What kind of action? Action that would bring out the latent human values. The body must be used only for performing good deeds. You must lead a virtuous life. In the end, you must give up the body with good thoughts.

The human body is not eternal. It contains flesh that can decay, and foul excreta. At the same time, present in this very same body are sacred feelings. It is for safeguarding this hidden treasure that you must take proper care of the body. Once the treasure is tapped and duly made use of, the body can be given up. This is the proper way to go through life. You must plunge wholeheartedly and most enthusiastically into service.

Na tapamsi na tirthanam na sastranam japa na hi.
Samsara sagaroddhare sajjanam sevanam vina.
The ocean of life cannot be crossed either through penance, or pilgrimage, or the study of scriptures, or even the ritualistic chant of the name of the Lord. It is service rendered to noble souls alone that can set you free.

In the Gita, Krishna says:

Anityam asukham lokam imam prapya bhajasva mam.

Realising that the world is ephemeral and full of misery, constantly pray to me.

The real reason for protecting and safeguarding the body is that it is the repository of great powers and capabilities. You do meditation; how? Using your body. You transact business and make money; how? Using your body. You become a great scholar; how? Using the capabilities of your body. The body is, therefore, very important. It must be properly used and the virtues latent in it must be fully experienced.

Preserve your purity and resist contamination

Do not make the mistake of imagining that the body has been given for enjoyment, comfort seeking, beautification, and useless pursuits of that nature. Indulgence in pleasure seeking, comfort, and luxury can be dangerous. In one of the wars between Germany and France, France suffered a crushing defeat. Reflecting on this, the then French Commander-in-Chief said, "We lost not because we lacked courage but because we had become soft by getting drowned in pleasure-seeking." You can ruin yourself by pandering to the senses. What does one gain from sensual pleasures? Nothing, because these pleasures are all momentary. God has not given this body for indulgence.

Dakshinamurthy was once walking along the seashore. He was the very embodiment of intellect, and always enquired deeply into the significance of what he observed. As he stood gazing at the ocean, he noticed that wind blew some trash into the water.

However, the trash was soon swept back to the shore by the waves. This happened repeatedly.

Dakshinamurthy then asked, "O mighty Ocean that art fathomless, why can

you not accommodate these tiny pieces of matter that are being blown into you? Why do you repeatedly throw them back on the shore? Why are you so selfish? What do you lose by giving in a little?"

Dakshinamurthy then sat in meditation, whereupon he heard the Ocean giving a reply.

The Ocean said, "Within me there are innumerable treasures like pearls, corals, etc. If I permit this contamination, in course of time it will swamp and overwhelm me completely. I do not wish to become impure and ugly. Trash is not my ornamentation but waves are."

For a village, beauty lies in the houses,
For the ocean, the waves are the ornament,
For the sky, it is the moon that confers grandeur,
For a woman, character is true beauty,
And for a devotee of Siva,
Beauty is the vibhuthi adorning the forehead.

One must acquire that which adds real beauty. For a human being, virtue is real beauty. Today, man is spurning virtue and is instead turning to jewellery for the enhancement of beauty.

Dharma is the best protection

Embodiments of Love! You have a long journey ahead. You must certainly care for your body but this does not mean you must develop body-consciousness. Protect your body by all means and take full care of your health, but use your body mainly to perform good actions.

Asthiram jivanam loke,

Asthiram yauvanam dhanam,
Asthiram Dara Putradi,
Satyam Kirti Dvayam sthiram.

In this world, life, youth, wealth, wife and children, etc. are impermanent.
Truth and reputation alone are stable.

You must, therefore, tread a truthful path, for that alone will earn for you a good reputation. You must protect truth, and without it you have no chance of becoming reputed. It has become fashionable for politicians to advise youth to protect the country. All this is hollow talk. What is it that confers real protection? Sathya and dharma alone can provide true protection. If sathya and dharma are upheld, they in turn will duly protect the country.

Dharmo raksati raksitah.

Dharma eva hato hanti.

The one who protects dharma will be protected by dharma,
but if one tries to annihilate dharma, that person is sure to get destroyed.

Does it make any sense to talk about protection of the country after abandoning sathya and dharma? The country can be protected only if dharma is protected. People today have become indifferent to dharma. There is no trace of justice, and truth has gone into hiding. Under the circumstances, how can the country be protected? Instead of pompously uttering empty words, the speechmakers should, by their actions, demonstrate how the country ought to be protected. The words that one uses must reflect the situation and circumstances.

Words and behaviour must match one's position

An actor once came to a King's court to give performances. He came dressed as a sanyasi (renunciant). The actor sang admirably and discoursed

eloquently on spiritual matters. He also gave a scholarly exposition on the philosophy of Adi Shankara. The King was very pleased and offered a lot of gold. The actor said, "O King, a sanyasi does not accept gold. I cannot accept this gift." The next day the actor appeared as a dancer. He danced beautifully and pleased everyone present. At the end of the performance the King offered a small gift of just a few coins.

The actor said, "O King, this gift is meagre and not enough." The astonished King asked, "Yesterday you refused a substantial gift but today you are demanding more. What is the meaning of this strange behaviour?" The actor replied, "O King, an actor will not be true to his profession if his words do not match the costume he is wearing. Yesterday I played a renunciant and, therefore, spurned wealth. Today I am a dancer, and a dancer always expects a handsome reward! My conduct must be in consonance with my garb."

All of you are in the dress of students; you must therefore have the behaviour and conduct expected of students. You must earn the respect due to students. You should be models of humility, for humility is the hallmark of true learning. You must, therefore, be always humble, speak respectfully to elders, and ever adhere to the path of sathya and dharma. Education is that which fosters noble qualities, keen intellect, truth, devotion, discipline, and a sense of duty. Students have to patiently cultivate all these qualities and attributes. If your behaviour is not in accordance with what one expects from the dress you wear, you will lose respect.

See no evil; see only what is good!

Embodiments of Love! Swami is aware that all of you are highly regarded. Even so, Swami has to say what needs to be told so that you do not become complacent. Proper vision is most essential for a student. You must see only what you are supposed to, and not other things. Do not gaze at everything in the street like a crow! Do you think eyes are given to you for seeing anything and everything? No, no, no! They are given so that you may see just the things a student ought to. Look at your books, and study them. See your parents; you may see your friends but not others.

Regard all others of your age as your brothers and sisters, and all older women as your mother. In the ritualistic worship of the Sun (Surya namaskaram), there is a passage to the effect that he who has evil looks would be blinded by the Sun God. Therefore, be warned; bad looks can be dangerous. When walking on the road, look ahead so that your safety is guaranteed. If, for example, you are cycling and your looks wander all over the place, you are more than likely to meet with an accident. Always concentrate on the traffic ahead. Control of looks is so important that Buddha gave special emphasis to it. He called for samyak drishti or good looks. Bad looks would only lead you astray into the path of evil.

Once, Socrates was walking, accompanied by his students. He walked with his head bent down, as he wanted to set an example to his students in the matter of looks. Suddenly, he bumped into a man coming from the opposite direction. This other person who was an officer of the State, angrily demanded, "Who are you?" With humility, Socrates replied, "Sir, that precisely is the question I am grappling with! Please can you tell me who exactly I am?" Socrates was strict not only in the matter of looks but also with respect to listening. He never listened to anything bad.

You should not lend your ear to all that is being said. Similarly, thoughts too must be kept under tight check. Thoughts must centre around appropriate matters. The questions when, where, and what you must think are all important. Excessive thought can lead to harm. Excessive thinking (plotting) is what the Kauravas did, and eventually paid dearly for it. They were always seized with evil thoughts, and spent all night devising mean and wicked ways of harming the noble Pandavas. The Kauravas came to ruin because they constantly harboured foul thoughts about the Pandavas who were the very embodiment of dharma. Therefore, always avoid bad looks, listening to bad words and talk, and also bad thoughts. Do not ever utter unbecoming words. Always say good things and speak pleasantly. You cannot always oblige but you can always speak obligingly! Students must cultivate such good qualities for they alone are the true ornaments.

Students - boys and girls! In this phase of life, there are many virtues that

you must acquire; later, you must make good and active use of them. Only if you accumulate wealth now, can you spend it later. If there are no 'earnings' now, what can you do later? You must, therefore, firmly resolve to develop right now, good intellect, good habits, and good speech. Buddha repeatedly stressed the need for samyak drishti or sacred looks, and never tolerated any violation of this maxim by his disciples. Bad looks encourage bad thoughts, which ultimately lead to ruin. Looks must therefore be strictly controlled.

Use the body for sacred actions and become ideal leaders

Students! You must all earn a good reputation now and later provide good leadership to the country. The children of today are the citizens of tomorrow. The youth of today are the leaders of tomorrow. When you become leaders, you must make this country sacred. As are the leaders, so will be the nation. If you are good, the country too will be good. You will earn much merit if you shape yourselves to be noble citizens of this great country of Bharat, that has the reputation of being a tyaga bhoomi (land of sacrifice), karma bhoomi (land of noble acts), and punya bhoomi (sacred land). It is for serving this country in a noble manner that you must really care for your body, and not for any other purpose.

Remember, the body once gone will never come back. Any other thing lost may possibly be recovered but not the body, never. You must resolve to keep the body in good shape till the goal is fully achieved.

Having resolved what ought to be,
Hold on till you succeed.
Having desired what ought to be,
Hold on till they are fulfilled.
Having asked what ought to be,
Hold on till you get it.
Having thought what ought to be,
Hold on till the thought is realised.

With heart mellowed, the Lord must yield to your wishes,
Or forgetting yourself, you should ask Him with all your heart.
Persevere, be tenacious, and never give up,
For it is the quality of a student never to retreat,
Abandoning his resolve.

Embodiments of Love! Swami blesses that you will duly treasure all the advice given to you by elders, guests, and teachers, and make ample use of them in the years to come so that you can lead ideal lives. With this blessing, Swami brings this discourse to a close.

5. Subtle Is The Lord

Date: 18 May 2000 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 2000

Daivadinam jagat sarvam.
Satyadinam tu Daivatam.
Tat satyam uttamadinam.
Uttamo Paradevatam.
God controls creation,
While truth holds sway over God;
But truth itself is subservient to a Noble One,
And such a One is the very Embodiment of God!

Embodiments of Love!

An individual has many experiences in the waking state and other distinct experiences in the dream-state. In the latter state, he creates everything he experiences - feelings, pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow. In the deep-sleep state he is oblivious to everything worldly or imaginary, and becomes one with Primary Consciousness. Thus, under three different circumstances, the same person has three different types of experiences. Experiences may vary but the Transcendental Being within is eternal and not subject to any change. A garland drawn on a piece of paper will never move, shake, or wobble with respect to the paper.

The paper itself might get tossed violently by gusts of wind but the garland would always remain firm on the paper and not undergo any relative movement. Likewise, although the external circumstances and the thoughts of an individual may undergo changes, the Divinity imprinted within will ever remain steady, constant, and never undergo any change. All aspirants must therefore cultivate clear vision and constancy of mind.

The body is an infinite reservoir of auspiciousness

The human body may be compared to a bamboo pole. The bamboo has many joints that interrupt its smoothness. For the human being, the six vices, namely kama (desire), krodha (anger), lobha (greed), moha (attachment), mada (pride), matsarya (jealousy), represent the bends or the joints. The human body has been referred to as tungabhadra. Tunga means infinite and bhadra means auspiciousness. Thus, when one uses the word tungabhadra for the human body, it means that the body is an infinite reservoir of auspiciousness. Everyone must therefore carefully introspect to check whether this sacred gift called the body is being properly used or is misused and mishandled.

It was sage Narada who after deep enquiry gave this name tungabhadra to the human body. People often mistake Narada to be the one who foments trouble. This is not correct; such a view is an imagined and a distorted perception. Narada is the sage who has shown the path that can put an end to all sorrow.

He radiates Knowledge. It is this Narada who knows the past, present, and future and who is so dear to Narayana, that gave this sacred name tungabhadra to the human body. We have to make every effort to understand the sanctity of the human body, use it for noble and sacred actions, and derive Bliss therefrom.

Human life should not be looked at from just a worldly, material, and physical perspective. Through intense enquiry, Sages of yore have unra-velled the deeper significance of human existence.

Man today faces misery because he does not make proper use of his body and does not live his life as it ought to be, that is to say, in the service of humanity. Totally preoccupied with himself and his family, he has no time to think of community or the society he lives in. It is only when man becomes concerned with society that he will begin to understand why the human body is called tungabhadra.

See God in man

Embodiments of Love! You are undoubtedly aware that human life is the noblest and the most precious of all. That is why the Vedas declare:

Jantunam nara janma durlabham.
It is a rare blessing to be born a human.

You must really appreciate how rare and precious human birth is.

Man is called nara; this word has two syllables, na and ra. Na means no, and ra means death - thus, nara means one who is deathless, imperishable, and immortal. If you examine deeply, you will understand the inner meaning of the three words nara, Narada, and Narayana. Narada (the sage) is the one who shows Narayana (God) to nara (man). What a lofty meaning this word nara has!

You must ponder over the fact that man who is intrinsically sacred is now wasting and ruining his invaluable existence. God is not really distinct from man. Narada recognised the identity of man with God and declared that it was not necessary to formally worship God. Narada described the relationship between man and God with the words, Yallabdhwapuman, Siddho bhavathi, Amritho bhavathi, Truptho bhavathi, Atmaramo bhavathi.

He is a true devotee who only wants God, is all the time yearning for God, is intoxicated by the very thought of God, and eventually becomes one with God.

Man is really not different from the Indweller, and the individual is God Himself. Goodness lies in seeing Narayana (God) in nara (man). On the other hand, man today revels in seeing God as just man. Such perception arises

from an utter lack of faith, and is considered to be the height of intellectual reasoning. People think that it is important to achieve greatness; however, it is far more important to be good than to be great. The truly good one sees God in every human being. The evil one, on the other hand, reduces even the Divine to mundane levels. Such a one can be described as Ravana. Ravana mistook God to be an ordinary human, quite in contrast to Sage Narada who always saw Narayana in nara.

Every individual has divine power latent within. Man is the son of Immortality

Students must carefully examine all such matters thoroughly. You must go into the deeper aspects of the stories you read. Take the Ramayana, for example. This epic reveals how the principle of unity can lead to Bliss. On the other hand, stress on diversity leads only to unhappiness and sorrow. Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Shatrugna became renowned on account of their strong sense of unity. Contrast this with Vali and Sugriva; they too were brothers but both had to undergo suffering on account of lack of unity. The Pandavas too illustrate how unity is strength. All the four younger brothers always bowed to the command of Dharmaja the eldest brother; they never went against his advice. The glorious example set by them in the Dwapara age continues to remain a shining beacon even in this Kali age. Disunity, discord, and disaffection between brothers invariably produce pain and suffering. Unity, on the other hand, always paves the way for happiness.

The scriptures offer many ideals for people to live by. Ravana, who went badly astray, realised his folly in the end. He said, "O people of this world! By yielding to lust and anger, I have brought ruin to one and all, including my family. I could not conquer hatred and jealousy and thereby lost all my relatives. Unable to understand the Fundamental Truth, I lost my sons too. Do not repeat my mistake." This was the warning given by Ravana just prior to his death. Noble Souls are very powerful because they have completely grasped the basic truth. Ravana was mighty. He was one of great penance. He had acquired multiple capabilities - physical, mental, and even spiritual. But ultimately, of what use were all these various achievements? No use at

all. Becoming a slave to attachment and hatred, he had, in the end, to suffer and perish. There was not a trace of Love in him. If, on the other hand, one instils Love in one's heart, one can emerge victorious even under the most adverse circumstances.

The scriptures hail man as Amrutasya putraha, or the Son of Immortality. Unable to understand this truth, man has degenerated into anrutha putra or the son of falsehood. You should be the child of Immortality and not of falsehood. You should not merely love God but become God Himself. It is only when you experience love that you would begin to get a feel for who God is. Who is God?

If you believe that God is far from you, He is definitely far away. But if you earnestly believe that God is very intimate and that He is the greatest friend of all, then He is as close to you as you are to yourself. It is a great mistake to believe that God exists only in a temple, or a sacred place, or in a pilgrim centre. All this has been explained very clearly by noble souls who have experienced Divinity within. Traditional and ritualistic practices are certainly needed to start with. It is like learning the alphabet first when one learns a language. Once you have learnt the alphabet a, b, c, d, etc., you can learn words like GOD. After learning words, one can form sentences. Once one can read sentences, one can then read an entire book. In the same way, wise men of the past initiated people to the concept of Divinity by advising them to visit temples, holy places, etc. This is rather like learning the alphabet. Even Avatars go through a learning process [by way of setting an example]. All such practices were recommended as spiritual drill for the ordinary people and beginners on the spiritual path.

Proximity to the Divine confers remarkable experiences

For every spiritual practice there is an inner meaning, however trivial the practice might seem. Sainath (teacher and former student of the Institute who spoke earlier) mentioned that even apparently simple things that Swami says and does are full of deeper meaning. He is speaking from personal experience.

Sainath, Dilip, Satyajit, Patle, Srinivas - all these boys, who serve Swami, stay with Him in the Poornachandra Auditorium. At night, they sleep not far away from Swami, and nothing escapes their attention.

On occasions, departed souls visit Swami both during day as well as at night. One morning, Swami returned to the Poornachandra Hall as usual after morning bhajan.

It was around ten o'clock, and Swami went upstairs. Sitting there in the chamber was Easwaramma, the mother of Swami's body.

Swami asked her, "Why do you come like this? What would people say? Don't come like this."

She replied, "Swami, this is Your mother. What do You know about the love of a mother? Only a mother can understand my feelings. I am a mother and You are God full of Love for all. A mother cannot understand God's Love and God cannot understand a mother's love! I have come here in order to tell You something."

Swami then told her, "Tell me quickly whatever it is that you want to say; I have to go somewhere soon."

Easwaramma pleaded, "Swami, I don't know what to do because You are always in a hurry! Please relax, spare me a few moments, and listen carefully to what I have to say."

Swami asked her to continue and she said, "The situation in the outside world today is not very good. Everywhere, it is bad thoughts, bad actions, and evil manipulations. You believe that people who come here are all full of Love for You. It is natural for You to think so but in my opinion, this is not always the case. When You give darshan, so many people offer a handkerchief to You. This frightens me. Please accept kerchief only from those in whom You have complete faith; ignore the rest."

Swami then asked, "Why are you making such a request?" and she replied, "For You, all are equal."

Everyone is Your child. However, some people are wicked. The kerchief they offer may have poison and when You wipe Your face, the poison may enter Your mouth."

Swami said, "Alright, to satisfy you, I shall henceforth be very selective."

Some days after this, Swami was resting at night. The boys serving Swami were all sleeping nearby. Around 1 a.m., the mother of this body once again made a visit. Swami motioned her to the bathroom, where the conversation took place. She began to speak loudly and Swami cautioned her saying, "Shh! Speak softly; the boys are all sleeping nearby. If they wake up, they will know about your visit."

Easwamma said in reply, "Swami, why should I be afraid of them? I am afraid only of You and none else. I have not done anything wrong. Only those who have done so need to be scared. I have come here only out of my love for You and nothing else." Swami then said, "Alright, now tell me what you have come for." She replied, "Swami, yesterday was a festival day and You wore a new dhoti. To properly secure it, You went looking for a belt. You did not like any of those brought to You because they all were rather ornamental."

What she said was correct, and Swami did look for a belt. Easwamma then continued, "Swami, why do You have to ask others? You gave me a chain just before I died. Here it is; take it and use it as a belt."

The day prior to her death [Swami was in Brindavan at that time, and so was Easwamma], Swami had materialised a nice chain for Easwamma because she liked such things. He then placed it round her neck. Next day, she gave up her body saying, "Swami, Swami!"

After her demise, her body was taken to Puttaparthi. Just before that, Swami

told Ramabrahmam (who was the caretaker in Brindavan at that time) that Mother Easwamma liked that chain very much. Let her be buried along with the chain." So the chain was not removed from the body before it was interred. This was the chain she was now offering to Swami.

To send her away, Swami accepted the chain.

Meanwhile, Sainath woke up. The slightest sound and these boys all wake up! Sainath began to wonder, "I am hearing voices. How could anyone have entered Swami's room? All doors have been locked; the lift also has been locked; and the keys are with me. How could anyone get inside?"

Slowly the boys came near Swami.

They all were scared but Satyajit picked up courage and gently asked, "Swami, we heard voices. Who was that?"

Swami first said, "That is none of your business." But seeing their concern for Swami's safety, Swami revealed who had come.

Swami said, "The one who came was the mother of this body. She passed away about twenty eight years ago, before your time." These boys are all in their mid-twenties or so. The boys then wanted to know what the lady had given Swami. Swami showed them the chain; they all saw it. Later Swami gave the chain to one of the boys, and it is still with him.

On another occasion, a lady in Simla suffered a massive heart attack. She had lost her husband and had two small children to look after. She was suffering from intense physical pain and, on account of her children, deep mental anguish as well. It was 2 a.m. Swami left the body in order to save her. This body then collapsed and fell down, hitting the floor with a big bang. The boys heard the sound and rushed inside. They saw the body on the floor, seemingly lifeless. There was no movement at all. They tried to lift the head but could not. Imagine that! These four or five young men, all so strong, could not lift this little head! They brought towels to wipe the wounds if any, but

there was no sign of any bleeding. Slowly they understood; Swami was away on an extra-corporeal trip in order to save somebody. They just sat there and waited for Swami to return. When the task was completed, Swami re-entered the body, and the boys were very happy.

The boys staying with Swami have had many such experiences.

They are all extremely devoted to Swami. They never waste a single moment, and rush to Swami's side the moment their work is over. This is true of those working in the institute and those serving in the hospital. On festival days when they feel that Swami may retire early, the hospital boys come back ahead of schedule, without having their meals. If Swami asks them about food they will reply that they are not hungry. But Swami does not accept such replies and arranges food for them. All these boys are very devoted to Swami, and Sainath is one of them. Swami does not wish to give publicity to these boys, but at the same time, the world must know about the love and devotion with which they take care of Swami.

Man himself is the Form of God

It is not possible to enumerate or describe what kind of experiences one can have with God. Man and God are not distinct from one another. Drawing attention to this, Sainath quoted the saying, "I and you are one." Even this is not the best way of putting it. 'You' are not different from 'I'. There is only 'I' and no 'You'! You are I and I am You! God, the I, is present in everything in creation, particularly so in human beings.

Deho Devalayaprokto Jivo Devah Sanatanah.
The body is the temple and the Indweller is God.

It is popularly said that Vishnu is the One bearing the conch, discus, and mace. What is the inner meaning of the words conch and discus? Conch

symbolises sound, and discus symbolises the wheel of time. Therefore, when people say that Vishnu has the conch and the discus, it really means that God is the Supreme Master of sound and time. One should not imagine God to be separate from oneself. All the powers inherent in the body are really in the control of God, who is actually within. Therefore, do not think God is separate from you, then assign Him a separate Form, and thereafter start decorating that Form.

About thirty years ago, Burgula Ramakrishna Rao (a great devotee of Bhagavan, who served as the Chief Minister of An-dhra Pradesh, and later as the Governor of Kerala and Uttar Pradesh as well), compelled Swami to go to the holy city of Tirupati, where Lord Venkateswara is the presiding Deity. At the temple, Swami was received in the traditional style with full honours, and was conducted into the sanctum sanctorum, where the idol of the deity is installed. Mr. Anna Rao was the Chief Executive Officer of the temple at that time. Swami told Anna Rao, "Why do you disfigure this beautiful idol with so many decorations and ornaments? If the jewellery is removed, the Lord would look far more majestic." Burgula Ramakrishna Rao added, "Swami, I too do not like all this decorations but then, people always do such things for their own pleasure. " Swami then remarked, "It is better to leave the idol in its natural form." Anna Rao listened to all this but was unable to do anything. Decoration of the idol is not the proper way to see beauty in God and experience joy.

Inner beauty is what gives true Ananda (Bliss), and such joy is the true fragrance of life.

God needs no decoration. However, the human form that enshrines Divinity has to be given due respect and treated accordingly. As Swami mentioned earlier, the human body was given the name tungabhadra; is it proper then to display it or treat it in an improper and inauspicious manner? Swami wears a robe so that almost all the body is covered. It is not possible to cover the hands, feet, and the face. However, at times, Swami's hair partially covers His face. But what can I do about it? The Avatar's body comes with a brilliant effulgence of its own. In fact, every being has within it some divine

effulgence. Everything that Swami does has its own innate significance. A small example. People eat when they are hungry; and people drink water only when they are thirsty. One cries only at times of sorrow, and smiles only when happy. For every action, there is a specific reason. Swami too takes care of His body for specific reasons.

Modulate your voice if needed but never compromise on truth

The three Ps, namely, purity, patience, and perseverance, are very important. Swami is ever the embodiment of purity. Whatever Swami does is always for others and never for Himself. The purity present in Swami cannot be seen anywhere else; that is how Swami's heart is pure. It is that purity that draws people in hundreds and thousands from all over the world to Swami. No invitation is sent to people to come here, and yet they flock in such large numbers; such is the magnetism of a truly pure Body.

Swami is also very patient. Mountains may move but Swami's heart is ever steady and unruffled. However, at times, Swami may "hiss"! This tactic is used solely to rectify and correct people who are going astray. Such methods become necessary because people do not always respond to nice words of advice! When Swami gently asks people to sit down, they do not listen but when He raises His voice, there is instant obedience! (Laughter.) Voice and tone modulation can be useful and effective, and at times even lives have been saved. Once during the Kurukshetra war, Aswatthama, the son of Dronacharya, took a terrible vow to annihilate all the Pandavas. Coming to know of this, Draupadi prayed to Krishna to save the Pandavas. The leelas of the Lord are not only wonderful but also most mysterious. For the sake of devotees, God enacts dramas and even changes the scenes in His play for their welfare and to ensure their safety. In this instance, the Lord saved the Pandavas with a delicate touch that only He is capable of.

He went to meet sage Durvasa, who was immensely delighted to receive Krishna. The sage then asked, "Lord, what brought You to my humble ashram?"

Krishna smiled and said, "I have a small job for you." The Sage was happy and said, "I am at Your service. You just have to command."

Krishna then said, "Good! Tonight, you have to save the Pandavas." Durvasa was puzzled and asked, "Lord, it is You who protects everything in Creation. Who am I to do that job?"

Krishna replied, "That is a different matter. But for this job, you will be My instrument. I extend protection in many different ways. On this occasion, you have to do something specific, as per My instructions."

Durvasa wanted to know what it was and Krishna continued, "Dig a pit, ask the Pandavas to hide in the pit, cover the pit with planks, grass, and mud, and then take your seat on the cover so prepared.

The enemies of the Pandavas may come and ask you about the whereabouts of the Pandavas. They may say, 'O sage who knows the past, present, and future, please tell us where the Pandavas are hiding.'"

Durvasa intervened and said, "Lord, I cannot tell a lie."

Krishna countered, "Did I ask you to utter falsehood? I am Truth, and I will always ask you to speak only the Truth. However, you are at liberty to change your voice suitably, to achieve the desired effect. I am sure you understand." The sage nodded and smiled.

Sometime later, after the Pandavas had been hidden away, Aswatthama came there, exactly as Krishna had forecast. Durvasa was sitting with his eyes closed. Bowing to the sage, Aswatthama sought, in a most humble manner, some information concerning the whereabouts of the Pandavas. Durvasa slowly opened his eyes; they were flaming.

Angrily he roared, "Yes the Pandavas are here, right beneath me." Besides anger, there was also much sarcasm in the sage's voice.

Aswatthama was frightened because the sage was well known for his fiery temper and his propensity to curse those whom he was angry with. Promptly he fled from the scene, and the Pandavas were duly saved. All Avatars employ such techniques, and Swami does the same when required.

In the Rama Avatar, it was the day scheduled for the coronation of Rama. Rama had just met Kaikeyi and returned to His residence, where Sita was busy getting dressed for the big occasion.

Smiling broadly, Rama told Sita, "Listen to this, for it is very important. I have to leave Ayodhya immediately. On account of a promise given earlier by My father, I have to go in exile to the forest."

Sita was stunned. She then recovered and said, "You are going to the forest? In that case, I too will go with You."

Rama replied, "No, you cannot. The forest is not a fit place for you to live in. You will constantly face danger from the demons and the wild animals."

Sita then said, "What! You the Protector of the whole world cannot protect one woman? I do not believe that You cannot protect me; it is simply that You do not want me to accompany You! I am determined to follow You!" Rama tried hard to dissuade Sita from going with Him but she was adamant.

Speaking harshly, Rama then said, "If you come, it would mean more trouble for Me; you would just be adding to My burden. I have to go to the forest by way of obeying My father's command. What role do you have in this? Why do you have to come?"

Rama prepared to leave the premises when Sita asked, "Where are You going?"

Rama replied, "I am going to see My mother to bid her goodbye."

Sita said, "I shall go with You," and Rama agreed. Together they went to

Kausalya's palace.

Kausalya was in tears. She lamented, "O my dear Son, I was so happy thinking that You were going to be crowned. But in a few short moments, destiny has taken such a shocking turn. After You leave, I cannot remain here in Ayodhya even for a second. So, I too will go with You to the forest."

Rama softly replied, "Father is old and also somewhat disabled. No matter what, you cannot leave him. For a woman, husband is God. Your prime duty is to serve him."

Sita heard all this. She was very intelligent you know! On return to their abode, Sita opened the topic again and told Rama, "I am going with You." Rama tersely replied, "Not possible."

It was now Sita's turn to raise her voice, and she said, "You told Your mother that husband is God. In that case, is not my husband my God? You are the moon and I am the moonlight. The moon and its light are linked; can they ever be separated? Moonlight has to be where the moon is. It is unthinkable that Rama is in the forest and Sita is in Ayodhya. I am coming with You!" Rama had to yield to this powerful and indisputable argument!

Commence spiritual practice at an early age As Swami said earlier, never utter falsehood. But, for the sake of the welfare of others, you can adopt other suitable strategies to achieve the desired goal.

Sarve loka hite ratah. (May everyone be prosperous. Always wish everyone well.)

Next,

Sarve samudita gunaih. (May everyone be virtuous.)

And finally,

Sarve jnana sampannah. (May everyone be endowed with Wisdom.)

The key to these three cardinal principles, namely, well being, virtue, and wisdom, is contained in Swami's three P's: purity, patience, and perseverance.

In the strict pursuit of the three Ps, Swami remains unmatched in the entire world (loud applause). Whatever Swami does is always for the good, welfare, joy, and comfort of others, and not for Himself. Never does Swami do anything for His personal benefit or advantage. From top to toe, there is not a trace of selfishness in Swami, and there is no place for it either.

Everything that Swami does is always for you and you alone.

Embodiments of Love! Boys and Girls! It is not possible to fully understand the divine principle. No one can ever understand God. People may declare that they have done so but the very next minute, they are full of doubts and confusion. Such vacillations are due to tendencies acquired over many births. Influences of the past can and do hamper spiritual progress. Hence, transformation does not come easily; it has to happen slowly but steadily. That is why Swami repeatedly says: start early, drive slowly, reach safely. Yours is the right age to make a serious start and to begin assiduous spiritual practice. Always be calm and peaceful, and do not give any scope for your purity to get contaminated. Purity and patience would automatically make perseverance quite easy.

Swami always addresses you as Premaswaroopulara (Embodiments of Love). Swami is ever full of Love and that is why His words too are always saturated with Love. Swami expects all of you to actually become what He hails you as. You should ensure that your Love does not ever get diminished or diluted under any circumstance whatsoever. If you live like that, Swami is ready to grant you whatever you want! Students of today will become the leaders of tomorrow and the emancipators of this country. You must therefore drive away all bad feelings, cultivate virtues, and always have sacred vision. Be ever careful about what you say and let there be no room for untruthful and

improper words. Such ideal behaviour would bring great joy to your parents. It is your duty to make them happy. Remember:

Matr Devo bhava.

Pitr Devo bhava.

Mother is God; father is God.

All parents shower love on their children. Your parents care for you as much as Swami's parents cared for Him. It is therefore your duty to bring Ananda (Bliss) to them in every possible way.

Swami brought His divine discourse to an end by singing the bhajan: Bhava Bhaya Harana

6. The Exalted Nature Of Devotion

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Devotion is the key to the spiritual path,
And vital for sailing across the ocean of life;
Devotion heightens the yearning for divinity,
And is the stepping stone for liberation.

Embodiments of Love! Students, Boys and Girls!

This land Bharat has eloquently proclaimed through the ages the virtues of bhakti or devotion. Devotion does not merely mean the observance of rituals, the performance of penance, or meditation.

Devotion really means sincere and intense love for the Lord. It implies pure and steady love, untainted by any selfish desires or action. Such love knows no boundaries and is beyond all regulations. The spontaneous outflow of selfless love from man to God is true bhakti. Love admixed with worldly desires cannot be called devotion. The only desire one must have is for God; all other desires must be set aside, and nothing must be allowed to come between oneself and God. The love coming from the devotee's heart must flow unimpeded to God. love for God must be totally impervious to the vicissitudes of life.

Constantly meditate on the Lord

Dharmaja, the eldest among the Pandavas, is one example of a person who was able to achieve this kind of one-pointed devotion. He remained unruffled even when his wife Draupadi was being subjected to extreme humiliation in the royal court.

Similarly, when Abhimanyu the son of Arjuna was slain in the battle,

Dharmaja accepted the verdict of destiny with perfect equanimity. He remained equally calm when Aswatthama the son of Dronacharya mercilessly slaughtered all the Pandava offsprings.

Nor was he bothered when he and his brothers had to spend long years in exile in the forest, foregoing all the royal comforts they were used to. All this was possible for Dharmaja because his mind was ever absorbed in the contemplation of Krishna. He was constantly thinking of Krishna, always chanting His Name, and was generally oblivious to what was going on around him.

Dharmaja was not alone in such one-pointed devotion. His wife Draupadi also thought of Krishna incessantly and constantly chanted His Name. After the gruesome murder of the young Pandava children, Arjuna tracked Aswatthama the perpetrator of the atrocity and dragged him before Draupadi. And what did she do on that occasion? Did she curse the murderer? Did she explode in fury? No; with great forbearance she said to Aswatthama:

These children were at home
And did not enter the battlefield;
Nor did they hunt and kill;
They were just tiny tots,
Devoid of all ill feelings.
Why then did you cruelly strike them,
And in the darkness of night slaughter them?
They were the children of Dronacharya's disciples,
That very same Drona, Who was also your father and guru.
Can you truthfully declare,
That what you did was right?

Bhima could not bear to see what Draupadi was doing. Here was Aswatthama waiting to be dealt with severely for his dastardly act, and Draupadi was

trying to reason with this evil monster!

Exploding in anger, Bhima roared:
Here is this demon,
Who has slaughtered our children,
And this foolish woman,
Is trying to reason with him!
Should the murderer be spared,
Or dealt with as he deserves?
If no one is willing to punish him,
I shall with bare hands,
Crush him to pulp!

Consumed by fury, most of the Pandavas were about to jump on Aswatthama. Draupadi raised her hand and said, "Stop, you should not kill or harm this person."

O Partha! It is wrong to kill
One who is afraid,
One whom courage has abandoned,
One who is asleep,
One who is intoxicated,
One who seeks refuge,
And finally, a woman.

"You should not kill Aswatthama, for he is your preceptor's son. Just shave his head off as a token punishment and set him free."

This is how Draupadi reacted to the situation; she did not have the slightest hatred for one who mercilessly wiped out all the Pandava offsprings. Among

the Pandavas, Dharmaja and Draupadi were two precious gems. It is their constant con-templation of Krishna that enabled them to face all odds with equanimity and display magnanimity as well as forbearance, under the most trying of circumstances.

Draupadi constantly chanted:

Kleem, Krishnaya, Govindaya, Gopijana Vallabhaya, Swaha!

This sacred chant has deep significance. Kleem stands for prithvi or earth. Krishnaya means jala or water. Similarly, Govindaya is a reference to agni or fire. Likewise, the other words refer respectively to vayu or air, and akasha or ether. In short, the words of this sacred chant refer to the five elements.

Through this chant, Draupadi proclaimed her belief that Krishna the Supreme was not only immanent in all the elements, but was Himself the elements. This was the profound way in which both Dharmaja and Draupadi meditated on Krishna. Krishna was everything and He was also Perfect. Therefore, no matter what the circumstance, He was beyond both criticism and reproach. Such are the shining examples of devotion available to us in Bharatiya Culture.

The ideal offerings to God

True devotion is not bound by rituals, set procedures, and prescribed forms. It is exemplified by the flood of tears that originate from the ocean of love in your heart. The Gita talks about various offerings to the Lord like patram (leaf), pushpam (flower), phalam (fruit), and toyam (water). These words should not be taken literally. By leaf, the Lord does not mean the tulsi or the bilva leaf normally used in ritualistic worship. Truly speaking, the human body is the leaf that must be offered to the Lord. Like the leaf of the tree, the

human body too would one day die and decay. No one can say when that will happen. Before such a fate befalls, the body in its fullness, freshness, and purity, ought to be offered to the Lord with the words:

Oh Lord! This body gifted by You,
I reverentially offer back unto You,
Treating it as a leaf,
And in the spirit in which tulsi leaves are offered.

Why is this leaf called the body special? Because it is not the sort of leaf that would dry up in just a day or two. You must say with feeling, "Lord, I don't know what kind of leaf would please You.

I have this body, and I offer it to You. Please treat it as a leaf and accept it." Next, flower. You must say, Oh God who has gifted me a heart, That same heart I offer back unto You Along with my humble salutations; What else is there to offer?

The flower of your heart is what would please the Lord most and not the flowers purchased from the bazar. The bazar flowers fade in a few hours but the heart is not like that. Totally pure, fragrant, soaked in love, and perfect, it does not wither easily.

After this, fruit. What fruit would please God? Is it apple, orange, mango, or something else? God is not interested in fruits that grow on a tree; He is interested in your mind! Mind therefore is the fruit that must be offered to the Lord. Lastly, water. Is it tap water, well water, or Ganges water that the Lord wants from you? None of these. What God expects are the tears of joy that flow when your Heart is full of love for Him. These then are the offerings that the Lord expects when you worship Him.

God can be secured with Love alone

Sathyabhama [one of the consorts of Krishna] once got the idea that using her wealth, she could secure Krishna exclusively for herself. Can God be ever bought for money? No! Love alone can get Him; but Sathyabhama did not appreciate this. Sage Narada appeared on the scene at this stage, and the matter was placed before him. Narada is the one who imparts Wisdom.

Wanting to teach Sathyabhama a lesson, he decided to stage a small drama. He asked for a big balance to be brought, and then invited Krishna to sit on one of the pans. Krishna of course knew very well what Narada was up to, and smilingly obliged the sage.

Narada then asked Sathyabhama to place gold on the other pan.

But lo and behold! No matter how much gold was placed on the other pan, the scale refused to become even. Sathyabhama felt utterly frustrated. Seeking advice, she went to Rukmini [the other consort of Krishna], who at that time was engaged in the worship of Tulsi.

After hearing what Sathyabhama had to say, Rukmini remarked, "God belongs to all and resides in every being as the Eternal Indweller. No one can have a monopoly of God, nor is it good to even entertain such a desire."

The gold was then removed and Narada now asked Rukmini to try and somehow match Krishna's weight.

Rukmini replied, "O sage, I believe Krishna's Form can be balanced just by uttering His Name, and that is what I am going to do."

Narada was not prepared to accept such a scheme and said, "The Form is visible and tangible whereas the Name is not. I want you to match Krishna's Form with something that has a form."

Rukmini agreed. She took a tulsi leaf in her hand and prayed:

O God, Who is worshipped with leaf, flowers, fruits, and water,
If it be true that You submit Yourself
When You are offered Pure Love instead of all these,
I pray that You be balanced by Your Name,
And then tilt the scale with this tulsi leaf.

So praying, Rukmini said, "Krishna!" Immediately the scale became even, although one of the pans was totally empty.

Rukmini then placed the tulsi leaf on the empty pan, and the pan carrying Krishna went up instantly; the Lord had been more than matched!

This story teaches that the Lord submits Himself only to pure devotion; He cannot be obtained in any other way; least of all, He cannot ever be bought! There is nothing greater than pure bhakti, which is why it is given such an exalted status in Bharatiya culture. Our ancients held that devotion is more precious and valuable than all the material wealth one can dream of. It is this wealth that man should really seek instead of gold. In fact, it is the bounden duty of man to acquire this wealth; and he does not have to go far to seek it, for this treasure is already locked up within him.

The chakras and their significance

In every human being there are seven chakras or centres of psychic power, Shad chakras as they are called. These chakras have been interpreted in various ways. Among these, the two most important ones are the hridaya chakra and the sahasrara chakra. They are described as being special kind of lotus flowers, the former having eight radiant petals, and the latter a thousand petals. It is said that a thorough understanding of the principles underlying these two chakras would facilitate the attainment of divinity. The flower of the heart represents God, while each petal of the sahasrara represents sixteen aspects of Divinity. Thus, the thousand petals of sahasrara

represent in all, sixteen thousand aspects of Divinity. The sixteen thousand gopikas (cowherd maids) that the scriptures talk about represent nothing but sixteen thousand variants of Divinity. They say that one gets liberated when one ascends from the hridaya chakra to the sahasrara chakra. What does this really mean? Simply this: Just as the petals dissolve their individual identity and merge together to form a radiant flower, the gopikas merged into the Omnipresent, Omnipotent, and Omniscient God. The coming together of the gopikas and God is, in the chakra language, the coming together of the two important chakras mentioned earlier. God is the Ultimate Divine Master, and everything in creation belongs to Him. All beings are His property. The sahasrara flower [representing the mind] is His property, and it must be offered to Him alone. The Ramayana provides an illustration.

Sita is the daughter of Mother Earth and the consort of Rama - this is as far as the Ramayana is concerned. In spiritual terms, Rama is Paramatma (God) and Sita is prakriti (nature). Nature was created by God and belongs to God. In the Ramayana, this is symbolised by the marriage of Sita and Rama; this marriage represents the eternal unity and the inseparable nature of God and His Creation. Ravana, who did not understand all these subtleties, tried to abduct Sita and paid dearly for it.

Toward the end, Ravana's wife Mandodari said, "Ravana, Sri Rama is God Himself and Sita is the embodiment of Mother Supreme. You have committed a heinous crime in abducting Sita. What right do you have to take away what belongs to someone else? Repent at least now for what you have done. Go to Rama, fall at His Feet, seek His pardon, and restore Sita back to Him." But alas, when disaster beckons, the mind gets perverted; so Ravana ignored Mandodari's advice and later paid the price for his rashness.

Being aspects of Divinity, the gopikas were the property of God.

Through their lives they demonstrated how God and His property became one. In a subtle sense, the sahasrara with thousand petals and representing sixteen-thousand Divine aspects is derived from the hridaya. The petals and the flower are not separate. The sahasrara is the Mind and the hridaya is God.

The enormous powers of the mind belong to God, and they cannot be appropriated as one wishes. Dissolving one's ego, the mind must, in its entirety, be offered to God. It is this principle that is described by way of the chakras on the one hand, and through the gopikas on the other. The yogis and rishis of yore understood all this and tried to elevate themselves so that the two chakras came together. This is described as ascending from the hridaya chakra to the sahasrara chakra. It implies the unification of the mind and the heart. Why were the rishis so particular about this unification? Because this union led to Infinite Bliss. Happiness is union with God. The heart is the seat of God, and the mind is born of the heart. Thus the mind is the property of the heart.

When the Master and His property are united there is Bliss.

Krishna created the gopikas and enacted a drama involving them in order to demonstrate how one must relentlessly go in quest of God. The gopikas recognised Krishna as Divine and described Him in numerous ways. When they were separated from Krishna, they became very depressed. Life without Krishna seemed totally empty and meaningless. In their hearts they prayed, "O Krishna, won't You come and visit us at least once?" Krishna eventually responded to their prayers and came. Pangs of separation had by this time reduced the gopikas to skin and bones. They were beyond hunger and thirst. Krishna saw their pitiable condition and said, "You should not starve like this. Eat something." They replied, "Krishna, our food is the melody of Your flute. We know no food other than Your music." Radha added:

O Krishna! Sing please a sweet song,
And fill our hearts
With nectarine words and Bliss.
Distil the essence of the Vedas,
Transform it into lilting music,
Play it on Your enchanting flute,
And captivate us with Your melody.

Sing, O Krishna! Sing for us!!

This is the way Radha appealed to Krishna. Krishna then picked up a bamboo twig, made it into a flute, and played music for the gopikas. Radha was transported to the height of ecstasy and said, "Krishna, this is the moment I have been waiting for so long.

I am now full." So saying she gave up her body and merged into Krishna. After this incident, Krishna never again touched the flute.

God's response depends upon how much you yearn

God offers Himself to His devotees in exactly the same manner in which devotees offer themselves to Him.

Yad bhavam tad bhavati.
As you feel, so you become.

If you constantly cry out, "O God, O Most Loving God," He responds by saying, "O My devotee, My dearest devotee." (Applause.) God has no thought other than for His devotee. If the devotee always thinks of God, then God too will always be thinking of the devotee. No one can come between the two. The Pandavas demonstrated this to the world. They had to face innumerable difficulties, humiliation, and suffering but, in the midst of all their travails, they never forgot Krishna. They always said, "Krishna's glorious Name is our food, water, and nectar." It is by such thoughts that they sanctified their time. For them, Krishna was always first; everything else came later.

For the Kauravas on the other hand, the priorities were radically different. For them, Kauravas first, relatives next, and Krishna last. They left Krishna and in the process got lost! This shows the importance of having God as priority

number one. In the priority list, the world must come only after God. How can there be a world without God? God is Eternal whereas the world comes and goes; that is why it is called jagat; jagat = ja + gat; it comes and goes. Your focus must always be on the permanent and not on the temporary. Then alone can you become Immortal.

Embodiments of Love! It is not enough to merely do japam (ritualistic chant of the Name), and dhyanam (meditation). You must in addition have a deep yearning for the Lord for He alone is Eternal and Permanent. It is from Him alone that you can get Eternal Bliss. Do not go after ephemeral pleasures. Do not be deluded by false attractions. The world is transient and all the pleasures it can offer are fleeting too. That is why in the Gita it is said:

Anityam asukham lokam.
The world is illusory and full of miseries too.
Imam prapya bhajasva Mam.
Constantly pray to Me.

The world comes and goes, whereas God is always there. He neither comes nor goes; He neither makes an entry nor an exit, for He is ever present. That is why the gopikas always thought of Krishna and were constantly praying to Him.

It is impossible for anyone to describe even in a small measure the Love of God or His Sweetness. The more you describe, the more you feel these are indescribable. How can anyone describe the Infinite? One must instead be absorbed in the contemplation of the Glory of God, which is what the Pandavas did; and that is why Krishna was prepared to do anything for them.

Examples of Krishna's compassion

Once during their exile, Dharmaja and Draupadi were walking through the

forest when Draupadi saw a huge fruit on a tree. She wanted to have the fruit since it could make a sumptuous meal for all of them. Arjuna happened to come by and, responding to Draupadi's wish, brought the fruit down by shooting an arrow.

He then tried to lift the fruit but could not; it was very heavy. Dharmaja and Draupadi gave a helping hand but the three of them together still could not lift the fruit. Then Dharmaja said:

"O Krishna, not a blade of grass can move without Your will;
Is it necessary to mention all the details?
From the tiny ant to the vast galaxies,
It is You who pervade and prevail everywhere.
The ignorant do not realise this,
And arrogantly imagine,
That it is their intelligence that makes the world go.
Clever and intelligent they might be,
But can they forecast what will happen when?
O Krishna, nothing can happen without Your divine Will."

Meanwhile, Bhima, Nakula, and Sahadeva arrived on the spot.

The arrival of Bhima was greeted with joy for he was the mighty one and could be depended upon to lift the fruit. Bhima tried at first quite casually, using just one hand; but the fruit would not budge. Realising that it was not such a simple matter, Bhima then made a serious try using both his hands but no luck once again.

All six then tried to heave the fruit but still it was of no use.

Now there is a story behind this unusual fruit. In this forest there lived a rishi named Roma Rishi - this name means the one with long hair. It was he who

had nursed this tree and was doing intense penance to attain the fruit. This fruit was known as amrutaphala, by eating which one would be for ever free from hunger and thirst. That was why Roma Rishi was keen on having it. Seated in meditation, the rishi sensed that some intruders were trying to take the fruit away. His long sprawling hair then automatically started extending in search of the culprits; once the culprits were located, the hair would tie them down. Draupadi was frightened by the approaching coils of hair.

She prayed, "O Krishna who saves us all the time, You must come to our rescue once more. We have no refuge other than You."

Krishna promptly arrived on the scene, smiling as usual. He enquired, "Sister, why are you crying? You wanted the fruit; you have got it; now go ahead and enjoy it!"

Draupadi replied, "Krishna, I desired the fruit without realising the implications. We are humans and cannot be expected to be aware of supernatural consequences. You must save us now."

Krishna then said, "Draupadi, My hands are tied. The rishis too love Me, and they are constantly thinking of Me. I am installed in their hearts, so I am obliged to them also!"

Though Krishna appeared to be wriggling out, was He the one to give up the Pandavas so easily? No, and He came up with a neat trick that would save the Pandavas from the wrath of Roma Rishi. Whatever God does or says is always for the benefit of His devotees; He is never driven by personal or selfish considerations.

Krishna said, "Now all of you, Draupadi included, go to the hermitage of Roma Rishi and pay your respects to the Saint. Don't be afraid. Just go there, and I shall follow soon. Whatever happens, remain tight-lipped, especially after I arrive. Be careful and remain silent throughout."

The Pandavas went to the hermitage in accordance with Krishna's Master

plan. There they found the rishi fuming and all set to curse. Angrily the rishi asked the Pandavas, "Who are you and where do you come from?" Precisely at that moment, Krishna entered the hut of the rishi. Roma Rishi hastened to welcome Krishna and said, "Lord, how lucky and fortunate am I to have You visit my humble abode!" The sage was bubbling with joy.

Meanwhile, Krishna appeared to be surprised to see the Pandavas there. Instantly He started prostrating most reverentially before them one by one. He even fell at the feet of Draupadi. The rishi was stunned to see all this.

He said to himself: "Krishna is verily God, and He is prostrating before these people. Does that mean that these people are even greater than God?" But he did not spend too much time analysing what was going on. Obviously the visitors must be exalted ones. So, following Krishna's example, he too started falling at the feet of the Pandavas one by one.

Having prostrated, he could no longer curse them! That was just not done - one does not curse those to whom salutation has been offered. The rishi's anger quickly came down, even as Krishna was chanting santhi.

Incidentally, Santhi is always chanted three times. Do you know why? Because one wants peace at the level of the body, mind, and soul.

The rishi then asked Krishna, "Lord, what is all this mystery? There is none greater than You and yet, You are prostrating before these humans! What is the inner significance of this?"

Krishna smiled and replied, "O Noble One, I dwell in the minds of My devotees. I am the captive of My devotees. These Pandavas have extraordinary devotion for Me. No matter what the circumstance, they never forget Me. I am under the control of such devotees!"

The sage realised the greatness of the Pandavas and said, "Please take this fruit; I do not need it." The rishi then wished them all a long life; not just a

long life but a long, long life, happy life, and a peaceful life!

Sure enough the Pandavas were happy till the very end. With this particular episode, God taught an important lesson to humanity. If you have steady devotion for God, there is nothing that cannot be accomplished. God Himself would come running forward to help you. Numerous such incidents occurred during the incarnation of God as Krishna.

Here is another example of Krishna's limitless compassion. On the ninth day of the Kurukshetra war, Bhishma took a terrible vow to exterminate all the Pandavas before sunset the next day.

Draupadi came to know of this and became highly perturbed. She said to Krishna, "O Lord, this must not happen. You have to do something. I don't know how, but You must make sure that I do not become a widow."

Krishna smiled and was non-committal.

He just said, "Wait and see what happens." God may appear noncommittal but when you appeal to Him with deep sincerity, He will certainly respond.

Night came, and quiet descended on the battlefield, everyone having withdrawn to their respective quarters. In his tent, Bhishma was restless and was pacing to and fro.

Meanwhile Krishna came to Draupadi and said, "This is the moment. Bhishma is unable to sleep and is pacing back and forth in his tent. He is regretting the vow he has taken. You must slip into his tent this very moment and throw yourself at his feet."

Draupadi nodded and started moving toward Bhishma's tent. She was wearing special slippers used by royalty, that made a squeaking noise. The noise could be clearly heard in the stillness of the night.

Krishna signalled to Draupadi to stop and said, "If Bhishma hears this sound,

he would know that a lady is coming. He should not know about your approach.

So remove your sandals and give them to Me." Draupadi did as instructed. Krishna collected the slippers, wrapped them in His upper cloth, and started walking behind Draupadi, some distance away.

Quietly, Draupadi slipped into Bhishma's tent. Absorbed as he was in thought, Bhishma did not notice her entrance. Immediately upon entry, Draupadi threw herself at the feet of Bhishma. As she did so, the bangles in her hand made a sound. Bhishma heard the sound and realised that a lady was prostrating before him.

Without a second thought, he blessed the lady in the traditional manner, "May you have a long and happy married life."

Draupadi was happy when she heard the benediction. She said, "This is enough for me," and rose. It was then that Bhishma realised whom he had blessed. He exclaimed, "What! You, here at this time?! Who brought you here?" Draupadi replied, "Who else but Krishna?! He is the One who suggested this strategy to prevent the slaughter of my husbands. You have blessed me with a long and happy married life and so you now have to spare my husbands!"

Precisely at that moment, Krishna entered. Bhishma was happy about the turn of events, though it meant going back on his vow.

The Pandavas were ideal men and great devotees of the Lord. God in His Infinite Mercy had staged a drama as a result of which the Pandavas were now secure.

Bhishma was tired, having paced up and down for a long time.

He sat down and said, "Krishna, have You brought any eatables for me? You seem to have a bundle slung on Your shoulder. Why don't You open it and

give me some of the food it contains?"

Krishna smiled and said, "Do you think it is My job to bring food for you? This bundle does not contain food but the sandals of Draupadi. I carried them so that there was no sound when Draupadi entered your tent."

Krishna then opened the bundle and the sandals fell on the ground. Tears flooded Bhishma's eyes.

In a voice choked with emotion he said, "Lord, there is no limit to the extent You are prepared to go in order to save Your devotees!"

The Avatar is beyond petty worldly considerations and, where devotees are involved, no task is too mean or lowly for Him.

He will do what has to be done, anytime, any place. Protection and the welfare of devotees is His priority number one. Krishna always protected the Pandavas and they, for their part, worshipped Krishna with great feeling. Krishna's Name was always on their lips. The Lord was ever uppermost in their minds. The feeling was mutual, and Krishna too constantly concerned Himself with the welfare of the Pandavas. As is the sound, so is the resound. The Lord's yearning for the devotee matches the yearning the devotee has for the Lord. God is inscrutable. People think: "How can God do such lowly things?!" God does not have such distinctions or gradations. For the welfare of His devotees, God is prepared to do anything. Without devotees, where is God?! God's greatness and noble acts are all due to devotees.

The magnetism of Sai's prema!

So many of you have gathered here. Why have you all come?

There is only one reason for this. You have come for that which is not in you, that which cannot be got at home, that which is not available in your village or town, or even country. What is that?

Pure Divine Love, or Sai's prema! That is the reason why all of you have come, and not because someone invited you [loud applause]. That which you don't have is Sai's prema or selfless love! That which you cannot get in your village, town or country is Sai's prema! That love is available only here and it is in search of that you all have come! In short, you have come here in search of something that you desperately want but cannot get anywhere else. Having come in such a quest, collect all that you can before you return. Fill your hearts with this divine love. Without devotees, where is Baba? And without Baba, where are the devotees?! There is an unbreakable bond between Baba and His devotees. The two are inseparable and inter-dependent. Devotees are Baba's very life. Likewise, Baba is the very life of His devotees. The two lives have the same breath. If you thoroughly grasp this principle, then, wherever you are, you will always enjoy Baba's protection.

Those who are firm and steadfast in their devotion will never face any troubles or difficulties. Surely, you must have heard or read many stories that illustrate that those who repose full faith in God and are always pure, never come to any harm. You must have pure, unsullied, and steadfast devotion.

Your heart must stand firm like a rock. There are rocks on many seashores. Huge waves constantly dash against these rocks but the rocks remain firm. Waves repeatedly bash the rocks but they do not give way. Your heart must be like those boulders on the oceanfront. You may be constantly bombarded by worldly problems, but your faith in God must remain firm like a rock.

That is true devotion.

Embodiments of Love! You can give up everything but never give up God! Never forget God! Engrave this lesson in your hearts.

God is your most assured insurance and source of protection.

At the conclusion of the discourse, Bhagavan sang the lively bhajan, "Subrahmanyam ...", at a vigorous tempo!

7. God Is The Only True Friend

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The Supreme Self is the same as the Individual Self,
The Individual Self is also divine.
He who realises this unity,
Is truly enlightened.

Embodiments of Love!

There is only one divine principle

Students!

Human life is hard to obtain. One may ask: "How can one assert that Divinity is latent in the human being?" The Gita is the authority. It declares:

Mamatma Sarvabhutantaratma.
(I the Universal Spirit am present in all beings).

The Lord's declaration is the proof, if any is needed. Krishna says, "I am present in all beings." It means that the Universal Spirit or the Lord is present in all beings as the Prime Motivator. Man alone has the capacity to recognise the latency of the Divine within; other beings do not have this capability. That is the reason why human life is regarded as a precious gift to be used carefully.

Man is enveloped by five *kosas* or sheaths. They are: *annamaya kosa* (food sheath), *pranamaya kosa* (life sheath), *manomaya kosa* (mind sheath),

vijnanamaya kosha (sheath of wisdom), and *anandamaya kosa* (sheath of Bliss). Whereas other beings can at best reach out to three kosas, man can easily go to the fourth and even beyond, if he makes the effort. This is what makes man so superior. It is through wisdom that man can perceive the underlying unity between the individual Self and the Universal Self.

If this capability is not an expression of the Divinity within, then what else is it?

All beings are subject to moha or attachment but man is capable of breaking away and attaining *moksha* or liberation.

This capacity for the transition from moha to moksha is once again an expression of the divine force within. Although divine capability finds greater expression in man than in other beings, Divinity is actually latent in all things in the Universe. It is this Omnipresence that provides a powerful undercurrent of unity to the otherwise apparent and bewildering diversity. What the eyes see is superficial; that which is True lies beneath.

Maya or delusion arises on account of the three *gunas* (intrinsic tendencies), namely, the *satva guna* (gentleness), the *rajo guna* (aggression), and the *tamo guna* (torpor). Maya leads to moha or attachment, which is of three kinds - *dhaneshana* (attachment to wealth), *dhareshana* (attachment to wife), and *putreshana* (attachment to one's progeny). One who transcends the three gunas, is totally free from both delusion as well as attachment.

Clearly, therefore, if you want to be rid of attachment, you have to go beyond the three gunas. So long as you are in the grip of the gunas, you cannot escape maya and moha. The Gita says:

Achalam Chameva Cha.

God is both mobile and immobile; these two aspects of mobility and immobility are present in all living creatures.

When a pot is immersed in water, there is water in the pot as well as outside the pot. In the same way, God is not only in you but also above you, below you and behind you. That is why the Vedas declare:

Antarbahisca Tatsarvam Vyapya Narayanassthitah.
The Lord is present within, without, and everywhere.

When an iron rod is placed in the fire, it gets hot. The heat is everywhere; it is present in the rod as well as the fire. In the same way, the same God is present in man as well as in the whole world surrounding him. There are not two Gods or two divine principles in action.

There is only one God and only one divine principle. That which is latent within, is seen as a reflection without. That is why Swami often says that the world is merely a reflection of the Inner Being. If there is no reality within, how can there be a reflection outside? How can one say the world is real and deny the Indweller? Reality is within, and it is seen as a reflection outside.

In the same manner, action originates from within while reaction comes from outside. Total Reality is a composite of everything within and everything outside. Rishis of yore grasped this truth and proclaimed it to the entire world. It is such teachings of truth that helped ordinary people of those days to rise to exalted levels.

Ancient teachings are full of inner significance. They are not commonplace instructions relating to the phenomenal but keys to Inner Wisdom.

You must yearn for liberation

A long time ago, the population of the world was just one billion, while today

it is five to six billion. The population has swelled but the desire for liberation has sharply declined. In ancient times, most people pined for liberation; the percentage was as high as seventy-five but today, not even twenty percent want liberation.

Why? Because the emphasis is on the quest for worldly knowledge.

Such knowledge drives people toward worldly pursuits and a million ways of making money. In one manner or the other, all of today's education is aimed at making a living rather than life itself, and the fundamental purpose of human existence.

How can education that caters to the stomach produce in the Heart a yearning for liberation? Modern education promotes only *mohapeksha* (craving for worldly things) instead of *mokshapeksha* (desire for liberation). In olden times, students controlled their desires and reduced their worldly wants, increasing instead the desire for liberation. What is the meaning of worldly desires?

It means craving for the supposedly good things that are available in the external world, the sort of things that the birds and the beasts go after. Is it for seeking these that one goes through school and college? Does one have to work so hard to attain these? Our ancients recognised the futility of such pursuits and instead directed their attention to more purposeful goals. Modern educational system has totally inverted the priorities. What our ancients shunned, has now become priority number one. Such is the perversion of today's education!

Gratitude to the guru

In those days, there was gratitude to those who showed the right path. Students never failed to prostrate before their guru, and they gave expression to their gratitude in many ways. Whatever the guru wanted was given unhesitatingly and with much love.

The preceptors sacrificed much for their disciples, and, for their part, the disciples were not far behind either, in the matter of sacrifice. What about the students of today?

They are ready to injure those who feed them.
They will ridicule those who teach them.
And they will not hesitate to harm those who help them.

Such are the fall-outs of modern education, which is supposed to be so advanced. Students of olden days were humble and obedient to their gurus. The tribal boy Ekalavya provides the classic example.

Ekalavya adopted the celebrated Dronacharya as his guru, even though the latter refused to accept Ekalavya as his pupil. Ekalavya never received any instructions in archery from his adopted guru; yet, there was never any doubt in his mind that Drona was his guru. He became an archer par excellence through self-effort.

One day, Drona took his favourite disciple Arjuna into the forest.

They took a hunting dog along with them. On spotting a wild animal, the dog started barking. All of a sudden, Arjuna found five-six arrows coming from somewhere and piercing the mouth of the dog. The person who shot the arrows was none other than Ekalavya. Though he could not see the dog, guided by the barking sound, he shot the arrows one after the other that found the target. They both were stunned. They then started searching for the archer and soon located Ekalavya.

Arjuna asked the tribal boy, "Who is your guru?" Ekalavya pointed to Drona and said, "He is my guru."

Drona angrily said, "I am not your guru. I never taught you anything."

Ekalavya replied, "Sir, that may be, but in my mind I adopted you as my guru. For me, there is none other. My respect and devotion for you have enabled me to acquire all skills, even though you personally never taught me. I have learnt it all from within."

In those days, there were no books and all instructions were by word of mouth. Word was therefore considered very sacred. In Sanskrit, *Aksharam* means word but it also means Imperishable, a term used for God. Thus, Word is God!

Dronacharya was unhappy to see another archer whose skill was greater than that of his favourite student Arjuna. Wanting to ensure that Arjuna was number one and that there was none to excel him, Drona told Ekalavya, "If I am your guru, then what about my *gurudakshina* (fees paid to the teacher)?"

Ekalavya replied, "Master, what is it that you want?"

Without the slightest trace of magnanimity, Drona angrily demanded, "I want your right thumb as my payment."

Drona knew that without the thumb, Ekalavya's career as an archer would be finished; and automatically, Arjuna would move to the number one position. On hearing Drona's demand, Ekalavya pulled out his knife, cut his thumb off without any hesitation whatsoever, and offered it as *gurudakshina*.

Giving up the vital thumb,
He ceased to be an archer.
Disabling himself as a mark of respect,
He surrendered his very skills as a token of gratitude.

Such was the spirit of gratitude amongst disciples in those days.

For the sake of their gurus, they were ready to sacrifice anything, including their lives. Just compare this with what is happening to day! Both the teacher and the student are found wanting.

The teacher stretches his hand out for money even before the instruction is complete. The student is regarded as a source of income rather than as a responsibility. In olden times, things were different. The guru not merely had affection for his disciples but actually looked upon them as his own sons. Drona, however, was an exception to this noble tradition, having most disgracefully betrayed the trust placed in him by Ekalavya who was not even formally enrolled with him. Would Drona have done such a thing to his son?

Yad bhavam tad bhavati.

As the action, so is the consequence.

In due course, Drona had to pay for his cruelty. As the action, so is the reaction. No one can escape the inexorable law of reflection, reaction, and resound.

The ideal friend

Students!

You should not be immersed in books all the time; you must be virtuous and also do service to your teachers in such a manner that would please them. In every human relationship, there should be balance and parity. At one time, the brothers Vali and Sugriva were inseparable; but enmity developed and they parted company. While Vali remained in his place, Sugriva hid himself in the mountains to avoid Vali's wrath. Sugriva was all the time wondering how he could overcome his brother, now his enemy. Vali was very strong and powerful and could be defeated only by one who was more powerful than him. Sugriva consulted his companion Hanuman for advice and the latter

suggested that Sugriva should be patient; time would show the way.

One day, while Sugriva and Hanuman were wandering in the hills, they spotted two people in the distance. There was an extra-ordinary radiance about them. It appeared as if they had descended from the very Heavens. Sugriva asked Hanuman to investigate and ascertain who those two were. He said, "Find out if these two are Vali's agents who have come in disguise."

Clearly, Sugriva's observation was a reflection of his inner fear; otherwise, how could he have made such a statement, considering that the strangers had a distinct divine aura about them?

Hanuman replied, "To me these two look divine. Anyway, I shall go and investigate."

Coming down from the mountain, Hanuman approached the two effulgent strangers, who were none other than Rama and Lakshmana.

Rama introduced Himself and said, "We are the sons of Emperor Dasaratha, presently in the forest in exile. Recently someone abducted My wife Sita, and we are wandering about in search of her."

A king should always speak the truth, and Rama did what a king ought to.

Hastasya bhusanam danam.

Kanthasya bhusanam satyam.

Charity is the ornament for the hand. Truth is the ideal necklace.

Listening to sacred words is the jewel that should adorn the ear.

What more ornaments do you need? Every word uttered must be true.

He is mighty, who always adheres to truth.

Hanuman told Rama, "Lord, I shall take you both to my King Sugriva who lives

over there. Kindly tell him your problem, and he might be able to help."

Carrying Rama and Lakshmana on his shoulders, Hanuman leapt over the hills and landed where Sugriva was. Seeing the two brothers, Sugriva forgot all his problems and became ecstatic. Beaming, he said to Rama, "Lord, You must be tired. Kindly rest here for a while, and partake of these fruits.

There is also some cold and refreshing water for You to drink; have some of that also please."

But Rama and Lakshmana were not interested either in rest or in food. Sugriva sensed the power latent in Rama and was eager to befriend Him. Now what sort of a friend should one have? Not the one who feigns loyalty but betrays with cunningness; not the one who speaks sweetly but never matches words with action. He alone is fit to be called a friend who swears by truth. True friendship implies one breath though there are two bodies involved. Sugriva wanted such a friend so that with his help he could overcome Vali.

Sugriva wondered: "Is Rama strong enough to overcome Vali?"

He decided to check up Rama's power and capability. On the following day, Sugriva took Rama to a huge fig tree and said, "Rama do you know what tree this is? It is a jungle tree that grows to a big size and is very strong. There are six trees in a row here. Once my brother Vali shot an arrow that pierced through not just one but two trees. I am on the lookout for someone who can excel that feat." Sugriva then requested Rama to despatch an arrow and the latter obliged. Rama's arrow went through not just two trees but all the six of them and flew beyond to a great distance. Sugriva immediately prostrated at the feet of Rama and declared, "You are the friend I have been looking for all along."

Who was this friend that Sugriva had found? He was the very Lord Himself! The friendship between Rama and Sugriva was formally solemnised with fire as the sacred witness.

Sugriva then said, "Rama, from today I am Your servant while You are my master and preceptor. Please relieve me of my sufferings, give me courage, and lead me to victory over my brother."

Rama kept His promise to Sugriva and killed Vali. This story teaches that if you are looking for a friend to help you, then that friend must be stronger than your adversaries. In life, obstacles are the main adversaries, and the only friend who can help you across is God; He is the only True Friend.

Lack of virtues leads to doubts

Doubts readily spring to the mind of the worldly wise. They may be clever and intelligent where worldly matters are concerned but pretty dumb where real discrimination is required. Sugriva was one such person. In his heart he felt that Rama was divine; yet, he had to test Rama's skill in archery - there were doubts in his mind; the mind and the heart were not in harmony. Hanuman provides a striking contrast to Sugriva in such matters. From the moment he first set eyes on Rama, there was never even an iota of doubt that Rama was God Himself. It is the so-called educated ones who become plagued with all sorts of doubts. This is what is happening today. Man is totally preoccupied with the acquisition of worldly skills and worldly knowledge, completely ignoring basic values and the necessity for the cultivation of virtues.

Modern education may make you clever,
But it would never help develop character.
Education that does not foster virtues leads to [spiritual] blindness.

Can you afford to be blind? No! Without virtues and the Grace of God, you cannot really achieve anything. Karna was rich, strong, and powerful, but he distanced himself from dharma and Krishna. What is the use of wealth and skills if you do not have the Grace of God?

Slave he becomes,
Who does not have the support of God.

This mighty Karna, who had many good qualities, did not submit himself to God. He refused to become a servant of Krishna. If you fail to serve God, all the intelligence you might possess is of no value. In fact, the intelligence then gets misused. Since Karna spurned Krishna, he eventually fell in battle despite his strength and physical prowess. One must always strive to earn the protection of dharma and the Grace of God. You become strong only when you harmonise your activities with divinity.

When the goal and God go together, there victory is assured.

Students! Boys and girls!

It is not enough if you just immerse yourselves in text books. Study of these books and the acquisition of secular knowledge are no doubt required. However, all such knowledge is totally useless without the support and the backing of devotion to God. Devotion is the foundation. All forms of worldly and physical power are useless if they are not based on devotion for God.

If character is gone, everything is gone

The story of Ekalavya illustrates how sacred and pure were students in ancient times. Pure and divine feelings must radiate from every heart, which is possible only when virtues and character are present.

All of you are aware of Prahlada. He was a student just like you, in fact much younger in age. What extraordinary character he possessed, even at that age! Thanks to this blessing, in later life he was able to achieve much success and victory. He could even vanquish Indra, the chief of the devas or demi-gods.

Indra became depressed by his defeat and began exploring all possibilities for regaining his kingdom.

One day, the preceptor of the devas summoned Indra and said, "Pahlada is presently performing the sacred ritual called Viswajit. On such occasions, gifts are given as charity. You must present yourself before Pahlada, and ask for his character as a gift. You will then be able to regain your kingdom." Indra got the hint. Disguising himself as a brahmin, Indra went to the court of Pahlada.

The latter was impressed with the brahmin and asked, "Sir, what is it that you would like to have?"

Indra [posing as a brahmin] replied, "O King! I want very little. Just give me your character."

A surprised Pahlada said, "That I can easily give but you should really ask for something more substantial. I am ready to give you anything you want. Why then are you prepared to settle for something so little?"

The cunning Indra replied, "For me, this small thing is enough. I do not want much."

Pahlada said, "As you wish." Immediately, Pahlada's character peeled off and merged in Indra. Pahlada did not seem to be bothered.

A little later, another entity emerged from Pahlada and left him.

Pahlada was surprised and asked, "Who are you?"

The entity replied, "I represent your kingdom and opulence. Once character goes, kingdom and opulence have to do likewise; therefore, I am leaving you!"

In this manner, Pahlada lost everything. This story teaches that once

character is lost, everything is lost.

A crestfallen Pahlada now realised what had happened to him.

He prayed intensely and said, "Lord, I do not care anymore for kingdom, wealth, and all the rest of what I lost. I just want my character back. That is enough."

It was thus that Pahlada came to realise the very important role that character played in life. In fact, character is three-fourths of one's life. Pahlada prayed to the Lord for the restoration of his character. At this point, pleased with Pahlada's willingness to part with even his character in order to keep the word he had given, Indra returned the gift he had received.

This story teaches how fundamental and important are values and character in life. Character is supreme. Behaviour is born of character; if your character is good, so would be your behaviour. The welfare of a country depends on the character of its citizens. Men and women of character alone bring prosperity to a nation.

Embodiments of Love!

Give the utmost importance to the development of character. Apart from the books that you normally study, there is one big book that you definitely ought to read; that is the book called the World! All that you want to know and need to know are contained in this extraordinary book. Besides books, you also need a teacher. Who is the best and the greatest of all teachers? Your heart! Not the physical heart but the spiritual heart. You also need a friend. Who is the best possible friend you could ever have? God! [*Loud applause.*]

Taking God as your friend, your heart as the teacher, and the world as the Great Book, acquire all the knowledge you wish to. You should master this *pusthaka* (book) using your *masthaka* (head)! Books printed on paper are not so important as this book composed and written by God Himself. It is available everywhere, to everyone, at all times, and is absolutely free. So,

even as you pore over your regular textbooks, remember your guru the Heart; and make sure you always have your true Friend God near you!

Sarvada sarvakalesu sarvatra Daiva cintanam.
(Think of God at all times, and at all places.)

God is in you, with you, above you, below you, around you; and He will always take care of you.

Do you know why? Because He is your best Friend [*loud applause*]!

Your so-called worldly friends are always selfish and have their own axes to grind but God is not like that. He is totally free from desires and expects nothing. He only helps, supports, and protects. And in return He only wants your love.

He has absolutely no desires. His heart is filled with love and compassion for His devotees. Is this treasure of selfless love available anywhere else [except with God]?

All that happens is only for your good

Students!

Right from today, develop sacred feelings, serve your parents, respect elders, and adopt God as your friend. With God as your friend, you are sure to find fulfilment in life.

Cheerfully accept all tests He may subject you to, remembering that they all are meant for your own good. No matter how difficult or painful the test,

always repeat to yourself: "This is good for me, this is good for me." You must have full faith that everything that God does is only for your good and welfare.

You have a disease and you undergo surgery. The doctor cuts you with a sharp knife; he does so not out of hatred for you but because he wants to cure you. In the same way, understand that God too is curing you out of love for you; there is thus no room for grumbling or complaints.

Students!

Be aware that man has within himself all the powers that one can think of. Krishna said:

Mamatma Sarvabhutantaratma.
I am present in all beings.

You should be charged with the feeling that the Divine Spark is present everywhere and in all beings.

If you sincerely cultivate this feeling, you would, without fail, be able to have access to the Divine Power within you in full measure. With such a feeling, man can penetrate through all the five kosas or sheaths surrounding him. That is why it is said:

Jantunam nara janma durlabham.
Among all the living forms, the human form is the most precious.

When he can have the company of the divine within, why should man seek bad company without? Why does he have to become a slave to others? It is to

God that one must become a slave. Not just that.

Seek to serve the servant of the Lord,
And have the desire to help His devotee.
Serve God in this fashion,
And the entire world would serve you.
But if a slave you become to desires,
Then a slave you shall be to the whole world.
Keep desires under control,
And the world would become your slave.

The only desire you must have is the desire for God. Then God will protect you at all times and eventually Liberate you.

Sanctify the period of youth

Students!

Yours is a sacred and golden age. Do not defile it. Make good use of the golden opportunity and sanctify your life. Do not waste a single moment. The time lost may appear to be just a moment but in that fleeting moment you may lose everything!

Suppose you are spooling thread into a bundle. You wrap the thread one round at a time. If you accidentally let the ball drop, it would roll down the floor and unwind itself to a considerable extent. Thus a single moment of carelessness may cost a lot. Hence, always be very careful and hold on to the golden opportunity before you; then alone would you be successful.

Embodiments of Love!

Study well. By all means acquire all the secular knowledge you want to. But

let it not stop just at that.

Remember:

Secular knowledge is for making a living,
While spiritual knowledge is for life!

Worldly knowledge is certainly required because one has to live in this world. But spiritual knowledge is transcendental. While secular knowledge is useful for daily life, spiritual knowledge is for the life hereafter. You cannot postpone the acquisition of spiritual knowledge; you have to do it now! Secular knowledge will fill your belly but spiritual knowledge will fill your heart.

One is 'left' and the other is 'right'. While marching, both the left and right steps are needed - you march: left, right, left, right.....

When the time comes to go, the 'left' has to be left behind! You can take with you only the 'right' or spiritual knowledge. 'Left' is weak but 'right' is strong and also right! So, keep to the right! It also earns you the right to reach God! In marching through life no doubt both the 'left' and the 'right' steps are needed but recognise their relative merits and utility. This is how normal life must be blended with spirituality.

Embodiments of Love! Always think of God, constantly chant His Name, and sing, whenever possible, His Glory through bhajans. Propagate to the entire world the greatness and the glory of bhajans.

8. Buddha's Message

Date: **21 May 2000** / Location: **Brindavan** / Occasion: **Summer Course 2000, Buddha Purnima**

The more you grind sandalwood,
The greater is the fragrance;
The more you chew sugarcane,
Sweeter is the taste;
The more you heat gold,
The greater is its brilliance.
Likewise trials and tribulations will only enhance the goodness in noble souls.

Embodiments of Love!

The more one loves one's fellow beings, the greater would be the Bliss that one enjoys. The more you love others, the happier you would be. Therefore, if you wish to be constantly happy, you must always love all. Love is the royal path to God. The best way to God is to love all and serve all. This is the lesson that Buddha taught humanity.

Ahimsa is the greatest dharma of all
Buddhists chant the following:
Buddham saranam gacchami.
Dharmam saranam gacchami.
Sangam saranam gacchami.

* This discourse was delivered on Buddha Poornima, when Buddhist devotees from several countries were celebrating the festival in the divine presence.

These three maxims imply that firstly, one must sharpen the intellect and the capacity for spiritual discrimination. Next, intelligence has to be used in the service of society. Thirdly, service must be based on dharma or righteousness. If these three steps are followed, they would lead to Bliss. Never harm any living creature in any way whatsoever. Help ever, hurt never - this is the essence of Buddha's teaching.

Ahimsa paramo dharmah.

Nonviolence is the supreme dharma. One must never ever hurt or injure another person by thought, word, or action. You may wonder:

"Is such a thing possible?" Yes it is, provided you have firm determination. With resolution and absolute determination, there is nothing in this world that cannot be achieved. Fear is a great obstacle to achievement. Once you realise that the same divinity resides in all, you will never be afraid of anything or anyone.

Prahlada saw unity in diversity. He clearly perceived Narayana to be the substratum of everything in creation and happily surrendered to Him. He realised that God is Omnipresent. His father Hiranyakasipu was just the opposite. He saw diversity in unity and became deluded by the multiplicity of forms in Creation, each with its own name. These forms are all transient whereas God represents the Eternal Truth.

God is known by various names and of these, the greatest and the most fitting is Satchitanada. Sat means that which remains unchanged in all the three periods of time - the past, the present, and the future. Strict adherence to truth would enable one to experience sat. Chit means total awareness or complete knowledge. It is that which enables one to experience divinity in all its aspects. Once sat and chit are experienced, ananda or bliss would follow automatically.

Everyone wants to be happy. Such a desire is natural and it springs from the fact that man's true nature is Bliss. Bliss is God but man does not understand

that. He does not understand that he originated from God, that life's undercurrent is God, and that his final destination also is God. Man is born of ananda, the basis of his life is ananda, and his goal also is ananda. Truly speaking, it is not difficult to know what the basis of life is, and what should be the goal of life. Bliss should be the goal, and one must seek it in all earnestness. The human body is temporary; the pleasure that it can give also is fleeting. Therefore, one must seek that which is permanent, that is to say, God, or, what is the same thing, Bliss.

It is meaningless to seek this Bliss by way of instruments that are impermanent. The body can give only bodily pleasure, and the mind can at best give only mental satisfaction. But these do not represent Bliss.

Buddha left his home in quest of the secret of ananda. In his wanderings, he saw a dead body, an old man, and a sick person.

These painful sights made him to enquire deeply. He realised that death could not be avoided. Old age also is inescapable, being the natural culmination of childhood, youth, and middle age. Such changes form part and parcel of the physical world, which itself is ephemeral. These changes are natural, and one must not be perturbed or agitated by them. Buddha asked himself, "What is the cause of death? Why do old age and sickness come upon humans?" After much pondering, Buddha concluded that the body is just like a water bubble, while the sickness of the body has its origin in the mind. In modern parlance, the psychological attitude of a person determines his actions and behaviour.

Vishnu is all-pervasive. He is powerful. In the human being, Vishnu is represented by the mind. The mind is thus a very powerful instrument in the possession of man. The body must be used in conjunction with the mind to experience divinity and not diverted to other activities. In life, the alternation of pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, good and bad are all inevitable. One must not be deluded by them. But man is deluded by duality and fails to realise the Omnipresence of the Lord, despite performing innumerable yajnas and yagas and engaging in all forms of ritualistic worship.

One day in his wanderings, Buddha came to a village. The residents of the village were performing a yajna and, as a part of the rituals, were preparing to sacrifice an animal. Buddha saw this and advised the villagers not to do so.

He said, "No harm must be done in any manner whatsoever to any living being, because God dwells in all."

Isanah sarvavidyanam.
Isvara sarvabhutanam.
God is wisdom. God dwells in all beings.

Buddha added, "This is what I have learnt. God dwells in all; therefore the individual is God and God is the individual. Hence, it is wrong to kill this animal."

The head priest replied, "Sir, we are not killing this animal; we are offering it liberation."

Amused by the reply, Buddha said, "You are offering liberation to an animal that did not ask for it. Instead, why don't you liberate a person who is asking for it? Your argument has no basis in the scriptures. No Veda advocates what you are saying. Your observation is false and untrue. Do you think Liberation can be granted by inflicting harm, pain, and injury? No! Your father, mother, wife, and son all want liberation. Why don't you offer them in sacrifice and grant them all the liberation that they seek? You are so eager to liberate an animal that has no desire for it but unwilling to liberate fellow humans who are hungering for it. What kind of perverted logic is this? What you are trying to do is the worst of sins. Never hurt, injure, or kill living beings." This is how Buddha conveyed the idea:

Ahimsa paramo dharmah.

Ahimsa (nonviolence) is the greatest dharma of all.

The love principle inherent in man is equally present in all beings, birds and beasts included. Therefore, one has to place the same value on the lives of all beings. Share the love latent within you with not only fellow human beings but also with all creatures in nature. This is the true universal love principle. Such principle alone should be the basis of one's life.

The real meaning of liberation

People have strange ideas about liberation, imagining that it involves going to heaven and having eternal existence there. That is not the meaning of liberation. It means achieving selfless love that is constant, unabating, and total. This is the state that one must seek to attain; it is only when this state is reached that one is truly liberated. In the name of liberation, seekers are trying out all sorts of spiritual paths. All such exercises can at best confer temporary satisfaction. The path of Pure Love alone can truly get you there and confer permanent Bliss.

You are aware of the nine traditional paths of devotion:

1. sravanam [listening to the sacred word]
2. keertanam [singing the Glory of the Lord]
3. Vishnu smaranam [chanting the Name of the Lord]
4. pada sevanam [service to the Lotus Feet]
5. vandanam [offering salutations to the Lord]
6. archanam [offering worship]
7. dasyam [service to the Lord]
8. sakhyam [being the Lord's friend and companion]
9. Atma nivedanam [surrender]

These paths, if followed by rote, will fetch nothing more than temporary satisfaction. If you want liberation, then a flood of love must accompany such

pursuits. Pure love must be the undercurrent of whatever path you choose to adopt. Indeed, it must be so in every spiritual endeavour. Everything must be done out of love for God, and for God - this is true devotion. Bhakti does not mean mere chanting of the Name, ritualistic worship, studying the Vedas, etc. All such activities represent but one aspect of devotion. True devotion is the direct flow of love from you straight to God. Unconditional and selfless love for God is true devotion. Worship of God must be totally free from any demands, especially the fulfilment of worldly desires and the expectation of worldly rewards. However, people always worship God with a lot of self-interest - this is not true devotion. What you must offer to God is pure and selfless love. It is such love alone that would secure liberation. Indeed, such love itself is liberation, because it frees you from worldly desires. As Swami often says: moksha is mohakshaya - liberation from attachments and desires is true liberation.

One God, but many Names

Pure love cannot be learnt from books. Nor can it be taught by others. It has to well up from deep within. Your heart is the source of Eternal Joy and Eternal Bliss. You yourself are Ananda Nilayam or the Abode of Bliss. This love originating from your heart must be offered to the Lord. Swami said the other day:

Deho Devalayah prokto jivo Devah sanatanah.
The body is a Temple, and the Indweller is God Himself.

The same God resides in all bodies. Therefore you must love others to the same extent you love yourself. This is a body [Swami points to Himself], and that also is a body [Swami points to another person]. Bodies may be different but the God within is the same.

There is a man who is addressed as father by his son. The daughter-in-law

calls him father-in-law, while the grandchildren call him grandfather. The individual is the same but the manner in which different people address him varies. Similarly, the same God is given different names by the followers of different religions; they hail Him as Allah, Jesus, Rama, Krishna, Buddha, and so on.

Though the names vary, God is one and the same. Therefore, there is really no room for dispute between people belonging to different religions. You may address God by the name of your choice but all calls go to the same destination. Goal is one, and God also is one. Thus, in respect of God, there should be no difference of opinion. In fact, Sarva jiva namaskaram Kesavam pratigacchati.

No matter to whom you offer salutations and greetings, they all go to God Himself. Since the same God resides in all, where is the room for arguments based on caste, creed, race, etc.? As the deputy foreign minister of Sri Lanka (who spoke earlier) said, we all belong to the caste of humanity.

There is only one caste, the caste of Humanity.
There is only one religion, the religion of Love.
There is only one language, the language of the Heart,
And there is only one God,
He is Omnipresent.

This one God can be given any name you choose. These are names given by you to God, but in actual fact, God has no names of this kind. He is nameless and formless. He is pure consciousness and pure energy. This divine energy and consciousness are present in you, and you must use these extraordinary powers and capability in a most reverential manner for sacred activities only.

From prema to poornam - from pure love to totality

God has blessed you with pure love but due to worldly perturbations, and your food habits as well as life style, this love gets contaminated. It gets adulterated by kama (desire), krodha (anger), lobha (greed), moha (attachment), mada (pride), and matsarya (jealousy). The aberrations and pollution of divine power that one sees these days are entirely due to food and habits. Sattvik food is the proper diet for man, because it alone fosters good, noble, and pious tendencies. Buddha ate only satvic food, which in due course led to the blossoming of buddhi or the intellect in all its fullness. The Vedas declare:

Candrama Manaso jatah, caksoh Suryo Ajayata.

Moon is the presiding deity of the mind while Sun is the presiding deity of vision.

The moon is not self-luminous; it shines by reflecting the light from the sun. The light is the same; it originates in the sun and gets reflected by the moon. However, while the direct light from the sun is bright and brilliant, the light reflected from the moon is soft and subdued; it is cool to the eye. Sunlight represents jnana or spiritual wisdom, while moonlight represents prema (love).

You know how a fruit comes into existence. It starts as a flower, becomes a bud, grows big, then becomes an unripe fruit, and finally transforms into a sweet fruit. The flower, the bud, and the ripe fruit merely represent different stages in the evolution of the same entity. Similarly, in the pathway to God, the karma marga (path of action), the bhakti marga (path of devotion), and the jnana marga (path of wisdom) represent different aspects of the same underlying principle. That underlying principle is prema, and the three paths mentioned are three different ways of showing one's Love for God. Prema is fundamental, and that is what you should focus on. You have to develop humility on the one hand and divine feelings on the other. The festival of Buddha Poornima is celebrated to remind us that prema is the pathway to

poornam (totality).

Avoid sycophancy

Buddha wandered across the length and breadth of the land, advising people to follow the path of divine love. In the process, he became physically exhausted. Thus, once when he stopped in a village, he decided to take some rest and asked one of his disciples to speak to the villagers in his stead.

Happy about his good fortune and charged with great enthusiasm, the disciple said in the course of his talk, "Buddha is the One of love, wisdom, and compassion. Such an exalted one was never born before and never will be in the future."

The villagers were thrilled to hear this and responded with a loud applause. Buddha, who was resting, heard the sound. He came out of his room and went to the disciple. Motioning the disciple to stop talking, he asked, "Son, how old are you?" The disciple replied, "Lord, I am twenty five."

Buddha then asked, "What places have you visited?" The disciple mentioned the names. Buddha then said, "You are young and inexperienced and have seen so little of the world. With such limited knowledge, how can you be sure that none like this Buddha was ever born or will not be in the future? You do not know the past, nor do you know the future. You do not even know everything about the present. What authority then do you have to make assertive statements about both the past and the future?"

By talking the way you did, you are merely exposing your utter ignorance."

Buddha then declared, "Many great souls have been born in the past and many more will be in the future. None can contradict this Truth."

Buddha disliked pomp, show, and sycophancy. He was simple, ever calm, pure, humble, and always full of love as well as compassion. Only a person equally full of love can appreciate his greatness.

Practice alone leads to Bliss

Embodiments of Love! It is not enough to be happy just on this day of Buddha Pournima. You must be able to experience bliss all the time, and you can do so by following the teachings of Buddha.

These days, people are great heroes in making platform speeches but zeroes when it comes to practice. It is far more important to translate Buddha's teachings into practice than to make eloquent speeches. This is the proper way to enjoy happiness. This is also the right way of showing respect and reverence for Buddha.

The teachings of Buddha are lofty, sublime, and sacred. His most important teaching is:

Ahimsa paramo dharmah.

Ahimsa or nonviolence is the greatest dharma of all.

Buddha asserted this with great emphasis and force. Buddha also advised that one's looks must be sacred. He said, "Sacred vision is a must for leading a pure life. You should cultivate samyak drishti (the habit of looking only at good things) and samyak sravanam (the habit of listening only to good things)." For Buddha, everything had to be pure and sacred. If you throw a pebble into a well, ripples are created and these travel up to the edge of the well. In the same way, if you throw a pebble called good thought into the well called the heart, the ripples generated travel throughout the body. When the ripple reaches the eye, it stimulates pure vision. When the ripple reaches the ear, it tunes the latter to sacred sounds. When the ripple reaches the hands, it swings them into good action. In this manner, when the ripples spread across the entire body, there is a symphony of sacred activity all round. Thus, good and noble thoughts are fundamental to sacred activity.

Such are the great teachings of Buddha. What is your response to them? No doubt you all read books containing Buddha's teachings. But the moment the book is put down, all the teachings are forgotten. Remember it is only when the sandalwood is continuously ground that the fragrance can be experienced. It is only when sugarcane is well chewed that the sweetness can be experienced in full measure. In the same way, it is only the continued and the sustained practice of sacred teachings that can lead to Bliss. Great people of the past have left behind innumerable teachings that must be followed and ideal examples that ought to be copied. It is enough if you practise just one or two of these great lessons from the past.

Sanctify Time, do not waste it

God has given you the gift of time. What for? For you to sanctify it. But are you doing that? Introspect and find out how much time you are wasting. Time is God; don't waste time. Time wasted is life wasted. These days, people are wasting their time in every conceivable way. They can find time to remain glued to TV sets but have no time for service or doing something sacred. Why do you have to waste time in useless pursuits? Instead, why can't you use that time for charitable and service activities? This is what Buddha did, always serving others. The moment came when he had to give up his body. He had a small coin with him at that time. There is a story behind that coin. To please Buddha, kings and emperors built great mansions for him to stay; but Buddha was not happy with this. One day an old lady came to him and said, "Sir, I am poor and do not have much money. But I love you and want to give you something. I have this small coin. Please accept this as my offering". Buddha was very happy; the amount was small but the heart of the giver was large and full of love.

Large amounts gifted with pomp and ostentation do not count for much. A small gift with pure love is far more precious. As Swami often says, one teaspoon of cow's milk is far superior to a barrel of donkey's milk.

Buddha was once resting in a forest. He was by himself. A fearsome demon came to him and said, "I am very hungry. Are you prepared to become a meal

for me?" Buddha smiled and replied, "I am ready! Death is certain to come some day or the other. Why then should I not die today, especially if I can satisfy your hunger?"

Never be afraid of death, because it is a certainty; no one can escape it. Buddha was not afraid of death, and that was why he was ready to become a meal for the demon. The moment the demon heard the reply, it transformed into a dove and said, Today, you have demonstrated your enormous capacity for sacrifice. From now on, I too shall spread your message everywhere".

God and love are not different

Buddha's teachings were based on the love principle. The same is true of Sai also. Love is the basis for all Incarnations. No one is making any effort to understand this fundamental truth. You have to develop selfless love. If you do, the whole world would be in your control. This love is blissful and nectarine. The sweetness of nectar may have limits but the sweetness of divine love has none.

It is beyond all measure. It is beyond description too; it can only be experienced. Buddha discovered this love, experienced it, and became one with it. God and love are not different.

The bubble is born in water,
It grows and lives in water,
And it finally merges with water.
Man is a bubble,
And God is the water!

Man is a bubble born of water that is God. The individual is God and God is the individual. The two are not distinct, as people imagine.

Embodiments of Love! Regard all as just different forms of God.

Parents give you a name, and that is the name you print on your visiting card. The card that you present to God must not have your given name but love. When you show your card to another person, that person recognises you by the name and address on the card. God, on the other hand, recognises only love, love, love!

Start the day with love
Spend the day in love.
End the day in love.
This is the way to God!

[Loud applause!] Therefore, starting from today the auspicious day of Buddha Pournima, vigorously develop your love for God. Propagate and spread selfless love. There can be no greater spiritual preaching than love. The study of scriptures can make a person scholarly [in the worldly sense] but not wise. Who is a true scholar? Who is the truly wise one? He who has perfect equanimity and is equal-minded under all circumstances alone can be described as scholarly and wise. They pore over books, claim to have mastered all the texts, and proclaim themselves to be highly learned. Such self-praise and self-acclaim are a sure sign of ego. Ego is very dangerous because it drags one with certainty to ruin. What is the use of mere study? Do these scholars practise even a bit of what they have studied? Hardly. Scholarship will not protect or redeem you; only pure love can.

Pure love is like a well-paved, one-way road with no speedbreakers.

You can rush along it to God at whatever speed you want. Rivers also illustrate this principle. All rivers speed down from mountains. They flow fast and swift to somewhere. Where to? To the ocean. In the process, they go over boulders and rocks, skilfully avoiding obstacles on the way. They never stop,

but keep moving all the time towards the goal. Life must be a river rushing towards the ocean called God. The flow should never stop or falter. Overcoming all obstacles, you must keep rushing toward God. That must be the characteristic of your spiritual journey.

Be strong-willed, resolute, determined, and sincere. There should be no room whatsoever for weakness. If your vision, hearing, thoughts, feelings, and actions are good, you will experience nothing but Bliss.

Obey God's command and spread love

Embodiments of Love! You need not go in search of God; He will come in search of you. God does not reside in temples, mosques and churches. These are structures built by man. God resides in a temple that He has built for Himself, and that is the human body. The human body is a living temple, a walking temple, and a talking temple. No man-made temple can match this God-built temple in power and sanctity. This temple has not been built with brick and mortar. No [human] architect has designed it, and no engineer has built it. This temple has come into existence by the will of God. You must treat your body as a precious gift of God and safeguard this sacred gift. Obey God's command and engage only in sacred actions. Spread love as much as you can, and also the fragrance of the Atmic Principle.

Body and Head must both be oriented toward God

Sarira madhyam khalu dharmasadhakam.

The body has been given for following the path of dharma.

Man is not born to eat, drink, and make merry. No doubt, food is necessary to sustain life.

Bhiksannam deha raksartham, vastram sita nivaranam.

Food for maintaining life and clothes for covering the body should be the guiding principle.

Food and head must lead you only to God and nowhere else. There must be perfect harmony between food, the head, and God. By itself, the head carries no value. There is a story that illustrates the point.

Emperor Ashoka was once going through a forest. Seeing a Buddhist monk, he alighted from his horse and prostrated at the feet of the monk. Ashoka's minister, who was accompanying the Emperor, was shocked. He wondered, "How can such a great man bow before such a lowly one as a renunciate?" Nevertheless, the minister kept quiet and did not voice his misgivings. Later when they were back in the palace, the minister gently raised the topic. He said, "O Emperor, how can such a great and intelligent one like you place your head at the feet of an inconsequential monk?" Ashoka just smiled and did not reply. Some days later, he summoned the minister and quite casually said, "Obtain first the head of a sheep, a goat, and a man. Take these three and try to sell them in the market. Afterwards, come back and report to me."

The minister was taken aback by this most peculiar command, but then, orders are orders especially when they come direct from the Emperor. The minister procured three heads, as told, and tried to dispose them of in the market. He was able to find a buyer for the heads of the sheep and goat, but no one came forward to buy the human head. The minister went back and reported the matter to the Emperor. Ashoka said, "Well, if no one is prepared to buy the human head, give it away free." The minister went back to the market place but to his dismay, no one wanted the human head even if given free. He went back to the palace and reported to the Emperor. Ashoka smiled and said, "Do you remember how you protested when I placed my head at the feet of a monk? Now you have discovered for yourself that the human head has no value! The head is not eternal; yet, you were agitated by what I did.

Though the head has no value, when placed at the feet of a noble one, it brings blessings and grace. That is what I wanted you to learn."

Darsanam papa nasanam,
Sparsanam karmavimocanam.
Sambhasanam sankata nasanam,
The vision of the Lord wipes out all sin.
The touch of the Lord destroys all bondage.
Talking to the Lord removes all difficulties.

Ashoka continued, "The moment my head brushed against the foot of the monk, all my sins were wiped out." Wisdom slowly dawned on the minister.

Realise the usefulness of the body while you are alive. It is when you are alive and in possession of the body that you can have darshan, sparshan, and sambhashan, [i.e., the opportunity to see the Lord, touch the Lord, and converse with the Lord]. Can you have these after the body is gone? Impossible! The world may not give you what you want but from the Lord, you can certainly get all the good things you want.

Resolve to follow Buddha's teachings

Embodiments of Love! All of you have come here with great devotion. Your sincerity is praiseworthy. You must resolve to follow the teachings of Buddha. He was a noble soul. The best way of celebrating Buddha Poornima is to put into practice the teachings of this holy one. It is not enough to be happy just on this festival day. By constantly re-living the experience of this holy day, you must experience joy all the time. The cow first grazes; it then sits down quietly to chew thoroughly what it had eaten earlier. If an animal can do this, can not a human do the same with respect to the teachings he acquires? When you get back home, ruminate over what you have learnt today. Recall repeatedly the experiences you have had today. This is the way to digest

what you have learnt and also be happy. It is only when you do this that your journey to this place would become worthwhile. You should not forget the lessons the moment you leave from here.

Spiritual lessons must soak into your blood and spread everywhere.

God has a special name: Rasovaisaha. It means that in the human body, God is present as the Divine Essence. This divine essence spreads all over the human body, to every limb and organ.

Therefore, God is also given another name - Angeerasa. Angam means limb; Angeerasa therefore means One who pervades over all the limbs, soaking them with His divine power and essence.

Thus, God is within you as Angeerasa. You think you are taking care of yourself and protecting yourself. This is not true! It is God who really does so. Who do you think protects you when you are fast asleep and do not know what is happening around you? Who takes care of you then? It is God who does so. In fact, He cares for you at all times, at all places, and under all circumstances.

Since God always protects, there is no need to be afraid of pain and sorrow. Difficulties are bound to come, but they also will go away. They do not stay forever; they are like passing clouds. But God is steady and permanent. Make Him the basis of your life and think of Him always. This is the lesson you must grasp today, as a part of your pilgrimage to this place.

9. Preyas And Sreyas - What We Seek And What We Ought To Seek

Date: 22 May 2000 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 2000

Enthusiasm, dynamism, courage,
Intellect, energy, and valour -
Where these are present,
There one can see the Glow of God.

Embodiments of Love!

The effulgence of Divinity can be seen when the six qualities of enthusiasm, dynamism, intellect, energy, courage, and valour shine in a person. Bhoga (craving for sensual pleasures) and tyaga (the spirit of sacrifice) cannot ever co-exist. Bhoga will not allow tyaga to come anywhere near, while tyaga would strongly resist bhoga. One might wonder, "Is it possible to sacrifice and yet be happy?" The answer is, "Yes, it is possible". If ego is effaced and there are no expectations of reward for the actions performed, sacrifice itself becomes a joyous experience; happiness and sacrifice then merge into one. Happiness is not the property of any particular individual; all are entitled to it, and everyone has the right to enjoy it. To receive your share, you must sanctify your life by serving society, using the gifts God has endowed you with.

The two competing forces

The scriptures say:

Āṅsa vasyamidam jagat.
The whole universe is divine.

Every bit of the universe functions on account of divine energy and power. Other than God, there is nothing else in the universe, any place, any time. But no one has grasped this truth. The outlook of people is largely worldly and so also are their expectations.

There are two competing factors at work in this world. The first is preyo shakti (force that promotes a material outlook or tendency) and the other is sreyo shakti (force that promotes a spiritual outlook or tendency). The former is what motivates people in the various stages of life, from childhood to old age, driving them to sensual pleasures. Sreyo shakti, on the other hand, manifests as the noble virtues daya (compassion), prema (Love), sahana (patience), sahanubhuti (empathy), tyaga (spirit of sacrifice), etc., in the individual.

In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna describes the actions motivated by these two shaktis as paradharma and swadharma respectively.

What is meant by swadharma? The prefix swa relates to the Atma; therefore, swadharma means dharma that is in conformity with the Atma, that is to say actions performed in harmony with the nature of the Atma. Sreyo shakti is the driving force behind swadharma. Paradharma on the other hand, relates to actions performed mainly in conformity with the dictates of the senses and the mind. The motivating force in this case is preyo shakti, which triggers the senses into useless indulgence. Man today hungers for preyo shakti, totally ignoring sreyo shakti. While preyo shakti can secure fleeting pleasures, sreyo shakti can earn God's Grace for you. What causes rain? God's Grace is primarily responsible for it. God's Grace makes the sun and the moon shine, the rivers to flow, and the crops to grow. Sunshine, food, and water help you to live and be happy. God has given all these and much more for the common benefit of all living beings. Every living creature has equal right to enjoy these gifts of God.

Always follow Atmadharma

Every gift of God offers the opportunity to go from preyas to sreyas. People are engaged in all kinds of worldly activities.

You grow crops, you harvest them, you eat food, you study and acquire various types of worldly knowledge, and so on. If all these mundane activities are performed with a spiritual outlook, then you can enjoy bliss. Performing action with a spiritual outlook is the essence of Atmadharma. If you enquire deeply, you will realise that everything happens not merely because of your personal efforts but on account of the will of God. From the atom to the cosmos, things happen only because of God's will.

From here to there,
From the ant to the galaxies,
You know not what it is,
You comprehend it not.
People may imagine
That they make the world go.
It is not their wealth,
Nor pride and pomp,
But God's Will alone,
That runs the universe.

The gross and the subtle, ignorance and knowledge, the worldly and the spiritual - we form such pairs and thereafter make a distinction between the members of such pairs. In truth, the members of a pair are interrelated and not separate from each other. There is no duality, as we tend to make out. The two members of a pair are in fact intimately connected with each other. All actions when motivated by the heart become spiritual; but when driven by the mind, they become worldly. Modern man is dragging even the so-called spiritual actions to the mundane level. There are many today who are described as dharmatmas (people of charitable disposition), tyagatmas (people given to sacrifice), yogatmas (so-called yogis engaged in spiritual

actions), and karmatmas (people supposedly engaged in selfless service).

But there is none in this world that might be called an Atmatma.

Who is an Atmatma? Not the one who follows karma yoga (the path of spiritual action), or bhakti yoga (the path of devotion), or jnana yoga (the path of wisdom). An Atmatma is one who follows the Atma Yoga! There is none in this world that follows this unique path.

The body is visible and tangible. The mind, though subtle, can be discerned through one's experience. Everyone knows of the existence of the body and the mind. But there is none that truly understands the depth of the Atma and has experienced It in the fullest sense of the word. He alone is entitled to be called an Atma Jnani (the Knower of the Atma), who understands the real Self.

No deep enquiry is needed concerning the body - it is just made up of the five elements. It is fragile and can collapse any moment.

It is therefore pointless to enquire into the principle of such an ephemeral and transient entity. Those who follow the preyo marg (the worldly path) are highly body-conscious. Swami said the other day that the mind is the Embodiment of Vishnu. What does one mean by that? Vishnu is the Omnipresent One. The mind too pervades everywhere, and that is why it is linked to Vishnu.

Manomulam Idam jagat.

The mind pervades the whole universe.

Traditionally, Brahma is described as the son of Vishnu, born out of the navel. In the human body, sound originates from the navel while the thought behind the spoken word is born in the mind. Thus, the emergence of words, consequent to a thought occurring in the mind is a physical symbolisation of

the emergence of Brahma from the navel of Vishnu. As Swami said earlier, in the human being Ishwara is the heart, Vishnu is the mind, and Brahma is the word.

However, there is none in this world that has experienced this Trinity of Godhead within.

See unity in diversity and realise the Self

Many people head for the forest to experience the Self within. How foolish! Where is the need to go to the forest to discover the God within you and around you?

When you have a lamp at home,
Why seek one elsewhere?

When the Self is there right within you, there is no need to withdraw to the forest in quest of It. Such an act is a sign of sheer ignorance. It reflects the seeker's inability to cognise the seat of the Atma. The Atma is within you, and that is what you have to know first and foremost.

The Atma or the Self within is not localised. It is all-pervasive, universal in nature, and the fountainhead of all creation. The Atma being the source of the five elements, wherever the elements are present, so is the Atma. Thus, since your body is made of the five elements, it should be obvious that the Atma is also present in you.

God has created all the five elements for the benefit of mankind. Air and water, for example, sustain life. Again, air, water, and land are all needed for growing crops; this is another example. Without food, the body would wither away; for the sustenance of life, food is a must. All the five elements have originated from the Self or the Atma. It is therefore necessary to examine the

spiritual overtones of the five elements.

The (Universal) Self or the Atma, is the fundamental basis for the existence of all the five elements. The same Atma underlies all - the elements do not have Atmas of their own.

Ekatma sarvabhutantaratma

The same Universal Spirit or Self pervades all beings and entities.

Today, mankind is facing various problems because it is not focussing on the underlying unity in creation. Instead, it is being deluded and carried away by the superficial diversity. You must see unity in diversity and concentrate on the underlying divine substratum. The true seeker goes in quest of this unity, and this search in turn leads to Atma jnana or the wisdom of the Self.

Ignorance is just the opposite of this wisdom; its characteristic is to see diversity where there is unity. You should not fragment the One into disjointed bits and pieces. This would weaken you, though superficially you might feel strong. To comprehend the Principle of the Atma, it is sufficient to see unity in diversity.

God is not only all-pervasive but sweetness itself

You see clouds forming in the sky. The clouds bring rain. Rain helps crops to grow. Crops give you food-grain. You cook the grain and prepare a meal, which you then eat. You have here a chain of complex but linked events. What is the driving force behind all this? Who motivates this complex but linked chain?

The Atma is responsible for all this! Atma is also known as Brahman, and the Atmic Principle is the same as the Principle of Brahman or the Divine Principle. Who is this Brahman? Brahman is the One who is all-pervasive.

When God manifests as Word, He is called Brahma. The scriptures describe this Supreme One as follows:

Sabdabrahmamayi, Caracaramayi, Jyotirmayi, Vanmayi,
Nityanandamayi, Paratparamayi, Mayamayi, Srimayi.

God Almighty is the Primordial Sound, the Immovable as well as the Movable,
the Divine Light, the Word, Eternal Bliss, the Supreme, Illusion, and Ultimate Wealth.

This is a comprehensive description of God. This divinity manifests in the individual as the divine trinity consisting of Ishwara, Vishnu, and Brahma. The heart of man represents Ishwara, the mind represents Vishnu, and word represents Brahma. All the attributes that describe Brahman apply equally well to the Perfect Individual. They also apply to the word because word is God. The spoken word is the form of Brahma, who is an aspect of God. Speech is born of the mind, which is an aspect of Vishnu. Thoughts are shaped by the feelings of the heart, which is an aspect of Ishwara. Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwara are not different; they are just aspects of the same, one and only God, also known as Atma or Brahman.

If man gives up ego, he becomes perfect and rises to the level of divinity. What is it that people readily give up these days? Good and sacred habits! No, no! This is not what you should do. You should embrace sacred feelings, thoughts, and actions and give up all bad thoughts and habits. Welcome the sacred and drive out the evil. Reject the bad like you expel the excreta. When you take in food, you retain only the nutrient part and excrete the rest.

You eat a tasty fruit; but, after digesting the essence, you expel the foul waste part. Worldly things have this mixture of good and bad. But one thing is totally sweet. What is that? God!

Vacanam Madhuras, Caritam Madhuras,
Vasanam Madhuras, Valitam Madhuras,
Calitam Madhuras, Bhramitam Madhuras,
Madhuradhipaterakhilam Madhuras.

His words are sweet, His eyes radiate sweetness, His gait is sweet, and His smile too is sweet!

The Lord of Mathura [Krishna] is sweet, sweet and nothing but sweet!

Even ambrosia and nectar may satiate after some time but where the sweetness of the Divine is concerned, one cannot have enough of it.

Yato Vaco Nivartante Aprapya Manasa Saha.

Words and the mind fail to describe God and His sweetness.

Such is the greatness of the Atmic principle, and that is what man is ignoring today. Preoccupied with petty priorities, man has become totally indifferent to the real purpose of life. At the end of it all, what is it that man has achieved? Nothing. Man's action these days is like breathing in carbon dioxide and exhaling oxygen. This inversion is the result of bad thoughts flooding the mind. This is not how it should be. God has arranged for man to breathe in oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide; in the same way, man should take in what is good and reject what is bad.

Life should be based on sacrifice. Just look at the trees. But for them, where would you get the oxygen that you breathe? All beings in creation - trees, birds, animals, and insects - help in their own respective ways. But modern man has sunk below the level of animals. There is hardly any trace of helpful attitude anywhere. Every action of man is driven by selfishness and

selfinterest.

These two base qualities represent animal tendencies, and are not representative of the true nature of man. Man is the embodiment of truth and love. He is the one of peace. Although he might not be aware of it, man's life is sustained by sathya, dharma, and prema. It is by recognising this underlying principle that the ancients of India declared:

Satyam vada dharmam cara.
Always be truthful; always abide by righteousness.

These declarations are a testimony to the greatness of Bharatiya (Indian) culture. Never forget Truth!

From truth emerged creation;
Truth is what sustains creation;
Truth is that into which creation finally dissolves;
This is the authentic principle
Of the Universal One.
God is in you

Where is this Supreme, Universal Cosmic One? It is not out somewhere there but right within you! Man today is indifferent to this remarkable and eternal truth. People read all kinds of spiritual books and engage in various types of sadhana (spiritual practices).

What does sadhana really mean? It means the transformation of the bad into good. But what happens in practice is just the opposite!

People do sadhana in such a confused and mistaken fashion that they end up

forgetting the good and welcoming the bad! Man is not making effort to understand what Sadhana means. Sadhana = sa + dhana. Sa means the Atmic Principle, and dhana means wealth. Thus, the principle of the Atma is true wealth, health, and happiness. Where is this true happiness or bliss? Bliss is where you came from. You were born of bliss. Why don't you recognise your roots? You are prepared to believe anyone and everyone but not your own heart! Twenty-one thousand and six hundred times a day, your inner voice cries out Soham, Soham, - I am God, I am God. This is the spiritual message conveyed to you by your breathing process. You are foolish to ignore this Inner Voice and pay heed to what ignoramus outside proclaim. Where is God?

He is in you! Swami said earlier,

Deho Devalayah prokto jivo Devah sanatanah.
The body is the temple, and God is the Indweller.

All bodies are temples, and the same God is the presiding deity in all these temples. Why then do you differentiate between people? Why do you hate some and like others? Do not entertain such feelings of difference, because the same God resides in all. Do not abuse or criticise anyone. To do so is a sign of bad character and weakness.

Be alike to everyone. The best way to love God is to love all and serve all. Since the love principle inherent in every being is the same, you must try to achieve Selfless Love. Such Selfless Love alone is true love for God. God is Love. Love is Awareness. Love is Divinity.

God has so many names. Aham or I - that also is a name for God. If you say Aham Brahmasmi [I am God], there is a slight tinge of duality in that statement. Here, there is a reference to I as well as God. A better declaration would be: "I am I!" That is all there is to it. This is true advaitam [philosophy

of monism].

I am not this or that; such statements imply duality. If you say, "This is mine," it implies that you are separate from the thing you are referring to. "I am I," is the correct and proper way of declaring your innate divinity. This is I, that is I, that also is I, and so on [here, Swami pointed to various people and objects].

Everything is 'I'! Superficially, the different objects may have different names, but at the basic level, they all have the same name - 'I'. There is only ONE!

Jewels are many, but gold is one.
Cows are many, but milk is one.
Flowers are many, but worship is one.
Paths are many, but the goal is one.

Immersed in illusion, people worship this and that. Such actions are based on external perceptions and feelings. If you have a worldly outlook, you will win worldly rewards. Worldly feelings and thinking are negative; do not have such an attitude. Always have positive thoughts - positive, positive, positive! Positive thinking alone is the foundation of the Atmatathwam (Principle of the Atma), which is the same as Chaitanyatathwam (Principle of Awareness), which is the same as Prematathwam (Principle of Love) and also Anandatathwam (Principle of Bliss). See how all these different principles are one and the same!

Bliss is not separate from you; it is inherent in you because God is in you. Bliss is in your body because God is the Indweller. It should be obvious that you are not the body. You say, "This is my body." This clearly implies that you are separate and distinct from your body. The human body is just a machine, an instrument. Like a water bubble, it is transient. Can you identify your Immortal Self with this body? You must say, "I use this machine for My sake! I do not use it for the sake of any other person for the simple reason that there

is no other person! It is 'I' everywhere!"

Let us say you have a desire for something. You say, "I desire this or such and such a thing." Ask yourself, "Do I want this thing for my sake or the sake of the thing or object concerned?"

You feel like eating an apple. Is it for your sake or the sake of the apple? You eat for your satisfaction. In the ultimate analysis, every individual acts for their personal satisfaction, and not really for the sake of the world. The world is generally neutral - it has neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction. Whatever one does is for one's own Self-satisfaction. Self-satisfaction promotes Self-sacrifice, which in turn leads to Self-realisation.

Embodiments of Love! God is not separate from you; in fact, He resides in you. He manifests when you are virtuous and have the right tendencies and attitudes. The gunas or tendencies of a person are strongly influenced by food and life style. If these are such as to promote body-consciousness, then the six deadly enemies, kama (desire), krodha (anger), lobha (greed), moha (attachment), mada (pride), and matsarya (jealousy), overwhelm the person. If one rises above the body to the level of the heart, then the divine qualities of prema (love), daya (compassion), sahana (patience), and sahanubhuti (empathy) all manifest in the person. These virtues constitute the essence of swadharma [Swami often refers to this also as Atmadharma]. Actions performed for the sake of the Real Self constitute swadharma. Practice of swadharma leads one to experience the bliss of the Self or the Atma.

Bliss is within, and you do not have to go elsewhere in search of it. In fact, there is nothing other than you! What you think you see outside is only a reflection of your own Inner Self. Some of the reflected images may appear distorted but that is a fault of the mirror, and has nothing to do with your Real Self. Prakriti or nature is the mirror in which you see yourself. Prakriti is based on gunas (tendencies or attributes), which leave their imprint on the images that you see. Looking at the distortions, you draw wrong conclusions. This is not correct. One who understands the principle of the Self will see through these distortions and aberrations. He will not be deluded by them. There is a

mole on Swami's left cheek, but in the mirror, it appears as a mole on the right cheek. Can one straightaway accept what one sees in the mirror? If you have confidence in the Reality of the Self, then you will not be deluded. But if that confidence is lacking, then you will be easily swept by the opinions of others. You have a mind of your own, and you have been blessed with the power of discrimination; why then should you allow yourself to be misguided by others? Follow God and not others. First know thyself, i.e., your innate Divinity, your Real Self, which is the Inner Reality.

Embodiments of Love! Each and every one of you is the personification of love. There is no individual without love.

However, when the pure love latent within manifests outside, it gets modified by the tendencies of the person concerned. People are worldly in their outlook, and that is why people are also so diverse in their attitudes, despite the common underlying divine basis. Worldly outlook is characteristic of preyas. Sreyas, on the other hand, makes one turn to God; such a person has no other interest, especially of a worldly nature. Therefore, always follow swadharma or Atmadharma. Do not be bound or limited by paradharma, which is based on bodily considerations.

God must be your goal

If you immerse a pot in water, there is water in the pot and also around the pot. The water inside is not different from the water outside. The same is true of God. The scriptures say:

Antarbahisca Tat Sarvam Vyapya Narayanah Sthitah.
God is present inside, outside, everywhere.

It is the same God who is within as well as without. You must have unshakeable faith in this truth, in this basic fact concerning the Divine. Never

forget God, no matter what the problems or difficulties. Don't you have a mind? Don't you have aspirations and goals? Be firm; be resolute. God must be your goal, and you must pursue it with steadfast determination. Today, man is not doing that; he is following goals set by others, by foolish and thoughtless people.

What do you achieve by this? Nothing! On the other hand, you lose even what you have.

Seek sreyas and not preyas

Students! You are all studying here in the hope that the degree that you will acquire will get you a nice job. Employment is necessary no doubt. But remember this: what you are taught in the class relates only to the external world. It constitutes secular knowledge. This secular knowledge must be supplemented with a strong dose of spiritual knowledge, which comes only by following the sreyo marg (spiritual path).

Preyas (worldly outlook) and sreyas (Spiritual outlook) are like left and right. You have been given a left hand and a right hand.

Why? So that the two may work together. While working, the two hands must synchronise and be in harmony with each other.

Swami has mentioned this before - when you do namaskaram, you bring your two hands together. One palm represents the worldly path and the other the spiritual path. Namaskaram is an act that is symbolic of the fusion of the two paths. Do not compartmentalise certain things as purely secular and other things as purely spiritual.

Both are intertwined, and any separation that one seeks to make is entirely artificial. Namaskaram thus symbolises unification of the two paths. Some people greet by taking one hand to the head - they do a kind of salute! This gesture is not appropriate. It gives the impression that you are knocking your head, ruining your fate or misfortune! Namaskaram = na + ma + skaram. The

first two words mean, "I am not", and the word in full implies, "I do not have any ego." Ego brings ruin and must therefore be totally avoided. Perhaps you have some worldly desires, but excessive desires would breed ambition, which in turn would make you wicked. The only desire one must really have is for God. Saints like Meera and Sakkubai clearly understood this, and made God their sole priority. They realised that God is the Indweller, and worshipped Him with great devotion. God alone can be within; no one else can. There is a person who claims to be your friend; can this friend of yours be within you? Worldly friends are external but your true friend is inside; that is God! He alone can be both inside as well as outside, and He has the right to be so! Your heart is a single-seat sofa, and there is place for only one. That one seat must be reserved for God. If you lead your life filled with this feeling, not only would your life be always happy but, in addition, you would be able to spread that happiness all around you. Your family would be happy. If families are happy, the whole village would be happy. When all villages and towns are at peace, the whole country would be peaceful. Today, we mechanically repeat santhi, not just once but three times. The one that leads the chant is himself not at peace! Whom else is he praying for?

Peace does not come with mere chanting. Peace will enter the heart only when it is swept clean of wicked qualities. Once bad thoughts are given some room, they would rapidly multiply. The best way of keeping bad thoughts away is to cultivate the feeling of Oneness.

Try to experience Oneness

The gopikas (cowherd maids) of Brindavan always strove to experience Oneness. They said, "O God, we have this body, which is transient. It may collapse any moment. We must make proper use of it while it is with us. You have now taken a Form and come amidst us. We would like to take advantage of this and develop a proper relationship with You." They then sang:

O Lord! If You are a gigantic tree,

I will be a creeper around You;
If You are a fragrant flower,
I will become a bee and hover around;
If You are the infinite sky,
I will become a tiny twinkling star;
If You are a mighty mountain,
I will become a waterfall;
If You are the infinite ocean,
I shall become a river and merge in You!

This was the intense devotion and the sense of unity that the gopikas had. You too should feel the same way because, truly speaking, there is no plurality; there is only One. You should never be deluded by diversity and superficial differences. Your father, mother, guru, etc., - at the body level all these are different; but the divine Principle in all of them is the same. Why then do you entertain a feeling of difference? Why then do you experience diversity instead of unity?

Here is this body [Swami points to His body]. It is made up of the five elements. There is another body [Swami points to a person nearby]. That too is made up of the same five elements. Therefore, both are one; where is the scope for difference? Your mother, father, friend -every one of them is made up of the same five elements.

Thus, even from the purely material point of view, there is only one, reflecting the philosophy of advaitam or monism. In the entire universe, there are only the five elements; there is no such sixth [gross] element. No matter where you search, you cannot find a new element; everywhere, it is only these five. Yet, within a human being, there is a separate and distinct element. It is not gross but subtle. And that is Supreme Love! This Supreme Love may be regarded as the sixth element; it reflects the Indweller and the divine Principle. The Vedic aphorism Tat Twam Asi meaning 'That thou art', reflects this divine Principle. You must aspire for this sense of unity between yourself

and God.

You should neither be exuberant with nor be overwhelmed by body-consciousness. The experiences you have with your body and mind should neither send you into raptures, nor plunge you into deep depression. Supreme love rises far above duality and transient experiences as well as feelings. With this spirit of love, you can attain indescribable bliss.

Go through life smiling always

Students! The more you love humanity, the greater would be the happiness that you experience. On the other hand, if your love is feeble, then so will be your sense of joy. Therefore, love all. What do you lose by loving all? Nothing whatsoever. Love can confer so much joy. If you smile, others would do the same. Therefore, all of you must go through life with smiles and joy.

When someone scolds, one normally feels hurt while the person who is scolding gets some satisfaction. Don't feel hurt when you are criticised or abused. Instead, react by just smiling. You may wonder, "Why should I smile when that person is saying so many unpleasant things about me?" The answer is simple. You must smile because you have given the other person a chance to derive some satisfaction, even if it is by hurting your feelings. Be happy that you were an instrument to make the other person happy.

This is the positive attitude and sense of Love that you have to develop. You must be charged with uthsaham, sahasam, dhairyam, buddhi, shakti, parakramam enthusiasm, dynamism, keen sense of discrimination, energy, courage, and valour. These are the six forms of wealth that you must go after. Where these are present, there one can see the effulgence of Divinity.

God is Omnipresent; so are the five elements created by God.

There is no place where God is not; the same is true of air and water. You might not always be able to see the presence of water, but it is there nevertheless. In the atmosphere, it is present as water vapour, while below

the surface of the earth it is present as subterranean water. When man turns wicked, the water table starts going down, suggesting that divine water does not wish to see the face of man! Water feels disgusted. It says, "Why should I see and be useful to such an evil fellow?" and then hides itself!

Or else, it becomes brackish and unpotable. Man then sheds tears, which too are salty! What is described as toyam [water] in the scriptures is not this type of useless water but crystal clear and pure water, as God Himself made it. What is the toyam you must offer back to God? Tears of joy! God gave water to man with love. Man must offer back love to God; God's love can be secured only with love.

The other day, Swami mentioned that God is described as Chitta Chora [the One who steals the Heart]. If a devotee happens to say, "God, You are a big robber," then others would object.

They would ask, "How dare you describe God as a thief?" and then thrash the devotee! However, if with love the devotee sings Chitta Chora Yasoda ke Bal, then others join in the singing with great joy. Therefore, express your love for God through music!

Everyone would then join you in chorus. Let your speech and actions be expressions of your love. March resolutely forward in love, no matter what the obstacles. Welcome troubles; welcome, welcome, welcome! If sorrow comes, welcome it; if pleasure comes, welcome that also.

Sukha dukhe samekrtva labhalabhau jayajayau.
Pleasure and pain are not really different;
they merely represent two aspects of the same occurrence or event.

Pleasure is an interval between two pains. If there is no pain, how then can there be pleasure? Without darkness, brightness has no meaning. Hence have

the faith that whatever befalls you is for your own good. If people blame or criticise you, do not get upset. Criticism should spur you to work better, so that later you earn praise. This is a dual world, and pairs of opposites are inevitable in it. However, that does not mean that you should get submerged by duality.

As Swami often says, a man with a dual mind is half blind. If you expose yourself to duality, you would automatically become half blind. Duality is a part of Nature, and the world cannot be non-dual. But, using your discrimination, you must be able to see through this duality; that is the only way to secure happiness.

Embodiments of Love! Swami always addresses you by the endearing term Embodiments of Love; you must strive to become worthy of that description. Never go against the dictates of Love.

Do not get angry with anyone; be pleasant to all. You will then experience what the scriptures describe as:

Nityanandam, Paramasukhadam, Kevalam Jnanamurtim,
Dvandvatitam, Gagana Sadrsam, Tatvamasyadi Lakshyam,
Ekam, Nityam, Vimalam, Acalam.

This is the state variously described as:

Eternal Bliss, Supreme Happiness, Supreme Wisdom,
Beyond Duality, All-pervasive, the Embodiment of Oneness,
Eternal, Pure, and Immovable.

How can one in a state befitting such a description ever be in sorrow? Swami will discuss this point tomorrow.

Students! Time flies! Time is flowing fast but are you getting closer to the goal? If you want to go to Bangalore, you must drive in that direction. If

instead you drive in the opposite direction, how can you ever get to Bangalore? Life's journey may be slow, but must be toward the proper goal. Do not get disheartened by obstacles that are bound to come en route. You must be determined to reach the goal. Where exactly is this goal? It is within you.

How is the goal to be attained? Simple: removal of bad qualities would get you there. Once bad thoughts are given up, you would have reached the destination. Give no scope for bad thoughts. See good in all. Everyone must love God. Do not waste your time by looking for God elsewhere; He is right within you, around you, behind you, above you, and below you. Is it ever possible to get away from such an omnipresent God? God is everywhere but what you see of Him outside is just a reflection of the inner Divinity.

That is why Swami often says: Art is outside while heart is inside. God is in the heart. That also is why Vedanta [ancient Indian philosophy] advocates the development of inner vision.

At the conclusion of the discourse, Bhagavan sang two bhajans: Pibare Rama Rasam and Hari Bhajan Bina....

10. God Is Pure Bliss

Date: 23 May 2000 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 2000

The Embodiment of Supreme Bliss,
The Embodiment of Transcendental Happiness,
The Embodiment of Transcendental Wisdom,
The One beyond duality,
The One in Eternal Bliss,
The Embodiment of Oneness,
The Supreme One, The Eternal One,
The Unsullied One, the Ever-steady One, and
The Eternal Witness.

In the Anandavalli portion of the Rig Veda, there is a beautiful and poetic reference to Brahmananda or Supreme Bliss. Brahmananda refers to bliss that is limitless and beyond description by words; it is also something that cannot be comprehended by the ordinary mind. Unless one leads a calm, pure, noble, virtuous, peaceful, and unsullied life, one can neither understand nor experience this Brahmananda. Supreme bliss is beyond the physical, mundane, and transient world.

From ephemeral pleasures to divine bliss

Our ancients have categorised the various types of joy and happiness that can be experienced. The lowest type is manavanada, that refers to the pleasure that humans experience in the course of their normal life, and which is connected with worldly objects, entities, and matters. Thousand times greater is gandharvananda or the happiness experienced by celestial beings. daivananda is the next higher level of happiness, and is a thousand times greater than gandharvananda. It refers to the joy experienced by the devas or the demi-gods. Far greater than daivananda is Brihaspathiananda, or the bliss

experienced by Brihaspati, the preceptor of the devas. A thousand times greater is Prajapatiananda or the joy experienced by Prajapati (in ancient Indian scriptures, Prajapati is the one associated with the practical aspects of Creation). Brahmananda is a thousand times greater than Prajapatiananda, the highest joy that can be measured on a finite scale. You can see what an immense gulf separates manavananda that man hungers and normally settles for and Brahmananda that he really ought to seek.

People use the word Brahmananda quite casually, without the faintest idea of what it actually means. Thus, every petty pleasure is glibly described as Brahmananda. For example, if a person has a nice meal, he describes the experience as Brahmanandam. Man does not understand what an infinite gulf separates manavananda and Brahmananda. The pleasures that man normally enjoys is not even a tiny spec of Brahmananda. He does not realise that while worldly pleasures can be described in words, Brahmananda is indescribable.

Sandeepan Chatterjee [who spoke earlier] said that divine love and bliss transcend the bounds of space and time, and that they are beyond season and reason as well. Indeed; Ananda is Ananda at all times and under all circumstances. Since Brahman and Atma are synonymous, Brahmananda can also be referred to as Atmananda. Supreme bliss is verily the same as the bliss of the Self. In fact, Ananda is just another name for Brahman or God.

Worldly happiness that man is so crazy about is insignificant compared to the vastness that is Brahmananda or Atmananda.

You are aware that air is present everywhere and that it has no specific form. Yet, when this formless air that is present everywhere fills a balloon, it acquires a form - that of the [inflated] balloon.

If you go on inflating the balloon, a stage would come when the balloon would burst. The air inside the balloon then merges with the air outside to become formless and vast once again. What a great difference there is between the trapped limited air and the vast free air! Similar is the comparison between the tiny spec called manavananda and to the infinity that is Brahmananda.

Our ability to experience happiness is one of the many gifts of God. However, owing to his limited vision, man makes only a minimal use of his capacity to enjoy happiness. He is ever ready to settle for just manavananda; this will not do. Like the exploding balloon and the merger of the air inside with the air outside, man must break out of human bondage, soaring to the level of Brahmananda.

Brahmananda is one of the Names of God. It conveys the idea that God is ever in a state of Supreme Bliss. Bliss is thus the Form of God, and therefore it is that God who is called Brahmananda.

There are many other such names, and these were mentioned in the beginning. The next in the list is Parama sukhadam, meaning real ecstasy. What is this sukham [happiness or ecstasy]?

Is it connected with the body? Is it physical, sensual, or intellectual?

It is beyond all these. Our ancients said, "Tasmai Namaha." It means, "I offer my salutations to the Embodiment of Happiness".

Our ancients did not try to describe this supreme ecstasy but knew that God is its very Embodiment. So, they hailed God as Parama Sukhadam. God is the personification of Happiness that is beyond the constraints of space and time, and also human reasoning. If one is to describe this Parama Sukhadam or Transcendental Bliss, all one can say is that it is neither physical nor has it a form that can be comprehended. Nectar has an appearance, and its taste could possibly be described; but Parama Sukhadam is beyond both form and words. God is Eternal Bliss - what else can one say? He is totally unaffected by all pairs of opposites like praise and blame, [worldly] joys and sorrows, etc. He is ever supremely happy.

Kevalam Jnanamurtim

Kevalam means that which transcends space, time, and circumstances. Jnana means wisdom. Thus, jnana moorthim means Embodiment of wisdom. What

sort of wisdom is this?

Can it be acquired from books? Is it connected with the physical world? Can it be acquired by yogic practices? Jnana is not of this type. It is supreme, transcendental wisdom, which is beyond this world, beyond space, time, and beyond circumstances as well.

This jnana is also known as Brahmajnana (Knowledge of the Brahman) or Atmajnana (Knowledge of the Atma). It is eternal.

Whereas worldly knowledge can be acquired from books and one can compare scholars saying he is better and so and so is less learned etc., Brahmajnana is total, and beyond textual and academic knowledge.

God alone is the Embodiment of jnana - in fact, He is Jnana itself. Brahmajnana is Eternal, Total, and Omnipresent. It is the knowledge of the Self. Since the Self is in you, this knowledge also is in you. The moment you realise your True Self, you acquire this knowledge. Acquisition of this knowledge confers supreme wisdom. Since this knowledge also confers supreme bliss, acquisition of Brahmajnana, automatically elevates you to the state of Brahmananda and Parama Sukhadam.

Dvandvatitam

The state represented by Brahmananda has another name : dvandvateetham. It is a state that transcends all dualities like pain and pleasure, good and bad, praise and blame, merit and sin. It is a unique state of Total Oneness. The Vedas say:

Ekam sat viprah bahudha vadanti.

Truth is only One though scholars describe it in various ways.

Truth is One, not two - that is what dvandvateetham implies. It means that Brahman or God is infinitely beyond duality in which man is imprisoned.

Next,

Gaganasadrisam

This means that like space, Supreme Bliss is both ethereal and all-pervasive. Who is it that is called by the name Gagana Sadrisam?

God of course! In fact, all the words Swami has mentioned so far - Brahmanandam, Parama sukhadam, Kevalam jnana moorthim, Dvandvateetham, and now Gagana Sadrisam - all these are Names of Almighty God.

Tatvamasyadilaksyam

The four Vedas proclaim four mahavakyas or fundamental truths. These basic statements are:

1. Prajnanam Brahma or God is Pure Consciousness
2. Ayam Atma Brahma, meaning that Atma (the Self) and Brahman (God) are one
3. Aham Brahmasmi, meaning I am God
4. Tat Twam Asi, meaning That thou art!

All these four statements imply the same, namely, there is only God and that, therefore, man also is divine. They underscore the Unity of Divinity. Thus God is also described as Tatwamasyadhi Lakshyam or the Ultimate Goal [which represents Total Unity].

After this, Ekam, Nityam, Vimalam, Acalam.

These four words also are Names of God. Ekam means One. Everything in this vast Universe is just God [though, may be, in 'disguise']. However, man is carried away by physical appearances. Thus, he perceives and experiences only diversity, totally missing the underlying divine Unity. The diversity that man sees is purely physical and superficial. He sees only diversity because his vision as well as outlook are both entirely worldly and external.

Let us say you have the numeral one (1). You next add a zero adjacent to it. This gives you a number that you call ten. You then add another zero and get hundred. Go on adding more and more zeroes, and you progressively get larger and larger numbers. You get hundred, thousand, ten thousand etc. In this way, with a mere string of zeroes, you can increase the number to million, trillion and so on. You can get astronomical numbers by just adding zeroes to 1. Remove this 1, and you are left with a mere string of zeroes!

You may have a large number of zeroes but they carry no value. But place the number one before this string of zeroes, and you get numbers that carry value - that one makes all the difference!

In the Universe, That One is God, one of whose Names is Ekam. God is just One, no matter by what Name you choose to call Him or what Form you wish to ascribe to Him.

Next we have Nityam, which means Eternal. God is not only Eternal but also Changeless. He remains so in all the three periods of time - past, present, and future - in all the three worlds, and in the presence of the three gunas (satva, rajo and tamo gunas) too. This divine constancy is described in the scriptures by saying that He is beyond trikalam (three periods of time), trilokam (three worlds), and trigunam (three gunas). Thus, God is Nityam, Nityam, Nityam!

After this, we have Vimalam - Pure. Today, contamination and pollution are everywhere. Air and water are polluted. Food too is contaminated and polluted. What is even more serious, man's mind is polluted. God, on the other hand, is the personification of Total Purity. He is absolutely unsullied, crystal clear, and pristine pure.

Achalam. This means steady and not wavering. All objects and entities made up of the five elements are subject to changes with time; in fact, change is an inherent part of their nature. The Sun changes with time, and so does the Moon. The stars also change with time. The Earth is always in motion. You know that in a movie, sixteen frames change per second. So it is in Creation - changes all the time, everywhere, and in everything. But God is Achalam or steady and constant.

Calanam Acalameva Ca. God is no doubt steady and unchanging, but He is also immanent in things that are subject to change. Even so, constancy being the basic nature of the Absolute, God is known as Achalam.

Sarvadhī Saksibhutām.

In addition to all the names mentioned so far, God is called the Eternal Witness. He is a witness to everything and all the time.

Names of God not given by man Pious and noble rishis of the past gave so many Names to God.

Keen to experience Divinity, they sacrificed everything worldly and material, and did intense penance. Induced by his inner feelings, each sage ascribed an attribute or form of his choice to God and then gave a name to God appropriate to his conception.

God is actually both Formless and Nameless - all the descriptions of God are due to the rishis of old. However, Names of God like Brahmanandam, etc., have nothing to do with worldly or physical descriptions. They transcend all these and relate to a superior plane. In this plane, God is beyond all normal and conceptual description. He is the Supreme One beyond all duality, and is described as Brahmanandam, Paramasukhadam, Kevalam Jnanamurtim, Dvandvatitam, Gaganasadrisham, Tatvamasyadilakshyam, Ākāśham, Nityam, Vimalam, Acalam, Sarvadhīshaksibhutām.

God alone is entitled to all these glorious Names.

The all-comprehensive nature of God's Name

Once, sage Narada came across young Dhruva who was then undertaking an intense penance to propitiate Lord Narayana.

Narada said, "Dhruva, you are so young. Is it possible for you to undertake such an intense penance? How are you going to contemplate on God? In what form will you meditate on Him?"

In this manner, Narada asked many questions. Dhruva smiled and replied, "O sage, the idea that I should do penance was planted by Him. The seed of thought becomes a sapling due to Him. The sapling grows into a giant tree because of Him. And He it is who also makes the tree to bear fruits. I have no doubt that the very same God will take care of me. I have not studied the Upanishads or other sacred texts. I know only the Name of God."

Narada asked, "What Name will you chant?" Dhruva thought for a while and replied, "I shall chant: Gopijana Vallabhaya Namaha."

Here, the word gopi does not just refer to the gopikas of Brindavan. Gopa means the Earth, the Vedas, the Word, and cows. The rootword for all these four words is Go. Gopis are those who worship and take care of these four sacred entities. They worship the Earth, they foster the Vedas, they are true to their word, and they also protect the cows. In essence, the gopikas of Brindavan did all these. God does not have any names per se, but various names are given to Him.

Dhruva said to Narada, "I am one among the gopis. I am a part of the Earth, a part of the Vedas, etc. In short, I am one among the many created by the Lord. Who protects and sustains the many? God. That is the One I am worshipping with this chant."

Swami said the other day,

Kleem, Krishnaya, Govindaya, Gopijanavallabhaya, Svaha.
You will recall that kleem means earth.
Krishnaya means water, govindaya means fire,
and the other two words mean respectively air and space.

These five words thus symbolise the five elements, which are the very personification of God. Thus, even a chant of the names of any one of the five elements amounts to calling out to God. All five words mentioned are also the Names of God and there is no particular need to chant the name Krishna, Vishnu, or Siva. It was only after the emergence of sects like Vaishnavites and Saivites that the fashion of chanting particular names like Vishnu and Siva emerged. This practice not only narrowed one's perspective about God but also promoted unwanted controversies. God does not have any specific name.

Tasmai Namah.

Become free from desires and attain Perfect Happiness

This is short salutation hails God as: "O God, the Embodiment of Supreme Happiness!" When are you truly happy? You feel that way when you are free from all worries and anxieties. God has no desires and that is why He is always happy. Try to be like that, free from desires, and you too would always be happy.

It is desires and worldly expectations that destroy happiness. To achieve permanent happiness, you must be totally free of desires. You may or may not believe this: Swami has no worries whatsoever, and is therefore always in a state of bliss. Swami has no thoughts relating to Himself. However, because He has come with a physical form and on account of His contacts with people,

He might, at times, appear to be concerned and worried.

But truly speaking, Swami is beyond both desires and worries. He wants nothing for Himself from anybody at any time. What He wants is only your welfare and that is the feeling dominant in Him all the time.

The true meaning of Self-satisfaction

Suppose you want to eat a fruit. Do you want the fruit for your sake or the sake of the fruit? No. You want the fruit because you wish to enjoy it. You are attracted by a nice piece of textile.

Do you want it for your sake or because you wish to give some satisfaction to that cloth? Obviously, the latter is not true; you want the cloth for your sake. It is the same with food. In this manner, every desire you have is for the gratification of your own self. There is something in you that drives you, and that driving force arises because you are either consciously or unconsciously seeking satisfaction for yourself. However, in almost all these cases, it is the lower self that is involved; that is why one describes all such actions as selfish. In spirituality, one must focus on the Higher Self; all actions must spring from the desire to satisfy this Higher or real Self. This is true Self-satisfaction.

Actions aiming at satisfying the Inner Self are not selfish in the worldly sense because they are far from worldly desires and petty expectations.

This Real Self within is nothing but the Atma, and Brahmananda is Happiness connected with providing satisfaction to the Atma.

Apart from the names already mentioned, the Atma is also known as Paramatma, Paratma, Ekatma, etc.

The journey to God must be by way of selfless service to society

Man is a vyashti or an individual. He is a part of samashti or society. And

society is a part of Parameshti or God. The vyashti must journey to Parameshti through samashti. The individual must involve himself with society in some manner or the other, and serve it selflessly. If in the name of your individuality you cut yourself off from society and give preference to the pursuit of your personal ambitions etc., you can never become one with God! Such selfishness is contrary to the spirit of unity and Oneness that God represents. He who yearns to experience Brahmananda must first develop Love for God and the longing to become one with God. This longing must be translated into practical terms by first becoming one with society. How do you become one with society? By selfless service. When you serve society in a selfless manner, you will start realising that all are one.

Enlightenment can occur in a flash

The Vedas proclaim,

Vedahametam purusam mahantam adityavarnam tamasah parastat

The rishis of old declared to mankind: "O man! We have seen God [in man]. He has the effulgence of the Sun latent in him but he lies in the darkness [of ignorance]." People then asked the rishis: "Where did you see this God? Inside or outside?" To this the rishis replied:

Antarbahisca Tatsarvam Vyapya Narayanassthitah.

"God is everywhere, inside as well as outside." They then added, "Man, there is God in you. You have the effulgence of the Sun, but the darkness of ignorance is eclipsing this radiance." The rishis saw God everywhere. Since

God is Omnipresent, Bliss too is everywhere since bliss is God's Form. God has no desires and that is why the state He is in is described as Parama Sukhadam (Supreme Happiness). If there are no desires, then one can truly experience Eternal and Supreme Happiness, which is what God is.

Absence of desires also makes God the personification of Supreme Knowledge. Supreme Knowledge exists when there is Supreme Bliss - the two go together. Thus, Supreme Knowledge, Supreme Happiness, and Supreme Bliss - all these are synonymous with God. These aspects of God are not the result of causal effects; they are intrinsic to God. The Almighty transcends reason, is beyond causality, and is also beyond both space and time. He is not bound by circumstances either.

Here is an example. You are now here in Brindavan. You are sleeping in your room and while doing so you dream that you are in Calcutta. Why did you go to Calcutta? How did you travel to Calcutta? Who accompanied you? How long did it take you to reach Calcutta? There are no valid answers to these questions because dream is beyond space, time, and circumstances such as one experiences in the waking state. Suppose you actually want to go to Calcutta. You catch a flight at 7 a.m. and in about three hours you are physically there. At Calcutta Airport you take a taxi and go to a house. What for? To meet your relatives there. Thus, in real life, there is a purpose for the travel - you wish to meet your relatives, that is the purpose. The mode of travel is air and the journey is made in the morning. The duration of the journey is three hours. The time of departure is 7 a.m. Experiences in the waking state are thus governed entirely by time, space, reason, and circumstances. On the other hand, experiences in the dream state are completely beyond all such considerations.

The dream-state experience illustrates another important point.

You are fast asleep at night. At 1.30 a.m. you get up to go to the bathroom. You come back and fall asleep again. The time now is 1.35 a.m. You drift into a dream. In the dream you see yourself growing up, getting educated, securing a job, getting married, having a son and later playing with this son.

In the dream, the child cries. With a start you wake up. You look at the clock. It shows 1.40 a.m. In just five minutes of dream, you have experienced so many stages in life that take nearly forty years in real life. In the same way, if you are able to rise to the transcendental state of turiyavasta, you can experience God in just the fraction of a second. You may wonder, "Is this possible?"

Well, can anyone explain how it is possible in five minutes of dream to go through what takes forty years in real life? No one can. In the same way, though no one can explain it, it is possible to experience Divinity, literally in a flash.

Here is another example. You are living in a house. Circumstances arise and you go abroad, locking up the house. You return after spending ten years overseas. You open the lock and enter the house. You then put on the switch. The room you are in has remained dark for ten years but in just one moment, it is filled with light. It took just one second to put the switch on, and in a flash the darkness is removed. In the same way, it does not necessarily take ages for the darkness of ignorance to be removed and for enlightenment to occur. Enlightenment is a process that is beyond reason and season. Why? Because God who confers enlightenment is also beyond reason and season. Intensely directing your intellect toward God amounts to flicking the switch. When the spiritual switch is flicked, Supreme Bliss can be experienced immediately. Therefore, the realisation of this exalted state described variously as Brahmanandam, Parama Sukhadam, etc., can happen instantaneously, without any apparent reason. To have this experience, you do not have to withdraw to the forest as people mistakenly imagine; it can happen to you right here.

Offer service, and receive love!

Peace is right within you. To experience what is right within you, why think of withdrawing to the forest? Such thoughts are foolish; peace is in one place and you are thinking of looking for it elsewhere. Peace is within you! If you want to discover this treasure within you, then, as Swami said earlier, you

must serve others and experience love. If you do so, then you would automatically discover peace. Enlightenment is nothing but experiencing peace and love within, and this enlightenment is nothing other than Supreme Bliss and Absolute Happiness.

When the mind wavers, faith also falters
Everything is in you. That is why it is said,
Sarvatah Panipadam Tatsarvato'ksi Siromukham
Sarvatah Srrtimalloke Sarvamavrtya Tisthati.
With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads, mouths, and ears
everywhere,
He exists enveloping all. He pervades through all these means.

Once, Krishna asked Arjuna, "How old are you?" Arjuna replied, "I am seventy."

Krishna then said, "Arjuna, do you know My age? I am seventy five!" For this body also seventy-five is coming!

[Obviously, this is a reference to the forthcoming Seventy-fifth Birthday. Perhaps, Swami was dropping a hint to those who forgot that He is none other than Krishna come again!] Bhishma was then one hundred and thirteen. At that age, he served as the Commander-in-Chief of the Kaurava forces in the Kurukshetra war. Can you think of such a thing in this day and age? People lived long those days.

When the mind is not steady but wavering, there are aberrations.

Once, Krishna chided Arjuna, "I taught you the Gita and gave you much spiritual advice; but you don't remembering anything.

Do you know why? Because you do not consider My teachings to be

important. You are indifferent to them, and that is why you have forgotten all that I taught you. Had you regarded them as important, then you would have remembered all My teachings.

You have also forgotten that you and I have been together in many lives." Arjuna felt sorry and with humility asked, "Lord, how is it that You remember everything and recall them all, while I am not able to do so?" That is forgetfulness.

The Real You or the Inner Being
Is ever aware in all states,
Be it the waking state
Or the dream state,
Or the deep-sleep state.
It knows no forgetfulness.

You, however, are not in the Taraka state, or the one of Perfect Awareness, but in the tamasic state, which is one of torpor. Arjuna was baffled and asked, "How can that be Lord? I am not all that dull." Krishna smiled and replied, "Is that so? Now tell Me; we have been together for so long; can you remember all the events?"

You do not. But you do remember your birthday, and also the day of your wedding with Subhadra, even though the marriage took place decades ago. Arjuna, where were you last year on Chaturdasi [fourteenth] day in the month of Margashirsha [approximately, November]?" A crestfallen Arjuna replied, "I don't remember."

Krishna continued, "You can recall precisely the date of your marriage that took place fifty years ago but cannot remember where you were on a particular day just last year! This reflects the human tendency of forgetfulness, caused by a wavering mind."

A short time after this conversation took place, the death occurred of Arjuna's son Abhimanyu. But Arjuna was not aware of this.

When he returned home, he wondered, "Every evening as I returned from the battlefield, my son used to receive me. Today, why has he not come?" Krishna, who was then by the side of Arjuna, knew even earlier about Abhimanyu's death but did not reveal it to Arjuna; there was a time and place for everything and in due course, Arjuna would become aware of the news. In God's Drama, there is a time and a place for everything. When Arjuna came to know of Abhimanyu's death, he could not bear the shock and collapsed. He shouted at Krishna calling Him "Vamsanasi!" [destroyer of the clan] for not having protected his son. Arjuna continued, "We all are now too old to have children again. With the death of Abhimanyu, our lineage has come to an end and You are responsible for it!" Krishna smiled and replied, "Arjuna, your mind is wavering. Right now you are in the grip of grief, and swayed by emotion, are speaking without thinking. But it does not matter; this mood will pass."

Sometime later, Abhimanyu's wife delivered a baby but unfortunately, it was still-born. Draupadi took the dead child in her hand and said, "Alas, even this child is dead." Sahadeva was sent to fetch Krishna. Krishna came. Draupadi placed the body of the still-born child on a plate, took it to Krishna and said, "O Krishna, have You given us the gift of a dead child?" Krishna was smiling as usual. It was Krishna's habit to always smile, no matter what the situation. Others might be worried, anxious, upset, or in despair but Krishna was always smiling. Grief and sorrow could never touch Him; He was far beyond them. Krishna told Draupadi, "This child is the exact replica of Abhimanyu.

His eyes are like that of Abhimanyu and so is the face." Arjuna could not bear this and shouted, "Yes, the breath too is similar!

Abhimanyu is dead and so is this child!!" Krishna smiled and chided Arjuna, "You are a fool, unable to understand what I am saying." Krishna then ignored Arjuna and continued talking to Draupadi. The latter had full faith in Krishna and His willingness to do anything for His devotees.

In the matter of devotion, women are exemplary. It is the wife that drags the husband to God. God gave the gift of bhakti (devotion) to women and jnana (wisdom) to men. In court language, whereas men can go only up to the Durbar Hall [where the King holds court], women can go to the inner quarters [where women stay].

In the same way, the devotion of a woman can take her right inside God's heart, whereas such access is not so easy for a man. Why?

Because, compared to women, men have less faith in God and correspondingly also less devotion. Women, on the other hand, have total faith. Arjuna did not believe that Krishna would do anything, but Draupadi had full faith that Krishna would restore the dead child back to life.

The Pandava brothers were all seated there, looking totally crestfallen. Meanwhile, Krishna was continuing His conversation.

Arjuna was boiling inside but was unable to say anything. All of a sudden Krishna told Draupadi, "Sister, give me the child."

Draupadi did. Krishna then patted the child and the baby began to cry. The Pandavas were stunned; unbelievable, but the dead child had come back to life! They shouted with joy, while Krishna named the child Parikshit (As He had made them undergo His pariksha (test) before giving life to the child). Arjuna too witnessed the miracle. He ran to Krishna, fell at His feet, and hailed Him thus:

"Krishna! Vamsoddharaka!! [Krishna, the Emancipator of the clan]" Krishna smiled and said, "Arjuna, just a short while ago you called Me the destroyer of the clan and now you are hailing Me as the Emancipator of the clan. How quickly you change! How fickle you are! How your mind wavers!"

If you say yes,

Sai says yes;
If you say no,
Sai also says no.
This yes and no relate to you,
But for Sai,
It is always Yes, Yes, and Yes!
[Applause.]

One moment Krishna was called the destroyer and then in the next He was called the Emancipator. These descriptions do not relate to Krishna but the person using the terms. They reflect the wavering mind of man. God is Unchanging and far beyond fluctuations.

Parikshit having regained life, everyone was very happy. All of them were sitting around Krishna. Arjuna moved close to Krishna and gently asked, "Lord, why did You let my son Abhimanyu die at such a young age? I did not even get a chance to see him before he died. Should death come so early? Could You not have let him live a little longer?" Krishna replied, "O foolish one! You are determining the age of a person by looking at the present body.

This age that you are talking of has no meaning really. Birth and death of the body follow according to the law of nature."

Here is an example that illustrates how one should understand the so-called early or untimely death. Suppose you go to Kashmir.

You may not be aware of it but Kashmir was the home state of Kaikeyi. While in Kashmir, you purchase some woollen cloth in order to stitch a suit. After return, you put the cloth in a cupboard, lock the cupboard, and then forget all about the cloth. Ten years pass and you are about to shift your residence. You are packing things for the transfer of residence. At that time, you discover the woollen cloth that you have stored away a long time ago.

You regret that you have forgotten about this nice fabric all these years. That very day, you go to a tailor and ask him to stitch a nice suit for you. Soon, the suit is delivered. You wear this brand new suit and attend a wedding party. A buffet dinner has been arranged there. You bend down a little with the plate to help yourself. Suddenly you find that your suit gives way and tears [laughter]. You feel sad. You wonder, "Brand new suit; how can it tear like this?" Yes, the suit is indeed new but the cloth is not new; it is old.

Krishna told Arjuna, "Abhimanyu did not die young as you imagine; he was 'old stock'. In this birth he might have lived only for a few years, but in reality, the one whom you called Abhimanyu was not young at all." Arjuna then said, "Lord, I was not aware of such subtleties." Krishna smiled and replied, "Yes, My dear son, life and death are both mysteries! You will not be able to understand them."

Experience God and do not try to analyse Him

It is not possible for anyone to comprehend Divinity. What God does one moment may appear to contradict what He does the next moment. God's actions are inscrutable, beyond, time, space, and human reason. As Swami often says: "No reason, no season!"

It is therefore both meaningless and improper to analyse God's actions and to interpret them. If God says 'Yes,' it shall be so. If He says 'No,' it shall be so. That is Destiny! You must accept all this and not argue. To question God's actions would imply lack of faith.

Let us say right now you go out to the bazar and tell people there what Swami is speaking about. You tell them that Swami is God. A man in the crowd asks you, "Where is God?" You tell him, "He is there on the stage delivering a discourse." He argues, "That is not God. God does not exist." You should then tell him, "If you say that God does not exist, that applies only to you and not to me. For me, God does exist. What right do you have to tell me that God does not exist? To believe in God is my right. If you are destined not to have faith in God, that is your misfortune."

Your faith in God must be strong. If it is, God will surely respond always. If you emphatically declare your firm belief in God, nonbelievers would automatically shut up and walk away.

You must understand that Creation is full of mysteries. The eleven words starting with Brahmananda are not praises of God. Nor are they descriptions of God. In fact, they are the Names of God.

The celebrated Gayatri Mantra has three basic parts.

Om

Bhur Bhuvassuvah, Tatsavitur Varenyam,
Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi,
Dhiyo Yonah Pracodayat.

First there is praise; next, there is meditation; finally, prayer - adoration, meditation, and prayer.

But the hymn beginning with Brahmananda, goes far beyond even the famous Gayatri. The words Brahmananda etc., have nothing to do with praise - they are the very Names of God. The Gayatri Mantra is the gift of Sage Viswamitra to humanity. It has a basis; it can be analysed; its meaning can be comprehended. But the Divine Principle [to which the words Brahmananda etc., refer] is beyond human reasoning, human analysis, and human understanding as well.

God knows no sorrow, has no pain, and is beyond thought. Sorrow and grief come only to those with thoughts, while the one without thoughts is always happy. God is beyond thoughts and is therefore always in Bliss. No matter what people tell Him, Swami always responds by saying, "Santosham, santosham" [meaning 'I am happy to hear that']. That is because Swami is Parama Sukhadam. A lady comes to Swami and cries, "Swami, my husband died". Swami replies, "Santosham". The shocked lady asks, "What Swami! I

am telling you that my husband has died and You are saying You are happy!! Are You happy that my husband died?" Swami replies, "No matter what you say, for Swami it is always santosham, santosham, santosham!" Once, a person told Swami, "Our people met with an accident". Swami said, "Chala santosham [very happy]".

Swami is always happy. What is there to be unhappy about?

Whatever has to happen according to destiny, will happen. Why then bother and feel sad about it? Life and death are natural.

They are common to all and not meant specifically for this person or that. Therefore, one must calmly face the verdict of destiny and accept with equanimity whatever happens. People suffer not because of destiny but because of desires and attachments. If you have attachments to the things of the world, you are bound to experience joy and sorrow in alternation. Pleasure and pain are an integral part of the dual world.

Everything happens according to the will of God. He gives and He takes back what He wants when He wants. You might have seen railway goods wagons carrying a marking: Date of Return.

It means that on the due date, the wagon has to be returned to the parent railway department. The body is like the goods wagon.

When it is sent here, a return date is stamped on it though you might not be aware of it. When the due date comes, the body goes back where it came from - that is all. Thus, when there is birth there is also death. The two form a natural pair. So, no one should give way to sorrow on account of death.

There is Bliss in every aspect of life, and God is Pure Bliss. Since God is in you, you should always be happy. You should ever be full of love. Never allow that love to become polluted or degraded into hate.

At the end of the discourse, Bhagavan sang the bhajan, Prema Mudita ...

11. How To Become Dear To The Lord

Date: 24 May 2000 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 2000

Anapeksah Sucirdaksa Udasino Gatavyathah
Sarvarambha Parityagi Yo Madbhaktah Same Priyah
He who is totally devoid of desires,
Absolutely pure,
Firm in determination,
Completely detached,
Immune to the play of Time,
And has renounced pomp and ostentation;
Such a one is dear to Me.
GITA: (12.16)

Embodiments of Love!

God loves dearly, those who possess the qualities enumerated in this sloka (verse) of the Bhagavad Gita.

The qualities needed to become dear to the Lord

Anapeksha means that the devotee is beyond apeksha, i.e., desires or expectations. Is it ever possible for man, bound as he is by the body and the senses, to be without desires? Hardly. Some desire or the other will always be there. However, there must be control over the desires that one has. What sort of desires are permitted? Recall what Krishna has to say about this matter.

He says that all righteous actions are divine. Thus, among the permissible desires, the best is the desire for tyaga or sacrifice.

The yearning for dharma also is important. The desire for God is mandatory. Although what must truly be desired is very clear, people have widely different types of expectations and desires.

While some consider being righteous as very important, others think that achieving [worldly] greatness is the best among goals.

Some even try to combine these two objectives. Truly speaking, no one has the freedom or the authority to do as one likes. One must do exactly as the Lord says.

The Lord has stated very clearly that He wants you to attain the state of anapeksha. How does one do that? One does this by strictly confining to righteous activities alone, performing such actions exclusively for the pleasure of the Lord, and by offering all such actions in their entirety to the Lord. Actions performed in this spirit rise well above worldly desires and expectations. Thus the word anapeksha ought not to be interpreted in a very rigid sense. What it really means is having the irresistible urge to work only for the Lord and for His sole pleasure. However, that does not mean one can do anything and everything. Our actions must be such that they please Him and would secure His approval. If a devotee conducts himself in this fashion, he becomes dear to the Lord.

The second quality that the devotee must possess is **sucih or cleanliness**. What sort of cleanliness does the Lord expect from us? Is it outer cleanliness or inner cleanliness? Both are required.

God loves cleanliness; cleanliness is Godliness. However, one cannot confine oneself to external cleanliness alone; inner purity also is very necessary. In fact, it is of prime importance. God is omnipresent. He is present both outside as well as inside. However, we must first try to recognise the Divine Principle within.

Here is an example. There is a brass vessel, and you are using it to prepare soup. If the vessel is not tinned inside, the soup would get spoilt and even

poisoned. Our heart is like the brass vessel.

This vessel must be coated inside with prema. If this precaution is taken, the inside will be clean. Inner purity is essential for achieving external purity. What exactly is meant by external purity? It does not mean washing yourself with soap and water. It means performing selfless service to society and doing such action for the pleasure of God. It is such service alone that produces external purity. If inner purity is lacking, the service rendered would inevitably be tinged with selfishness, thereby diminishing external purity.

The third quality that the devotee must have is **daksha or strong and unshakeable determination**. What sort of determination must you have? You must say, "Come what may, I shall not rest till I accomplish this or achieve this." This is the sort of resolve you ought to have. Swami occasionally says:

Having resolved what ought to be done,
Hold on till you succeed.
This is determination.
Having desired what ought to be,
Hold on till they are fulfilled.
This is determination.
Having asked what ought to be,
Hold on till you get it.
This is what is meant by determination.
Having thought what ought to be,
Hold on till the thought is realised.
Such is the quality of determination. In the end, what should happen?
Out of sheer disgust, the Lord must yield to your wishes!
Persevere, be tenacious, and never give up.
It is not the characteristic of a devotee to retreat,
Abandoning his resolve.

What is meant by determination? It means having the firm resolve: "I should definitely see God, have God, and secure His Grace." God loves dearly the devotee who has such firm determination.

Next comes **udasina**, which means detachment. You must be totally detached with respect to whatever you are doing. You can do any kind of work; you may, for example, be engaged in service activity. However, you should not have expectation of any type [including of the outcome], and also not seek any reward, praise, appreciation, etc., for what you are doing. Especially while working for service organisations, you should be very careful; you must not have any craving for fame and name. You must not seek praise and respect. You should not lament, "I am working so hard and doing so much but there is no mention of it whatsoever in the newspapers!" If you do your work with such cravings and expectations, then the good that you might be doing gets nullified and the sanctity of the work gets destroyed. Therefore, you must do service work sincerely, being immune to success and failure, praise as well as criticism.

After this, **gathavyathaha; this means being impervious to the ups and downs brought about by time**. Acquisition of this particular virtue also calls for strong determination. You should neither brood over the past nor worry about the future. Why all this pointless contemplation? No matter how much you think, reflect, and brood, the miseries of the past cannot be corrected nor set right. As regards the future, no one can say anything definite about it since it is so very uncertain. You are keen about achieving something tomorrow; is there any guarantee you would be alive then? Are you sure you would be alive? No one can speak with certainty on such matters. Therefore, what is the point in worrying about the future? The future is hidden in the womb of time; no one can see it. So, why spend time imagining all sorts of future scenarios? As for the past, it is gone and lies buried in the sands of time. The past cannot be revived, recovered, or resurrected.

The future belongs to time. Why therefore waste time reflecting about both

the past as well as the future? If you do want to think, then do so about the present. Man cannot live without thinking.

Waves of thought constantly assail you. Channelise your thought so the present. Why? Because both the past and the future are contained in the present. The present is a seed that came from a tree called the past. This seed also contains the tree called the future. Thus the present is very important, being the embodiment of both the past and the future; therefore, go by it.

He who speaks and conducts himself,
Judging properly the situation and circumstance,
And without wounding or hurting others; And without himself being hurt in
the process
Such a one is wise and blessed.

Don't worry about the future, but concentrate on the present. If you take proper care of the present, the future is bound to be bright; of that you can be sure.

Lastly, **sarvarambha parithyagi - this implies total renunciation.**

Who is a true renunciate? He who remains perfectly calm at all times and under all circumstances is the one who merits such a description. Such a one is beyond pomp and ostentation. God distances Himself from the ostentatious type. In fact, exhibitionism is the first thing that one must renounce. Pomp is a sure sign of rajo guna (tendency to be pushing and aggressive). The craving for ostentation is the starting point for all desires. Seeking publicity is a reflection of worldly desires. Do not go after worldly goals for they represent the temporary and the evanescent. Shun pomp, show, and publicity. Krishna declared that it was such a recluse that was dear to Him.

Today, everywhere it is a case of show and publicity. The person may spend just five rupees on charity, but he is prepared to invest five hundred rupees on publicising his act in the newspapers.

Is this not show? It is only the one who seeks fame that needs publicity; on the other hand, the one truly interested in service has no need for it. Never hanker after publicity. As long as you are after pomp, you would never be able to experience Atmic Bliss. How can one who is ignorant of the Self ever earn God's Love? While seeking God's Grace, one must be very patient in everything and in every aspect. Then alone can it be said that one is treading the spiritual path; then alone would one become eligible for God's attention.

Selfless service alone begets God's Love

Embodiments of Love! If you wish to become eligible for God's love, then your actions must be consistent with love. It is impossible to secure God's love without appropriate and sacred actions. Can the one who is always hankering after rewards be ever truly happy? The only compensation you ought to seek is the pleasure and joy of doing your duty properly. The joy of service is the true reward. If you go against the command of God, then everything is bound to go wrong.

Yad bhavam tad bhavati.
As is the feeling, so is the result.

If you desire God's love, then your actions must match and be compatible with your desire. If you do not want God's Love, then you are at liberty to do as you please. However, if God's Love is what you want, then you must act in an appropriate manner. In this world, you first have to pay the price before you acquire the authority to possess what you desire. You go to a shop to buy a towel. The shopkeeper quotes a price of twenty rupees. When you pay twenty rupees cash, the shopkeeper packs the towel and gives it to you. No

cash, no towel! God also follows a similar 'transaction' procedure. What kind of 'business' does God do? Divine business! If you lovingly obey God's command, then you are sure to receive Love. God's Love has no limitations or stipulations. Only one condition: you give and then you receive. As Swami said earlier:

Offer selfless service, And receive Love. Without offering selfless service, how can you expect to receive God's love? To receive God's love, you must be totally free from worldly desires and constantly engage in selfless service.

The service must be of a pleasing nature. All actions must be performed exclusively for God's pleasure. For this, you do not have to give up anything. Just keep on doing your normal duty in the manner ordained by Destiny. You wish to study; by all means do so. But in what manner should you study? You should do it for God's pleasure. You are employed in some place. How should you do your work? Do it as if you are trying to please God. Tell yourself, "I am doing this job as an offering to Him". Install this feeling in your heart and do whatever you want to or have to.

However, before rushing to adopt this course, pause, reflect, and make sure that God would really be pleased with what you are trying to do and offer to Him! You cannot do all sorts of silly and stupid things, claiming that you are doing it for God's pleasure.

If you act just according to your fancies, do you think that God will accept your actions as an offering? Every action of yours must have the stamp of quality that is acceptable to God. Without that stamp, your action would be a counterfeit. God should acknowledge that your action is good. When you affix the proper postage stamp, your letter can go to far off places. But if there is only address on the envelope and no stamp, it is of no use. An unstamped letter dropped into the mailbox would end up only in the dead-letter office. Therefore, if you really want your offering to reach God, then you must affix the stamp of prema. It is only when prema saturates every action of yours that God will shower His Grace. He will do so in many forms too.

Nothing comes without perseverance

Slowly but surely, you must develop all the qualities enumerated in the Gita Sloka. Do not ever doubt that the acquisition of these virtues is impossible.

Go on rubbing two pieces of wood,
Fire is sure to emerge.
Go on churning curd,
Butter is sure to be formed.
Engage constantly in enquiry,
Wisdom would certainly blossom.

Sparks of fire are produced when two pieces of wood are rubbed hard together. Butter is formed when curd is churned in a sustained manner. Similarly, in spirituality, sustained enquiry leads one to Wisdom and Divinity. You realise the truth: Tat Twam Asi - That thou art. Is it possible to get fire without rubbing and butter without churning? The fire is latent in the wood and is not visible.

You have to rub hard to make the fire emerge. Butter is latent in the curd, and you have to churn hard to make it come out. In the same way, if you want God's love, you must constantly do good work, do it solely for God's pleasure, and also offer it all to God.

It is only when you work with such a spirit of surrender that you become eligible for God's love. Surrender does not mean that you are vanquished and that the other one has emerged victorious.

In spirituality it means that the two merge into one - there is nothing like giving or receiving. Recognise the Cosmic Unity that pervades everywhere. Recognise that this substratum of Unity is nothing but God. You will then automatically experience God.

Students! All this may sound very difficult to practise. Know the truth that happiness comes only after hard effort. Without difficulty, there cannot be joy.

Na sukhat labhyate sukham.

Happiness does not beget happiness; happiness is born only out of difficulties.

If there are no difficulties to start with, how can you enjoy the sweetness of pleasure? So, you must struggle to some extent and face difficulties. Without darkness, does brightness have any value? Without hunger, does food have value? Similarly, you must discover the true taste and value of happiness. In what way must you do this? Discover first the Love within you, and then use it to receive God's Love. Once you tap the pure and unpolluted Love within you, you will become the recipient of God's Love. God would even overlook and forgive your mistakes. However, do not take this for granted and commit mistakes endlessly! You have to safeguard all the treasures God has deposited in you.

God is everywhere but you must make an effort to recognise Him

The gopikas (cowherd maids) constantly worshipped Krishna. They became very depressed when Krishna went away to Mathura. They were so absorbed in the thought of Krishna that they constantly called out His Name, no matter what task they were engaged in. Once, a gopika was carrying on her head pots containing milk, curd, and butter. She was heading for the bazar, and her intention was to sell the dairy products there. Normally the village vendor calls out loudly, "Milk! Butter! Curd!" etc., to announce the products available for sale. But this particular gopika was so absorbed in the contemplation of Krishna that she completely forgot to call out the name of the products she had brought to sell. Instead, she wandered up and down the bazar street crying out, "Govinda, Krishna, Madhava,...." etc. She went on repeating the

Lord's Name. She completely forgot everything about vending and returned home without selling anything. Such was the intensity of devotion in those days.

A gopika once told Krishna, "O Krishna, in what way am I to see You? How am I to recognise You? It is not possible! You are in everything and yet, You are invisible! When we declare You to be invisible, then You suddenly manifest Yourself. And when we say You are present, you suddenly vanish!"

O Krishna, can we ever know You?

Subtler than an atom,

Bigger than biggest, You are in every one of the eighty-four lakh species,
And You dwell in each and every living being of every species.

Can we ever know such a One as You?

People in those days believed that there were 84 lakh living species.

God is present as the Indweller in every living being belonging to each of these very large number of species. How come? Because He is the One that became many. When the forms of God are so numerous, in what particular form should we worship God?

By what Name should we call Him? Forms are the result of our physical perception, and Names are what we have given to these various forms. By Himself, God is just Truth.

Here is a flower, a pad, and a cloth [Swami points out to various objects on the table before Him]. To the eye, they all appear quite different. The flower is a flower, the cloth is cloth, and the pad is a pad. Despite the varying names and forms, there is common underlying factor - they all exist. This existence is the basic Truth. It is the unifying substratum behind the different names and forms. IT IS! It is the same with God.

God there certainly IS,
And visible also He is!
God IS, IS, IS! He exists!!

You should have complete and total faith in His existence. If you have this faith, you can see Him everywhere. How is it that you have faith in your mother? Do you ever doubt whether she is your mother or not? Never! How come you have faith in your father? Do you ever have doubts about his being your father? You prefer to believe in all worldly things but are unwilling to accept spiritual truths. This is the biggest mistake and the weakness of modern man.

Bhrama - Brahma

The warden [of the Brindavan Campus, who spoke earlier] referred to the Ramayana. Rama, Lakshmana, Bharata, and Shatrughna, representing the four Vedas, took birth as Emperor Dasaratha's sons. Rama was the embodiment of the Rig Veda, Lakshmana represented the Sama Veda, Bharata stood for the Yajur Veda, and Shatrughna represented the Atharvana Veda. Thus, the four Vedas manifested as four Royal Princes. Sage Viswamitra was performing a yaga [Vedic ritual]. He knew very well that only Rama, Himself the embodiment of the Vedas, could protect the ritual he wished to perform. So, Viswamitra went to the palace of Dasaratha to seek the assistance of Rama. The Emperor was very pleased to see the Revered Sage and said, "O sage, what brought you here?" Viswamitra replied by asking a question, "Will you do what I ask you to do?" Without taking even a second to think about it, Dasaratha replied, "Of course, without fail". Dasaratha thus committed himself and became bound to his word.

One's action must match one's capacity,
Must be pre-determined,

Taking all aspects into account,
Both good and bad,
Must never be in haste,
And also be consistent with the goal.
Otherwise, it can prove deathly and dangerous.

Before you give your word, you must think carefully. You should not glibly or blindly give your word and then regret as well as retract. Dasaratha gave a promise because of his immense faith in sage Viswamitra. The sage said, "O King, I want you to send your son Rama with me to the forest in order to protect the yaga I am performing there." Dasaratha was stunned. He thought, "This son Rama was born to me after countless prayers, after observing so many austerities, and after performing so many yajnas. Is it possible to send such a dear and tender son to the forest to fight demons and protect the yaga? Rama is so young. He has never seen a demon. He may be frightened by those terrible creatures." Dasaratha's love for Rama produced in him a surge of such thoughts. Viswamitra sensed Dasaratha's misgivings and severely reprimanded the Emperor, "You have no idea who your son is. He is the very incarnation of God. Do not consider Him to be your tender son! It is your attachment that is blinding you to the Absolute Reality that Rama is. Give up this bodily attachment and replace it with devotion." Viswamitra sent for sage Vasishtha [Dasaratha's resident preceptor]. Vasishtha said, "O Dasaratha, do you know why I am serving as a priest in your royal household?

I am not here because I am enamoured by your wealth, fame, and power. I knew that God was going to take birth here in human form. I wanted to sanctify my life by having the darshan of that divine boy, spending time with Him, and experiencing bliss. That is the reason why I am here, and not for any worldly gains. Why do you entertain doubts about Rama? Send Him immediately with Sage Viswamitra to the forest." With great reluctance, Dasaratha yielded to Vasishtha's command.

Viswamitra was no ordinary Sage. As his name implies, he was a friend to the

whole world. How did he achieve this status? By giving humanity the priceless gift of the Gayatri Mantra. This great Viswamitra, widely reputed for his intense penance, who possessed extraordinary spiritual powers, and who was the guru of so many, was now taking the young Royal Princes Rama and Lakshmana to the forest. The party penetrated deep into the jungle and approached the river Sarayu. It was evening time, and the sage told the Princes, "Offer your evening prayers now." After Rama and Lakshmana did so, Viswamitra pointed across the river and said, "We are going over there. That is where I shall be performing the taga. It is becoming dark, and You will see terrible demons there. To ensure that You do not get frightened, I shall teach You two mantras: Bala and Athibala. Come and sit near me and receive the instruction." The sage taught the two mantras.

You see how illusion blankets clear thinking! Here is the great sage who, in the Court of Dasaratha, emphatically declared and hailed Rama as God Incarnate. But now in the forest, that feeling has gone. He is imagining Rama to be a tender young prince, likely to be frightened by demons. This shows that no matter how evolved, when one has bodily relations, doubts can and do arise about Incarnations. Such doubts are the result of delusion.

Bhrama (delusion) can eclipse Brahman (God)! Delusion is born of tendencies accumulated over many births. Divine feelings and the ability to recognise God in human form, on the other hand, is the result of sacred actions performed. What an ocean of difference separates bhrama and Brahman! Even a great sage like Viswamitra could come under the grip of bhrama!

God can be bound only with Love

You too occasionally have such delusory experiences. Questions arise like, "What is Divine? How should one relate to Divinity?"

Who is human? What is a demon? What is an animal?" and so on. The answers to these are simple. Divinity is Pure Love.

He who follows the path of righteousness is a human. Cruelty reflects

demonic nature. And the presence of animal qualities in a person brings that one down to the level of an animal. Divinity can be fully experienced only through love and no other way.

God cannot be bought with money, as many foolishly imagine. You all know the story of Sathyabhama [one of the consorts of Krishna]. She wanted Krishna all for herself and did not want Him to go anywhere. She asked Sage Narada how she could achieve this. Narada is the one who offers instruction in spiritual knowledge. Recognising that Sathyabhama's ego was responsible for her unreasonable desire, he decided to teach her a lesson.

For this purpose he devised a plan, and asked Sathyabhama, "Do you have the wealth that can match the weight of Krishna?" She replied, "I have with me the magical Syamanthaka jewel. I can create wealth, and any amount of it. Therefore, do not entertain any doubts about my affluence. I will certainly be able to match Krishna's weight with gold, precious stones, and jewels." Narada then called for a large balance and sent word to Krishna to join him. When Krishna came, Narada asked the Lord to sit on one of the pans. He then asked Sathyabhama to pile her gold, etc., in the other pan. No matter how much gold was placed, the pan carrying Krishna remained down; it did not show any tendency to go up even a tiny bit. Sathyabhama became scared. She ordered all her wealth to be placed on the other pan; no effect. Finally, she placed even the treasured and magical Syamanthaka jewel. Even then the balance remained stuck. She ran to Rukmini [the other consort], calling out loudly, "Sister! Sister!" Up to this time, she never cared for Rukmini or bother to look at her face. It was Rukmini's birthday, but the jealous Sathyabhama had prevented Krishna from visiting Rukmini even on that day. Rukmini is a compassionate one. She asked Sathyabhama, "Sister, why are you so agitated? What happened?" Sathyabhama narrated all that transpired and then said, "It is all the work of that Narada!"

Rukmini went worshipfully around the tulsi plant in her garden, plucked a leaf, kept it in her palm, and came with Sathyabhama to where Krishna was. Narada was waiting for the two with a broad smile on his face. Krishna too was full of smiles. He said, "I am ready to offer Myself for sale, to whosoever

is prepared to buy Me." Rukmini then said, "Narada, Krishna can be matched only by His Glorious Name and not by material wealth. I am therefore simply going to chant "Krishna!". Narada replied, "How can one balance the One with Form with a word that is formless? I cannot accept this kind of balancing. You must place some object on the empty pan and try to tilt the balance. Sathyabhama tried putting all her wealth but it was of no use. What are you going to place on the pan?" Rukmini then sang, O God Who is worshipped with leaf, flowers, fruits, and water, If it be true that You submit Yourself When You are offered Pure Love instead of all these, I pray that You be balanced by Your Name, And then tilt the scale with this Tulsi leaf.

So saying, she chanted the Name Krishna and then placed the tulsi leaf on the empty pan. The balance immediately tilted, with the pan carrying Krishna going up. Krishna had been more than matched! Narada observed, "The Name Krishna made the scale even and thereafter, the tulsi leaf was enough to tilt the balance."

God yields only to love. Anything you offer to Him, no matter how inconsequential it might be in a material sense, is acceptable to Him if the offering is accompanied by pure love. Even a single tulsi leaf is enough. God cannot be secured with wealth but only with love. There is in fact no wealth greater than love. So, offer love to God. If you offer Him pure love, then God will be very pleased and will always be with you. If you want to be worthy of God's love and the recipient of His Grace, then you must obey His command. What does He say?

Anapeksah sucirdaksa udasino gatavyathah
Sarvarambha parityagi yo madbhaktah same Priyah

He says, "If you have all these qualities, then you become dear to Me." God would readily claim you if you do what He says.

You must understand fully what God wants of you and conduct yourself accordingly.

Embodiments of Love! How to grasp God's teachings? How to develop and sustain faith in Him? Swami will speak to you on these topics tomorrow.

Bhagavan concluded the discourse by singing the bhajan, Bhavabhaya Harana....

12. Kshama, The Grandest And Noblest Virtue

Date: 25 May 2000 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 2000

Love, being His Form,
He is present everywhere as Love;
Become bonded to this Love
And strengthen your spirit;
For, this will lead you to
The Pure Bliss of non-duality.

Boys and Girls!

Embodiments of Love!

True and Selfless Love manifests as sacrifice. Such love knows no hatred. It envelops the entire universe, and is capable of drawing near even those who are seemingly far away. Love it is that transforms the human into the Divine. It can transform pasu (a bestial person) into Pasupathi (Divinity). In the phenomenal world, you come across many shades and derivatives of this primordial love. You love your father, mother, brother, sister, friends, and so on. In all such cases, there is always a tinge of selfishness somewhere or the other. Divine love, on the other hand, is totally free of even the slightest trace of selfishness. You must surrender to such love, become completely submerged by it, and experience the bliss it confers.

Kshama is the breath of life

For acquiring such love, the quality of kshama or forbearance is a vital necessity.

[kshama is a word rich in meaning. Besides forbearance, it also implies extreme patience and an enormous capacity to forget as also forgive. In view of this, the word kshama is directly used in most places in order not to dilute Bhagavan's emphasis.]

Every individual must cultivate this noble quality. Kshama is not achieved by reading books or learnt from an instructor. Nor can it be received as a gift from someone else. This prime virtue kshama can be acquired solely by self-effort, by facing squarely diverse problems, difficulties of various sorts, anxieties, and suffering as well as sorrow. In the absence of kshama, man becomes susceptible to all kinds of evil tendencies. Hatred and jealousy easily take root in a person lacking this virtue.

Divinity is nothing but the combined manifestation of prema and kshama. **At one stroke, kshama subsumes sathya, dharma, and the entire Vedas. It is the greatest among tapas (penance). It is the grandest and the noblest among virtues. It is all encompassing.**

The Mahabharatha and the Srimad Bhagavatham both contain many episodes that illustrate the disaster that befalls when kshama is lost. Jealousy is the first bad quality that makes its entry when kshama makes its exit. The Mahabharatha gives a graphic portrayal of how life that is otherwise smooth, can be totally shattered by jealousy. The Golden island Lanka was like the very heavens but Ravana's jealousy reduced it to ruins.

Whereas kshama can give complete protection, its absence can plunge one into distress and disaster. Impatience breeds selfishness and promotes jealousy, which together spur infighting and divisive tendencies of various kinds. The troubles the country is currently passing through are largely due to the absence of this noble quality of kshama. Impatience has ruined even very great spiritual aspirants. Likewise, kings have been reduced to beggars. Absence of kshama can make yogulu (yogis) into rogulu (sick persons). Without kshama, mankind becomes degraded and starts declining, but if it has this quality then it can progress by leaps and bounds. Kshama is thus the very breath of life.

Can there be smoke without fire?
Can a car move without a driver?
Can a traffic light flash without a bulb?
How then can there be Creation without a Creator?

Everything must have a basis. For spiritual progress and advancement, kshama is the real basis or foundation. When kshama disappears, disturbance sets in and there is a decline.

Great countries have lost their glory, prestige, and reputation for this reason. Patience is therefore a vital virtue that must be assiduously cultivated, if one is to successfully face troubles and tribulations. Without patience and the capacity for forbearance, one becomes spiritually weak. Such weakness leads to bad feelings, undesirable thoughts, and unbecoming actions. When patience is gone, the greatest of men get reduced to utter fools.

The importance of kshama cannot be over-stressed. This virtue is best cultivated under adverse circumstances, and one must therefore gladly welcome troubles instead of regarding them as unwelcome. Difficulties help one to nurse and build the capacity for patience, as the example of the Pandavas clearly shows. When they were in power and authority, the Pandavas were somewhat deficient in kshama but once they went into exile and had to face numerous hardships, kshama automatically began to develop in them. Thus, times of distress offer the ideal opportunity for the development of patience and forbearance. In fact, pain and kshama go together, because kshama grows best in an environment of sorrow and misery. However, because of mental weakness as well as ignorance, we invariably shun painful experiences and distress. You should not be weak; be brave and welcome troubles. Let them come, more the merrier. It is only with such a courageous attitude that you would be able to bring out the kshama hidden within you. Can you get promoted to a higher class without passing an examination? It is only when you secure the prescribed marks and pass the

examination that you are declared eligible to advance to the next higher class. While preparing for the examination you have to face stress and many difficulties but how sweet is the promotion! So, welcome troubles as tests that prepare you for higher things. Some people may wonder, "If I develop kshama as Swami says and my life gets packed with troubles, how then will I survive?" Well, it all depends on what is meant by survival. kshama is the true breath of life. It is the greatest ornament that one can acquire. It is kshama that enables you to develop equanimity, and go beyond duality. Going beyond duality is the real purpose of life, and this cannot be done without kshama. You must therefore be happy when troubles descend on you because that is when kshama truly blossoms.

How doubts arise

Students!

Often you are seized with doubts. You wonder, "We are happy here because we are close to Bhagavan and are able to have great devotion for Him. But the moment we leave from here, our devotion and love both diminish. Why?" This happens because one is deficient in kshama. Doubts arise frequently in an impatient person. Such a person has no tolerance, and intolerance is a fertile breeding ground for doubts. An impatient person is drowned in doubts about God. Devotees with great faith too are sometimes gripped by doubts. Why? Because of lack of kshama.

It is therefore important to continuously assess the state of your patience and your capacity for forbearance. You must constantly ask yourself, "Is my kshama getting strong or weak?" You must then say, "Patience is my very life breath, and I cannot afford to let it slacken."

Kshama is no ordinary thing. It is the consolidation of sathya, dharma, ahimsa, and all such values that the Vedas extol. It is the ultimate in happiness and also an incomparable treasure. It is the most valuable asset and property that one can acquire. When people abandon kshama, politics becomes degraded, criticisms and accusations are exchanged freely, and

there can even be turmoil. This is what happens when forbearance gets eclipsed.

When kshama is absent, jealousy takes root

The moment kshama makes its exit, asuya (jealousy or envy) makes its entry. The opposite of asuya is anasuya. These two qualities are like two sisters but with diametrically opposite tendencies. In the scriptures, there is the story of a woman named Anasuya who had three sons. They were no ordinary sons for they were none other than Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwara.

Swami has already told you that in the individual, Maheshwara represents a Pure Heart, Vishnu represents a Pure Mind, and Brahma represents Pure Speech. Thus, if a person's nature is anasuya, then that person will have a pure heart and a pure mind; moreover, the speech of the person will be pure and sweet.

If anasuya has three sons, so has asuya; the three off-springs are: hatred, pomp, and anger.

Why is there such a huge difference between the two sisters? Because one is courageous while the other is not. Anasuya is courageous; it is her courage that enables her to face all difficulties; and it is also her courage that is the fountainhead of kshama. One must always be courageous, for this is the only way to acquire kshama.

Remember how mighty Ravana was? He possessed enormous physical strength, worldly intelligence, and various related capabilities in an abundant measure. In spite of all this, because of the total absence of kshama, his heart became polluted with envy and hatred. Now, love has the extraordinary capacity to draw near even those who are far to start with. Hatred, on the other hand, drives away even those who are near. Ravana had no love. He lacked kshama but was rich in asuya; as a result, he eventually had to pay a very heavy price. Is it possible to have kshama if one's looks are bad, if one lends one's ear to foul words, and if one's actions are rooted in evil? No! Man

today is seeing what he ought not to, hearing what he should not, and doing what is most undesirable. How can there be peace in such a polluted heart?

Ravana's heart was completely polluted which is why Hanuman, that great devotee of Rama, advised Ravana thus:

O Ravana, I shall teach you a lesson!
Lanka is no longer yours, O evil one!
Listen carefully and waste not this opportunity.
Ignoring the intellect,
And becoming a slave to evil tendencies,
You have got yourself into the clutches of death!
Sita is the Mother of all beings;
She is your mother too.
By abducting her,
You have committed a terrible sin.
One arrow of Rama,
Will remove all your ten heads!
O sinner! I destroyed your minions holding Sita a prisoner,
And in retaliation you have set fire to my tail.
Now watch while I make Lanka burn,
Before putting off the fire in my tail.

Hanuman said, "Ravana, your discrimination has been totally warped by jealousy."

Jealousy is the greatest enemy of man, and it takes root when kshama is absent. If you possess the virtue of kshama, then none of these enemies can come anywhere near you. If the hearts of today's students are polluted, it is because of the absence of kshama. This is a quality that has to be painstakingly cultivated by self-effort and cannot be acquired as a gift from others; nor can it be obtained from books or even a teacher. It is only your

own tenacity and firm determination that will help you cultivate this virtue. You must be resolute and ready to face any difficulty in the quest of your goal.

Life is a challenge; meet it!

In fact, it is a series of challenges and not just one or two. Face them squarely, resist the obstacles, and firmly march forward. Such determination alone would take you to your goal. If the Heart is devoid of kshama, it becomes vulnerable to doubts. Man today does not even know what to doubt and what not to doubt!

Caught in the whirlpool of doubts, modern man sometimes sinks to depths much lower than that of animals. In fact, at times he makes animals look better! Animals behave within certain bounds, and the dictates of season and reason. Man, on the other hand, knows no such bounds; for him, there is neither reason nor season. Absence of kshama is responsible for all this. Cultivation of kshama must therefore be an important priority. No doubt you will face many difficulties on the path but they should not deter you. Knock them aside and bravely march on, taking courage from the fact that once you have kshama there is nothing that you cannot achieve.

Embodiments of Love!

On occasions, you might fail in the class tests or in the examinations but that should not plunge you into depression. Realise that your failure is simply the result of lack of sufficient effort on your part. Tell yourself, "I did not work hard enough. Had I done so, I would certainly have passed. It is all my fault entirely." Own up your mistake, resolve to try again, and be determined to succeed next time. Instead, do not try to cover up your lapses by seeking imaginary excuses; such excuses serve no purpose. Your failure was simply the result of your neglect - that is all. With firm determination, you can

achieve anything in life.

When difficulties come, do not hide; confront them bravely and squarely. Difficulties are inevitable, and they will come in all shades - personal, financial, academic, professional, and even spiritual. Face them all.

Students sometimes start earnestly on meditation but after a while they lose their seriousness. As a result, whatever progress was made initially, gets wiped out. Whose fault is it? Can you blame God? No! You alone are responsible for whatever has befallen you. Instead of facing the impediments to your meditation, you become impatient; once you become impatient, you start having doubts about the utility and the efficacy of meditation; after that your interest starts slackening - all this because of the lack of patience. So, kshama is indispensable. Kshama is life itself and the very breath of life. Life bereft of kshama, is meaningless and one who lives so is no better than a corpse. Therefore, acquire and protect kshama at all costs.

Kshama must be cultivated when young

Students!

The stage of life you presently are in is most important.

This is when you can easily overcome all sorts of obstacles and tide over all difficulties. If you miss this chance to cultivate patience, when do you think you are going to do it? Is it after becoming old? Habits must be formed when one is young. You cannot acquire the habit of thinking about God in your old age.

When the messengers of death are at your doorstep,
When your relatives have given up hope
And are preparing for your last journey,
When your wife and children

Are lamenting about your imminent departure,
Is it possible to acquire in that last moment,
The habit of chanting God's Name?

Impossible! Such a thing cannot be done. Good habits must be cultivated in the stage of life you are in now. This is when you should start stockpiling patience, and accumulate a lot of it! This is the stage when kshama becomes the principal weapon of your life. If bad thoughts arise in you, resist and say: "These thoughts are coming because I am deficient in kshama. Let me counter the deficiency." Bad thoughts cannot penetrate one who possesses kshama. If the doors are slammed shut, can anyone enter? For aspirants in the spiritual path, kshama is indispensable.

Be ever ready for the tests of God

In life, your capacity for forbearance would be constantly put to test, and you must therefore be very careful. In the class, you are expected to be ever ready for surprise tests. You cannot excuse yourself saying that you have not prepared and are not ready. The teacher will not accept that plea because you are always expected to be ready. You know what photographers do before snapping a group photo. Just before clicking they say, "Ready." The Divine Cameraman, however, does not follow this practice. With Him, you have to be ever in readiness for no one can say when He will click the shutter. If you are not ready, the picture will not be good. So, in life you must always be ready for tests; achieving this preparedness is true sadhana (spiritual discipline). Do not imagine that sadhana is a drill performed according to a set timetable.

Time is not beholden to you and will therefore not oblige you. Time will not follow you; rather, you must follow Time.

Determination a must, for acquiring kshama

The Vedas declare:

Uttisthata jagrata prapya varannibodhata.
Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached!

Drowned in foolishness, you are sleeping soundly! Get up from this slumber of ajnana (ignorance), enter the realm of prajnana (consciousness), and experience sujnana (enlightenment). This really is the type of sadhana you ought to undertake. People do not understand this and simply declare that they are doing sadhana. Everyone is trying; trying, trying all the time! What is all this business about trying? Meek and puny efforts cannot be called sadhana.

To qualify for that name, the effort must be strong and made with firm determination. You must be firmly resolved to achieve the goal.

In life, actions must be accompanied by firm resolves. God too is firmly determined about the things He chooses to do. In the Gita He says,

Paritranaya Sadhunam Vinasaya Ca Duskrtaam.
Dharmasamsthapanarthaya Sambhavami Yuge Yuge.

This is His first resolution. He says, "For the protection of the virtuous, for the destruction of the wicked, and for the reestablishment of dharma, I am born from age to age."

Next He says,

Ananyascintayantomam Ye Janah Paryupasate.
Tesam Nityabhiyuktanam Yogaksemam Vahamyaham.

"As for those who exclusively worship Me, who meditate on Me with no other thought and who are ever steadfast - I bear entirely the burden of their welfare". If God Himself can make resolutions, why not you? What are the spiritual goals you have resolved to attain in life? If you have not set any such goals for yourself, then your life would be empty and meaningless. Life must have goals, and must be a brave journey involving the conquest of (spiritual) obstacles. Life's journey is full of bumps and jumps; without resolve and determination, these bumps can produce confusion and depression. When confusion and depression march hand in hand, life would become a total waste.

Students!

In everyone of your spiritual endeavour, you must make the resolution, "This I MUST achieve; this virtue I SHALL acquire." This is the way to prema and kshama. If you proceed in this manner with unshakeable faith and idealism, then without any doubt, your life will be fully redeemed. All your actions and feelings must be dripping with kshama, prema, and daya (compassion). Love knows no hatred and is totally free from desires. Thus God is said to be Love personified. Kshama will grow if you have unshakeable faith in God. Once you have learnt to be infinitely patient, Love will walk in almost immediately.

Prema combined with kshama is the surest way to fulfilment. Therefore, when you worship God, make sure you repose total faith in Him. Without faith, what is the use of worship? Faith alone will take you beyond worries.

Kshama leads to bliss

Life is full of worries. They seem to come in an endless procession. What is it

that does not cause anxiety?

Birth is a worry, and so is existence itself;
Family life is a worry, death is a worry,
Childhood is a worry, old age is the same,
Living is a worry, working is a worry,
Pain causes worry, pleasure too causes worry,
Worry, worry, all the time!

You are plagued by multiple worries all the time. In this world, troubles will come for sure but one must learn to rise above worry; this is possible only with kshama. Welcome troubles with a smile saying, "Come my friend, you are the bearer of joy!"

Truly speaking, it is not friends but enemies who give one bliss.

Do you know how? Enemies put you on your guard and help you to develop kshama. When one is filled with kshama, one cannot help being blissful. That is why Swami is stressing so much the acquisition of this incomparable virtue.

Embodiments of Love!

Along with love, also cultivate kshama.

What is normally professed as love is not real love because it invariably tends to be narrow, restricted, and tinged with selfishness. Do not mistake this distorted feeling to be love. This so-called love is based on selfishness and self-interest. Liberate this shackled love from the various clutches, purify it, and then direct it toward God. Once you have gone through this cleansing process, kshama will grow automatically.

The absence of kshama is responsible for most of the problems the world

over, and the decline in the innate humanness of man.

Where virtues and values are concerned, man is able to achieve hardly anything. When blades of grass stand all by themselves, they become a ready meal for cattle but when stranded and plaited into a rope, even a mad elephant can be tied down - that is the power of unity. Therefore, you should always be united. Unity promotes patience and strengthens it. What is the type of unity that Swami wants from you? Unity in matters relating to God and good activities. Such unity will develop purity, and once purity is attained, divinity becomes accessible.

Kshama develops courage

Students!

In matters spiritual, make sure that you get a firm grip on whatever it is that you are seeking. No matter what the obstacles or troubles, do not ever be afraid. Your steps must always be forward and never backward. But that is not what one finds amongst students of today. During the Mohurrum festival, people dance chanting two words, Hasein and Hussein, taking first one step forward and then one step backward. In the process, they end up being where they are! Similarly, you keep saying Sairam, Sairam, Sairam, but remain spiritually stagnant. When will you start moving ahead? Go forward, trampling over difficulties. To reach great heights, you must have courage. And how does one become courageous? When the heart is full of kshama, the spirit of courage will automatically makes its appearance.

Vibhishana provides the classic example. It was through kshama that he acquired the courage to defy Ravana and cross over to the side of Rama. He arrived in Rama's camp chanting 'Rama, Rama, Rama'. Seeing Vibhishana in the distance, Rama immediately raised His hand as a gesture of grace and protection. However, the people around Rama said, "Lord, that person is a rakshasa, a demon. He is the brother of your enemy. You must therefore not grant him protection." Meanwhile, Vibhishana kept on telling Rama, "I am Yours, I am Yours." Rama then said, "The moment a person tells Me 'I am

Yours,' that person shall receive My protection, come what may." Such was Rama's determination; you too must have similar determination in every spiritual endeavour of yours.

One day during the Lanka War, there appeared a young man on the battlefield. Vibhishana drew the attention of Rama to this warrior saying, "Rama, this person is mighty, powerful, and valorous. He is stronger than most, and You must slay him without fail."

In response, Rama despatched an arrow felling the Rakshasa warrior; the young man was dead. Vibhishana then went near the dead body and began weeping profusely. Rama gently lifted Vibhishana and said, "What is all this? Why are you crying over this man?" Vibhishana replied, "This is Neeludu my only son.

I urged You then to kill him since he was with the enemies but now, my emotion as a father is overwhelming me. I am unable to bear the sight of the death of my dear son right before my eyes. So, please grant me the power of patience and forbearance so that I can rise above such tragedies." Notice how unique is Vibhishana's prayer. He said to Rama, "Kshama is my sathya and dharma; it is also Rama for me! Kshama is my God and I cannot ever afford to forget it." This episode reveals how even great men suffer pain if they lose their grip over kshama. On the other hand, with kshama, there are no limits to what can be achieved.

Kshama and bad company do not go together

These days, it is not uncommon to see evil doers [seemingly] get away with it while good people suffer. It appears as if someone commits the crime and someone else gets punished - this is how things are in the world. Here is an example. You are sleeping in your room at night but mosquitoes disturb you. So, next day, you use a mosquito net but it still does not help because a few mosquitoes have sneaked into the net. You now resort to a drastic remedy - you spray Flit all over. You cannot identify the specific mosquitoes that bit you but you are not bothered; you spray over all the mosquitoes you can see.

Only one or two mosquitoes bit you but now hundreds are dying. Why is this so?

Because of friendship. Even if you are innocent, you have to suffer if you keep the company of evil doers. It is to drive this home that Swami often says: "Tell Me your company and I shall tell who you are." Once bad thoughts get in, they multiply rapidly and soon drive out kshama; and kshama once lost is not easily regained. You must therefore protect this virtue at all costs and see that you never lose it, especially because with kshama you can achieve anything.

Embodiments of Love!

Students!

During the Summer Course, you will receive such advice from elders and from Swami. Treasure them in your hearts. However, it is not enough to merely place on record the advice heard; you must make every effort to put them into practice. It is no use locking it up all inside; their impact must be made manifest through good actions. A villager was once walking carrying a bundle of food on his head. After sometime, he found the bundle to be a burden. So he made his way to the bank of a river, sat down there, opened the bundle and ate the food in it. In a few minutes, the burden disappeared, and the food consumed gave him fresh energy. In the same way, it is only when you put into practice what you have learnt that you will gain experience and strength. In turn, this will lead you to success.

Embodiments of Love!

Drive away bad thoughts and make room for good and noble ones. Through sacred thoughts, foster kshama. This will give you multiple capabilities, enabling you to transform your life into an ideal one. Study of books alone will not enhance your capability; they will merely provide you with superficial or bookish knowledge. This obviously is not enough. Real capability and strength come by tapping the Inner Power latent in you. All that is outside is artificial.

Real truth and power are both inside, in your heart. It is the heart that must be strengthened, but, unaware of this fact, people become furiously active in the external world, only to get lost there.

There are many types of food catering to the needs of the gross body but what about food for the heart? That food can be obtained only when you turn your head toward God. You must understand the subtle linkages here - food, head, and God.

Thus, along with the acquisition of worldly knowledge, you must also give importance to culture and refinement. Earlier, the Vice Chancellor spoke about the culture of Bharat. He crisply summarised the essence of many ancient texts. Bharatiya (Indian) culture is timeless, sacred, deep, profound, full of inner strength, and provides full protection. Today, we are losing our grip over such a great culture. Instead of ignoring and brushing it aside, we must do everything possible to nurse and foster it. Refinement accumulates and manifests as culture.

Here is a cloth [at this point, Swami showed His handkerchief]. It has been woven from yarn. Where did the yarn come from?

From cotton. By processing cotton, one gets yarn. By further processing yarn, one gets cloth. Likewise, this table has come from wood that has itself come from a tree. Refinement comes about only through processing and shaping. Farmers grow paddy.

Can you eat raw paddy? No; it has to be polished first and then cooked before it is eaten. In life too, refinement is necessary. And culture is nothing but accumulated refinement. Bharatiya culture is ideal in this respect, and worthy of being followed by everyone at all times.

Therefore, with God's Name on your lips, and unshakeable faith in your heart, acquire kshama, allowing it to manifest as daya or compassion.

At the conclusion of the divine discourse, Bhagavan sang the bhajan: _

"Rama, Rama, Rama, Sita".

13. Always Chant The Name Of The Lord

Date: 27 May 2000 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 2000

In the Krita Yuga it was tapas,
In the Tretya Yuga it was yajna,
In the Dwapara Yuga it became worship,
And now in the Kali Yuga it is namasmarana.

Embodiments of Love! Students, Boys and Girls!

The teachings of Manu offer an unsurpassed guide for achieving lasting happiness and joy in each and every yuga or age. Manu declared that for the Krita Yuga the right path was penance and meditation; for the Treta Yuga it was performing appropriate yajnas [Vedic rituals]; for the Dwapara Yuga the prescribed path was worship, and for the Kali Age it is namasmarana or chanting the Name of the Lord.

In those days, everything was pure. The environment was unpolluted, the food was pure, and the habits were sacred. All actions were based on truth. Manu recognised even then, the sanctity of human life and the divinity latent in the human being.

Having done so, he shared this knowledge with one and all. The declarations of Manu form the foundations of bharatiya culture.

Ignorance has driven away the fear of sin;
Love of God too has vanished.
No wonder human values have disappeared,
No wonder there is turbulence everywhere,
And no wonder peace is being threatened.

The people of the Krita Age were engaged in the constant meditation of the Lord. They meditated not for just a few minutes or hours or even days; they were always absorbed in the thought of God. They were guided by the scriptural teaching:

Sarvada Sarvakalesu Sarvatra Hari Cintanam.
Contemplate on God at all times and under all circumstances.

In those days, people were beyond unworthy desires and narrowminded feelings. Their hearts were pure, their feelings were sacred, their mind was mature, and they were ever in bliss. They therefore never entertained any petty or worldly desires. They enjoyed God's grace and were blessed with good crops as well as all the other needs of daily life. Such people are not to be found these days. The essence of bharatiya culture was amply reflected in the behaviour, conduct, and the sacred feelings of the people of the Krita Yuga. People of those times sought unity in diversity.

They did not have any kind of dissatisfaction or discontent. A sacred heart produces a mature mind. In that age, life moved at a leisurely pace. Unlike people of modern times who are tied to rigid schedules, they did not have specific meals at specific times, like breakfast, lunch, etc. They did not have the wide variety of vegetables that is available today. Their meals were thus very simple in nature; they ate rice with curds in the morning and did so again at night. That is why people of those days were both healthy and strong. They made use of all available time for contemplating on God. However, with the passage of time, this practice of simple living and high thinking began to get slowly eroded.

After the Krita Yuga came the Treta Yuga when devotion began to decline. It was during this period that kings and kingdoms came into existence and

politics made its first appearance. The king ruled, and the people followed the king. Thus it came to be said 'as was the king so were the people' - the king became a role model whom the subjects copied. It was no longer possible to spare time for continuous meditation as in earlier times. Instead, certain specific times and occasions were set apart for the performance of various yajnas and yagas [Vedic rituals]. Yajna is an offering to God. It also means a selfless act of sacrifice. People of the Treta Yuga believed that yajnas provided the pathway to divinity. Like the people of an earlier age, they too desired, pined, and yearned for God; but the path they chose was different. In course of time, certain aggressive and selfish tendencies arose that corrupted the original sacred feelings behind the Vedic rituals.

After this came the Dwapara Yuga when yajnas and yagas slowly receded to the background, getting replaced by archana or ritual worship. People of this age sought to reach God through worship performed at prescribed times, through the study of the scriptures and other sacred texts, and by observing vows and other such austerities. In course of time, as the number of kings, landlords, and power brokers increased, matters of polity began to receive dominant attention, and all forms of worship started declining.

Reason for the decline of Bharat

For the people of the present Kali Age, there is a new prescription since neither constant meditation nor the performance of yajas and yagas is possible. To attain God, all that one has to do is namasmarana, i.e., constantly chanting the Name of God. There are no rigid stipulations or conditions regarding the chanting of the Name of God - one may sing or just chant His Name anytime, anywhere, and under any circumstance. In the beginning, it used to be incessant namasmarana; but slowly, the time devoted to the pursuit of even this most easy path to God, has dwindled. From this one fact alone, you can judge for yourself the extent to which the great culture of Bharat has declined.

In the Treta Yuga, Rama declared,

Janani Janmabhūmisca Svargadapi Gariyasi.

One's mother and motherland are greater than the very heaven.

Today, who is bothered about the motherland? Who worships the motherland? Who is fired by patriotism? Such feelings are not to be found anywhere. What is the reason for this indifference?

Politics polluted heavily by evil designs, cunning manipulations, and patently selfish interests is responsible for this tragic decline.

Today, who bothers about patriotism? There are so many politicians, but is there anyone concerned about upholding the prestige of the country? No one; everyone is driven solely by selfishness and self-interest. He alone is a true politician who is prepared to sacrifice everything for the sake of the country. But unfortunately, such a spirit of sacrifice is not to be seen anywhere.

Present-day politicians exploit the wealth and the resources of society for their personal benefit and advancement. Their effort is concentrated entirely on acquiring power and achieving status.

Their sole desire is to enjoy position and esteem in society. Can one afford to neglect one's country in this callous manner? Can politics exist if there is no country in the first place? How can a person who does not respect his country ever be a politician?

Can a leader who does not know what service means,
Ever serve the people and the country?
Can the one hankering after position
Ever have a pure heart?
Listen to this truth, O brave sons of Bharat!

Today's politicians want power alone and not the welfare of the country. On account of extreme selfishness and self-interest, politics has become completely degraded. It is such polluted politics that has destroyed the sanctity of Bharatiya culture. A thousand promises are made but not even one is fulfilled. Many talk about Bharatiya culture but no one knows whether these people really understand what our culture is all about. What good has come out of this practice of placing party loyalty above the country?

Swami said the other day: "One plus one (1+1) is two while one minus one (1-1) is zero." Suppose you remove the plus and the minus signs; then you are left with 11! Eleven is a much bigger number than one; we get this bigger number simply by removing both the plus sign and the minus sign. We don't need either the plus or the minus. In reality, the progress of the nation depends on the welfare of society. Therefore, we should pray that all should be happy. However, present-day politics promotes divisive tendencies. Politicians say, "So and so is mine while so and so is yours." This separation into 'mine' and 'thine' reflects nothing but extreme narrow-mindedness. On the other hand, we should abide by the feeling of oneness and declare, "All are mine, we all are one." It is selfishness that plunges the country into ruin. That day when we get rid of this selfishness would be the day when the country will turn around and get on the road to prosperity. Presently, everyone is saturated with selfishness and self-interests. This would not do; instead, we must foster the feeling that all of us belong to one Universal Family. Today, the population of Bharat is about one hundred crores (one billion). If every one of this huge number of people were to feel that all are one, how blissful it would be! How prosperous the country would be! But the politicians and the people of today seem to delight themselves in fragmenting the country into tiny bits. What is the motivating force behind this extreme divisive tendency? People imagine that by carving out their own bit of territory, they can become ministers! What sort of a minister would such a selfish person make? He would be a deluded individual living from minute to minute. He could lose his position any minute! We should not go after such foolish desires.

Students! Boys and Girls! Do not ever enter politics! Instead, enter the path of service to the nation! [Loud applause.] Desire and pray for the welfare of the entire universe. Develop the sense of unity and banish the feeling of differences. This is true service to the country. You should live in unity and be charged with the feeling that all are your sisters and brothers. Your sense of togetherness ought to exceed even that which is found amongst the members of a family. You all know that when Vivekananda delivered his address in Chicago at the Parliament of Religions on the subject of the wisdom of our ancients, he began with the words, "Brothers and Sisters of America." The audience was so thrilled to hear this that they gave him a standing ovation. They were so happy to be referred to as brothers and sisters. Today, however, Bharatiyas (Indians) are ashamed to regard others as brothers and sisters.

That which fosters the feeling of universal peace,
That which dispels narrow feelings,
That which immerses you in the nectar of unity,
Is not education but the spirit of mankind.

We have to spread such a spirit amongst one and all. Humanness is something that came along with us at birth and not later. The human being and the quality of humanness came into existence at the same time. How is it that we have forgotten such a divine feeling?

The real meaning of sadhana

How great is Bharatiya culture! The ideals it upholds are not meant merely for the citizens of this country but for the whole of humanity. Culture is that which refines man. Refinement implies the elimination of bad traits and the development of good and noble qualities. One becomes cultured when all bad and undesirable qualities are totally got rid of and daily life is based entirely on virtues.

Country does not mean just land or territory but people who live there. Who is manava (man)? Manava is the one with manas (mind). What is meant by mind? Mind is just a bundle of thoughts and desires. Man becomes a genuine human being when all thoughts are bound to Truth. Humanness manifests in such a person as good and noble conduct. Today, truthful thoughts are conspicuous by their absence. If we fill our lives with thoughts based on falsehood, the whole world then becomes filled with untruth. Hence, eliminate all bad qualities within you; develop good qualities, and endeavour to experience Divinity - this is true sadhana (spiritual practice). What is the real meaning of sadhana?

Transforming the bad into good is sadhana. What is the point in claiming that you are doing sadhana, if this important principle is not observed? In the name of doing sadhana, you close your eyes and roll the rosary beads; but the mind is wandering all over the place! This is not sadhana! We have to expel bad thoughts, bad feelings, and bad tendencies, and replace all these with good thoughts, noble feelings, and sacred habits. Purging out the bad and replacing it with good is what sadhana is all about.

Education must bring out the latent human values
Education has become a fashion and everyone is eager to study.

However, the way instruction is imparted is ridiculous. Students are made to cram guide books and pass competitive examinations.

Is this the way to acquire knowledge? Is this the way to achieve success? It is very much like a person trying to board a moving bus; it is dangerous!

You have slogged and studied,
And you have learnt many subjects;
But of what use is all this?

You must acquire that knowledge
That frees you from death.
This is the essence of Bharatiya culture.

What you need is educare and not education because the latter is negative while the former is positive. The negative fills the head while the positive fills the heart.

An empty head can be filled,
But can one fill a head that is already full?
Without first flushing it clean,
Is it possible to fill the mind with good thoughts?

Modern education is directed towards filling the head whereas educare seeks to fill the heart. It promotes good and truthful feelings, good conduct, righteous action, and justice. Thus, study of textbooks alone is not enough.

Secular knowledge
For comfort and happiness in this world;
Spiritual knowledge
For happiness in the other world.

No doubt, making a living is inescapable and some effort for this is also necessary. However, one should not mistake education as something meant merely to help us to make a living. Rather, it should help you to become determined to achieve the real goal of life. Education should be for life and not for living alone. The proper education for life is the development of good character. You should not fail to read books that help to promote good character.

Many great people of the past have written classics that help in the development of virtues. You must absorb their essence. Avoid narrow sentiments based on individual communities or castes.

All differences arising out of caste, creed, and community ought to be set aside altogether.

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

Always abide by these principles. Never stop the contemplation of God for it is the very basis of life. The great sages of the past faced many difficulties and obstacles while treading the path of Truth, but they marched resolutely forward. Even today there are noble souls that are totally wedded to truth and righteousness but, unfortunately, they are ignored by society. Even though society may ignore such people, God does not. What is it that is gained by achieving recognition by society? Nothing permanent. Society may approve today, but tomorrow it may ignore you and cast you aside. 'Yes' and 'no' pertain to the worldly domain but for Sai it is always 'Yes', 'Yes', and 'Yes'!

It is thus important to discover the Divinity latent within you. It is impossible to be ever away from Divinity. God is in you, around you, above you, below you, with you always, and constantly protects you. And such a God, we forget so very easily! Relentless quest for the God within is the essence of our ancient culture.

People often refer to our ancient culture. In reality, our culture is eternal and changeless, being based on pure and unsullied truth.

It cannot be hidden; it is ever effulgent. Today, man is trying to forget this glorious and evergreen basis of his true nature. People are not making even

the slightest effort to understand what a true human being is, and what is the real meaning of humanness.

Follow manudharma

The word manava or man is derived from Manu, his teachings, and his life. Man is also referred to as manuja. Manuja = manu + ja. Ja means to be born. Thus, manuja means one who has descended from Manu. Who is this Manu we are talking about?

He is the very embodiment of dharma. Even to this day, legal experts talk about manudharma or the code of righteous conduct as laid down by Manu. No doubt they speak eloquently about the teachings of Manu; however, their conduct is in complete violation of what Manu had taught! He who follows the commandments of Manu alone is eligible to be called a true Bharatiya. It does not matter to which country he belongs; country is not important; dharma is! It is important to follow dharma, no matter what the difficulties and obstacles.

Students! Boys and Girls! Your first priority must be to set your own house in order. Love and respect your parents. The scriptures command:

Matru Devo bhava.

Pitru Devo bhava.

Mother is God; Father is God.

Without them, would you exist?

Yet, no one bothers to respect parents or take care of them in their old age. This is a big mistake. If today you fail to respect your parents, tomorrow you would receive the same treatment from your children. Reflection, reaction, and resound are inescapable in life. So you should have good feelings, good thoughts; see good alone, and also do only good. There is no need to be

afraid of anything. Only those who have done wrong have reason to fear; not those who are good and are doing only good. Those wishing to tread the path of truth should be totally free from fear.

Influenced by undesirable and crazy political influences, people today are becoming mad! Hence, say goodbye to politics! Good conduct is important, and not politics. Therefore, good conduct and good behaviour must be your first priority. Swami is very distressed to observe the behaviour and character of the so-called educated people of today. They boast of a string of degrees and high academic qualifications, but their behaviour does not reflect their so-called attainments. Bad behaviour is the very negation of education. Humility is the foremost characteristic of one who is truly learned. What is the use of claiming to be educated if you have not acquired the virtue of humility? Education in ancient times laid great stress on humility and obedience. What is the meaning of education if it fails to foster these noble virtues? Such education is no education at all.

The importance of kshama

For a human being, humility is of foremost importance. Humility is born of kshama (forbearance). Swami has already told you:

kshama is sathya, dharma, the essence of the Vedas; it is allinclusive, and the most important thing in the world. It was kshama that elevated sage Viswamitra from the status of a raja yogi to Brahma yogi. It was on account of the power of kshama that Bhagiratha was able to make the sacred Ganges hidden in celestial heights to descend to the earth. Kshama it was that enabled Emperor Janaka to transform from a karma yogi to jnana yogi. The power of forbearance can help you to achieve anything.

Students! You are not aware of this; Swami is nothing but kshama from top to toe. It is this that enables Swami to deal with any situation in a perfectly calm manner. Swami is never bothered by difficulties; rather, Swami welcomes them! Why? Because it is difficulty that enables one to cultivate kshama. But these days, people who declare themselves to be devotees

welcome pleasure but abhor difficulties and pain. You must maintain equanimity and treat pleasure and pain alike - that is what kshama is all about. You should accept the fact that pleasure and pain are both gifts of God, and try to be unaffected. It is important that students make every effort to cultivate the virtue of kshama. It may happen that sometimes you might not do well in exams.

You should not be upset by that; work hard, try again, and do well the next time. Marks may seem important but not earning bad remarks is even more important! Make sure your behaviour does not attract unfavourable comments from others. Be careful that you do not earn a bad name. Let good and noble feelings be the basis of your conduct. Wherever you go, people must say, based on your good conduct, "This person seems to be a student of the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning." Swami is not interested in earning a reputation; all that Swami wants is that you must earn a good name.

Vision is poor, not the country

Sometimes, out of love for Swami, people say that our culture is Sai culture. This is not the right way of putting things. Our culture is not new; it did not come into being recently; it is very ancient.

Bharatiya culture revolves around God, who is described as

Nirgunam, Niranjanam, Sanatanam, Niketanam,
Nitya, Suddha, Buddha, Mukta, Nirmala Svarupinam.
Attributeless, Blemishless, Eternal, Ever Immersed in Himself,
Ever Pure, Ever Illumined, Totally Free, and Immaculate.

People make pompous speeches praising Swami but Swami does not approve of these. Instead, good conduct must be your primary goal. Don't make

others your example; rather, others must consider you as the example to be followed. That is the outcome of true Self-confidence, which in turn leads successively to Self-satisfaction, Self-sacrifice, and finally to Self-realisation.

Everything is within the Self, and that is the Self that you must realise. This is the philosophy underlying Bharatiya culture.

Since ancient times this country has faced many difficulties and troubles. People from many lands have invaded Bharat. Moghuls, Arabs, and the British all wanted to conquer this country, which everyone calls poor. It is foolish to describe this country as poor.

Is there a country that can excel Bharat? People say this country is poor; it is not at all poor; it is the poverty of people's mind that makes them say so! If Bharat is really a poor country, why was it repeatedly invaded? The wealth looted from this country was loaded by these invaders on horses, elephants, and camels, and then carried away. Bharat is the land of wealth and prosperity.

What is it that we are short of? It appears poor only when seen by petty minds linked to narrow vision.

Yad bhavam tad bhavati.
As is the feeling, so is the result.

Broaden your mind and your vision; you would then be able to see your country also in a wider perspective.

When you have sacred texts worth more than gold,
Why run after other types of learning that are not so precious?

Slavish imitation of other cultures is not necessary because our culture itself has so much to offer. Why at all should we look down upon our country? Should we not be aware of its tremendous resource and potential? Bharat is the fountainhead of all higher learning; it is the master, and what is not found here cannot be found anywhere else. Our people have forgotten the greatness of Bharat and have instead started extolling other countries. This does not mean that you have to criticise other countries. All countries are good in their own special way, and we must see the good in all. All religions too, are good. What then is bad? It is the mind that is bad and polluted! It is on account of mental aberrations that people quarrel about religions, decrying some and praising others.

All religions teach only good,
And one has to follow the teachings
Using one's discrimination.
If the mind is pure,
No religion would appear bad.
All religions are good - Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism,

Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism. All religions are good without exception. Only when the mind is polluted do other religions appear bad. Your perception of religion is influenced by your mind. The mind is a powerful instrument that can travel very fast.

Manomulam idam jagat.
The mind pervades the whole universe.

Therefore, if you have a good and pure mind, the country too would appear good. Hence try to correct your mind before attempting to correct other

things. If everyone does this, the country would automatically improve.

Always be grateful

Students! You all study hard for pariksha or examinations. This type of knowledge will not give you real raksha or protection!

Raksha is more important than pariksha! It is a great fortune to have been born in Bharat. To be able to declare that you are a Bharatiya is a matter of great luck. You must be worthy of this boon given to you. Under no circumstance must you criticise your Motherland. Even in your dream, you should not think of forgetting or disowning your Motherland. That is true gratitude.

What is the use of taking birth as a human, if one lacks a sense of gratitude? The one without gratitude is a wicked person. In the hymns that pertain to the worship of Surya or the Sun God, it is said that the Sun God may forgive any sin but not ingratitude. You should never fail to be grateful, and never give anyone the opportunity to accuse you of being ungrateful. You must endeavour to enhance the glory of Bharatiya culture.

Don't be afraid or ashamed of doing this. Do not think that others would harm or criticise you. Just ignore such people. In fact, you must be even ready to lay down your life to defend the culture of Bharat. Death comes but once, and what can be nobler than facing it for the sake of the country? Such a brave death would amount to an expression of the deepest gratitude to your country.

Never ridicule or speak ill of your culture, especially driven by fear. Mother is so near to you. You may have to search for God but you don't have to search for your mother. Therefore, how can you ever forget mother? That is why Lord Rama declared:

Janani janmabhūmisca svargadāpi gariyasi.

One's mother and motherland are greater than the very heaven.

These days, many people claim to be the devotees of Rama. They keep chanting the name of Rama but of what use is this empty chanting? Rama sacrificed wealth and power, whereas these devotees want nothing but wealth and power! They are after money whereas Rama was ready to give up even a kingdom. Is there anyone who is prepared to do such thing today? Rama sacrificed everything including comforts, in order to uphold dharma. Sita too did the same. Regarding her husband as God, and feeling that it was her duty to be by His side at all times, she too sacrificed everything and went in exile to the forest. However, when she desired to have the golden deer, she had to suffer separation from Rama. She lost her dear, when she wanted the deer! That was the reason for her suffering. Later, repenting her folly she lamented:

Where from did this wicked animal come?

And how did I get deluded by it?

When you are in trouble, people distance themselves from you. Further, difficulties will dull your power of discrimination and you will not be able to see clearly the distinction between good and bad. Patience and forbearance are the answer to all this. Never be in a hurry; always reflect carefully. This is the way to success.

Sense control alone confers real strength

Swami would not object to your going to any country you want, acquiring any qualification you desire, and occupying any position that you aspire for, provided you use whatever you have achieved for rendering service. The more important the position you occupy, the greater ought to be your urge to

serve your country. Of what use are they, if opportunities are used solely for personal benefit and advancement?

Having got this chance,
Make the best of it;
For once lost,
You will not get again
The blessing of serving Partheeswara.
He will promote your devotion,
Grant you strength,
And lead you to liberation.
Listening to others,
Do not throw away this fortune.
Control your mind,
And wipe out forever,
All your accumulated karma.

This should be your goal. Do not be misled by others. Instead, follow your conscience for that is the voice of God. People follow their senses and not their conscience. This is not good, because one who follows the senses would inevitably come to ruin. Do you recall how mighty Ravana was? There was none as wealthy as he was. He annexed all the wealth of his brother Kubera. He built mansions of gold. He regarded himself to be a very great person, possessing as he did enormous strength, both physical and intellectual. He had also the power of penance. But in the end, of what use were all these? He succumbed to the senses and became their slave.

The one who conquers the senses alone is strong, while the one who yields to them is weak. The quality of strength is seen clearly in the case of Hanuman. Before Rama, he was the very embodiment of humility whereas before Ravana, he stood as a mighty warrior. When Ravana asked Hanuman as to who had sent him, Hanuman replied:

The One who clipped the nose and ears of your sister,
Is the One who has sent me here!

An arrogant person got a stinging and fitting reply! Hanuman was no ordinary person. He had no ego, and occupied the position of a minister to Sugriva. He was brave, courageous, highly educated, and virtuous, and it is these qualifications that enabled him to become a devotee of Rama. Ravana became furious hearing Hanuman's reply and roared, "How dare you speak to me like this? Nobody in the world has ever spoken to me in this fashion. You are addressing me as though I am a servant!" He added:

Even a mighty emperor
Dare not speak as you have done;
I shall silence you
And teach you a lesson.

To this Hanuman replied, "O mad fellow! Others do not know your true worth while I do! God is my Master, and fools like you cannot command my respect. I will address you any way I like and will even strike you if necessary!"

Such a contemptuous reply infuriated Ravana even more. Remembering that the tail is very dear to a monkey, he ordered Hanuman's tail to be set on fire. To this Hanuman reacted by saying, "I shall pay you back in your own coin and teach you the very lesson you are trying to teach me!" Hanuman then set Lanka ablaze by setting fire to numerous mansions. Panic stricken, the citizens of Lanka wailed, Who is this monkey, And who has sent it?

It has torched all our houses,
Where are we to go now?

They say it is the servant of Rama -
That ought to please Sita.

In this manner, even in the hour of their distress, the people of Lanka thought of Rama. It is important to think of God at all times, in times that are good as well as bad, whether one is being praised or criticised. Never forget God, no matter what the circumstance. Whatever be the difficulty, do not ever give up God. Only then can it be said that you are upholding human values. These precious values must be fostered, for, without virtues, what is the meaning of calling a person a human being?

Uphold sathya, dharma, santhi, and prema firmly and at all times for it is only the one who safeguards human values that can be called a human. The one that lacks human values is a demon. Man is called manava. What does this mean? Manava = ma + nava.

Ma means 'not' and nava means 'new'. Thus, manava means 'not new'. Thus, man is not something new or recent. He is quite ancient because he has been taking birth again and again. One has a human birth on account of deservedness acquired earlier.

Therefore, you must make sure that in this birth too, you earn merit by abiding human values and exhibiting human traits. That is the proper way of justifying your human form.

Listen, recall, and assimilate

Embodiments of Love! Students! Right now, you all are happy listening to this discourse. But, that is not enough; when you go away from here, you must ruminate on what you have heard and digest the lessons. You must listen here and practise there. You have all seen cows going out to graze. When it sees green grass, it makes a beeline for it and rapidly consumes it. It then withdraws to a quiet spot, rests there and masticates in a leisurely

fashion what it has eaten earlier. In the same manner, you should, when you go back, recall what you heard here and digest the essence of the lessons. A disciplined human being would practise this threestep procedure: sravanam (listening), mananam (recapitulating), and nididhyasam (assimilating).

Accumulate deservedness and protect it. This deservedness is not obtained from outside but from within your own self. Therefore, aim at enhancing your deservedness and never give up Bharatiya Culture that has come to us through many ages like Krita Yuga, Treta Yuga, and Dwapara Yuga. The superficial aspects of the culture might have changed but its core remains intact. Changes are inevitable and nothing to worry about. After all, you too have undergone changes. When you were born, you were a baby. A few years later, you became a boy. At the age of thirty, a person is called a man. When the person becomes seventy-five, everyone calls him grandfather. Are these not changes? Yet, the person undergoing the external changes remains the same. In the same manner, although yugas have come and gone, our ancient dharma remains the same. You too should not allow any change in your basic nature as a human being. Your intrinsic nature is Truth. To ensure that this intrinsic nature does not get tainted, it is necessary to develop intense devotion for God. Always keep chanting the Name of God and you will never be able to forget Him at any time. God's Name is so sweet!

At the conclusion of the discourse, Swami sang the bhajan, Prema Mudita....

14. My Life Is My Message

Date: 29 May 2000 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 2000

Today, Swami is going to speak about the childhood of this body.

Childhood is childhood, but the significance of the childhood of this particular body cannot be easily understood by students. That is why Swami is going to speak on the subject this morning.

Kondama Raju [Swami's grandfather] had four sons. The eldest was named Pedda Venkama Raju. The second son was named Chinna Venkama Raju. The third son was named Venkata Subba Raju while the fourth bore the name Venkata Rama Raju. Since Venkavadhoota was his preceptor, Kondama Raju liked the name 'Venka' very much; that is why all his sons had Venka admixed in their names.

In due course all these sons got married but being poor, all the four families had to share the same small hut. The hut did not have a tiled roof but only one of thatched grass. As time passed, children were born in all the four families. Chinna Venkama Raju had twelve children; Pedda Venkama Raju had eight children; Subba Raju had nine while Venkata Rama Raju had eleven. There were enough children to fill a small primary school! [Loud laughter.] In those days, people knew how to live united, adjust to each other, get along with each other, and help each other. For the sons, Kondama Raju was father but for their wives, he was not a blood relative. Thus, on account of the daughters-in-law, differences of opinion slowly began to crop up. Noticing this, Kondama Raju realised that it was no longer possible to continue the joint family, that it would have to be split, and that each son would have to shoulder his responsibility separately. The family had just two acres of land - it was that poor. Kondama Raju divided this land equally amongst the four sons so that they got only half an acre each. He also divided the ancestral house into four portions, ten feet by eight feet each, and gave one portion to every son for living with his family. This may seem small but by the standards prevailing then in the villages, this was ample space.

After this division, Kondama Raju had no place of his own in the original house. So he moved to a small plot eight feet by eight feet and built there a small hut for himself.

The four sons told him, "Father, why do you have to live alone? You are old. Please be with each one of us by turn for a while, and spend your remaining days in this manner." He replied, "I do not wish to live with my sons and daughters-in-law. I wish to live independently, supporting myself by opening a small shop." It was a small provision shop that supplied common needs like pulses, puffed rice, some edibles, coconuts, etc. The shop was very small, not bigger than this table [at this point, Swami indicated the table in front of Him]. For the village, however, this was a big enough shop. When Kondama Raju declared that he would run a small shop and take care of himself, Pedda Venkama Raju said, "But who would cook for you, look after you, attend to your needs, etc.? We feel it would be good if you were to have someone by your side." Kondama Raju thought over the matter for sometime.

Whom should he take with him? At that time, this body was about seven years of age. Kondama said, "Venka (this is the way he addressed his eldest son), don't think otherwise; I would like to have Sathyam live with me. He alone is my property." Everyone said, "But Sathyam is so young! How can He cook for you? We will hire a cook." Kondama replied most emphatically, "I do not want anybody except Sathyam. If Sathyam is by my side, no one else is required."

At that time, Sathyam had just one pair of shorts and one shirt. He had to manage with those for one whole year. The shorts and shirt would be worn while going to school; at home, Swami would wear a small dhoti. Life was very simple then. After advancing to the fourth standard, it became necessary to go to the school in Bukkapatnam since the school in Puttaparthi did not offer studies beyond the third. One had to go to Bukkapatnam by walk. There were other boys in the village who studied there, and Swami used to go along with them.

Early in the morning, Swami would make a millet preparation - two balls of it,

one for the grandfather and one for Himself; also, some groundnut chutney to go along with it. After this, Swami would run to school. Once a week, He would prepare some dal [a soup-like preparation made out of pulses], laced with spinach. There were no vessels made of metal; only earthen pots.

After hurried cooking, Swami would run all the way to school.

At noon, there would be a break; as soon as the bell rang, Swami would run back home. The distance to be covered was three miles [about four and a half kilometres]. All the boys used to do this, and Swami did the same. On reaching home, Swami would serve food to His grandfather. He would wash the clothes, keep food for the night, and then have His meal. After this, a long run back to the school; this was how life went on for some years.

Kondama Raju was quite upset by all this. He thought, "There is no one to help Raju." One Sunday he asked, "Sathyam, am I giving You a lot of trouble?" Swami replied, "Grandfather, if I do not work hard now, when else then? Start early, drive slowly, and reach safely! This is work that I have to do with pleasure! So long as I am strong in body and mind, I am ready to do any amount of work." The grandfather was immensely pleased with this reply. This is the loving manner in which we spent time together. Sometimes in the evenings, Swami would prepare rasam. The wonderful aroma of the preparation would spread all over, attracting the attention of people who lived in the neighbourhood. They were mostly tribals, called Valmikulu or Boyavallu. These people would wonder, "Where from is this nice aroma coming? What is the item being cooked? Raju is too young to make such items and Kondama Raju is too old to do the cooking. Who else could it be?"

One day, one of the tribals who had discovered the secret came to the hut, wrapped up in a blanket. He was shivering and suffering from fever. He said, "I am getting the smell of something good being prepared here. Please give me some of it." Kondama Raju was a most compassionate person. He called Swami to his side and whispered into His ears; he did not want everyone to know and that is why Swami was summoned to his side. Kondama Raju said, "Poor fellow, he is eager to have the rasam that you have prepared. Give him

some." Swami gave that person some rasam. Next day, his fever was gone. The news quickly spread and from then on, everyone in the neighbourhood started coming for rasam, bringing aluminium tumblers; and for their sake, Swami had to make extra! He would make rasam in a big pot.

Meanwhile, the tumblers would have been lined up, and Swami would pour rasam into them one by one. Thanks to the rasam, sickness disappeared from the village and everyone was happy.

In due course, this news reached the other street where Pedda Venkama Raju and Chinna Venkama Raju resided; soon, people from there also started coming for the rasam! What you have to note here is that even at the age of seven, Swami not only had to manage the house but also serve others outside. Drawing water, cleaning, cooking, procuring the provisions - everything had to be done by Swami.

Meanwhile, Swami was made a teacher! Students living on the street - students does not mean just young boys; some of them were in their twenties (!) - they all came to Swami and said, "Raju, please teach us alphabets and how to read." Swami readily agreed. Kondama Raju was not happy about this and said, "Raju works so hard during the day; He has little rest, and now you are adding to His burden." Swami intervened and told Kondama Raju, "My mission is to make everyone happy. Teaching these people is no problem at all. I will do this teaching without problem or inconvenience to you."

There was a person named Narayana Rao, who lived near the Sathyamma Temple. There were only two persons in the village, namely, Karnam Gopal Rao and Narayana Rao, who had proper houses. This Narayana Rao, made available a small thatched hut in his compound and that became our 'school'. Classes were in the evening, after all the household work was over. Swami used to serve food to Kondama Raju, eat, wash the vessels and put them away, and then leave for teaching.

Swami must make a special mention about the type of students He taught. These students were really adults; some even had moustaches! Swami would

come wearing shorts; yet, all these grown-up people would stand up as a mark of respect. In the beginning, they used to address Swami as 'Raju' but soon they began to say 'Sir!'. There was no chair for the teacher; so, a big, nice stone was brought, covered with cloth, and this became the chair. The students had no slates to write on. Swami therefore asked them to bring sand from the Chitravathi River and spread it in the 'classroom' before the places where the students sat. The sand thus became the slate! Swami used to write the alphabets, starting in the traditional manner with 'Om Namō Narayanayah'.

This is how the instruction was commenced. Within a week, the students had learnt the basics of the alphabets. The students now needed books and slates. In those days, the slate cost one anna [the decimal system of currency did not exist then; the rupee was divided into sixteen annas, and each anna into twelve pies; three pies made one pice], and for one pie, one could get three slatepencils.

Swami asked the students to procure these but they did not have any money, not even one anna - that is how poor they were.

Students! You have to note how much Swami cared about the welfare of those whom He taught. There was a small shopkeeper named Venkataramana Shetty who lived in Puttaparthi in those days. Swami told him, "Listen, I want you to give slates to each of the eleven persons studying with Me." The shopkeeper said, "But they will not pay me any money!" Swami replied, "I shall see to it that they do; My students will not default." Having total faith in Swami, the shopkeeper supplied slates and slatepencils to all the eleven students. Swami then told His students, "Be careful with the slates and the slate-pencils. Use the slatepencils till they become really small. You have obtained all these by paying money and so you have to be careful with what you have acquired." This is how Swami taught even in those days that money never ought to be wasted. The students learnt everything with great enthusiasm.

These people had no regular employment. They used to grow a small amount

of spinach in their backyards and then try to sell it.

Swami taught them how to augment their income. He asked them to go where there were tamarind trees, collect the tamarind fruits that fell down, remove the seeds, and then sell the processed tamarind. Swami said to them, "This belongs to no one; it is God's property. No one can object to your collecting and selling tamarind this way." These people followed Swami's instructions with implicit faith and total obedience. With money earned this way, every week they used to pay back the shopkeeper one bottu [a quarter-anna]. In a little over a month's time the slate and the pencil were paid for completely, by each and every student. The students were now happy and declared, "At last, the slate and the pencil really belong to us." Swami cautioned, "Yes, it is now yours, but never waste anything!" This is how Swami constantly reminded His students about the importance of never wasting anything.

In due course, the spinach business began to thrive. Where there is sacrifice, there is quality; and where there is quality, there Goddess Lakshmi [the Goddess of Wealth] appears. Swami now advised these people to grow papaya fruits along with spinach.

This way, in due course, they could now earn about half to one rupee per month, which they kept aside.

Two years passed. Swami had completed studies up to the sixth standard, which was the highest available in Bukkapatnam. In those days, one prepared for ESLC [Elementary School Leaving Certificate] examination; for this one had to study up to the eighth standard which meant going elsewhere. But then some one would have to look after Kondama Raju. At this juncture, Seshama Raju [Swami's elder brother] came to Puttaparthi and told Kondama Raju, "By keeping Him here, you are denying Him education; this would spoil Him. Therefore, send Him with me." Kondama Raju was a very wise and philosophical man. He replied, "Well what have I studied? Nothing. You are supposed to have studied; what good has it done to you? What is the harm that has come to me by my being uneducated? It is all the same, whether one

receives this education or not. I do not care for this type of education. You do not possess even one thousandth of the good qualities that Sathyam has! In what way has your education benefited you?" Seeing the angry response of Kondama Raju, Seshama Raju remained silent; in those days, youngsters kept quiet when elders became angry; they did not argue back.

Later, Seshama Raju called Swami aside and said, "Look Sathya, education is very important. What can you do without education?"

Even to count, for example, for counting the number of clothes given to a washerman, one has to study and learn. Education is therefore indispensable." Swami then went to His grandfather and said, "Grandfather, I am going." He asked most anxiously, "What happens to me?" Swami then arranged for one of the sons of Venkata Subba Raju to take His place. In this manner, Swami prepared to leave for Kamalapuram, along with His elder brother Seshama Raju. When word got round about the impending departure, the eleven students being trained by Swami began to cry, "Our teacher is going away; we are losing our teacher. What happens to us now? What will be our fate?" That was their affection for Swami.

On the following morning, these eleven students planned to walk all the way to the Bukkapatnam Bus Stand along with Swami and His elder brother to see them off. From Bukkapatnam, we were to go to Dharmavaram, and from there to Kamalapuram.

These students wanted to give a parting gift and so they collected some money; each contributed half-an-anna. It came to almost six annas. They offered the money to Swami but Swami refused saying, " I do not want all this. You keep it for yourself." In those days things were so cheap that one could buy a short-pant for half-an-anna and a shirt for just one anna. Swami took just what was needed for one shirt and one short-pant, plus two pice for stitching charges. But the tailor was so nice and so full of love for Swami, he said, "Raju, for You there are no charges!" What you must notice here is that everyone had love for Swami. What was the reason? Soft and sweet words, always spoken by Swami.

This is what endeared everyone to Swami. These students got the dress stitched and sent it over.

Meanwhile, Seshama Raju got married. Following his marriage, he had to go to Anantapur for some further studies and training.

His wife was left behind in Kamalapuram, and Swami had to do all the household work. In those days, a train used to pass by early in the morning. Hearing the whistle of the engine, all the town-people would take their pots and head for a pond five miles away, to fetch drinking water. Swami would go at four in the morning to bring water. It was the time of the Second World War.

It so happened that one day, a special military train passed by at eleven o'clock at night. Hearing the whistle of the engine, all the people went as usual to the pond, without realising what time it was. Swami also went with all the others. It was very chilly then but one had to carry on nevertheless. After daybreak, there was more work to do; water had to be drawn from the well for people in the house to bathe. After this, there was a lot of household work to be done, followed by the cleaning of the entire house.

It was only after finishing all this work that Swami could go to school.

In the school there was a Muslim teacher by name Mehboob Khan, who liked Swami very much. One day, with much kindness and consideration he said, "Raju, You work so hard all the time. I live just opposite Your house and, through my window, can see what You are doing. You are fetching so much water and also doing so much household work." Swami replied, "Sir, the body has to do work. In fact, the body has been given for doing work. If there is no work, laziness would set in and the body would become sick.

Work is not all that difficult." In due course, Mehboob Khan's love for Swami increased. He used to teach English; the lessons were simple and Swami would quickly absorb them.

It was only the sixth standard, but there were many big boys in the class. Some of them were as old as eighteen or twenty! If all the boys in the class stood up, Swami would not be seen because He was so much shorter. Even if He stood on the bench while others stood on the ground, He could not be seen easily - that is how short He was. Even now, Swami is rather short; just imagine how short He must have been then! [Laughter.] Mehboob Khan eagerly looked forward to taking classes for us.

One day, the Telugu class was in progress. It was being handled by one Kondappa. The bell rang, signalling the end of that class; it was Mehboob Khan's turn next. However, Kondappa continued with the class and asked, "Did everyone take notes in my class?"

Those who have not done so, stand up on the bench." Swami said, "Sir, I did not take notes." Swami had no money to buy notebooks! Swami ought to have stopped there but continued:

"Even without taking notes, I know all the answers. You can ask questions and test Me if you want." Kondappa became angry and said, "You have the audacity to talk back? Stand up on the bench! [In those days, this was one form of punishment given to students.] The students in the class protested by shouting 'No!

No!' in unison. This made the teacher even more angry. He said, "You will remain standing like this for the next three periods!"

It was time for Kondappa to leave the class. He got up but the chair stuck to him and also rose! [Laughter.] He thought that some nail had got stuck in his dhoti and that was the reason why the chair came up when he got up. Or might be there was some gum dropped on the chair. He called the sweeper to check for gum on the chair. The sweeper said that there was no gum.

Meanwhile, Mehboob Khan rushed into the class; it was Swami's class, and he was very keen to be there as quickly as possible.

He saw Swami standing up on the bench. Tears rolled down his eyes; wiping them, he asked Kondappa, "Why did you make Raju stand up on the bench? This is wrong. This is my class and you have no business to make Him stand." Turning to Me, Khan said, "Sit down!" Swami then said, "Sir, both of you are My teachers.

He asked Me to remain standing on the bench for three class periods. How can I disobey him? I cannot sit down unless he permits Me to do so." This is the way one should conduct oneself with teachers. Mehboob Khan then told Kondappa, "Raju is a very good boy; ask Him to sit down." Kondappa knew this but said, "He answered back and I did not like that." Mehboob Khan replied, "You are not aware. There is the mighty power of truth in this boy. His name itself is Sathyam! He always abides by truth, and that is why He commands so much power." Reluctantly, Kondappa said, "Sit down!" The moment Swami came down, Kondappa got unstuck!

News about this incident spread rapidly, and Kondappa getting stuck to the chair became the talk of the school. Some teachers called Swami and said, "Sathya, did You really make Kondappa get stuck to the chair?" Swami replied, "Sir, I did not do any such thing; as is the action, so is the consequence." As a result of this incident, Raju became well known.

Swami then moved on to the seventh standard. Holidays came, and Seshama Raju took Swami to Hampi [an ancient town of historical importance in the neighbourhood]. On reaching the place, Seshama Raju told Swami, "You keep a watch over the luggage while my wife and I go and have darshan [of Siva in the form of Virupaksha]." Swami said, "Please do; I shall mind the luggage." It is Swami's nature to always help. Seshama Raju then said, "After we come back, You can go and have darshan."

Swami sat down there with the luggage while the brother and his wife entered the temple to have the darshan of Virupaksha.

Inside, they did not see the Virupaksha idol but Swami! Then Seshama Raju said, "Look, Raju is here! Who is taking care of the luggage?" He came out

running and saw Swami there! He ran back inside and saw Swami there also. Seshama Raju and his wife then began to converse with each other. They said, "There is some strange power within Sathya. His effulgence itself is so unusual. We are not treating Him as He ought to be." Meanwhile, the Municipal Chairman came there, in order to have the darshan of Virupaksha. He too saw only Raju instead of the idol. He was surprised and asked the temple priest, "Who is this boy? Where did He come from?" All of them came outside and there they saw Swami near the luggage. They then exclaimed, "This was the boy we saw there inside the temple where the idol is installed! Clearly, this is no ordinary boy; there is some extraordinary power within Him." The Chairman asked Seshama Raju as to who I was; he replied, "My brother." The Chairman then invited all of us to his house for tea the following day.

We went to his house. Swami was offered coffee but Swami said 'no thanks'. The host then offered milk, coconut water, etc., but Swami refused them all - Swami does not partake of such beverages and drinks. From the day this body came into existence, it has never touched tea, coffee and such drinks. Other things offered were also refused. They then realised that Raju was different and said, "There is some extraordinary power in this boy." They were very keen to present something to Swami, like a dress. But they were not sure if Seshama Raju would get angry if such a gift was given; or the boy might refuse, thinking that his brother Seshama Raju would become angry. Finally, the Chairman brought a collar pin made of gold, and, holding Swami's hand, slipped the pin into Swami's palm. While giving the pin the Chairman said, "Please accept this. I am the Chairman and a respected person in this locality. You must pay heed to my word. I am giving this out of love, as if you are my son. You must not refuse this offering." Seshama Raju's wife spoke in the same tone: "He is an elder and You must not refuse what he is giving out of love." Swami reluctantly accepted the collar pin but was not happy. He does not like to receive material objects as gifts from others.

The Hampi visit over, we all came back to Uravakonda by bus.

Next day, Swami had to go to school. Swami left the house and went about

ten feet when the collar pin fell down. Many searched for it but the pin could not be found. Swami then said:

Understand that I am Sai!
Have no more worldly bonds with Me.
I have bonds with none.
It is beyond the power of anyone to restrain Me!

The collar pin symbolised worldly attachment, and when it was lost, it was also symbolic of the end of the 'Raju phase' and attachments implied by it. Declaring that He had no worldly relationship with anyone, Swami ran to the house of one Anjaneyulu. He was the Prohibition Commissioner in those days.

In front of his house there was a small rock. Swami went and sat on that stone.

Meanwhile, Seshama Raju, his wife, the children - all came running to where Swami was. They said, "Come back home."

Swami replied, "I have no home." Seshama Raju then said in a stern voice, "Stop this philosophy and come back; I don't wish to hear all this idle talk." Swami replied, "This is not idle philosophy but the Truth! I am not going anywhere." Seshama Raju tried to drag Swami away but he could not move Swami even an inch!

In the meantime, Anjaneyulu appeared on the scene and told Seshama Raju, "Why are you trying to force Him?" Seshama Raju replied, "I am not forcing Him; just that He has come away without having food." Anjaneyulu then said, "That is no problem; He can have food in my house today."

Swami was taken inside by Anjaneyulu and served many items of food on a plate. It was always Swami's practice to mix all the items before eating. This

used to be the practice in the Shirdi Avatar also; there, Lakshmi Bai would serve many items and Baba would mix them all before eating. In this Avatar too, Swami is following a similar practice.

Swami now started having food in Anjaneyulu's house, and spend time sitting on the rock. Anjaneyulu's children would say, "Raju, why are You doing like this? Your study is getting disturbed. Time is getting wasted. Don't give up study," and so on. But Swami did not pay any attention to such talk.

People also used to ask, "Who are You? What is Your name?"

Swami replied, "My name is Sai." In those days, no one knew the name Sai Baba. They mistook Sai Baba to mean 'Sahebu', which meant a Muslim. At that time, the Commissioner's son ran inside, brought a camera and clicked a photo. In the picture, Shirdi Sai could be seen in front of Swami. Thereafter, Prohibition Commissioner Anjaneyulu gave Swami the name Sai Baba, and in due course the name remained.

Earlier while in school, Swami used to lead the school prayer.

The Headmaster Kameswara Rao was an ardent devotee. He used to say of Swami, "Sathyam is not a pillavadu (an ordinary boy) as you imagine; He is a Pidugu (thunderbolt!)." Kameswara Rao it was who had asked Swami to lead the school prayer. Swami asked, "What prayer should I recite?" He replied, "You compose Your own prayer." On the spot, Swami composed a prayer that reflected the sentiments of many religions like Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, etc.

[At this point, Swami sang melodiously, the prayer song He had composed sixty years ago as young Sathya.]

Some said that the names of other religions like Islam etc., should not be mentioned. Such objectors merely reflected their own narrow-mindedness but all the school children liked the song.

One evening, Seshama Raju asked Swami, "Where from are You producing such songs? Are they Your own compositions or have You copied from somewhere else?" Seshama was himself a Telugu poet and poets are known to be crazy at times! That is why he asked such a question!!

Later, Seshama asked Swami to write a small play and also act in it. So, Swami wrote the play Cheppinattu Chesthara? You all know about this play. Swami acted in the drama and also won a big prize for His acting.

The Headmaster wanted to raise some funds for the school building. So he announced that there would be a dance performance by the well-known dancer Rishyendramani. The prize was to be distributed by the Head of the Panchayat [Council of Village Elders], one Rama Subbamma. This Rishyendramani was reputed as a dancer of great skill and talent. She could balance a jug of water on her head and dance without allowing the jug to fall or the water to spill. However, this dancer was not going to appear in our school. Swami was expected to play the role!

So, to uphold the announcement of the Headmaster, Swami had to appear on the stage dressed like dancer Rishyendramani and perform her type of dance! For the dance, Swami placed a bottle of water on the head, a plate on top of the bottle, and two lamps on the plate! This is not all! While dancing, a sewing needle had to be picked up with the eyelids, and this had to be done without allowing the objects on the head to fall down! Rishyendramani could do all this, and Swami was expected to emulate her feat!!

Everyone was stunned by the performance. No one knew that it was Sathya who had danced and not Rishyendramani. Seshama Raju also witnessed the show; he too could not believe his eyes; so spectacular was the show.

It was time for the prize distribution. Rama Subbamma came on the stage and showered praise on Rishyendramani for her scintillating performance. She then announced, "By way of showing my appreciation, I am now going to present a medal to Rishyendramani." All eyes were now on the stage, eagerly looking for the arrival of Rishyendramani. Instead, wearing shorts, Swami

came there running! Rama Subbamma said, "Boy, this medal is not for you but for Rishyendramani." The Headmaster then came there and told Rama Subbamma, "That was not Rishyendramani who danced; it was this boy, dressed like her!" Rama Subbamma was stunned; she dropped the medal, lifted Swami, and hugged Him! That was how the Kamalapuram experience was.

In course of time, Swami entered the eighth standard. There was one Raghavan, who was the drill master. He was well-built and had a good personality. At that time, a cattle fair was due to take place in the neighbouring town of Cuddapah. The drill master wanted all the scouts in the school to go and do service in the fair.

The question arose as to who should be the leader of the scouts. Boys from all classes, from the sixth to the twelfth, volunteered.

But Raghavan was firm; he said that Raju alone was fit to be the leader. Swami told the drill master, "Sir, how can I be the leader?"

"I am not big enough for the job." Raghavan replied, "I know that You can be the leader. You can do it!" Swami then softly said, "Sir, a leader must have uniform, whistle, stick, shoes, etc. I cannot afford these. Therefore, I cannot assume the responsibility of leadership." One must always be realistic and state truthfully what one can do and what one cannot. Meanwhile, all the students unanimously declared that they wanted Raju as their leader for the scout camp in Cuddapah. Raghavan explained why this was not possible - the leader had to have the proper dress, whistle, shoes, stick etc, and Raju could not get these.

Two boys used to share the desk used by Swami in school - Ramesh and Suresh. One was the son of the local Shirastadar while the other was the son of the Tashildar. Swami used to sit in the middle and these two boys used to sit on either side. All of us were of the same height. Ramesh was the only child of his parents. He went to his father and said, "Father, I want two scout dresses; I like them very much." He got them. He then neatly packed one set

and then wrote a letter: "Raju, You must accept this dress. If You don't, I will give up my life!" Ramesh kept the dress packet and the letter in Swami's place in the desk. Swami read that letter, tore it, and prepared a reply: "Friendship cannot and must not be based on giving and taking. If such transactions exist, then it can no longer be called friendship. Thus, your giving Me a gift is not good. You love Me very much, and I too love you a lot. If I were to accept your gift, then our mutual love would get spoiled. For this reason, I cannot accept what you are giving.

If you do not want our friendship to be ruined, then you will take back what you have given." Ramesh insisted, "Does not matter if our friendship gets ruined; but You must accept what I am giving.

I have not even told my father what I am doing. This is my dress, and I want to share it with You!" However, gently but firmly, Swami made Ramesh take back his gift.

In due course, the news that Swami was an excellent composer of poems and songs reached one Kote Subbanna. This person made his living by selling medicines. He had a big shop full of medicines. One day he sent word that Raju should go to his house.

Swami sent a reply: "Why should I? I have no work there; I do not go about aimlessly from house to house like a rat or a cat!"

Students should know this. You all have the tendency to go from room to room; this is not a good habit. Only cats and rats move about like this; you are neither cats nor rats. You must remain where you are.

Kote Subbanna realised that Swami would not come to his place; so, he came to Swami. Once you are after Truth and remain firm in your determination, then even people of great stature would have to come to you. Subbanna placed a small bag containing some eatables in Swami's hand and said, "Listen, I have a new wonder drug called Bala Bhaskara," and then went on describing its wonderful properties. He added, "I want a small help from You."

Swami replied, "Help I always give. That is My ideal. What is it that you want?" He said that he wanted a poem extolling the efficacy of the new medicine, and added, "If You can have the poem ready by the evening, it would be very nice!"

Swami wrote the song. Kote Subbanna came to the school to collect the poem because he was not supposed to come to the house. He was waiting near the school gate. There Swami gave him the composition. Subbanna then said, "I have the poem alright but what about the tune for the song, and who will sing it?"

"I don't understand." Swami said, "There are people who would be ready to do all this, if you pay them money. You can also prepare placards, and have little boys carry them while singing the song." Subbanna then said, "I shall do all this but You must indicate how the song must be sung." By evening he managed to round up a few boys and Swami taught them the song. The song was a hit, the advertising was a tremendous success, and Kote Subbanna did brisk business!

[At this point Swami sang, in His own beautiful way, the song He had composed over sixty years ago that advertised the qualities of the wonder drug Bala Bhaskara.] The story of the Cattle fair that Swami mentioned earlier, did not quite end there. The scouts in the school were preparing to leave for duty. They very much wanted Swami to go along with them.

If He did not go, the boys would feel very unhappy and sad. But Swami had His own constraints; He could not go without the proper dress etc. So, Swami decided to act as if He had acute stomach ache. If one has fever, it can be detected with a thermometer or even by touching the body; but stomach ache cannot be verified so easily! Meanwhile, the boys who were going in a procession came to our house. They saw Swami groaning and moaning and said, "Raju, if You are not going, we too will not." Drill master Raghavan added, "Why did such a thing happen to You? It is our supreme misfortune." Swami replied, "Sir all of you please go ahead. I shall join later if the pain subsides." A minimum of five rupees was needed for expenses during the ten

days of the camp; but Swami did not have even five paise! After everyone left, Swami sat up on the bed and thought of a plan.

At that time, Swami had just completed studies in the sixth standard. The textbooks used in the sixth standard were available with Swami. In those days, the same books were used in the class year after year. Thus, the books with Swami could be passed on to someone just entering the sixth standard. Swami decided to give these used books to a Harijan boy in the town. He went to the boy's house, called the boy out and told him, "Take a look at all these books that I used last year. They cover all the subjects like civics, history, and so on." The boy examined the books.

All that he needed were there; besides, they were in very good condition. These days, students do not take good care of their books. They scribble on them and even draw all kinds of pictures and cartoons. If books are spoiled, then so would be the heart.

Books must always be maintained in a good condition - this is what Napoleon also advocated. The Harijan boy, after examining the books that Swami had brought, said, "Raju, these books are worth twenty rupees but I would be able to give You only fifteen."

Swami said, "I do not want fifteen rupees; five would do."

In those days, currency notes were not yet in vogue; so Swami received the cash in small change. Two rupees were needed as bus fair and three rupees for food. Swami separated the coins amounting to three rupees, placed the change in a piece of old cloth and tied it into a bundle. When Swami came home, the bundle gave way and the coins scattered all over the place making a lot of sound. The lady of the house [Seshama Raju's mother-in-law] came out and angrily said, "Where did you get all this money from? You must surely have stolen it!" Swami explained, "I did not steal this money; I got it in return for my old textbooks." The lady retorted, "I do not believe a word of what You say." Swami then brought the boy who had purchased the books, to bear witness. Falling at the feet of the lady that boy said, "Mother, Raju is

incapable of stealing. It was I who gave Raju the money, all these coins that are spread over here." The lady shouted, "You two are made for each other! You are just dancing to His tune. Both of you get out from here!" So saying, the lady collected all the scattered coins.

Swami had promised the scouts that He would join them at night.

At five o'clock in the evening, Swami had food and started walking towards Cuddapah. Swami reached the destination in the early hours of the morning, at about 2.30 a.m. Swami was feeling very thirsty but there was no drinking water around. However, there was a tub nearby with water meant for bathing cattle. Swami was forced to drink some of that water. It was very quiet and there was no one around. When Swami looked around, He noticed that there was a bundle of beedis and a one-anna coin on a stone near the tub. Swami intensely dislikes beedis. So He crushed them and buried the bits in the sand. Having done that, He took the one anna coin and started walking. Soon it was daybreak.

All that Swami had was one anna. Is it possible to survive for nine days on just one anna? While so wondering, Swami noticed that in the fair, a game of petty gambling was in progress. Swami decided to play! Every time He did, He won; soon, the one anna He had started with had become twelve anna. At that point Swami stopped, feeling that this amount was sufficient to see Him through for the entire stay. Since He was on a winning streak, many urged Swami not to quit but continue playing. Swami told them that there ought to be a ceiling on desires and walked away.

Swami has played many games but this was the only time He had indulged in gambling. One should never gamble, but at that point of time Swami did so because He had no money. However, on reflection, Swami felt that He ought not to have gambled; so He went back to return all His winnings to the man who ran the gambling game. But that man refused to take back the money won from him. He then told others, "Strange boy. I don't know where he comes from. But this much is certain: He is a very good boy!"

After the cattle fair was over and the scout service had concluded, Swami returned to Kamalapuram. He carried with Him some fruits and flowers to be presented to His sister-in-law [Seshama Raju's wife]. Swami's long absence had infuriated the people at home, especially as all the work normally done by Swami had to be done by them. Thus, when Swami returned, He got a very cold reception. The fruits and flowers that He lovingly offered were flung away; and, Swami was severely punished. As a result, the hand was badly swollen. What could be done? Swami had to bear it all with patience and forbearance.

There was an old lady in the adjoining house. She used to watch all this and cry silently, because she could not bear to see Sathya hurt. On the following day, Seshama Raju's son died and a telegram was sent to Puttaparthi. In those days, the telegram was received in Bukkapatnam and then hand-carried to Puttaparthi. It so happened that Pedda Venkama Raju had gone to Bukkapatnam for the weekly fair. There someone handed him the telegram sent by Seshama Raju. Immediately, Pedda Venkama Raju boarded a bus for Kamalapuram. When he came home, he saw that Swami's hand was badly swollen. He asked what had happened and what caused the swelling. Swami said it was due to a boil. He did not say anything then. But meanwhile, the old lady in the neighbouring house told Venkama Raju all that had been happening - about the heavy work-load, the ill-treatment, etc.

In the evening, Pedda Venkama Raju took Swami out. It was dark and so Swami carried a lamp. We went beyond the limits of the village. There, Pedda Venkama Raju stopped. The lamp was placed on the ground. Pedda Venkama Raju took Swami's hands into his, cried, and then said, "Son, did I send You here because I could not feed You? I will do anything, I will even become a petty peddler of salt to support You. Why do You have to suffer so much here? Though Your father, I have never raised my hand against You and struck You! You are being put to too much suffering here. Come back with me at once." Swami gently said, "They need a lot of help here right now. It would not be proper to leave and go away abruptly. You please go now. I shall come back later when the time is appropriate." Swami never said anything against His brother or the other members of his family.

Father went back most reluctantly but after he returned, he kept on writing postcards, "Come back immediately." And then, in order to get Swami back real quick, the message was sent, "Your mother is in a serious condition." Swami knew that this was not true. He stayed in his brother's place till the examinations were over.

Swami is telling all this in order to impress upon students, how young people ought to behave and conduct themselves in relation to elders and teachers. You know a lot about the world.

You are aware that even great sages have faced many problems. The best way to get over problems is to develop sacred feelings.

Always, help ever, and hurt never. This is the maxim followed by Swami, and that is how He grew up.

These days, young boys have so many clothes - ten pairs of trousers, ten shirts, ten bush shirts...! Swami did not enjoy such luxury; He had to be content with just one shirt and one shorts per year. One must learn to manage with minimum possessions and be simple. As Swami often says, less luggage means more comfort. You must decrease your acquisitions and possessions. You must also decrease your desires. Do you think you will lose anything by doing so? No; on the contrary, by strictly adhering to Truth, you can achieve anything you want. Therefore, you must always follow the path of Truth. Thus, the two maxims, Sathyam vada, dharmam chara, Always speak the truth, and always adhere to righteousness, form the fountainhead of Bharatiya culture. Hence, follow the path of truth and foster love for God. Once you have intense love for God, you can achieve anything in this world. There is nothing greater than love in this world. You young people should never forget love. With love, you can accomplish anything. You can even acquire big and valuable objects.

[At this point, Swami materialised a big diamond. The creation of the diamond was greeted with loud applause. Holding up the diamond, Swami asked the audience, "Can you see it?" He then showed the diamond to Prof. Anil Kumar

(who was translating) and asked, "How is it?" Amazed, Prof. Anil Kumar replied, "Swami, it is brilliant!"]

Such things will be in your hands. Once you have truth, everything comes to you. King Harishchandra was able to accomplish everything; how? On account of adherence to truth. He lost his wife. His son died. He also lost his kingdom. He then ended up as a caretaker in a cremation ground. However, in spite of all his difficulties, he never compromised on truth. His wife then told him, "I too shall strictly adhere to truth. Together we shall sail through all other problems. Otherwise, together we shall sink. But we shall never give up truth."

[Swami interrupted His discourse and, pointing to the diamond He had created earlier, asked Prof. Anil Kumar, "Is it glowing?" He replied, "Swami, it is shining brilliantly!"]

If you adhere to truth, you can do anything. Once in Kodaikanal - many must have seen it. [Swami asked someone in the audience what He had materialised in Kodaikanal. He then continued.] Swami had materialised the Syamanthakamani in Kodaikanal.

This extraordinary jewel belonged to Sathyabhama. Swami showed the jewel to all present there; later, it was sent back to where it came from!

Whatever you want is in these Hands. Do not underestimate Swami just because He is moving about and talking to you all like an ordinary person. Everything is in this Hand! You may not know about it, but just wait; in the days to come, the whole world would be in this Hand like this diamond

[so saying, Swami pointed to the diamond in His Hand, and there was a big applause].

From today, all of you students must become wedded to truth. Always be just and you would then be automatically respected.

Adore and revere your parents and also your teachers. Are you aware to what extent Swami gave respect to His teachers? I don't think you know. The other day, Swami spoke about kshama.

There is a lot of difference between mere patience and kshama; people often mistake one for the other. Kshama is the golden virtue that enables you to face with equanimity all difficulties, troubles, obstacles, losses, suffering, calumny, etc. The world is not aware but it is because of kshama that Swami generously forgives and forgets all the misdeeds done against Him [applause].

Without kshama, it would not be possible to put up with even for a moment, what is going on around! Yet, Swami is so forgiving that He tolerates every mistake including very big ones - which is possible only when there is kshama. It is Swami's Kshama that will bring the whole world to Him. Adhere firmly to sathya and dharma, and you would have no reason to worry about anything. Only then would you be able to achieve anything you want.

Students must therefore be humble always; humility and kshama go together.

[Swami paused and then gently indicated that perhaps He had been speaking for 'too long'. In unison, all the students roared, 'No Swami!'. Laughing, Swami joked, 'Already you have started telling lies!' Bhagavan then continued.]

Swami wishes to mention one more thing. One day as Swami was returning from Bukkapatnam, He passed by an elderly lady who was removing lice from the hair of a child. This lady had the habit of chewing betel leaves and spitting frequently. It so happened that when Swami was going past her, she spat and the red spittle splattered all over Swami's dress. It all happened quite accidentally of course - nothing deliberate. The lady saw what had happened and became quite upset. She lamented, "Raju, look what I have done!" She

then tried to remove the stain left by the betel juice. Swami told her not to worry, went home and immediately washed the shirt clean. Had the shirt have been given to a washerman, he would have charged about half an anna or so. But no; Swami would never spend money like that; money was not only scarce but also very valuable. Swami would wash and then iron the dress using an improvised iron - a vessel with burning charcoal in it.

That is how frugal Swami was. He never added to the financial burden of His parents. Swami never borrowed, never caused any dissatisfaction to parents, always upheld the family honour - that is how Swami spent His student days. You too should be like that, and bring credit to your parents. They struggle hard to bring you up and you owe them a deep debt of gratitude. Just because you can receive money from home, it does not mean you should spend it any way you like. It is not good to waste money; misuse of money is evil.

Good conduct and behaviour would not only get a good name for you, but also bring credit to the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning. Swami will, without fail, help you to any extent, if you endeavour to earn a good name. Swami will ensure all success.

It is not enough if you merely listen; you should actively put into practice, the teachings of Swami. If you do so, it will do you a lot of good in the future. Purity will not only bring you peace but a good reputation as well.

[Swami then asked the students to sing bhajans. They sang two bhajans: Govinda Murahari Madhava ... and Bhajore Bhai Sai Ram.... Swami greatly enjoyed both the songs. Swami then asked, "Who wants this diamond? Tell Me, and I shall give. Who wants it?" Bhagavan then threw the diamond into the audience and it vanished! The miracle was greeted with loud applause.]

15. The Ideal Student

Date: 30 May 2000 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 2000

With scholarship, one may subdue savants in court;
Brave in spirit, one may fight courageous battles;
Born a king, one might rule over an Empire;
One may lavish gifts of gold;
One might be able to count all the stars in the sky;
One might be able to enumerate all the living species;
One may master all the eight forms of knowledge;
One may even land on the moon;
But of what use are all these achievements,
If one is not able to control the mind and the senses,
And uphold eternal human values?

Students, Boys and Girls!

What the world badly needs today is not wealth, affluence, and prosperity but students with exemplary character. The progress of the nation depends on such students alone. This is the fundamental assumption of Bharatiya culture. Bharatiya culture is the epitome of truth that is eternal. It is impervious to the passage of time and not influenced by history. Sanathana dharma is the core of Bharatiya culture. The culture of Bharat is latent in everyone as human values. This land Bharat is sacred in all respects. There is sathya in its dust, dharma in the wind, and daya (compassion) in the sand. Prema or love flows in the sacred river Ganges. To top it all, there is kshama or forbearance in the people of this land.

Human Values are your very life

Bharat has been the home of such noble qualities and virtues from ancient

times. The rishis of yore crowned sacrifice and not people. They accorded dharma a place of pride in their lives, were committed to justice, and embraced sathya. It is such sacred practices alone that have protected Bharat through the ages. Unfortunately, values declined in the course of time, and Bharatiyas of today have completely forgotten all about our ancient culture. People no longer remember their duty and obligations. In the prevailing situation, the basic principles of our ancient culture have become a vital necessity for one and all. Indeed, because of its fundamental nature, this culture is needed not only for the people of this land but also for the whole of humanity. Which country can afford to deny sathya? Which country can say that it has no need for dharma? Is there a person who says that he or she does not want santhi? Is there a human being that does not want love? Sathya, dharma, santhi, prema, and ahimsa are indispensable for the whole of humanity. They are vital for the survival of mankind. Neglecting to uphold these basic values, Bharatiyas in recent times have slowly forgotten all about virtues and character.

Students, Boys and Girls! You are the future citizens of this country. The glory of the ancient culture of Bharat can be revived only if you become the torchbearers. Today, falsehood, injustice, bad conduct, and evil are rampant everywhere in the country.

You students must firmly resolve to wipe out all such forces of immorality. Students of Bharat must make every effort to abide by basic human values and to spread joy and happiness in society.

Human values do not come from somewhere outside. They are latent in a human being and come along with the person at the time of birth itself. Since they are already in you, there is no need to go searching for them all over the place. They are in you and follow you wherever you go. If you cannot recognise the values already latent in you, how then are you going to understand your innate nature? If a person does not understand what sathya and dharma mean, how then is he going to live as a human being?

Therefore, begin by realising that sathya and dharma are already in you.

Bharatiya culture stresses the tremendous importance of sathya and dharma through the injunctions:

sathyam vada, dharmam chara.

Always speak the truth and follow the path of righteousness.

Sathya and dharma are the fundamental guiding principles of mankind.

Without sathya, dharma, santhi, and prema, Education is empty.

Without sathya, dharma, santhi, and prema, Charity and donations have no value.

Without sathya, dharma, santhi, and prema, Sacred activities so-called are pointless.

The eternal values sathya, dharma, santhi, and prema
Are the four pillars of Sanathana Dharma.

What else is to be communicated to this august body of students?

Gateway to ruin

Students! Human values are your very life, and you should never abandon them. Do not dissipate yourself by struggling for worldly achievements and power. No matter how powerful you are, if you immerse yourself in the world, you are sure to get drowned.

Ravana was most powerful. His strength was unmatched and so was his wealth. There was no comfort he did not enjoy. There was nothing he lacked. He was highly learned too, having mastered sixty-four forms of knowledge. He even knew the language of the birds and the animals. Despite all this, he became a slave to just one bad quality, lust; and that one weakness brought about his total ruin. On account of desire, he lost his kingdom, his kith and

kin, and his own son too. In the end, he lost his life.

There is also the example of Hiranyakasipu, a scientist par excellence. Whereas modern scientists have journeyed merely to the moon, Hiranyakasipu travelled all the way to the stars in order to investigate them. Once, as a part of his studies he was about to disturb a star. Fearing that there might be terrible consequences, people respectfully requested Hiranyakasipu to abandon his plans. Hiranyakasipu yielded and returned. This man who was so clever, smart, and accomplished, hated God. Why? Because he was a slave to anger. Anger and hatred blinded Hiranyakasipu completely and brought about his downfall. He lost everything, including his life. An angry man will never achieve true success.

He will constantly face obstacles and be driven to sin. He will invite only contempt from others. This is what anger does to a person, and Hiranyakasipu embraced this vile quality.

We also have the example of Duryodhana who was just as bad as Hiranyakasipu. He grabbed the territory that rightfully belonged to the Pandavas and exiled them to the forest. It was lobha or greed that drove him to such mean acts. Kama (desire), krodha (anger), and lobha (greed), are three great enemies of man. The evil persons mentioned thus far had only one bad trait each in them; but in this Kali age, all the three evil qualities co-exist in the same person. If one weakness alone led to such disaster earlier, what can happen to a person when all three are together present is beyond one's imagination. Students must therefore exercise strict control over tendencies that can lead toward kama, krodha, and lobha. Perhaps it may not be possible to completely quell such tendencies; only the very great have been able to wholly vanquish them. Even so, these bad qualities must be kept in check as much as possible. If any undesirable thoughts come to you, pause and think: "Is it good or bad? Is it right or wrong?" If your heart says it is bad, then immediately drive the thought away. Such discipline alone would, in future, enable you to become an emancipator of this country. Unfortunately, at the present time, neither parents nor teachers nor leaders give proper guidance and direction. This is what is responsible for students going astray.

Students are intrinsically selfless, pure, and unsullied. Basically, they are very good. If they have bad qualities, they are generally inherited from parents. In the school, the bad qualities multiply.

When they enter adult life, the prevailing political environment wipes out all traces of good qualities. Politics is the root cause for the present plight of the country. It alone is to be blamed for the decline of values and virtues, and the concomitant growth of evil. Therefore, avoid politics! Instead, dedicate your life for the progress, welfare, and the development of the nation. No matter what, be resolute in serving the country. Nothing excels service and sacrifice.

Always be happy

Students! In olden times, centres of learning were regarded as highly sacred. People in such centres prayed thus:

Sarve loka hite ratah.

May everyone be prosperous. In those days, people prayed for the welfare of one and all.

Sarve samuditah gunaih.

May everyone be virtuous.

Sarve jnana sampannah.

May everyone be blessed with wisdom.

Broaden your mind and treat the body as most sacred. Always ensure that your words are truthful and unsullied. Do not permit your body to stray to the path of sin. Man's true nature is a combination of a pure heart, an unsullied mind, and sacred speech. That is why it is often said: The proper study of mankind is man. He alone is worthy of being called a man whose thought, word, and actions are in perfect harmony. You should speak the truth that comes out of your heart. What you say, you must do.

Tridalam, Trigunakaram, Trinetram Ca Triyayudham.
Trijanma Papa Samharam, Eka Bilvam Sivarpanam.
I reverentially offer the trifoliate Bilva leaf to Lord Siva,
the Three-eyed One, who bears three weapons,
and has the power to wipe out the sins committed in three births.

In the Gita, there is a reference to pathram (leaf), pushpam (flower), phalam (fruit), and toyam (water). Your body is the leaf, your mind is the fruit, and your heart is the flower. Your tears of joy represent water. You should shed tears of joy and not of sorrow. Why at all should you ever be sad? Sorrow is the result of worldly attachments. Never give any room for sadness; always be happy, happy, and happy! What is happiness? Happiness is union with God. Be always attached to Divinity, and problems will not bother you. Due to bondage as well as due to the vagaries of the world, pain and pleasure will keep visiting you in alternation.

But you should learn to ignore them; they are just passing clouds; they come and go. They should never be allowed to enter your heart. Instead, let your Heart be just a witness. In fact, your heart is truly the Eternal Witness. By all means do what you must; do your duty; but remain aloof and detached. Abide by the advice of your parents. Absorb all their good teachings. Revere them as your preceptors and God. Rishis of old declared:

Matr Devo bhava. Pitr Devo bhava.
Acharya Devo bhava. Atithi Devo bhava.
Mother is God, father is God,
your teacher is God, and your guest also is God.

In fact, in this world, all are divine. If you are good boys, you become God boys! You should therefore all become good boys and experience the Atmic

Principle. If your heart is devoid of divine feelings, your entire life would become empty.

Strive for the restoration of dharma

Spirituality has declined sharply in recent times, and consequently human values have been forgotten. In turn, this has led to the disappearance of ethics and morality. Owing to the absence of ethics and morality, dharma also has vanished. Since there is no dharma, there are no ideal persons anymore and there is no idealism left.

Clearly, restoration of human values should be the country's first priority; then alone would the country be seized with spiritual fervour. The rise of spirituality will automatically promote morality in society. The return of morality is nothing but the restoration of dharma (dharmasamsthapana). When dharma prevails, everyone can easily lead an ideal life.

Students! You should all lead ideal lives. For that, you must strictly adhere to the path of dharma. Enquire deeply: "What is the basis for dharma?" Morality is the basis of dharma!

Dharayatiti dharmah.

Ceaseless contemplation of God is tantamount to following dharma. What is the prime quality of fire? To burn is its natural attribute. If it does not burn, it cannot be called fire. What is the quality of ice? To be cold is its nature. If it is not cold, it cannot be called ice. In the same way, what is the distinctive quality of man? Truth is the innate quality of man. But unfortunately, there is hardly any trace of truth in the world today. That is why there are law and order problems all over the world. Man opens his mouth only to utter untruth. No one believes what the other person says. How can children grow up to be truthful in such an environment?

Satyam nasti parodharmah.

There is no dharma greater than sathya. If there is no sathya, there cannot be any dharma. Harishchandra faced innumerable obstacles and enormous difficulties; but he stuck resolutely to Sathya all his life. People complain: "What can I do? It is so difficult to be truthful these days. If I do so, I might have to lose my job." So what? Let go of the job. Why so much fuss about udyogam (job)? What you really need is yogam (spiritual progress) and not udyogam (employment)!

Man today is all the time concerned only about job and money. It is nothing but job, money; job, money; job and money. Man has become a servant of job and a slave of money. Is this the way to live? You must become a slave of sathya! Today we need leaders who are dharmic. Only a slave of sathya can become a dharmic leader. Without dharma, how can one become a dharmic leader? The behaviour of people these days is a matter of great shame.

Truly speaking, you are the son of dharma but what is it that you are doing to uphold dharma? There is none to speak forthrightly like this, and that is why the country is plummeting to ruin.

There is no need to be afraid of being truthful. Be bold and face difficulties squarely. Bear the suffering and march resolutely a head. Students of such high calibre are a vital necessity in today's world.

Students! Life is meant to be a saga of bliss. Adhere to the path of sathya. Install dharma in your mind. Then you will automatically experience and enjoy santhi. You must be totally aligned to Bharatiya culture. What is meant by samskruti (culture)? That which refines is culture. You should be a refined and a cultured individual.

Bharatiya culture is most sacred. Because of its spiritual basis, it has from ancient times served as a beacon to all lands. Elsewhere today, the situation is deteriorating. And this country which was once the fountainhead of sathya and dharma is faring no better.

It is a matter of shame that it has lost its old glory. You are the children of this

ancient culture and civilisation. You must uphold this tradition so that you can hold your head proudly and declare that you are a Bharatiya, wherever you go. This is the level of self-respect that you must achieve. You must boldly declare:

"This is my motherland, this is my mother tongue, and this is my tradition." You must enhance the prestige and the reputation of this country. You must be an instrument that spreads the name and fame of Bharat. Spiritual power alone will enable you to do all this, and dharma is the basis for spiritual power. For dharma, sathya is the foundation. The close inter-relationship between sathya and dharma is the cardinal feature of Bharatiya culture.

Hallmark of a Sai student

Embodiments of Love! Just recently, all of you have taken a stiff examination with difficult questions. A few questions were so difficult that even some teachers did not know the answers!

Nevertheless, all students have scored over ninety percent! Two students have even scored centum! The overall performance has been so good that Swami feels that everyone should have got a hundred out of hundred! (Loud applause.) Elsewhere, it is difficult to find students with such concentration and focus on spirituality. The discipline of students is also of a high order.

Swami does not want to praise students in their presence but facts need to be mentioned. The discipline found in the Sathya Sai educational institutions cannot be found anywhere in the world (applause). Elsewhere, you might find enforced discipline but in our institutions, discipline is spontaneous, born of the heart, and therefore sacred. Sai students bring credit to their alma mater, irrespective of where they go. The Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning enjoys great reputation all over the world.

There may be a few shortcomings here and there. You must aim at being perfect and eliminate these. You must earn an even higher reputation for your Institute. One look at you, and people must be immediately able to

identify you as a Sai student. Your looks must be sacred, conduct impeccable, and behaviour exemplary.

Your looks must ever be compassionate,
Your words must ever be soaked in truth,
And your feelings must ever be nectarine.
You must always be happy and under no circumstance appear downcast.
Smile always; that should be your trademark.

Swami constantly gives, without even being asked

Students, soon many of you will be leaving the portals of the Institute. Wherever you go, maintain your character and your sacred outlook. Swami blesses that this shall be so. Right from the beginning, Sai institutions have been giving free education. Not a single paisa is charged as fees. There are no fees of any kind. It is all free, free, and free! Actually, where you are concerned, this term free has no place. Who is giving free to whom? You are all Mine, and I am yours (loud applause)! I give My children what I want to give; is it proper to describe this as a free offering? You must appreciate this bond of unity between Swami and yourself - I and you are one!

If you want a new dress, do you go to your father and say, "Father, you are making so much money. You are able to afford so many luxuries. How about a new dress for me?" You do not do that.

You simply demand the dress as a matter of right, irrespective of what his earnings are and what his status is. You have the same right with Swami. You do not have to beg of Swami or praise Him before making a request.

Ãsanah Sarvavidyanam. Ãsvarah Sarvabhutanam.
God is present in all beings and

the same Divine Principle is present in you as well as Me.

You must understand this fundamental truth. It is enough if you grasp this basic fact; there is no need for formal worship, ritual, and the like. Fill your heart with sacred feelings; there is nothing greater than that.

Draw people into the Sai path

You must all register steady spiritual progress and share with others what you have gained. Every year, each student must induct at least ten others into the spiritual path and train them properly. This is your real job, not the one that fetches a salary.

Train as many people as you can to follow Sai's principles and teachings.

It is said that Bharat is economically backward. This is no doubt true to some extent. But there is a greater problem faced by the country; in fact, it is a grave danger, and that is the decline of moral and spiritual values among the people. It is this decline that is mainly responsible for the present plight of the country.

If public morality and ethics improve, all-round progress would automatically follow. Hence, do not be concerned that the country lacks wealth. What is true wealth? True wealth is love for God.

That is the wealth you must acquire. Develop all the love you can; never stop. If you wish, go for higher studies and seek high positions. But always use these advantages for helping others.

Help ever, hurt never. Help everyone and not just the members of your family or community. Do not differentiate by saying, "These are mine, those others are not". Regard everyone as belonging to you. Such feelings alone can weld the whole of humanity into one tightly-knit family (viswakutumbam). Never

forget this.

The importance of adjustment and understanding

Embodiments of Love! During the summer course, you may have had to face many inconveniences. Swami knows about them all.

In fact, these inconveniences are intended to be a part of your training. At home you may have a room all to yourself but here you have had to share a small room with as many as thirty people sometimes. Swami knows how difficult this is. However, this is done deliberately in order to teach you adjustment and mutual understanding. These two qualities are most essential in life. If you have learnt how to adjust with your room mates here, you can adjust with people anywhere in the world, and under any circumstance.

Next, food. You have come from different parts of the country and are accustomed to different types of food. Your tastes vary, but over here you all have happily accepted the type of food served. There was not even a trace of any discontent, displeasure, or disappointment. You must develop such contentment and joy in all aspects of life. You must be ever humble, under all circumstances. Humility is the hallmark of a true Sai student.

Such behaviour would make you an ideal person and earn a great reputation for your Institute. This is what would make Swami extremely happy. Swami does not want anything else. He only wants you to earn a good name. This is all that Swami wants, and you do not have to do anything special to please Swami.

However, Swami is ever ready to do anything for you. Get a good name, and become leaders in society. Then alone would Bharatiya culture be restored to its ancient glory. Be polite, courteous, and humble when speaking to elders. Never be rough or rude. Your humility would please the elder to whom you are speaking. At times, you may not be able to do what you are asked to, but you can be courteous while being non-committal. As Swami often says: "You cannot always oblige but you can always speak obligingly. Cultivate this

practice."

Always love your mother and motherland

Always be immersed in divine feelings. If you happen to see a wicked person, do not immediately think of that person as being bad. The bad actions of that person are due to the body but within that person is the same Atma that is also in you. This unity, this Atmic Principle is what you must focus on. Deal with this other person with the feeling that the Self in you is also present in him.

This is the way to develop love for all beings. Also, do not bear ill will toward any country but be alike to all. Do not criticise the culture of other countries. Love your culture as your mother, just as people of other lands love their respective cultures.

Janani Janmabhūmisca Svargadapi Gariyasi.

One's mother and motherland are greater than the very heaven.

Always love these two. If you live like this, you will, without question, become an ideal person. It is not dress that makes a person great. Merely putting on kashayam (ochre robes) does not make one a noble person; one should see that there is no kashayam (ill-feelings) within. It is not externals but internals that are important. You must spiritualise your attitude, tendencies, and mind. Blessing you all to develop a sacred outlook and find fulfilment in life, Swami brings this discourse to a close.

Bhagavan then sang two bhajans. The first was a not commonly heard song beginning with the words Sathya dharmamu.... After this, He sang the familiar Prema Mudita....