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1. Divinise Every Moment

Date: 01 January 1992 / Occasion: New Year

If you wish to embark on a new life, you need not wait for the arrival of a new year. To wait for a whole year means waiting for twelve months and so many days, hours, minutes and seconds. Treat every second as new. Sanctify every moment of your life. This has to be done by realising the unity of Sath (the Divine) and Chith (the individual Consciousness). When this union is achieved, Ananda (Spiritual Bliss) is experienced. This is the primary task before everyone. Every second should be regarded as an expression of the Divine. This New Year Day relates to the Christian Era. December and January may come and go (every year) but God neither comes nor goes.

In this context, you have to bear in mind three things. One is that which, after it goes, will not come back. The second one is that which, after it comes will not leave. The third is the one that neither comes nor goes. That which, when it comes, will not go is Jnana (spiritual wisdom). When this sublime knowledge comes to one, it would not leave him. The knowledge which comes and goes relates to the waking and sleeping states. Knowledge of Supreme Reality, when once it is acquired, will never go away. The knowledge that is lost is not true knowledge. Ignorance is the thing which, once it is gone, will not return. If it returns, it is "ignorance piled on ignorance." This has been described in Vedantic parlance as Mithya in Mithya delusion within a delusion.

Surrender to the Divine present everywhere

That which does not come and does not leave is Atma Thatwa (the Atmic Principle). That which is omnipresent, where can it go? Where is the place for it to go? You set up a door to separate one place from a place outside it. If there is no place outside, there will be no need for a door. There is no place where the Divine is not present. Where, then, can the Divine come or go? Such questions are the products of confused book knowledge. The state of mind of the confused person is described in a song by a Gopika (Cowherd girl). The doubting mind calls for closing the door of the mind (to truth). The

person with faith asks for the opening of the door. Seeing the plight of the Gopika, who is racked by both doubt and faith, Radha was amused. Radha observed: When the whole Universe is the mansion of the Lord, Where is the need for a street or a door? When the cosmic Lord is shining within, Where is the need for a door? When one offers one's entire life to the Lord and sheds tears of bliss, that is all that is needed. As long as there is no such complete surrender, there will be need for doors and the like. Why are doors erected? To regulate the entry and exit of persons. But, it is the irony of the present Kali or Dark Age that the door is kept open for the entry of all kinds of undesirable creatures. Man's mind is kept open for the entry of evil thoughts. The door should be barred against the inroads of egoism and acquisitive impulses. The door (of the mind) should be kept sacred. Regard the entire cosmos as the great mansion of the Supreme Lord. It has no streets or doors. Total surrender is the way to enter the mansion. The advent of a New Year is greeted by welcoming the New Year and bidding farewell to the old one. This is the practice in the ordinary world. But it is not entirely a worldly affair.

Qualify yourselves to enter the Kingdom of God

The observance of the beginning of a New Year is based on the statements of the Siddhanthi (the almanac maker). The almanac is an artificial man-made work and is not related to anything permanent or unchanging. The sun and the moon remain unchanged. The calendar is a man-made device. For the Divine, there is no coming or going. God transcends such conceptions. He is the Lord of what is called the Kingdom of God. Each one has to acquire the qualification to enter that Kingdom. All are not entitled to enter it. But every human being should aspire to achieve that right. That is the essential purpose of human birth. Man is bound by his actions in this world. The actions should be good. Be pure in your speech. Develop a sacred vision. Purify your hearts. Discourse at Prashanthi Mandir to a vast gathering of devotees from all parts of world, 1 Jan

2. Manifest Your Divinity

Date: 01 January 1992 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: New Year

The Lord of the cosmos permeates the entire universe. Remaining invisible in the visible universe, The cosmic consciousness illumines everything Like the thread that runs through a necklace of gems. All things happen, good and bad, according to the dictates of Time. Time is the cause of joy and sorrow, gain and loss. Realise that Time is the cause of all happenings in the world. There is none who is not subject to the sway of Time. Embodiments of Divine Love! Time moves fast like a whirlwind. Each one's life span is getting reduced every moment, like a melting block of ice. Time passes even before man realises his duties in life. The human body is not easily acquired. The end of man's life should not be to waste his precious human birth without realising its primary purpose. It is the duty of every man to realise the purpose of life and utilise his time in the performance of his duties to sanctify his existence. Given the will, there is nothing that man cannot achieve in this world. But before embarking on any enterprise, man should recognise his abilities and endowments.

Today's man, who claims to know everything and engages in exploring space, is unable to experience bliss. If one acquires the ability to explore the stars or walk on the moon, but is unable to understand his own true nature, he misses his integral consciousness. This consciousness is not related to knowledge of the external world. It can be experienced only by turning one's vision inward. Only when he has samagratha bhavam (integral awareness) will he have the right perception of a sage. Only such integral vision can confer bliss. The greatest cause of bondage When people speak about man's bondage, what is it that binds man? Man can liberate himself only when he knows what it is that binds him. Are wife and children the bonds? No. Is it property? No. Are they sensual desires? No. The greatest cause of bondage is the failure to know himself. An individual who is not aware of his true self cannot escape from sorrow. As long as sorrow is there, bliss cannot be experienced. What is the sorrow that envelops man? Sorrow envelops man in three ways and afflicts him in many ways. One source of sorrow is Asath (the unreal). The

second cause is Thamas (the darkness of ignorance). The third cause is death. In this context the Vedanta mentions three categories: Prakruthi (nature), Jivatma (the individual soul) and Parmamatma (the Cosmic Spirit).

As long as man does not give up what he ought to renounce, he will not experience bliss. As long as he is not aware of what he ought to know he cannot get bliss. Bliss will elude man until he reaches the goal he should aim at.

Give up the fascination for the world

What is it that man should give up? What is it that he ought to know? What is his goal? What has to be given up is Jagath-bhavam (the fascination for the world). The reason is the world is not different from God. "Eashavasyam idham jagath" (God dwells in the Universe). "Viswam Vishnu-swaroopam." (The entire cosmos is the embodiment of the Supreme). Disregarding this profound and sacred truth, man is becoming a prey to grief by his worldly attachments. The world should not be treated as merely physical, but should be looked upon as a Divine manifestation. It is only when man is filled with godly thoughts that he will be rid of sorrow. Hence, what should be given up is worldliness. Then alone Atmananda (the Bliss of the Spirit) can be got.

The second thing that has to be given up is Jiva Bhava (the feeling of separate individuality). Who is a Jiva? Jiva is God. "The Jiva (the individual self) resides in the body. God dwells in the heart." They come together and engage in mutual sport. There is a Director who directs the play of the puppets. Both good and bad are present in the puppets. The Jivatma (the individual self) and the Divine principle are not two distinct and separate entities. Out of ignorance, man forgets the basic reality and cherishes delusions which cause sorrow. It is like a man who is seized with fear when he mistakes a rope for a snake. When the truth is known the fear goes. Likewise man, looking at the world, considers it a separate phenomenal entity - Jiva Thathwa. But in reality it is Divine. When the Divine nature of the cosmos is understood, man is free from the delusion of separateness.

The Divine Master illumines the entire cosmos And the cosmos shines in the Divine. God and the cosmos are inseparable friends. This is the prime dictum of Sai.

Human destiny is realisation of his divinity

What is the destination that man should attain? It is the original home from where he came (Swasthanam) What is this original home? It is the awareness of one's own true self. It is for the realisation of this truth that the body has been given to man by the Divine. Where can one search for one's self? Can the search be made outside of you? No. Similarly, the search for God in the external is futile. "His hands and feet are everywhere. His eyes, head and mouth are everywhere. He stands forth encompassing everything in the cosmos" (Stanza from the Bhagavad Gita). When the Divine is omnipresent, it is foolish for man to search for God in some place.

Hence the destination for man is the realisation of his divinity (the original source). This realisation must come through the Vedantic process of exclusion ("Nethi, nethi" "not this, not this"). "I am not the body. I am not the intellect. I am not the Will. I am not the Antha Karana, the inner instrument." All these are only instruments. Man should realise: "I am the Master of all of them." When by this process of elimination man realises his true Self, he is freed from sorrow. Man's most precious and sacred gift from God is Buddhi (intelligence). The intelligence that should be used for seeking the Atma (Spirit) is being used by man today to seek Annam (food). When you are given a mirror to recognise your face, if you turn it in the reverse direction, how can you see your face? Use the mirror of Buddhi to recognise your true self. That is known as Sakshatkaram - direct vision of one's true Self. Unfortunately man today seeks to know everything except his own true nature. He asks everyone: "Who are you?" but does not put the question, "Who am I?" One who does not know himself, what right has he to seek about others? Such an enquiry proceeds from ignorance. Without the awareness of his own true self, man can never attain bliss.

God contains everything within Himself

It is to set men on the path of such self-enquiry that the celebration of the New Year is intended. God as the embodiment of Time, is worshipped by the name Samvathsara (year). This name also means that God contains within Himself everything. God is also known by the name Kalatmaka (the Time Spirit). God incarnates on earth for revealing to man his divine essence. Man has been endowed with intelligence (as Dheemantha) so that he may use it for discovering the Divine within him.

The name Samvathsara represents the cosmic manifestation of the Divine. The Divine displays four kinds of glorious potencies (Vibhuthis) as the Supreme Omni-Self. As such, He is called Chathuratma. This means He is the Self that embodies three potencies. The three are: Vasudheva, Sankarshana and Aniruddha. When these three Vibhuthis are understood the fourth one, Pradyumna becomes intelligible. The meaning of the four potencies Vasudeva indicates that the entire cosmos is the Lord's dwelling place. It also means that He is the Supreme Master of the Universe. This means that the Divine resides in all beings as the Indwelling Spirit. Moreover, He pervades the entire Universe. The Upanishad describes Him as "Narayana who is inside and outside and pervades everything." Sankarshana refers to the divine's capacity to attract and transform all beings. All beings, moreover, have emerged from Him. The name is also associated with His power to transfer any object from one place to another. The child that was in the womb of Devaki was transferred to the womb of Rohini (another wife of Vasudhva) and for this reason the child got the name Sankarshana (another name for Balarama, the elder brother of Sri Krishna). The name Sankarshana also means one who attracts what is pure. Sam (pure) Karshana (attracts). Aniruddha is one who is beyond the control of anyone. He can be swayed only by His grace and not by any other means. This term applies to one who is all-pervading, all-powerful and allknowing. Pradyumna refers to one who possesses Aiswarya (infinite wealth). He confers by His grace all prosperity and happiness on those who adore, worship and love the Lord. Aiswarya includes not only material wealth, but every kind of wealth such as health, knowledge, intelligence and virtue. Another name of the Divine is "Bhagavan." The term "Bhaga" represents six attributes: Divine wealth, righteousness, power, fame, detachment and

Supreme Wisdom. The Lord is called "Bhagavan" because He has these six attributes. Thus every name of the Lord is related to specific attributes and not an expression of the devotee's feelings or fancies. Because of the Divine's myriad attributes, the sages hailed Him as "Om Samvathsaraya Namah."

As the Creator of the Universe and as the One from whom everything emerged, God is also called Yugadi (The initiator of every Yuga or Aeon). He is the One who willed to become the Many.

The one Atma that has different names and forms

What is the unity that prevails in the multiplicity? This is illustrated by the example of a huge mansion within which there are rooms and halls for different purposes. When all the dividing walls are removed, only the main mansion remains. All beings in the world have different names and forms as embodied beings. When the embodiment is taken away only the one Atma in all of them remains. The sense of separateness is a creation of the mind. When this feeling, born of ignorance goes, the Godliness in man will shine. Every man has within him a Kalpatharu (wish-fulfilling tree). But around it there is a wild growth of bushes. When you clear away the bushes, the tree can be seen. That tree is the Self within each one. This Self is covered by man's sensory desires. When the desires are removed, the Self is recognised. Although the Self is in man, no attempt is made to realise it. How can a man who is involved in external pursuits realise his inner Reality? The right method has to be adopted to attain the desired objective. The first requisite for the purpose is faith. There must be an unshakeable faith in God. Man's beliefs today are liable to be blown away like dried leaves. Man should strive to experience the Divine with firm faith, through weal and woe.

Man is inherently Divine

Embodiments of Divine Love! Man who is the embodiment of the immortal Spirit, identifies himself with his body and falls a prey to worldly desires. How can such a person be a true devotee of God, even if he calls himself a Bhaktha (devotee)? Such a man is only a devotee of Prakruthi (the

phenomenal world of Nature). If you regard even Prakruthi as Divine, it will be a good thing. But even here, men separate the Paramatma (Divine) from Prakruthi (Nature). As long as this sense of separation exists, all forms of japa and worship, performed even over many lives, are of no avail.

What is Srishti (creation)? Srishti is an expression of the will of God. This is called Prakruthi. Everyone who emanates from Prakruthi should have divine qualities. That which has emerged from the Divine should have divine qualities and not the traits of an animal or a demon. A human being without the feeling of compassion or love is not human at all. Every human being should manifest his inherent divinity. He should make himself a "messenger" of God. Instead, he behaves like a "miss-inger of God," as one who has "missed" what he should know about himself.

When man realises his true nature and his role in life, he becomes one with God. This is described in Vedanta as the Thuriya-avastha - the fourth state of consciousness in which the individual Spirit is one with the Universal. It is a transcendental state which is beyond the body and the mind - beyond the waking, dream and deep sleep states. What do we understand by the term Vyakthi (individual)? This term is applied to one who manifests the unmanifested Divine Power hidden within him. It is meaningless to apply it to anyone who does not manifest the Divine with him.

The Cosmic form of Divinity

Manifesting one's inner divinity does not mean producing something new. Divinity is inherent in man. It is called Swabhava (one's true nature) - the Atmic nature. It is the Atma that confers all powers on man. Those who bemoan their weakness are not aware of their inherent potential and are not putting it to fight use. The first feeling which one has to get rid of is the identification of his physical form with his real self. Those who ask, "Where is God?" do not realise that all they see in the cosmos is a manifestation of the Divine. That is why the scripture declares, "Pashyannapi cha na pashyathi mudho" (Even while seeing, the foolish one does not see). Man is all the time seeing the universe around him and yet declares he has not seen God. What

is the form of the Cosmos? Is it not Divine? You are seeing the Divine in the form of the physical universe. In the Bhagavad Gita this cosmic form of the Lord is described as Viswa Virata Ruupa. What is Viswa ? It is the whole cosmos. The Viswa Virata Ruupa is the collective form of everything in the universe. No attempt is made to understand the inner meaning of such expressions as Viswa Virata Ruupa. The intellect is used to misinterpret words and create confusion. What is needed is understanding through the heart. Even a highly evolved person like Arjuna confessed to Krishna that the mind is ever wavering and fickle. Are the intellectuals of today, with all their degrees, greater than Arjuna? Not at all. Above all degrees and intellectual attainments, one needs the grace of God. Krishna recognised Arjuna as His devotee. That is the supreme accomplishment.

The abode of the Lord is the heart

When you earn from the Lord the epithet of Bhaktha (God's devotee) you will be equal with Arjuna. God is not calling you as His devotee. It is not enough if you style yourself a devotee of God. God should hail you as His devotee. It is only when your devotion is acknowledged by the Lord that you can call yourself a devotee. If you have not received the acknowledgement, it may mean that you have given the wrong address in your devotion. The correct address of the Lord is Hridayavasi - the Indweller in the Heart. This means that you must continue with your devotion to God until your own conscience is satisfied. To achieve this satisfaction you have to purify yourself constantly. This means that you have to get rid of your bad qualities, bad thoughts and bad actions.

Body is an instrument for realisation of Dharma

Realise that the body has been given to you for the service of others. How is this service to be rendered? Through righteous and pure means. The body is an instrument for the realisation of Dharma (Righteousness). This truth is allegorically conveyed by the example of the Pandavas in the Mahabharatha. The Pandava brothers (Bheema, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva) and Draupadi representing Prakruthi (Nature) followed Truth and Righteousness as

represented by Dharmaraja (the eldest of the Pandavas) and sanctified their lives. This applies to every human being. It is only when he adheres to Truth and Righteousness that he can realise the Atma. Worship of the Divine must stem from the heart. When devotion flows from the heart, the voice of the Divine can be experienced in silence - Sabda Brahman (sound of the Supreme Spirit). This was the experience of Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He observed perfect silence awaiting the voice of God at any moment. Can the Divine voice be heard in the cacophony of daily sounds? No. Devotees must practice reticence. When speech is restrained, the voice of the Spirit within makes itself heard. That is subtler than the human breath. It is only through Prapathi or total surrender, that the Divine can be experienced. It is an experience that can be had every moment of your life.

You say, "Seeing is believing! I will believe in God only if I see Him " But are all things seen or heard or touched or tasted, as real as they seem ? Is it the eye that sees? Your eye may be open and turned in one direction, but if your mind is wandering elsewhere, you will not notice anything at all. You see things only through the illumination of the Atma. You love only because the Atma is Love. You know because the Atma is knowledge.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

3. How To Be Near and Dear To God

Date: 14 January 1992 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Sports Meet

Of what avail is it to be A scholar or clever intellectual If one does not practice even a Fraction of what one knows ? Not all the luxuries and pleasures of the world Will give a man contentment and peace. Only when he realises the truth of the Spirit Will he experience true peace and contentment. Dear Students! Embodiments of Divine Love! Whatever a man sees in the world rouses fear in him. Detachment alone can free him from fear. Failing to grasp this profound truth, man is allowing his desires to multiply. As long as man is attached to the body, he cannot get over the desire to possess the objects that attract him. A man afflicted with mamatva (the acquisitive impulse) can never get rid of worries. To overcome this attachment and possessiveness, the ancient sages, from Vedic times, pursued their studies. The sages believed that self-control promoted humility and that humility was the true index of right education.

System of education promoted by ancients

Control of the senses is essential for realising humility. Education should be pursued for achieving control of the senses. The ancients esteemed only that system of education which promoted Indhriyanigraha (control of the senses). Control of the senses is called Dhama (in metaphysical parlance). The vicissitudes of time, place and circumstances have resulted in the term Dhama getting reversed in today's student community into the term Madha (arrogance). The reason is the disappearance of humility and reverence from the students. Indulgence in sensory pleasures has become their primary concern. Students should regard control of the senses as their foremost guiding principle. In the old days, students who achieved self-control received a diploma in true education called Sakshara. The inner significance of this title is that the recipient is one who has mastered his senses and recognised his inherent Divinity. When Dhama (self-control) turns into Madha (conceit), Sakshara gets reversed and we have Rakshasa in its place. Consequently the student who practised Dhama and displayed humility and reverence was

regarded as Sakshara and the student who was filled with arrogance and egoism was characterised as Rakshasa (a demon).

Scholarship without humility and reverence

It is not enough if one becomes a mere scholar. Even if one has mastered all the scriptures, if he lacks humility and reverence and has no self-control, the ancients regarded such learning as Rakshasa Vidya (demonic knowledge). During Vedic times, the people believed in human values, had faith in God and led pure and sacred lives. The advance of science and technology has enabled man to produce weapons of mass annihilation. Scientists who can manufacture such destructive weapons are unable to secure peace of mind. A scientist who has acquired mastery over the elements is unable to get rid of the fear that haunts him. The scientists do not enjoy the sense of peace and security experienced by common people and are wasting their lives. The educational process is more concerned with imparting bookish knowledge, while education itself is sought only as a means for earning a living. This link between education and employment should be severed. Education should be the means for acquiring Vijnana (wisdom). The world today consists of two types of persons: those who are consumed by excessive desires and those who have no desires. The desireless person treats with indifference all worldly things. The desire-filled man will not be satisfied even if he is offered a mountain of gold (the Meru mountain). In the Ramayana there was a demonic character named Kabandha, who had his head in his stomach and who used his long arms to catch whatever object he could to fill his stomach. Most students seem like Kabandha to be concerned only about earning a living. The primary object of education is not to ensure how one can fill his stomach. The Lord, who gave a stomach, will not fail to provide the necessary sustenance. Man, who should seek the Atma or God, is searching for Annam (food). In the world today, three-fourths of the people appear to be Kabandhas and not truly educated persons. In all their actions - whether in sports or other fields - they are concerned with only selfish interests.

Recognise your duties and responsibilities

There are today two aspects relating to man which have to be considered. One relates to a person's rights. The other relates to one's duties. Most people are concerned only about their rights and engage themselves in struggles to secure them. But they do not recognise their responsibilities. In all the different fields - -social, political, economic and even spiritual - men do not recognise their responsibilities and duties. They want high positions and emoluments. The entire life is wasted in the pursuit of such desires. No one considers whether he is performing the quantum of work for the salary he receives, whether he is discharging his duties properly and fulfilling his responsibilities. Such an attitude is prevalent not only in mundane affairs, but also in the spiritual field. Everyone says, "I want God. I want Moksha (Liberation). I want to ensure my Yogakshemam (well-being here and hereafter)." But he does not make the necessary effort to achieve these desires. "I have no time for bhajans (devotional chants). I can't do any sadhana (spiritual practice). I have no time to think of God" - this is his attitude. But still he wants God. With such a narrow outlook, how can a man know what his fights are? To get anything you want from a shop, you have to pay the price. But is man, who wants God to ensure his well-being, prepared to pay the price for getting it? Is he prepared to offer to God the sacrifice he has to make to secure his Yogakshema? Does he offer the love that has to be given to secure peace, prosperity and security? Man today seeks to get something without paying the price for it. But the Lord cannot be deceived. He offers the appropriate reward for each action according to its nature - whether it be gain or loss, good or bad. We will be entitled to expect what we desire from God only if we make the appropriate offering to God. No one is prepared to offer anything to God, but everyone is eager to get something from God.

Be grateful to those who help you

People go about preaching to others. How far are they practising what they preach? Many call upon others to make sacrifices. What sacrifices are they making? People expect others to be grateful to them for what they have received. How far are they themselves grateful to those from whom they have received benefits? There is no point in investigating all kinds of things in the

world. The first thing one should do is to enquire into the truth about himself. Only then will he be competent to enquire into the conduct of others. The devotion and faith of devotees today can be compared to a dried leaf which can be blown away by a slight breeze. A true devotee, on the contrary, will remain unshaken like a ball of iron whatever the trials or tribulations he may have to face. Many devotees, who are voluble in their speech, ostentatious in their display of devotion, are swept off their feet when they encounter any adversity. When their expectations are not realised, they develop all kinds of aversions. They make no efforts to recognise their own faults. Students, for instance, nourish a grievance that Swami is not smiling at them, that Swami does not talk to them, but they do not enquire within themselves why Swami is acting in this manner and in what way they have violated Bhagavan's injunctions. If they examine their own conduct in this manner, there would be no room for them to entertain such thoughts about Swami.

It is not truly human to commit mistakes

Many feel that it is human to err and that Bhagavan should forgive their lapses. In fact, if they are truly human, they should not commit mistakes at all. Even if sometimes a mistake is committed, wittingly or unwittingly, it should not be repeated again. It is a grievous error to think that it is natural for a human being to err. Such feeling should not be entertained at all by anyone. Every man should realise, "I am not weak. I am not an animal. I am not a demon. I am a man." When a man has this conviction he will not commit mistakes. When a man is described as Nara, it means that he is the very embodiment of the Atma (Spirit). The Atma cannot be affected by any taint. It is the attachment to the body which is the cause of bad thoughts, bad desires and bad actions. It is the one who is a slave to his senses, who is a prey to such impulses. To follow the directives of the senses is a mark of the animal. To be guided by the Atma is the sign of the human. No one should attempt to justify his weaknesses and lapses as natural to a human being. They should be regarded as signs of mental debility. You should continually strive to master your senses. When you have truly acquired sense-control, you will experience the power of the Divine within you.

Become the captor and not captive of the senses

There is a story which illustrates what happens when the agency intended for control of the senses becomes itself a victim of the senses. Once upon a time the government of a country set up a border force to prevent the entry of hostile foreign elements. A camp was set up on the border. A soldier who was keeping vigil caught an enemy intruder entering the country. After catching him, he shouted aloud that he had caught an enemy. The captain, who heard his shout from his tent, asked the soldier to bring the captive to his tent. The soldier said that the man was refusing to come. Then the captain asked the soldier himself to come. The soldier said that the intruder would not let him go! This illustrates the plight of educated students today. Education, which should enable them to acquire mastery over the senses, has made them captives of the senses.

Students should not give way to such weakness. They must develop spiritual strength. They must keep out the bad qualities which afflict them. Those who cannot do this can never become good students.

Men should regard the senses as potential enemies. They should not be allowed to have their own way. They should be subject to one's control and direction. What is the easiest way to achieve this mastery? Only the spiritual path.

Let conscience prevail

If there is real faith and devotion in a man, the senses will be powerless against him. It is the decline in faith and devotion which has led to man becoming a slave of the senses. Students should, therefore, examine before they do anything whether it is good or bad, right or wrong, and act according to the dictates of their conscience. Even in respect of the conscience, certain facts should be borne in mind. The promptings of intellectual reasoning should not be identified with the dictates of the conscience. The directives should come from the heart. When you dive deep into a problem and enquire whether what you should do is in the interest of your friends and society in

general, your conscience will give you the right answer. You should not be guided by intellectual reasoning which has a selfish element in it. You should be guided by a concern for the collective interests of society at large. That alone is the true voice of conscience. This kind of broad social conscience should be developed through education. Students! You have performed a variety of gymnastic feats. You have distinguished yourselves in a variety of games and sports. Although these games have a value of their own in the physical field, there is something greater than all of them. Life is a game, play it! Treat life itself as a big game. To achieve a good name and success in this game, you have to cultivate good habits. Good thoughts, good speech and good actions are the disciplines required in this game. When so much practice and effort are required to achieve success in games like tennis, how much more effort is needed to succeed in the game of life! In this game, if you wish to achieve a good name, uphold your ideals, and realise the Divine. You have to observe in your daily life, right thinking, right conduct and right attitudes.

Longevity and the good life

Students! You have to take a resolve today to restore the ancient culture and tradition of Bharath. Life is wasting away every moment. People are growing older every minute, forgetting their duties. In this situation, what is it that you have to achieve? All that you wish to accomplish, you must set out to achieve now when you are in the vigour of youth. Man's lifespan, which should be a hundred years, is shortened by the misuse of the body. The length of man's life is determined by his own actions. A man's bad thoughts, his hatreds, his jealousy and bitterness are shearing his life into bits every moment. Anger shortens a man's life. This can be seen from everyday experience. When a man gets angry, his temperature rises. The blood gets heated up. In the process the nerves get weaker and as a consequence all organs in the body also get weaker. This weakness may last for six months. One moment of anger will deprive a man of the energy got from six months of food. Every fit of anger shortens a man's life span. Regardless of the temporary satisfaction a man may derive by the display of anger, it causes greater damage to the individual concerned than to others. Likewise, hatred and envy are equally debilitating in their effect. Egoism and attachment also have similar

deleterious effects on man's life.

Transcend the body and mind to attain the Divine

Man is made up of three constituents - the body, the mind and the Atma. Man needs the body for performing actions. But if the actions are done without using the discriminating power of the mind, man will be behaving like an animal, which acts on impulse. Moreover, if the mind, without relying on the eternal and ever-pure Atma, follows the demands of the body and the senses, the actions will be demonic. The combination of mind and body leads to demonic qualities. When one is installed in the Atmic principle, transcending the body and the mind, he attains the Divine.

The ancient sages divinised their lives by control of the senses, by observing spiritual discipline and by successfully carrying on their daily avocations. These are the means by which men can transform themselves into sages. For effecting this transformation, students will have to cultivate faith and devotion. Spiritual education is greater than all other types of education. This was declared by Krishna in the Gita. Rivers are distinct in their names and forms, but when they merge in the ocean, they become one. Likewise, all kinds of studies and practices, when they are merged in the ocean of spiritual knowledge, become one.

The Lord's offer to man

Make your heart pure so that it becomes a worthy abode of the Divine. What should be a Ksheerasagara (an ocean of milk) has been turned by man's misdeeds into an ocean of brine. Sanctify all your thoughts, words and deeds. Only then you will deserve the title Sakshara (truly educated).

The Lord made three declarations: "Son! I shall give you what you ask. If you search for Me, you shall find Me. When you knock at My door, I shall open it." But man today asks for favours not from God but from Nature. He searches not for God but for worldly pleasures. He knocks not at the doors of Liberation but at the gates of Hell. What you should ask for is the grace of the Divine.

What you should search for is God. And you should knock at the doors of the gate to Liberation. Man is acting contrary to God's injunctions. If only man followed God's commands he would be divinising his life. Man's frailties have made him distant from God. A student (in his speech earlier) said that to be away from God was a "living death." Man should strive to be "near and dear" to God. Many who are "near" to God are not "dear" to God. For instance, here in Prashanthi Nilayam you see devotees who have come from distant countries like Argentina, Australia and America out of their love for God. Many who are near Swami may meditate on God but they do not dedicate their lives to God. Only by dedication can they become "dear" to God. Students should strive to be both near and dear to God.

Outsiders coming to Prashanthi Nilayam, on seeing the students, feel: "How lucky are these students! Swami is always talking to them and moving with them." But they are not aware who are really "near" to Swami.

Saint Thyagaraja's confession

The saint Thyagaraja's experiences provide an illustration of the dilemma confronting devotees. Once while experiencing troubles and undergoing indignities from others, Thyagaraja wondered whether the troubles he had to go through were due to deficiencies in his devotion or whether Sri Rama was not potent enough to help him. Convinced about his own devotion, he attributed his troubles to Rama's inability to relieve him. Such doubts often arise in the minds of devotees. After meditating over this matter, he realised that Rama's power was limitless and that the defect lay in his own devotion. He composed a song which described how devotion to Rama had enabled Hanuman to leap over the ocean and how it had enabled Lakshmana and Bharatha to perform heroic deeds. Thyagaraja confessed that in doubting Rama's powers he had been guilty of weakness in his devotion.

If Swami did not possess such power, is it conceivable that people would come seeking Swami's grace from distant countries like Argentina and Australia? No one issued any invitation to them. Are they less intelligent than any of you? The fact that they have come here at great expense, prepared to

put up with many inconveniences, shows the depth of their devotion. Therefore, you should not entertain complaints against God or blame Him for your difficulties. If Swami did not have the power, would people of different faiths and from different countries come to Him and experience their oneness? What is the Will that is able to accomplish this? If you enquire along these lines, you will discover the jejuneness of your attitudes. It is your smallmindedness, which accounts for such reactions. Therefore, develop a broad outlook and a wide vision.

All the students of our Institute of Higher Learning should prove themselves to be ideal men wherever they go. You should earn a good name from everyone. Students who have won prizes in sports should realise that by their conduct they should earn the esteem and love of Swami. All kinds of titles are conferred on people today. But the title which all of you should aim at is that you are Amruthasya Puthrah (Children of Immortality). Install God in your hearts and make Him the basis for all your actions. Then all your actions will become sacred. Bring a good name to your parents, to your society and to the land of your birth.

4. The Sacred Message Of A Holy Festival

Date: 15 January 1992 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Sankranthi

The Sun appeared serenely peaceful. The day started to get shorter.
And the chill wind blew fiercely. The fields were ripe with the golden crop.
The farmers rejoiced in singing.
The buds of flowers blossomed On the banks of rivers like garlands.
Farmers were bringing home the newly harvested grain.
And hailed the arrival of the sweet Festival of Sankranthi.

Embodiments of the Divine Atma!

Many persons in the world have expounded in different ways the nature of divinity. Even in Bharath, although from ancient times profound spiritual truths have been proclaimed and propagated, the minds of men have not turned towards the sublime. It is the minds of men that need to be changed, not their external appearances. Men are judged by their qualities, not their garments.

Yath Dhrishyam Thannashyam
(That which is perceived is perishable).

Everything associated with the phenomenal world is continually changing. That which is subject to change is impermanent. What is unchanging is the eternal. By attaching excessive value to the changing things of the world, man is making himself remote from the changeless and eternal Reality. Men should endeavour to realise the eternal and unchanging Atma (Omni-Self).

Significance of Sun's entry into Capricorn

In a year, the Sun passes through the 12 houses of the Zodiac in 12 months. The Sun's entry into each house of the Zodiac is described as a Sankramana. Kranthi means change. Sankranthi means a sacred change. The Sun's entry into every house in the Zodiac is not considered as equally holy. What, then, is the reason for giving special importance and sacredness to Makara Sankramana, the entry of the Sun into Makara (Capricorn)? Besides the physical qualities associated with the Sun's movement into each house of the Zodiac, there is an inner spiritual significance relating to the Makara Sankramana. The Sun's entry into Capricorn takes place in mid passage between the months of Margasheersha and Pushyami. In the Bhagavad Gita, Sri Krishna has declared: "Among the months I am the month of Margasheersha." The Margasheersha month is the crown among the 12 months. What is the reason? Among the planets of the solar system, the Sun is the presiding deity. Without the Sun the life process in the world will cease. During the month of Margasheersha, the world experiences the abundance of the harvested food grains, which sustain and confer joy on the people. Every farmer's granary is filled with grain. The weather during the season is cool and pleasant. It is an appropriate time for enjoying peaceful rest. It is the time when man is free from the burdens of daily toil and can devote his time to enjoyment with his children and his cattle.

Every experience is reflection of the Inner Being

However, what is the connection between these physical comforts and the spiritual significance of this season? Man is a lover of the beautiful. He rejoices at the sight of good food. It may be asked whether this joy, which he experiences is related solely to physical things or has it an inner spiritual basis? It is not the body that experiences joy. It is the Atma (the Indwelling Spirit). The joy that one derives from looking at others is not related to the body but the Atma. What the eye sees, the ear hears, the mind thinks, or the heart feels, all of them are experiences of the Atma. The senses are only instruments. Every experience is a reflection of the Inner Being. Only when this truth is recognised will it be possible to comprehend to some extent the nature of the Divine.

For all actions, the inspirer, the performer and the experiencer is the Sun-God. For man, caught up in a meaningless existence and going through an endless round of futile activities, the Sun-God stands out as the exemplar of tireless and selfless service. He enjoys no respite from work. He is above praise and censure. He carries on his duties with absolute equanimity. Everything he does is only for the well-being of the world and not for causing any harm. It is only man's senses which prove helpful or harmful to him. When man submits to his senses, they become his enemies. When man masters the senses they become his friends. Friends and enemies result from the strength or weakness of men. Earlier, a student in his speech mentioned that to Vibhishana, who believed in God, Rama was a friend. To the unbelieving Ravana, Rama became an enemy. Hence, man's happiness or sorrow stems from his belief or disbelief.

Faith leads to God

The primary motto for man should be Sraddha (faith or trust). The ancients declared: "Believe and Live." Without Faith you cannot live happily. Only when you have the belief that one is your mother you develop love for her. Likewise, a woman loves a baby only when she feels he is her child. In the same manner, the recognition of the Divine arises from Faith. Where there is Faith, there is Love. Where there is Love, there is Peace. Where there is Peace, there is Truth. Where there is Truth, there is Bliss. Where there is Bliss, there is God. Thus it is Faith that reminds us of God. All that is taught or learnt today appears to consist of pompous verbiage concerning the external world. Doubtless, there is a great deal of talk about Divinity and Spirituality. But one cannot notice in these preachers any sacred mark of Truth, Love or Peace associated with Godly men. Are men to be esteemed for the clothes they wear, the speeches they make, or the "punditry" they display? No. The only person worthy of esteem as a wise man is the one whose actions correspond to his thoughts and words. The Divine judges men by their thoughts and motives. God sees only the inner purity of man's motives and not his external appearance or the power and pelf he possesses. Valmiki, Nanda, Kuchela, Gajendra (the Lord of the Elephants), the child Dhruva, the illiterate Sabari, Vidura and Hanuman are all examples of beings who enjoyed

God's grace only through their devotion and not because of birth, wealth, scholarship, or any other accomplishment.

Entertain good thoughts and good feelings

What is Bhakthi (Devotion)? Bhakthi is directing one's sacred love towards God. Man gets bound by his attachment, through egoism, to the transient things of the world. Your primary task is to discharge your duty. This does not mean renouncing worldly life or your obligations to your family. Keep your mind serene and unruffled. All the changes affect the external. They do not affect the internal experience. Entertain always good thoughts and good feelings.

In this connection, an incident from Jesus's life may serve as a good example. Jesus saw in the market place a woman who was being stoned by people around her as one who had gone astray. Jesus approached them and said: "Oh People! you are all persecuting this woman for some physical misconduct. Think how many such sins you are committing mentally. Whoever has not committed such a sin even mentally, let him cast the first stone. All others have no fight to throw stones at her!" People go on judging who is a sinner and who is a pure person, but they should enquire within themselves how far they are sinners or meritorious. Everyone must try to keep his mind free from bad thoughts. The Sankranthi Festival is intended to make people embark on this exercise in transformation.

Symbolism of Sankranthi celebration

In the Dwapara Yuga the cowherds and cowherdesses used to experience boundless joy in the presence of Krishna, forgetting themselves in their devotion to the Lord. On Sankranthi Day they used to employ cow-dung as a sacred means for cleansing purposes. They demonstrated also the inner significance of the Sankranthi celebration. They placed three balls of cow-dung in front of their houses, fixing three pumpkin flowers on their top and went round singing and dancing in adoration of Krishna. What is the significance of these three balls of cow-dung? People are inclined to despise

cowdung. But in the eyes of the Gopikas they were sacred. In olden days, people used to sprinkle water mixed with cow-dung in front of their houses. The cow-dung helped to destroy the bacteria in the atmosphere. The cow-dung was considered a symbol of health and happiness. The first cow-dung ball represented Krishna, who was worshipped as Gopala (the protector of cows). Krishna was adored as the bestower of joy and health. The second cowdung ball was placed as a symbol of the Govardhana Hill which Krishna lifted and thereby demonstrated His divinity. The third cow-dung ball symbolised the cow, which is the source of health and joy for the people as the giver of milk. Gopala, Govardhana and Go (the cow) were worshipped in this manner. Among vegetables the pumpkin has a place of honour as the largest in size. The Gopikas looked upon the pumpkin as a symbol of large-heartedness. Hence, pumpkins were offered as fitting gifts on Sankranthi Day. What is the gain from this offering? The pumpkin does not rot quickly. It can be preserved for a long period. Any number of edible preparations can be made from it. It can also be used in combination with many other vegetables. Because of its distinct qualities, the offer of a pumpkin also meant making an offering of one's virtues.

Develop harmony towards everyone

Sankranthi is a holy day for many reasons. It was the day on which Adhi Shankara took Sanyasa (renounced all worldly ties and donned the ochre robe). On this day it is the usual custom to offer to people a mixture of jaggery and Thil (sesame). Jaggery is sweet and is a symbol of love. Thil is also known as sneha, which means friendship. Therefore, the offer of the jaggery-thil mixture means offering to people love surcharged with friendliness. Develop harmony towards everyone. Much of what passes for friendship today consists in associating with persons when they are affluent and benefiting from their money. When they are in distress, the same persons will not even look at them. This is not friendship at all. True friendship must emanate from the heart and should remain unaffected by weal or woe. In fact, God alone can be an unfailing friend in all situations. He is with you, above you, below you, beside you and around you.

The profound message of Sankranthi

Today people do not rely on such Divine friendship. They place their faith in the transient things of the world. The message of Sankranthi is the promotion of love among one's kith and kin and friends by all of them coming together to celebrate this festival. It is on this day that the "Ganga" bull trainers take their decorated animals from house to house, play music in front of the homes and make the bulls demonstrate their skills before the family gatherings. The bulls are also made to give demonstrations in the market place with a view to promoting fellow feeling and harmony. The girls in every home will take their younger brothers to such demonstrations. The trainer of these animals will be dressed in a special way and display large caste-marks on his forehead. He will carry a small whip which is used for training the bull. The bull will be taught to respond to instructions designed to promote love and happiness in the home by relating the story of the wedding of Rama and Sita. Rama and Sita represent the Omni-Self and Prakruthi (Nature) respectively. Their union is to be celebrated by the offering of one's love to the Divine couple. Thus, the performance of the sacred bull on 'Sankranthi day conveyed a profound message to the people. Because Sankranthi was deemed the most important festival, it was the day on which the newlywed bridegroom visited the bride's home. It was the day on which many people called on others as a mark of goodwill. There were rejoicing in every home because of the get-together of all kinsfolk. (Swami recited a poem describing how the young girls in the family celebrated the occasion by cutting jokes and playing tricks). The Sankranthi festival was thus designed to promote harmony and love in the family, to make people realise the unity of the Creator and creation, to teach the people their obligation to instil heroism in them by making the Sun-God their example, and, above all, to make them realise their inherent Divinity. This is the sacred purpose of the Sankranthi festival.

Sankranthi festival: then and now

Today such a holy festival has been converted into a day for the enjoyment of jaggery and thil, totally missing its inner significance. People are immersed in

the darkness of self-indulgence. Rice cooked with jaggery is a special preparation for Sankranthi day. What is the mason for this? In the olden days, this sweet rice was prepared to celebrate the gathering of the harvest and after the cows had been fed with the sweet rice, it was scattered over the fields. On the third day, all the cattle used to be decorated and taken round the bazar in procession. For this reason, the festival was called in Tamil Nadu "Mattuppongal" - the Pongal festival of the cattle. The bull is much more than a mere quadruped. As the vehicle of Shiva, it has an honoured place in the Shiva temple as Nandi. Its eyes are always directed towards the Lord in the sanctum. The Nandi is worshipped before one enters the sanctum.

Develop faith in God and serve fellowmen

The Sankranthi festival should be regarded as the day on which man turns his vision towards God. Man's life may be compared to a stalk of sugar cane. Like the cane, which is hard and has many knots, life is full of difficulties. But these difficulties have to be overcome to enjoy the bliss of the Divine, just as the sugarcane has to be crushed and its juice converted into jaggery to enjoy the permanent sweetness of jaggery. Enduring bliss can be got only by overcoming trials and tribulations. Gold cannot be made into an attractive jewel without its being subjected to the process of melting in a crucible and being beaten into the required shape. When I address devotees as Bangaru (Golden one), I am considering you as precious beings. But only by going through the vicissitudes of life with forbearance can you become attractive jewels. You should not allow yourselves to be overwhelmed by difficulties.

Develop self-confidence and have firm faith in God. With unshakeable faith, dedicate yourselves to the service of your fellowmen and lead exemplary lives. Today the Sun-God begins his northward journey, Uttarayana. The noble and heroic warrior Bhishma waited for fifty six days so that he could give up his life in Uttarayana.

Do your duty like the Sun

The Sun, in entering on his northward journey, hailed the Himalayas in the

north as the beautiful abode of Lord Shiva. The heart should be regarded as the abode of the Lord and the vision should be turned to experience the Divine. The human heart itself symbolises the Himalayas as the abode of purity and peace. The Sun's northward journey is a pointer to the path man should take to realise God. The Sun is the supreme example of selfless and tireless service. The world cannot survive without the Sun. Life on earth is possible only because of the Sun. The Sun teaches man the lesson of humble devotion to duty, without any conceit. The Sun is the supreme example for everyone that he should do his duty with devotion and dedication. Doing one's duty is the greatest Yoga, as pointed out by Krishna in the Gita. Let your actions and thoughts be good. You will then experience the Bliss Divine.

Sankranthi is intended to bring about various changes in man's attitude so that he may sanctify his life. It is a festival not intended for Bharathiyas alone. Its message has a meaning for everyone in the world. It has a message for people of all climes, creeds and countries. Kranthi (change) and Shanthi (peace) both reside in the heart. You need not search for them in the outside world. Discover them within you. This is your duty. Serve your parents and society. Lead a Godly life, dedicating all your actions to God. Live in Love!

What exactly is the cause of all grief? It is the attachment to the body that produces grief as well as its immediate precursors: affection and hate. These two are the results of the intellect considering some things and conditions as beneficial, and some other things and conditions as harmful. This is a delusion, this idea of beneficence and malevolence. Still you get attached to objects that are considered beneficial, and you start hating the others. But, from the highest point of view, there is neither. The distinction is just meaningless. There is no two at all. How can there be good and bad then? To see two where there is only one, that is delusion or ignorance. The ignorance that plunged Arjuna into grief was of this nature - seeing many, when there is only ONE.

- *Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

5. Graama Seva is Rama Seva

Date: 16 February 1992

Union is strength,

With unity anything can be achieved, Like ants which collectively Can destroy even a python. The honour of a community Rests on its morality.

Without morality the community Loses its honour and name. Only that can be called a community In which morality is cherished. Hearken! You noble sons of Bharath To this profound truth. Embodiments of the Divine Spirit! Village Officers who have gathered here! If an individual is to progress, or a village is to develop or a nation is to be prosperous, social consciousness and the sense of unity are essential. Unity protects man. Disunity makes man a prey to worries of all kinds. "Sanghe bali Kali Yuge" (In union lies strength in the Kali Age). This adage proclaims that there is no greater strength than that derived from unity. When we recall the past history of Bharath, we find that various invaders - Muslims, the Portuguese, the French and the British - overran the country and tried to change the ancient culture and institutions of the country. The nation did not lack men of valour or scholarship or eminent political leaders or men of science. But because there was no unity amongst them, the nation was subjected to various calamities.

Unity is the supreme need for Bharathiyas

Unity should be the supreme watchword for Bharathiyas. Freedom was achieved but not unity. This is because of the steady eclipse of an all-embracing vision. Parochial fanaticism, caste and religious dissension, and selfish and self-centred ambitions have combined to degrade human qualities to their nadir. Another potent factor responsible for the moral decline in the country is the absence of a feeling of national oneness and the regard for a common national culture. In the Mahabharatha, Dharmaraja once made a significant declaration. He said, "When an outsider attacks our country, we will all stand as one, all the 105 of us (the hundred Kauravas and the five

Pandava brothers). But when there are internal differences, only the five of us will be together." The lesson of this statement is that when the national interests are at stake, all in the country should be united as brothers. All should work in unison, but in matters affecting individuals, differences may remain.

The four pillars of national edifice

The situation in the country today demands that all Bharathiyas should unite as brothers to strive for the progress, the prosperity and the well-being of the nation. This means that in the interests of the nation and the society, four things are essential: Equality, Unity, Co-operation and Fraternity. These are like four pillars of the national edifice. If any one of these is absent, the edifice will collapse. Hence, the people should cherish equality and unity. For the divinity inherent in man, man himself is the authority. The term "Man" is derived from the term "Mind." Mind means an aggregation of thoughts. And thoughts account for the joys and sorrows experienced in daily life. Hence, it is only when the mind is filled with pure thoughts that human existence becomes meaningful. When the headman in a village deems himself a servant of the village, he will be able to render selfless service. Can a person obsessed with power have a pure heart? No. Hence, the village chief should become the servant of the village. The village officials are like a bridge between the Government and the people. It is only when this bridge is safe and sound that there can be good relations between the Government and the people.

When we speak about village officials, we should remember that in the villages Grama Adhikari (village officer) means one who has no antipathy towards anyone in the village. He is one who treats all alike. It is only when such terms are understood properly and people act accordingly that a person leads a meaningful existence. On the vast ocean, countless waves appear. Each wave appears different from another. But despite these differences the waves are not different from the ocean. The waves arise from the ocean and are of the same stuff as the ocean. Likewise, although human beings appear different from each other, it has to be realised that all of them have emerged

from the ocean of Sath-chithananda. Forgetting this truth and identifying themselves with the impermanent body, many are falling a prey to various troubles. For people who are caught up in the coils of mundane desires and pursuits, the beacon of spirituality is showing the path to emancipation. Spirituality is fundamental for man to reveal to him the means for the blossoming of his qualities.

Look upon the entire mankind as one family

Spirituality, however, does not mean leading a solitary, ascetic life. Spirituality means looking upon the whole of mankind as one family and realising the unity in diversity. This is the essence of Indian Culture.

This ancient culture, rooted in the villages, spread over the years to the cities. Today the situation is reversed. The practices of the cities are spreading to the villages. Modern education and modern ways of living cannot serve to improve the quality of life. People must ponder over the values of the culture that has come down to us from ancient times. The well-being of the village determines the well-being of the nation. By providing the essential amenities for the people in the villages, promoting mutual co-operation amongst them and developing fraternal feelings among them, the progress of the village has to be ensured. At the individual level, there may be differences. But these should be set aside and all efforts concentrated on the development of the village as a whole. When rain falls from the sky, the rain water is totally pure. But depending on the nature of the place where it falls, the name and form of the water become various. Likewise, there may be diversity among men on account of regional and other factors, but the historical reasons for this diversity will have to be borne in mind.

Conduct yourselves in an ideal and sacred manner

Embodiments of Divine Love! It is only when you equip yourselves well as village officials that the villagers will enjoy peace and prosperity. What is past is past. But the future is dependent on what you do in the present. Your actions in the present will determine the shape of things in the future. If you

wish to secure a great future, you have to conduct yourselves in the present in an ideal and sacred manner.

If today such a large number of village officers have gathered here for a training programme, it must be regarded as an exemplary occasion. There may be differences and problems of various kinds among you as individuals. But setting them aside, you should concentrate on the promotion of national well-being. Regard the nation's welfare as your welfare. Entertain the sacred feeling that the nation's good is your good. There can be no nobler feeling than this for a human being. The true mark of a human being is the cultivation of a broad outlook. When you have such a vision, you can transform the national scene. The nation's welfare depends on the individual. The individual's welfare depends on the family. The welfare of the family is bound up with the condition of the village and so on right up to the national level. At the base of all is the individual. And only when all the individuals in a community act in unison can the society progress. Unity, is, therefore, the essential means for accomplishing anything. Today senior officers from the district and the State capital and several Ministers have come here to launch this vital programme. I desire that all of you should extend your wholehearted co-operation to them so that the villages in this district may serve as an ideal example to the rest of the State.

There should be no place for factions

You must take note of one important factor. There are in the villages many factions and rival groups. Village officers should see that there is no room for these divisive forces. Today, in every village there are several factions. This is not good at all. The man who does not feel that this is his Motherland and has no love for his country or mother tongue is a soulless corpse. Every villager should feel proud of his village and feel himself one with everyone else in the village. You must strive your best to promote such a sense of unity. The Minister admitted that the remuneration that was being offered to you is meagre. But you should not be swayed by this factor. When you discharge your duties well, your remuneration also will improve. Regardless of the remuneration, you must dedicate yourselves to the development of your

respective villages. Whatever amenities you may need for doing your work, you should not resort to senseless methods like strikes for securing redress. Resorting to such methods means causing harm to the villages for securing selfish gains. Bandhs and strikes have become utterly senseless actions causing a great deal of inconvenience to the public. There is nothing heroic about these forms of agitation. They are disrupting the political fabric, If the village officers act with courage and devotion today, they can do a great deal of good to the people.

The role of village headmen

Act with courage and dedication to ensure the prosperity of the villages and strive to earn a good name for yourselves. This is the foremost task before you. In olden days, the village headman was regarded with great respect and looked upon as "the Lion of the village." This does not mean that he was lording over the villagers and terrorising them. Rather, he was their protector as the chief of the village.

Sri Diwakar Reddy (the Revenue Minister) said that the village officer was to the village what the Collector was for the district and a Minister was for the State. He has to properly discharge his duties with regard to collection of taxes and other matters. Village officers should consider themselves fortunate that this position has been conferred on them. They have to live up to the responsibility entrusted to them. If they pride themselves on their official status and ignore their responsibilities, they will be guilty of treason to the village and the nation.

Rights and duties are like two wheels of a cart

Men have both duties and rights, but today they are more concerned about rights than duties. Rights and duties are like the two wheels of a cart or the two wings of a bird. Both are essential. When duties are discharged properly, rights will be secured of their own accord. If everyone examines within himself how far he is carrying out his duties, he will realise how his rights are also protected.

In ancient times, when there were no minister or district officials, the village headman was all in all. He cared for the welfare of the villagers and the villagers lived in unity and harmony. Today, every family appears to be a house divided. There is no unity. If the five fingers in a hand do not function in unity, the hand will be useless. There are five qualities in man: Sathya, Dharma, Shanthi, Prema and Ahimsa (Truth, Right conduct, Peace, Love and Non-violence). These human qualities have to be fostered. Today peace is absent because fear of sin and love of God have declined and man has degraded himself. If we have fear of sin, love of God and morality in society, mankind will be truly human and there will be harmony in society. When you cultivate human qualities like compassion and love and act in unison with a sense of mutual regard and friendliness, you can render valuable service to the people. By your performance, you must make Anantapur district an example and an ideal for the whole of India. Grama Seva is Rama Seva (Service to the village is service to God). There is no value in worshipping Rama if you do not serve your Grama (village) well. But if they have not installed Rama in their hearts, what use is there in building a temple for Rama? Sanctify your hearts and make the village a shrine in your hearts for the Lord. When you make service to the village your service to Sri Rama, you will be promoting your welfare in every way, economically, socially, morally and spiritually. You need not strive for salvation as a separate goal. Service to the village will itself ensure Mukthi (liberation). Bear this truth in mind and act up to it in your daily life. This is my message to all of you. I wish you all happiness, peace and prosperity. Address to Village Administrative Officers from Anantapur district in the Institute Auditorium at Prashanthi Nilayam,

When man is able to master the senses, and direct them along more beneficent channels - the eye seeing God's footprints in stars and rose petals, the ear hearing God's voice in the throats of birds and peals of thunder, the tongue tasting God's sweetness in all that appeals to it; the nose discovering fragrance in everything that recalls the glory of God, the sense of touch content to clasp the hand of the forlorn and the distressed as the beloved children of God - then, he can visualise the God installed in the

cavity of the heart; that is the lesson the five-hooded Sesha (divine serpent) imparts!

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

6. The Mansion Of Life

Date: 20 February 1992 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Sports Meet

You do not need a lamp
To see a lamp that is burning brilliantly.
Likewise there is no need for
Any other knowledge to know the
One Who is the very embodiment of all knowledge.

When birds and beasts that have known no education lead regulated lives, it is a pity that an intelligent human being does not have this sense. Students! Embodiments of Divine Love! Life is a four-storied mansion. For any edifice to be strong, the foundation has to be strong. The mansion is visible to the beholders. Its architecture is attractive and pleasing. But the foundation has no such attractions. Nevertheless the safety of the mansion depends on the strength of the foundation. Every part of the mansion may have its own attractive feature. But the foundation has no feeling of pride about its being the base on which the mansion stands nor does it desire that anyone should take notice of it. The foundation is unaffected by praise or blame.

The four floors of the mansion of life

The first floor of the mansion (of life) is Brahmacharya (celibacy). The second floor is the Grihastha (householder) stage. The third is Vanaprastha (recluse). The fourth is the stage of Sanyasa (renunciant).

Many persons pass through all the four stages. Some go through only three of them and some others only two. But irrespective of the number of stages, the foundation is the base. The first stage (or floor) is that of Brahmacharya. You students who are in the first floor of the mansion of life have to ensure the firmness of the foundation. This foundation consists of humility, reverence,

morality and integrity. The strength of the foundation depends on these four constituents.

Unfortunately, the nation today is affected by the consequences of seven grievous sins. The first is business without morality. The second is politics without principle; third, education without character; fourth, worship without sacrifice; fifth, wealth without hard work; sixth, human existence without regard for scriptures; seventh, devotion without austerity. These are the seven deadly sins that are ravaging the nation. The country will regain prosperity and peace only when all these are banished and we have morality in business, principles in politics, educated men who have character and work is the basis of wealth. The mansion of man's life should be built on these virtues. But unfortunately today morality and integrity have declined and the spirit of sacrifice is on the wane.

Because these qualities are lacking among students, the nation is suffering from disorders and violence.

Although these statements may not be quite palatable to the students to hear, they should realise what the public feels about the present situation.

The actor should relate strictly to his role

Anyone's thoughts and actions should be related to the role he has to play. If there is no such correspondence between one's role and one's conduct, the social fabric will be shaken. Once upon a time a strolling actor, Pagati Veshagadu, presented himself before a king in the role of Adhi Sankaracharya. The king, welcoming the Acharya, gave him an honoured seat and enquired about his welfare. In keeping with his role, the visiting actor recited a stanza. "Birth is sorrow, old age is a curse, marriage brings sorrow. The end is the most sorrowful of all; therefore, beware! beware! There is no mother or father, friend or kinsman. Neither wealth nor home abides. Therefore, beware! beware !" He preached in this manner the truth about the ephemeral nature of human existence. At the end, before the "Sankaracharya" was leaving, the king offered him gold coins in a silver plate.

He told the king: "I don't accept this." He declared that immortality can be attained only by sacrifice and not by karmas, wealth or progeny as stated in the Upanishadic stanza: "Thyage Neike Amrithathwam Anashuh." He left the palace, informing the king that he would present himself the next day in a different role. The next day he appeared as a well-dressed danseuse and danced before the king in his audience chamber. The dance was so superb that the entire audience was enraptured. The king offered the dancer a plateful of gold coins. The "danseuse" said that what was offered was too meagre and asked for more. The king said: "Yesterday you refused to take the gold coins I offered. Today you say these are too meagre. What is the mystery behind these different attitudes?" The actor replied, "The behaviour is in accord with the role. Yesterday I appeared in the role of Sankaracharya and I behaved as Sankaracharya would have done. Today I have come as a dancer and I am behaving as a dancer would." The inner meaning of this story is that when people do not act according to their roles in the different stages in life - Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanaprastha and Sanyasa - the nation will be morally ruined.

Students and teachers should act up to their roles

It is only when students conduct themselves according to the role assigned to them that they will acquit themselves well as students. If they do not behave properly as students, the culture and traditions of the entire community are undermined. Likewise, if teachers do not act up to their roles as teachers, the good name of the teaching profession is tarnished. When householders do not discharge the duties of householders, they bring the Grihastha tradition itself into bad repute.

Divine operates to reduce the burdens of people

Whatever the role one has to play at any place or time, and in any capacity, he has to act up to that role properly. It will be seen from the Puranas that this principle applies to the Divine also (when the Divine appears in human form). This may be illustrated by a small story from Sri Krishna's life in the Dwapara Yuga. Once a Gopika went to a well to bring two pitchers of water.

After placing one pitcher on her head, she wanted someone to place the other water-filled pitcher on the first one. At that time, Krishna came there and she asked him to place the water-filled pitcher on the first one. Krishna refused to do so. Soon another Gopika came along and helped the first Gopika. The Gopika carrying the two pitchers reached her home. Krishna followed her to the house and without even waiting to be asked, he took the top pitcher from the Gopika's head and placed it down. She was surprised at Krishna's strange behaviour. She asked him, "Krishna, at the well, you refused to place the pitcher on my head when I appealed to you to help me. Now you take it down from the head without my asking. What is the inner meaning of this action?" Krishna replied, "Oh Gopika! I am wont to remove the burdens borne by people and not to add to them." This shows that the Divine operates only to reduce the burdens of the people and not to increase them. It means that there are rules which govern the role which each one has to play in life. Men, however, find it difficult to act upon this truth. Man is a seeker of happiness. He is essentially the repository of happiness. But not realising this truth about himself, man goes after happiness all over the world. He pursues studies in the belief that scholarship will give him happiness. But happiness eludes him. He tries to find happiness in work and fails to get it. Seeking happiness in married life, he meets with disappointment. Nor does he get it through children. Then he gets absorbed in the acquisition of wealth in the belief that wealth will give him the means of securing happiness. At the end of it all, he finds himself a pitiful creature when the wealth he acquired is either stolen or misused by his profligate progeny. He then realises that all his earlier efforts to secure happiness gave him only some temporary satisfaction but not any lasting joy. A wealthy man behaves like a dog in the manger. He will neither enjoy his wealth nor give it for good causes. A rich man should realise that sacrifice should be the hallmark of a wealthy man and that true happiness is to be got through sacrifice.

The five kinds of afflictions

What is it that prevents man from securing enduring happiness? There are five kinds of Kleshas (sufferings) which stand in the way. The first one is Avidya (ignorance). Asthitha-Klesha (unsteadiness) is another. Abhinivesha-

Klesha (immaturity) is another. Raga-Klesha (attachment) is the fourth. Dwesha-Klesha (hatred) is the fifth. These five types of suffering afflict man.

Avidya (ignorance) is one kind of suffering. What is this ignorance? In the scriptures, the question is asked: "Who is a murkha (fool)?" The answer is given: "One who identifies himself with the body." By this kind of identification the foolish one forgets his true nature. The day he realises that he is not the body but the eternal Indwelling Spirit, that day he experiences true bliss. The body, the mind and the intellect are all instruments. These are called Karanas. It is a sign of ignorance to identify one's Self with these instruments. Avidya-Klesha is the suffering arising out of ignorance. As long as man has a body, he experiences various kinds of sorrow. What is the saga of this body? "In childhood, the young lad sports with his companions. In youth he falls a prey to sensuous enjoyment. In middle age he is lost in the pursuit of wealth. Unable to give up attachments, he is caught up in the cage of karma (action and reaction), and at the end he returns to the dust." This is the real truth about the body. Man is thus pursued by a myriad sorrows because of his identification with the body.

Mind is the cause of all desires and pains

The second Klesha is Abhinivesha-Klesha. For all kinds of desires and pains the cause is the mind. All desires arise in the mind. When desires are not fulfilled, hatred arises. If the desires are realised, the man loses his mental balance. Failing to realise how the mind is the cause of sorrow and giving a free rein to desires is Abhinivesha-Klesha (suffering due to mental infirmity). Only when man is able to give up desires and disregard the mind, which is the cause of desires, will he be able to experience Ananda (bliss). The third is, Asthitha-Klesha (suffering due to unsteadiness). This suffering arises from an insatiable appetite for all kinds of things. It is the result of one being immersed in the vagaries of the senses. To regard as enduring the sensuous pleasures which are impermanent is the cause of this type of suffering.

Raga-Klesha refers to the suffering arising out of attachment of all kinds. All other evil tendencies in man like hatred, envy, etc., have their root in Raga. It

is this attachment which ruins the entire life of man. There should be a limit to one's attachment to persons and things. Excessive attachment is the cause of sorrow. Man is unable to derive happiness from excessive possessions.

Dwesa-Klesa (the suffering caused by hatred) arises when a man fails to obtain what he seeks from someone. This is the result of selfishness and self-seeking.

Every action begets a corresponding reaction

Man's failure to secure happiness is due to these five factors. You are today in the stage of students - the first storey in the mansion of life. When you arm yourselves with adequate safeguard at this stage, the rest of your journey will be safe and secure. The basic qualities required for the successful completion of the other three Ashramas (stages) in life will have to be acquired now itself. If in the stage of Brahmacharya (celibate studentship) you do not acquire these qualities, the other stages in your life will be mined. Students! Having in view your future, you have to make right use of the present and follow the right path. You are allowing yourselves to drift from moment to moment. You are giving way to the attractions of the moment, failing to comprehend what is transient and what is permanent. You are laying up endless troubles for the future. The Lord created everything in the Universe, but kept nothing for Himself. Every creature has been given complete freedom. Everyone is free to enjoy anything he likes. But there is one limitation. For every action, there is a corresponding reaction. You are free to do as you please subject to this rule. If you use the freedom given to you to indulge in wrongful acts, the consequences are bound to be bad. These results are not caused by God but are the fruits of your own actions. The Lord inflicts no harm on anybody. Everything that happens to you is the consequence of your own thoughts and actions.

Prabhava and Swabhava

Students! Lured by the external, man is forgetting his true nature. The Prabhava (external trappings) are the products of Prarabdham (past action).

The observance of Purusharthas (the practices prescribed for the different stages) determines one's Swabhava (nature). Prabhava is momentary and evanescent. Swabhava is enduring. Today, the permanent and the enduring is being ignored, while the transient and the trivial are being pursued assiduously. The consequences of this misplaced effort are inescapable. This freedom given by the Divine to man should be exercised with a due sense of detachment. Examine for a moment how various objects in creation are conducting themselves. For instance, a tree bears sweet fruits. But it does not enjoy the fruits itself. It offers them to others for enjoyment. What a spirit of sacrifice is displayed by the tree! The Lord created the rivers. But the rivers do not use for their own benefit even a drop of their water. The water is offered to those who seek it. Likewise, the cow does not consume the milk it produces, but offers it to its calf and to others.

Selfishness is the worst disease of man

But man, despite all his intelligence and knowledge, does not exhibit this sense of sacrifice. He keeps all that he earns for the benefit of himself and his kith and kin and makes no sacrifice at all. Consequently, man is haunted by all kinds of troubles. He is a victim of many diseases. Neither birds nor beasts are subject to such afflictions. They are content to live on whatever they can get. But man consumes a variety of foods and invites a variety of maladies. The worst disease to which man is subject is selfishness. Only when man is able to rid himself of selfishness will he be able to understand the meaning of life and experience real Divine bliss. Birds, beasts and trees display the spirit of sacrifice. Man alone is the exception. When man is animated by sacrifice, he will become sublime. If selfishness grows, he loses his radiance and vitality.

The lesson provided by three great devotees

The life-stories of three great devotees - Thyagaraja, Goparaju (Ramadas) and Potharaju (the author of the Telugu Bhagavatham) - show what sacrifices they were prepared to make out of their devotion to the Lord. They were totally indifferent to material gains in their love for the Lord.

These three devotees by their sacrifices made themselves Rajus (rulers) of the world. This means that only those who make the highest sacrifice are entitled to be called Rajus (monarchs). Today, only the wealthy are regarded as "kings." But real kings are those who are prepared to make every kind of sacrifice. At Rishikesh, the sadhus are greeted by the pilgrims as Maharaj. In the eyes of the devotees, only those who have given up everything are entitled to be called Maharajas. Maharaja means King of Kings. The term is appropriate only for the person who makes the greatest sacrifice.

It is a pity that today people are wasting their lives in the pursuit of meaningless desires. The true purpose of education is to make one recognise truth. The rationale of education consists in the quest for truth. Realisation of Truth is the Goal. "Sathyasya Sathyam" (The Truth of Truths) is how God has been defined.

Students! While you are acting the role of students, you should conduct yourselves according to the role of Vidyarthi (those who have to seek knowledge) and not behave as Vishayarthi (seekers of sensuous pleasures). Otherwise, you will be degrading yourselves. Humility is the hallmark of true education. Truth and integrity are essential qualities for students. The means to acquire these qualities is devotion to God. Without these attainments, education is a futile exercise.

You all know how the village folk and the tribal population lead more virtuous lives than most "educated" persons. Immoral practices are on the increase in places where there are colleges, universities and courts. More honesty and integrity and compassion and fellow-feeling seem to prevail among the people in the remote forest areas. The "educated" are doing more harm to society today than the uneducated.

Compassion is the greatest wealth

This is not proper education. You must set an example to the world. You must correct your faults and avoid committing them in the future. Love God and earn His love. Redeem your lives by developing compassion and kindness. All

other accomplishments and sadhanas are of no avail. Compassion is the greatest wealth. Purity of heart comes foremost. Students should take note of two things. One is the health of your body depends on the purity of your blood. The other is: you can always enjoy real bliss as long as your devotion is pure and unsullied. With purity of body and mind, you are assured of the highest bliss. When you have achieved this, you can carry on your normal lives with ease. Because of the uniqueness of our University, you have to demonstrate its exemplary character. You have to take in whatever good things you can from others, but you should lead your own ideal life. This is the lesson to be learnt from a tree, which draws its sustenance from the soil, the water, the air, and the sun, but remains true to its own nature as a tree. Surrender yourselves to God and not to anyone else.

Elation at profit, joy and cheer, dejection at loss and misery, these are the natural characteristics common to all mortals. What, then, is the excellence of the Sadhaka? He should not forget the principle, "Be vigilant and suffer the inevitable, gladly." When difficulties and losses overwhelm you, do not lose heart and precipitate some action but meditate calmly on how they ever came to be. Try to discover simple means of overcoming them or avoiding them in an atmosphere of Shanthi.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

7. Power Of The Divine Name

Date: 02 March 1992 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Shivarathri

When rains fall, if seeds have not been sown, Will there be any crop in the field? If seeds are sown, but there is no rain Will any crop come up in the field? Both rain and seeds are needed For the harvest to be reaped. Likewise, Divine Grace will bear fruit Only when there is also human effort, When the thoughts in the mind are good They will be reflected in the actions; When the thoughts are ill-disposed The fruits thereof will be equally bad. Embodiments of Divine Love! The world is based on three entities: Fire, the Sun and the Moon. No one can deny the existence of these three. "Hethu Krisanu Bhanu Himakarathe." Krisanu means the Fire principle. Bhanu refers to the Sun and Himakara refers to the Moon. The combination of these three attracts and sustains all beings in the world. They give pleasure, provoke wonder and also delude men. Because they give pleasure, the three are called "Rama." In the word "Rama" there are three sounds: Ra, A, Ma. "Ra" refers to Agni (Fire). "A" refers to the Sun and "Ma" refers to the Moon. The combination of these three entities represents the "Rama Principle."

The name is fundamental for all objects

All objects in the world can be cognised by name and form and nothing else. All objects are identified by their names. The form is derived from the name. Hence, for everything in the world, the name is primary and fundamental. The Divine Name is highly potent. Even the wish-fulfilling celestial cow, Kama Dhenu, when it is tethered to the post, comes under control. Likewise, when the Supreme Lord, the Indweller in all hearts, is bound by the rope of Bhakthi (devotion) and tethered to the post of the tongue, He gets bound to the devotee. There are only two means by which the Lord can be bound or enjoyed, namely, through the name and through Love. The name can be "Rama," "Hari" or "Hara" or any other name, because the All-pervading Divine bears all names. The name "Rama" is not confined only to the son of Dasaratha. The Atma that confers bliss is known as Rama. The sage Vasishta gave the name Rama to Emperor Dasaratha's son. The name Rama

symbolises the universal attributes of the Divine such as omniscience, omnipotence and omnifelicity.

The sage Valmiki composed the Ramayana in a hundred crores (a thousand billion) of stanzas. He prayed to the Lord that the stanzas should be divided equally among the denizens of the three worlds. When the stanzas were thus divided and distributed, one stanza of 32 syllables alone remained. After 30 syllables were equally divided, only two syllables remained undistributed. These two syllables have become the names of the Divine such as Rama, Had, Hara and Sayee. These names can be recited by people of any country or faith. They are not confined exclusively to any faith or country. Any person with a pure and loving heart can recite any of these names. No blame will attach to him.

Divine Name can convert poison to nectar

The potency of the Divine Name is such that it can convert even poison into nectar. This is illustrated by an episode from the life of Meera. She was a queen. But she was so much absorbed in her devotion to Krishna that she would sing and dance with ecstasy unmindful of whether she was in a palace or in a crowded bazar. Her brother-in-law, who was incensed at such conduct in public places by the queen, was not aware of what true devotion meant. Meera had no body consciousness at all. A true devotee should be totally free from the sense of "I" and "Mine." Feeling that Meera's conduct was casting a slur on the royal family's prestige and reputation, her brother-in-law decided to do away with her by giving her a cup of milk mixed with poison. Having dedicated herself heart and soul to Krishna, Meera used to take any food only after offering it to Krishna. When she offered the milk given to her to Krishna before drinking it, the Lord accepted all the poison in it and made the entire milk pure. In this way, Meera demonstrated to the world the power of the Lord's name and the greatness of devotion to the Lord.

Very few in the world try to find out how the Name emerged, how it is to be pronounced and what is its potency. The authority for and exponent of the glory of the Lord's name is the Bhagavatham.

From the navel to the tongue

Yasoda did not know where Balarama and Krishna were born. She brought them up as her own children. They were born in Mathura, but grew up in Gokulam. They grew in the womb of Devaki (the wife of Vasudheva). But they lived and played in Yasoda's house. When we try to explore the inner meaning of these events, we realise the Divine story unfolded by them. Balarama and Krishna were both in Mathura. Mathura signifies the navel. Devaki represents the Divine Shakthi. The Nadam (Divine sound) represented by the names Balarama and Krishna emerging from the womb of the Divine Shakthi, proceeding to Gokulam, represented by the mouth, was playing on the tongue, represented by Yasoda. "Rama" signifies one who gives delight. "Krishna" means one who attracts. The Divine name thus has its origin in the navel and its sacredness should be safeguarded when it is uttered by the tongue. Thus, Nama-smarana, remembrance of the name of the Lord, implies chanting the name from one's inmost being and preserving its sacredness. What is the significance of the word Nama? "Na + A + Ma," according to the science of numerology, amounts to a total of 7. Na - 0, A=2, Ma=5. The total is 7. Seven is associated with the Sapthasvaras in music (Sa, Ri, Ga, Ma, Pa, Da, Ni). The Sun's rays are made up of seven colours. There are seven oceans in the world. The supreme sages are seven in number Saptharishis. It is significant that certain religious observances are spread over seven days - - Sapthaham.

Potency of Rama-Nama

The name "Rama" has a unique spiritual significance. "Ra" represents the Paramatma, "Ma" represents the individual soul and "A" brings the two together. The Divine Name thus demonstrates the unifying principle. The Puranas relate a story regarding the potency of the Rama name. Once Easwara wanted to choose a leader for the host of ganas (Divine entities). Gana refers to the Devas. Easwara summoned all the deities and told them that whoever amongst them goes round the earth quickest will be made the leader of the Deva ganas. The different deities got on to their respective

vehicles and set out on the round-the-world trip. Ganapathi, the elder son of Easwara, was one of them. He was originally called "Lambodhara" because of his big belly. His vehicle was a rat. Sitting on the rodent Lambodhara entered the race to go round the world. On his way, Narada saw him and enquired about his mission. Lambodhara was put out by the facts that a lone Brahmin had confronted him in his trip and put the inauspicious question as to where he was going. He feared that his trip would be a failure. Narada approached Lambodhara with a smile and told him that he was well aware of Lambodhara's mission. But, he declared that only if Lambodhara acted up to the Vedic injunctions would he be successful in his mission. Narada explained what this Vedic injunction was. All the Vedas have extolled the potency of the Lord's name. "As a vast banyan tree is potentially immanent in a little seed, the entire universe is potentially contained in the Lord's name. The cosmos is, therefore, not different from the Name. If you go round the Name, you will have gone round the world. If the deities object to this claim, I shall bear witness on your behalf," declared Narada.

How Lambodhara became Ganapathi

Lambodhara said: "Well, if that is so, what is that name?" Narada replied: "I shall impart that name to you only if you are prepared to carry out my words." "Yes, I shall do so implicitly," said Lambodhara. "Write the two letters "Ra" and "Ma" and go round them. Then go back to Easwara," said Narada. "This is the name which delights the universe. The entire world is contained within this name. Going round the name is equivalent to going round the world," declared Narada.

Lambodhara acted according to Narada's advice and went back to Easwara. As the one who had found the truth about the potency of the Rama name, Lambodhara became the chief of the Ganas and got the name Ganapathi (the chief of the Divine entities). Easwara blessed his son with the words: "As the chief of the Ganas, you will be the first deity to be worshipped on all auspicious occasions and at all religious ceremonies before the commencement of the functions." This is the inner meaning of the worship of Ganapathi at all religious functions. Ganapathi is also called "Siddhi

Ganapathi" and "Buddhi Ganapathi." Ganapathi is noted for His acute intelligence. "Siddhi" and "Buddhi" are His powers. Because He possesses these powers and is capable of ensuring that any undertaking is carried out without impediments, He is known as the remover of obstacles - Vighneswara. Consider how Ganapathi got his overlordship of the Ganas. It was solely through the name of the Lord. How potent is this name can be explored by you.

Entire cosmos rests on the basis of Name

In the name "Rama," the three deities - Agni, Sun and Moon - are present. From where have these three deities originated? The Sun has the power to scorch the earth from millions of miles away. Who are the parents of the Sun? Should they not be even more powerful than the Sun? There is, then, the Fire principle. Fire can destroy anything. Who are the parents of Agni? The Moon is the source of coolness and light. Who are the parents of the Moon? If the enquiry is made regarding the parents of these three powerful entities, it will be found that God is the parent. Everything has come from God. The common people do not make this basic enquiry into the root cause of all things. Nothing can exist without a basis. Even scientists are now engaged in trying to discover this basis. In fact, the Name is the basis and the entire cosmos rests on it. The Name is the easiest means to identify anything or any person. Hence, the best way to recognise God and envisage His form is through the Name. The Name is always auspicious. Every human being experiences three kinds of night. One is a moon-lit night. A second is a dark night. The third is a night half-dark and half-lit by the moon. But, apart from these three, there is one night which is more sacred and unique. That is Shivarathri. This is the night devoted to the chanting of the sacred name of Shiva. This means that the entire night should be devoted to recitation of the auspicious name of Shiva.

God is one and one only

Unfortunately, in this Kali Age, people observe the vigil of Shivarathri by seeing three cinema shows all through the night or playing cards or seeing

some dramas. This cannot be called "Shivarathri." What is true vigil on Shivarathri night? It is to devote every moment of the night to thoughts of God and recite His name. This alone is Shivarathri. Shiva means auspicious, not Easwara. God has innumerable names. There is no difference at all between Hari and Hara. The differences between the two names have been created by Vaishnavites and Shaivites, but God has no such sectarian differences. God is one and one only. There may be many names and forms but Divinity is one alone.

Many worshippers go to Tirupathi. Vaishnavites repeat the name: "Venkataramana, Venkataramana!" They derive satisfaction from repeating this name. Ramana is favoured by Vaishnavites. They carry a mark of three vertical lines on their foreheads. Shaivites go to the Thirumula temple and repeat the name: "Venkateshvara! Venkateshvara." They derive some satisfaction from using the word Easwara. The Shaivites carry on their foreheads three horizontal lines of vibhuthi. These marks are the difference between the two sects. But the Lord in the temple is one and the same, whether he is called Venkataramana or Venkateswara.

Meaning of the four weapons in Vishnu's hands

Moreover, Vaishnavites consider that Vishnu carries four insignia in His four hands - Sanka (conch), Chakra (discus), Gadha (mace) and Padma (lotus). The conch is a symbol of sound. This means that the entire universe is in God's hand. The chakra (discus) symbolises the Wheel of Time. The inner significance of this is that God holds Time in His grip. The lotus is a symbol of the heart. God holds in His hand the hearts of all beings. The mace is a symbol of prowess. God is the possessor of all power and strength. This is the esoteric meaning of the weapons attributed to Vishnu.

Easwara bears in one hand a Damaruka (kettledrum). In another hand He carries a conch. The kettledrum symbolises sound. In another hand, Easwara carries a trident, which symbolises the three aspects of Time - the past, the present and the future. Thus, Easwara is also Lord of Sound and Time.

When the attributes of the Divine are studied in this manner, it will be found that divinity in any name or form bears all the attributes and potencies. Among the glorious attributes of the Divine, Sadhashivamayee (perpetual auspiciousness) is one. Comprehending the significance of the name, eschewing all differences, remembering the glories of the Lord, people should sanctify their lives by utilising the sacred days like Shivarathri for the purpose intended by Bharathiya tradition.

Embodiments of the Divine Atma! Remember that the Indwelling Spirit in everyone is the same Divine. He is called Hridayavasi - the dweller in the Heart.

Buddhi transcends the Indriyas

You must consider the distinction between mind and heart. Heart refers to the blood-pumping organ in the body. This heart produces pure blood and circulates it to every part of the body. The Mind is not related to the body. It transcends the body. It is associated with the Universal Consciousness. There are two other agencies: the Buddhi and the Medhas. The Medhas is the agency that controls all Indriyas (organs). It is described as the "Control room." Buddhi, however, is not related to the body. The Medhas is related to the Indriyas (the instruments of perception and action). "Buddhigrahyam atheendhriyam," it is said. The Buddhi transcends the Indriyas. When a person says, "My Buddhi was preoccupied with something else," it shows that the Buddhi is beyond the body. Hence, both the mind and Buddhi are related to the Atma and not the body.

Men are accustomed to treat the mind as part of the body. This relates only to the sensory activities of the mind. This mind is made up of thoughts and doubts. But the mind that is associated with the Divine Atma transcends the body. Consequently, it is only when the ordinary thought processes are extinguished that the divinity within can be experienced. The consciousness that goes beyond thought is a reflection of the Atma.

Distinction between Aham and Ahamkara

The Atma, the Buddhi and the mind are three in one. This unified consciousness transcends the sense of "I" and "Mine." It may be called Aham. Aham means Consciousness. In the Atma, the Aham abides as a subtle entity. When the Aham acquires a form, it becomes Ahamkara, the Ego. The distinction between Aham and Ahamkara should be understood. To identify the Aham with the corporeal form is Ahamkara - the Ego feeling. Aham transcends the Ahamkara (the physical form). When the identification of the Self with the body is given up, the state of "Aham Brahmasmi" (I am Brahman) is realised. Brahman and Atma are the same. Brahman refers to the Universal Consciousness that is present in all beings. The consciousness that is present in the body is called Atma. It is called Conscience. The distinction between the Conscience and the Universal Consciousness should be noted. Conscience is a reflection of the Consciousness. When the Conscience ultimately leaves the body, it merges in the Universal Consciousness and becomes one with it. This process may be likened to the oneness that occurs when the air within a balloon joins the atmospheric air outside. This is the process of the many merging with the One. The individual self is the Bhuthatma. The Universal Self is the Paramatma. The individual self confined within a body is like the air confined within a balloon. When the individual self sheds its attachments relating to the body and develops universal love, it overcomes the confines of the body. It merges in the vast, infinite Love. This merger is described as Mukthi, Moksha or Liberation. The correct name for this consummation is Sayujyam (oneness with the Universal). It is comparable to the merger of a river in the ocean from which it had its origin.

Brahma-Jnana exists within everyone

Once this merger of Consciousness takes place, there is no reversal of the process. The individual self has become the Universal, as when a drop of water is put into the ocean and becomes one with it. As long as the individual self is attached to the body and maintains its separateness from the Universal Self, it cannot escape the succession of birth and death. But once it casts off its separateness and becomes one with the Omni-Self, there is no further

return to the cycle of birth and death - Punarjanma na vidhyathe. This Brahma-Jnana (awareness of the Divine) cannot be got from any external source. It exists within everyone. Once the delusion of separateness in which the individual is enveloped goes, the resplendent Awareness manifests itself. All other knowledge relates to the external world. This external knowledge is only "a reflection of the Inner Being." It is entirely wrong to imagine that one can acquire knowledge of the Inner Reality by exploring Prakruthi (Nature). The Omni- Self is not to be realised through the understanding of the phenomenal world. You have come from the Paramatma (the OmniSelf). This truth has to be understood. The fountain-source of all knowledge is within you. The Jnani (wise one) is not the one who has a great deal of book knowledge or knowledge of the physical universe. The true Jnani is one who is aware of the Self within and lives accordingly. Many who discourse elaborately on the glories of God do not lead a Godly life. Of what use is their scriptural knowledge? What fight have they to exhort others, when they themselves do not practice what they preach? This was the message of Jesus when he saw a woman being stoned by a crowd for her sinful conduct. He told the crowd: "If there is anyone among you who has not sinned mentally, let him cast the stone at her."

The proper way to observe Shivarathri

Festivals like Shivarathri are intended to make people cultivate auspicious and Godly qualities. To listen to a Divine discourse on Shivarathri day and forget all about its message after leaving the hall is not the way to observe Shivarathri. It may well be called "Shavarathri" (a Night of Death).

The difference between "Shiva" (what is auspicious) and "Shava" (a lifeless corpse) can be understood from the process of breathing and cessation of breathing. The process of inhaling and exhaling conveys the message of union with God - So-Ham (He is I). It is the consciousness of this oneness that is auspicious. When this consciousness is absent, inauspiciousness (or death) sets in.

There has to be a complete absence of body consciousness. It was by

forgetting the body completely while chanting the Name of Rama that Ratnakara, the dacoit, became Valmiki the supreme poet (who gave the Ramayana to the world). He was so completely absorbed in chanting the name that he was oblivious to the anthill that had grown over him. Shivarathri is the day that is devoted to the contemplation of God. It does not come only once a year. Every night can be a Shivarathri. Even if you are not able to contemplate on God all through the night, it is enough if you think of God before going to bed and when you wake up in the morning.

Again, whatever manner in which you may think of God, the results will be good. There is a story to illustrate this. Once a father took his son to the temple and advised him to keep vigil all night in the sanctum sanctorum. After some time, both the priest and the father dozed off. But the young lad, who was keeping vigil, observed a mouse repeatedly nibbling at the fruit and other edibles kept as offering to the deity. He felt sad that the mouse should be nibbling away at what was intended for God. Because he was thinking in this manner about God all night his life became sanctified. But neither the priest nor the others in the temple got the benefit of Divine grace. What is important is that devotion should be expressed in some form. Different devotees are bound to differ in their ways of worshipping God. But whatever the method of worship, there must be one-pointed devotion. Develop the love of God. Love towards God is devotion. Love towards the world is attachment. Devote this entire night to chanting the name of God. Life can be immensely sanctified through bhajans.

8. Purify The World By Sankeerthana

Date: 03 March 1992 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Shivarathri

There is no age like the Kali Age, none at all. Where by mere meditation on the name of the Lord, The Supreme Goal is realised Oh Blessed One! Even a multi-millionaire has to be content With ordinary raiment and food He cannot live on a diet of gold When Time is unpropitious, a stick may turn into a snake While, when it is favourable, dust may turn to gold. The wheel of Time can make a scholar a dumb animal, And a dumb man can become a saint, And a wealthy man may become a plaything of the Goddess of Poverty at one time. Whatever your prayers, you cannot get What you are not destined to get. Don't cherish, Oh young man, any desires. Lead instead a noble life with intelligence. What more can I tell you The good people assembled here ? Embodiments of Divine Love! "Samyak-keerthanam Sankeerthanam" (Congregational singing of bhajans is the best of bhajans). There is a big difference between Keerthanam and Sankeerthanam. Keerthanam is an individual affair. It is singing by an individual for the fulfilment of his prayers. Sankeerthanam aims at the well-being of the whole universe. This is also described as Samajika bhajans (community singing). This method of singing bhajans was first initiated by Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism. Sankeerthana aims at demonstrating unity in diversity. When all the participants combine to sing in unison with one voice, it is described as Sankeerthana.

Four kinds of Sankeerthana

Sankeerthana is of four kinds: One is Guna Sankeerthana; two, Leela Sankeerthana; three, Bhava Sankeerthana; four, Nama Sankeerthana. Guna Sankeerthana applies to the kind of bhajan in which the devotee recites the auspicious qualities of the Divine, experiences oneness with the Divine, and acquires the Godly qualities. Thyagaraja had recourse to this type of singing. In one of his keerthanas, he exclaimed: "Oh Lord! You are beyond all words. Is it possible for even Brahma or other Gods to extol your glorious exploits? I am waiting for your grace. Harken to my entreaties. You restored to the

preceptor the son whom the Lord of Death had taken away. You conquered the God of Love. You liberated from prison Vasudheva and Devaki. You protected Draupadi when she appealed to you in despair. You were the guardian of the Pandavas. You relieved Kuchela of his poverty. You saved 16,000 damsels from subjection." In this manner, Thyagaraja recounted the great qualities of God in his songs.

Gita Govindam is a form of Leela Sankeerthana

Leela Sankeerthana refers to the enjoyment by the devotee of the sacred sport of the Divine in ecstatic dancing and singing and being totally absorbed in it. This is exemplified by the Gita Govindam of Jayadeva.

Bhava Sankeerthana: This is illustrated by Radha alone, who expresses her different feelings towards God and identifies herself with the Divine in every mood of devotion. She expressed her devotion in the five forms of Santha (Serenity), Sakhya (friendliness), Vatsalya (eternal love), Anuraga (affection) and Madhura (sweetness). Radha and Meera were the exponents of Bhava Sankeerthana.

Nama Sankeerthana: Chaithanya was the exponent of this form of Keerthana. "All names are yours. There is nothing in this cosmos which does not bear the imprint of your name or form" - "Sarvaroopam Dharam Shantham Sarvanamadharam Shivam Satchidananda roopam Advaitam Sathyam Shivam Sundaram" (Swami sang this sloka). Chaithanya revelled in singing the name of the Lord as signifying all that was beautiful and glorious in the universe. While in each of the previous aeons the devotees adopted one or another methods of singing the glories, it is the supreme good fortune of the residents of Prashanthi Nilayam to enjoy all the four forms of Sankeerthana. The bhajans sung here are a combination of all the four forms of Sankeerthana.

The significance of Namalikhitam

There is yet another special form of glorifying the name of the Lord. This is Namalikhitam (writing the Name of the Lord). Contemplating on the name of

the Lord mentally, uttering the name by mouth and writing the name by hand serve to perform Trikarana Suddhi (purify the mind, the speech and the action). The name of the Lord has been glorified in different ways all over the world. Jayadeva was one who enjoyed always the leelas (sport) of the Divine, experienced the presence of the Divine within him, devoted every one of his daily activities to enjoying the sport of the Divine, felt that he had no use for anything other than God's love, merged his love in Divine Love and thereby became the very embodiment of Divine Love. As people did not comprehend the spiritual significance of his keerthanas, they misunderstood and misinterpreted the meaning of Jayadeva's Ashtapadhis (octaves).

Hanuman, after the completion of his mission in Lanka, went to Sita to receive her blessings before returning to Rama. At that time, Mother Sita blessed Hanuman in this manner: "Hanuman! You are full of prowess, intelligence and fortitude. May you never grow old." This did not give joy to Hanuman. Noticing his sense of disappointment, Sita blessed him again: "Live as an immortal." Even this did not please Hanuman. Sita then blessed him again: "Hanuman! You are full of virtues! May the dwellers in the three worlds extol your qualities." Hanuman felt embarrassed and bent his head as if he was ashamed to hear her praise him. Observing Hanuman's reactions, Sita finally blessed him thus: "May Sri Rama always love you!" The moment he heard these words, Hanuman was in rapture. "This was all that I wanted," he declared. "I must be worthy of Rama's love. A life without Rama's love is an utter waste. It is a living death. The only thing I desire is Rama's love." Hanuman was proficient in music. There was none that could excel him in singing. Even Narada and Tumbura could not prevail against him. Such a great singer continued always to chant the name of Rama.

Devotional singing is outpouring of love to God

What then is the essence of Sankeerthana? Its essential purpose is to earn the love of God. Combining one's voice, tune, feeling and rhythm to the appropriate beat of the song, the devotee should immerse himself in the singing. Harmonising the feeling with devotion and Love, the sacred words of the song should be an outpouring of love towards God. That alone is

devotional singing.

When the song is rendered without understanding the meaning of the words and without any inner feeling or genuine love for God, it is a mechanical performance. Bhava (feeling), Raga (melody) and Thala (rhythm) are the essentials for proper singing. Even the name Bharath signifies the combination of these three elements. (Bha-Ra-Tha). In every action in daily life, the combination of these three elements should be observed. This rule can be applied even to one's studies. Bhava, in relation to study of a subject, means understanding the subject thoroughly. Raga implies cultivating a love for the subject and Thala means expressing one's knowledge coherently and clearly.

Understand the meaning of songs while rendering

In the rendering of Thyagaraja's songs, the failure to observe the meaning of the words of the song has produced bizarre results. Thyagaraja's songs are in Telugu. Tamil musicians, who are experts in music, rendering Thyagaraja's songs have often mangled the words of the songs and made them meaningless. In one of his songs, Thyagaraja sang: "Ne pogadakunte neekemi kodhavu Rama?" (If I do not praise you, what do you lose Oh Rama?). A Tamil musician sang the song in such a manner that it meant: "If I eat pakodas, what do you lose?" It is essential to ensure that the meaning of the words, the emotional feeling of the composer and the melody of the song are all brought out in rendering the songs during Nagarsankeerthan and in bhajans. Where one does not understand the meanings of the words, he should get the meaning from those who know.

Embodiments of Divine Love! Regard community singing as sacred devotional exercise. Even if you have no musical ability, utter the names of the Lord with feeling and love. There is no greater means of God-realisation in the Kali Yuga than chanting the names of the Lord. Dhyana (meditation) in Kritha Yuga, Yajna (sacrifice) in Thretha Yuga, Archana (worship of idols) in Dwapara Yuga and Nama Sankeerthana (Reciting the name of the Lord) in Kali Yuga are the methods prescribed for realising the Divine. Remembering the Name is the

panacea. When the name is chanted as a song set to music, it delights the heart immensely. Many pandits recite the names as slokas (verse). They do not experience the intense yearning expressed in the stanzas. Some actors are able to pronounce the words loud and clear, but without any depth of feeling. But when the names are sung melodiously they appeal to the hearts of the singers and the listeners. Even non-believers and agnostics nod their heads in appreciation when they listen to devotional music.

A song sung melodiously tugs at the heart-strings

The words of a song can be expressed in prosaic manner which has no appeal to the listener. But when they are sung melodiously as in the song: "Rama! Nannu Kapadu" "Rama! save me," they tug at the heart-strings. (Swami sang the song to demonstrate its appeal). Such sweetness is contained in the song when it is rendered melodiously. Everyone, whether he is well-versed in music or not, should listen attentively to the singer and try to repeat the words of the song with feeling. Some persons attending bhajans do not move their lips at all. They may say that they are singing the songs mentally within themselves. This is not proper. If you have devotional feeling, it should be expressed by the tongue joining in the bhajan. Only then can it be called Sankeerthana - singing in unison with others. You must sing the names aloud, full-throated, as far as the voice can reach. Only then the Divine will respond in full measure and shower His grace. No one will go to the rescue of a drowning man if his cries are feeble. Only when he cries aloud at the top of his voice will the cries be heard and people will rush to save him. Sankeerthana means singing with abandon and fervour. Everyone should realise that every limb and organ in the body has been given to man to be used for a sacred purpose the tongue to utter the Lord's name, the hands to offer worship, the feet to go to the temple and so on. These organs should not be used for frivolous and unholy purposes. Sanctifying every one of the sense organs, man should purify the mind and contemplate on God.

The only means to purify the polluted world

Embodiments of Divine Love! It is impossible to describe the sweetness and

sacredness of the name of the Lord. The intensity of the devotion with which you chant the name of the Lord will yield commensurate benefits and confer joy on you. All should strive to chant the names in unison. Today, all the five elements in the world - space, air, fire, water and the earth - are polluted. You cannot get pure water or pure air. The sounds you hear are impure. The earth is polluted. The Kali Yuga has become Kalmasha Yuga (the age of impurity). To purify all this the only means is chanting the names of the Lord. Today people spend most of their time watching the TV and Video screens. Is it any surprise if children born in these circumstances are TV products? They behave as actors from childhood. They indulge in stunts. Only the parents are to blame. In olden times, when a woman was enceinte, she used to hear stories about Prahlada, Sathyavan and other noble characters. The child in the womb was influenced by such stories.

Atmosphere is purified by chanting Divine Name

Experiments in Russia and other countries have demonstrated the relationship between the food one consumes and one's mental attitudes. It was found, for instance, that a child which had been fed on apple juice while it was growing in the womb, exhibited a love for apples after birth. The recitation of the names of the Lord will help to purify the atmosphere as a result of the sacred sound waves getting absorbed in the atmosphere. The power of sound waves is evident from the way radio waves are transmitted and received over long distances. The atmosphere that has been polluted by impure sound waves can be purified by the chanting of the Divine Name. Likewise, sacred thoughts, pure speech and pure actions will purify other polluted elements. There is no better purifying agent than this. Crores (one crore is ten million) are being spent to purify the Ganges water. Of what use is this exercise if the Ganges continues to be polluted by the discharge of drainage water into the river? First prevent the flow of filthy effluents into the Ganges.

In the same manner, the evil thoughts arising in the mind should be diverted; and it should be filled with pure, Godly thoughts by reciting the Divine name. Everyone participating in bhajans should sing the name of the Lord and

thereby serve to purify the atmosphere and promote the well-being of the nation.

You must see, hear, study, observe, experience and reflect. Only then, can you understand me. You will learn then that I am Love (Prema); that I give only one thing, Bliss (Ananda) through Love. My task is to grant solace, courage, and Peace (Shanthi). That is to say, my characteristics are the ancient, authentic ones. Only the manifested form is new.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

9. The Head and The Heart

Date: 15 March 1992 / Location: Brindavan

If the thoughts in the mind are good The sequel will be equally beneficial If the thoughts in the mind are impure The resulting actions will be likewise. Yad Bhavam Thadbhavathi (As one feels, that he becomes). As are the thoughts, so are the results. As is the seed, so is the plant. As is the flour, so is the bread. In the human body, there are two important organs. One is the heart and the other is the head. All the actions in the world, all their consequences, originate in the head. The Vedas have declared that all things that originate in the head relate to the Pravritthi Marga (the External Path) and those that arise from the heart relate to the Nivritthi Marga (the Inward Path). All that you think, all that you do, all your achievements, gains and losses, are all related to the head (to thoughts). All that comes out of the head relates to Prakruthi (the phenomenal world), grows from it and ultimately merges in it. Hence, all thoughts are associated with the Prakruthi (external world). But, feelings like .peace, kindness, compassion, forbearance and love emanate from the heart. These transcend Prakruthi (external phenomena). Consequently, what should be cherished in the heart should be pure and sacred, and nothing that. is sullied. The human heart that should be like ksheera (milk) in its purity is today unfortunately polluted and kshara (saline) like sea water. The Lord resides wherever there is purity of the milky ocean. It is for this reason that the Lord was described by the devotees as Ksheerasagara Sayana (the One who reclines on the Ocean of Milk).

Lord dwells only in pure Sathwik heart

Ksheera or milk represents that which is Sathwik, pure and sacred. The heart should be pure and untainted like milk. It is only in such a pure Sathwik heart that the Lord will choose to dwell. Alas! Man's heart today, instead of being a Ksheerasagara (ocean of milk), is Ksharasagara (filled with brine). In the Ocean of Milk, dreadful aquatic creatures like whales and crocodiles will not flourish. These creatures can only survive and grow in an ocean of brine. In the saltish ocean (of the heart) what are the creatures that flourish? They are

bad qualities like lust, hatred, greed, envy and pride. If man is filled today with all these bad qualities, what does it signify? It shows that man's heart is bereft of the milk (of good qualities). If it had been pure as milk, there would have been no place for any qualities other than the godly virtues.

Fill your heads with sacred thoughts

Today there seems to be no limit to man's desires. The entire human life is spent in the pursuit of these desires. Every moment is filled with insatiable wants. Man's head is filled with these desires. If only the head is filled with sacred thoughts, it will get sanctified. How is this change to be effected? Food is an important factor. When pure, sacred and wholesome food is taken in moderation, that food itself will transform the head. The head will be turned towards God. Thus, Food, Head and God are the three whose unity will divinise man. Even Sathwik food (food which is conducive to the promotion of good qualities) should be consumed in moderation. If there is no purity, wholesomeness and moderation in the food, the man turns Thamasik (evil minded). In due course, this leads to the development of Rajasik qualities (anger, etc).

What, then, is the proper food for man? Man possesses five organs of perception: the mouth, the ears, the eyes, the nose and the skin. What is regarded as Sathwik food is taken through the mouth. But what kind of food are the other senses consuming? The eyes are "consuming" Rajasik food (seeing ugly and undesirable things). Looking here and there like crows, the eyes are taking in impure "food" of all kinds. The eyes thus do not receive proper food. See no evil, see what is good.

Now, what is it that the ears hear? They are listening all the time to scandal, idle gossip, bad stories about others. They do not listen to the name of God or anything that is sacred and good. Why should anyone listen to such gossip? He should be concerned only about his affairs. Transforming himself, he should share his good thoughts with others. It is totally wrong to interest oneself in bad things about others. Hear no evil; hear what is good.

Multiple role of the tongue

Now we come to speech. The tongue is a very powerful organ. The eyes can only see. The ears can only hear. But the tongue has a double function: speech and taste. Hence, the tongue has to be kept under rigorous control. Only then the food that is consumed through the mouth will be pure and sacred.

The tongue is prone to indulge in several undesirable activities: talking ill of others, talking excessively, idle gossip and the like. Of the four kinds of misbehaviour by the tongue, the first is excessive talking with others. Talking endlessly with all kinds of persons is an evil. The second evil tendency is abusing others. The third evil is making fun of others. The fourth is indulging in falsehood. By indulging in these four forms of abuse of the tongue, man's life is rendered unholy. Recognising the greatness of the tongue, Saint Jayadeva declared: "Oh tongue! You know what is sweet and relish what delights the heart. You must utter what is true and beneficial. Therefore, rejoice in uttering the names of the Lord and in nothing else." The tongue is the cause of greatness in a man or his downfall. There must be harmony between speech and action. If your actions do not correspond to your words, your life will be mined. Therefore the tongue should be "fed" properly. It should be "fed" with good thoughts, good words and good actions so that it may behave properly.

The importance of sense of touch

Then, there is the sparsa (sense of touch). Avoid touching others. The meaning of this rule will not be apparent on the surface. But it is highly significant from a deeper sense. The ancient sages used to seek secluded spots and engage themselves in meditation. The reason is there is a divine energy within the body, a kind of current flowing in it. This divine energy is in everyone. When a house is electrified, an earth wire is also fixed to protect people from electric shocks. When a person is meditating, a divine energy is generated in him. The earth also has an energy (gravitational energy) which attracts objects towards itself. That is the reason why when a person sits in

meditation, he uses a wooden plank one inch above the ground, spreads a deer-skin on it and covers it with a cloth. The cloth serves as a cushion protecting the meditator from any pricks from the deerskin. This kind of meditation is called Sukhadhyana (meditation in comfort). The wooden plank acts as an insulator, preventing the energy from passing down. It should be recognised that there is a divine energy in the human body. When this divine energy comes into contact with the body of another person, it is likely to receive the bad thoughts in the latter. If the other person is a good man, you may receive good thoughts from the contact. But you cannot decide who is good and who is bad. Hence, if you sit apart during meditation, you may experience highly elevating thoughts. Some persons say: "Swami! I do not entertain any bad thoughts in my mind. But somehow bad thoughts infiltrate into the mind. How does this happen?" The reason is: Other people's bad thoughts enter your mind. It is by close association with bad persons that bad ideas enter the head.

Significance of Padanamaskar

The idea behind bowing one's head at the feet of Bhagavan is that thereby sacred thoughts enter the devotee's mind. This means that when one comes in contact with Bhagavan's feet, the sacred impulses from them flow to the devotee. When the devotee's head touches the Lord's feet, the Lord's divine energy flows towards him. This implies that you should keep contact with only pure objects and keep away from impure objects. You are affected by whatever you touch. For instance, if you touch fire, it scalds. Fire can burn even iron. It is so potent. But when the fire is extinguished, the residue is mere charcoal. When you touch charcoal, your hand becomes black. Thus, in either case, the contact is not beneficial. But, what happens when you come into contact with divine fire? All your bad thoughts and bad actions are reduced to ashes. This is the sanctity attaching to the performance of Padanamaskar (prostrating at the Feet of the Lord). When you associate with anyone, you are affected by the qualities of the other person. That is why, it has been said: "Through association with the good, develop detachment and solitude. Through seclusion, steady the mind. Through steadiness of the mind, get rid of all delusions. Freedom from delusions is Liberation." (Bhagavan

recited the relevant stanza from Bhaja Govindam).

Choose to become dear and near to God

Good company is thus most essential. Take for instance, a piece of charcoal. If it is to bum, it has to be brought close to a piece of burning charcoal. It will bum better if a fan is turned towards both. This is the result of being both "near and dear" (to the source of fire). This applies to devotees as well. There are many who are "near" to Bhagavan. But they are like frogs in a lotus pond. The frogs are near to the lotus, but do not taste its honey. But bees come from remote distances to taste the honey in the lotus. If the frogs were aware of the sweetness of the honey, they would not have let the bees come near. It is, therefore not enough if you are near. You have also to become dear to the Lord. You must be both near and dear. If you love the Lord, but are far from Him, you suffer the pangs of separation like a mother who is worried when she has no news from her son who is abroad. Thus both love and nearness are necessary. This is the value of having darshan of the Lord. Vedanta has declared: "Dharshanam papa nashanam" (Sight of the Lord destroys all sins). "Sambhashanam Sankata nashanam" (Conversing with the Lord destroys all grief). "Sparshanam Karma vimochanam" (The touch of the Divine liberates one from all karmic bonds). What you should seek is Karma vimochanam (freedom from the bondage of one's actions).

"Sambhashanam Sankatanasanam." You can recognise the truth of this declaration from your own experience. Some may have doubts whether the touch of the Lord will destroy all their karmic bonds or whether the darshan of the Lord will destroy all sins. But there can be no doubts regarding the effect of Sambhashanam. When you are conversing with Swami you forget all your sorrows. You forget even your worries and anxieties. This is direct experiential proof of the truth of this dictum. As long as you are conversing with Swami you are in a blissful state. Whatever your worries, when you are conversing with Swami in the interview room you forget everything. From this, you should infer that the darshan of the Lord can destroy all sins, even though you may not know it. Many people don't recognise this fact. For all difficulties and sorrows, the mind is responsible. Most people are not conscious of their

own feelings. If one's thoughts are good, they are bound to lead to good results.

The results of our past karma are born with us

As you sow, so shall you reap. This is an inescapable fact. If your thoughts are of one kind, how can you expect the results to be different? When you are born, the Creator sends you with a necklace round your neck made up of the results of your good and bad deeds in the previous life reckoned most meticulously.

When anyone accuses you and if you do not respond to it in a like manner, but ignore it, the accusation returns to the accuser like a registered letter which the addressee declines to accept. An incident in the life of Buddha illustrates this truth.

How to react when you are accused

There used to be a village-chief who did not like Buddha's way of life. He used to look upon him as a lazy person who was gathering round him young men and making them lead an idle life. Buddha who was aware of the man's attitude, went to his house one day with his disciples and begged for alms "Bhavathi! Bhiksham Dehi" (Oh blessed one! offer me alms). The headman, who had espied Buddha approaching the house and begging for alms, shouted: "You lazy fellow! You don't deserve any alms. Get out! You have been wasting your time." The headman went on abusing Buddha, calling him all kinds of names. Buddha was amused and was smiling. After exhausting his abuses, the headman calmed down and asked Buddha, "Sire! I have a doubt. Will you clear it?" Buddha said, "What is your doubt? Speak out." The headman asked how Buddha had remained unaffected by all the abuse he had levelled against the latter. Buddha said, "I came to you begging for food. Supposing you had brought the food and I had refused to take it, what would you have done with the food?" The man replied, "I would have taken it back." Buddha then said, "Now, instead of food, you gave me all your abuse. I refused to receive it. What happens to it? It goes back to you. I have no

connection with it." The headman learnt a good lesson.

You should not be concerned with the goodness or badness of others. You have to entertain good thoughts and direct your, mind towards God. Bliss is got by experiencing oneness with the Divine.

The Vedantic message of oneness has been perverted by exponents who promoted divisive tendencies. The supreme message of the Vedas is unity as proclaimed in the manthra: "Sahana vavathu, Sahanau bhunakthu, Saha veeryam Karavavahai" (May we be protected together. May we be nourished together. May we work together with great energy.) Let us all work together. Only then will there be peace. (Swami recited a Telugu poem conveying the purport of the Sanskrit stanza from the Shvethashvathara Upanishad). What a great message is conveyed by this prayer! The pandits however, are interpreting the message in different ways and causing divisions. Vedamatha (Mother Veda) sought to promote oneness and a universal vision by its all-embracing message. Fill the heart with love and Divine feeling Man today receives all kinds of knowledge in his head in a distorted form and behaves like a demented being. Whatever he reads, whatever he hears, he fills his mind with all sorts of things about the world. When he wakes up in the morning he starts reading the newspaper to know what is happening in one country or another and stuffs his mind with a lot of junk. Does he fill his heart with any divine feeling? Instead of stuffing the head with a mass of rubbish, he should try to fill his heart with love. Without love in the heart, you are only another newspaper. From the time of waking to the time of going to bed, the day is punctuated by eating breakfast, lunch and dinner. What is the meaning in indulging in this repetitive routine day after day? What is the new thing that you should do? It is contemplation on God. Are you making any effort in this direction?

Science and technology are advancing apace. They are penetrating the depths of space. But is the slightest movement being made to explore the depths of the heart? Man has not moved even half an inch to understand his heart.

Scientists do not acquire any experience of life

It is by exploring the internal that man will discover the truth and not by going far out into space. The entire preoccupation of science is with the study of matter. What is it you find when you go far out into space? There is nothing there. If you need air, you have to carry it from the earth. Travel in space has thus become a kind of picnic! You carry everything you need from here. There is nothing there. The water you need and the food you require lie at your feet. All the metals, the diamonds or anything else you want are all underneath your feet. Above the head (in space) there is nothing. They spend crores to go out into space. But when they need food, they have to come back to the earth. A proper understanding of how the senses function is a function of science. Without knowing how to control the senses, what is the use of all other scientific knowledge? Many scientists ultimately qualify themselves for places in the mental hospital. Burying themselves in a dark laboratory and performing experiments all their lives, they expire without acquiring any experience of life.

Follow the heart - not the head

Students! Take care of your heart. Do not follow the head. Take into your head all that is useful. But transmit it to the heart. That will generate real energy. That is Sath. That is imperishable energy. What is received in the head comes and goes. The head seeks happiness. But this happiness is temporary. It is satisfaction of needs and desires as they arise from time to time. You are hungry, you take food and you feel happy. But this lasts only for a few hours till you feel hungry again. This kind of happiness comes and goes. This process relates to the head. But the heart is concerned with securing lasting bliss. You must understand the difference between the head and the heart. The head is content to carry out temporary obligations. The heart is concerned with what is permanent. Once bliss is secured, all that the head seeks will also be got. Students! The story of Emperor Bali teaches you that in no circumstance should you go back on your plighted word. Bali was prepared to discard the advice and warning of the guru Sukracharya, in order to fulfil the promise he gave to Vamana, even if it cost him his kingdom or his life.

Truth is the food that sustains speech. Likewise, you should feed your senses with wholesome food by listening to sacred things, seeing what is holy and speaking what is true and good. Consuming wholesome food through the mouth is not enough. Everything that you take in through all your senses should be pure.

Dedicate the sweet period of your life to God

Students! This is the most sacred stage in your life. It is a sweet period. It is a time that should be dedicated to the Divine. Does anyone offer an unripe or overripe fruit to the Divine? Only a ripe fruit, rich with sweet juice, is offered to God. You are neither an unripe fruit nor a spoiled fruit. You are good, ripe fruit. It is such a fruit that should be offered to God. That is the proper kind of sacrifice to be made in one's life. The Upanishad has proclaimed that immortality can be attained only through sacrifice and not through good actions, progeny or wealth. You cannot take with you, when you pass away, even a handful of earth. So, make the best use of your years now by leading a selfless, dedicated life. Thereby you should earn God's grace and share it with others. This is the secret of a meaningful life.

10. Hold Fast To The Lord

Date: 04 April 1992 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Ugadi

When sandalwood is rubbed repeatedly, the fragrance from it increases; When the sugarcane is chewed again and again, the juice gets sweeter. When gold is heated in the crucible repeatedly, it becomes pure and brighter. The noble ones adhere to righteousness through all the vicissitudes of life. Embodiments of Divine Love! Human life is supremely precious in this world. But not all are alive to this truth. Wherein lies this preciousness? Humanness does not consist merely in the physical and the mundane. "Shareeram Adhyam khalu Dharmasadhanam" (Verily, the body is the primary requisite for the realisation of Dharma). It is for the pursuit of Righteousness that this body has been given to man. God is the repository of Ananda (Bliss). He is eternal. Among the myriad names of the Divine, the greatest is Sath-chith-ananda. Sath means that which is unchanging at all times - past, present and future. It remains the same irrespective of time, place and circumstance. It transcends time, space and conditions. Chith means paripurna jnana (complete awareness). It comprehends full knowledge of everything - social, moral, physical, scientific and spiritual. It is the undercurrent of every kind of knowledge. Where Sath and Chith exist together, there is Ananda (Bliss). Humanness originates from Ananda, grows in Ananda and merges in Ananda. This bliss is the goal of man. Man is born in bliss. To manifest bliss is the duty of man. This is the secret of the human saga.

It is a sheer folly to search for bliss outside

Every individual makes a variety of efforts to experience bliss. From infancy to old age, man dedicates every effort of his to secure bliss. But, this bliss is not to be found in the places he searches. When he is the very embodiment of bliss, to seek for it outside himself is sheer folly. Does any man in the world search for himself outside himself? If such search is a sign of ignorance, equally the search for bliss outside one's self is a mark of ignorance. Water can exist without fish, but fish cannot exist out of water. A branch is part of a tree. A child is part of the mother. A branch cannot survive apart from the

tree. The child cannot live without the mother. Likewise, the human existence is based on the Divine. Man is a spark of the Divine. Without the Divine, man cannot experience bliss. Unfortunately, on account of the perversions of the Kali Age, men express verbal acceptance of this truth, but do not experience it wholeheartedly and hence seek, by their own efforts, to find the bliss by exploring the phenomenal world.

Understand your true self

What is the origin of man? Wherefrom has he come? What is his original home? No one tries to investigate these matters in the proper manner. Man exists, he moves about, eats and lives, but wherefrom has he come? Basing himself on his corporeal form, he declares that he has come from Madras, Bombay or some other place. Similarly, reckoning on the profession in which he is engaged, he describes himself as a doctor, a lawyer, an agriculturist or something else. By relating himself to a place, a country or a profession, he cannot understand his real self. What is this true self? The answer is Manuja or Manava. What does Manu signify? It refers to Swayambhu Manu (the self-created Manu). Ja means birth. Manuja refers to one who has had his birth from Manu. Man is called Manuja because he has originated from the self-born Manu. Man does not recognise this fact. Consequently, even though he is the embodiment of Sath-chithananda, he desperately seeks bliss elsewhere. What is the reason? Oblivious to the Jnana (higher knowledge), he lives in ignorance' in a dream world of illusions. Immersed in this sleeping state, he forgets his nature. One may be a president, an emperor or a prime minister, but in the sleeping state he is not conscious of his position. In the dreams he experiences in this state, he considers them to be real and feels that these are his true state. In that dream state, a poor man may think he is an emperor (or a President). But the moment he wakes up, he is conscious of his real position and status.

Wake up from the sleep of ignorance

Likewise, man in his dream state of Ajnana (ignorance) forgetting his true form of Sath-chithananda, identifies himself with a country, a profession or a

physical form. It is this ignorance that envelops man in delusion. Just as one cannot see the rice when it is covered by husk, or see the water underneath a layer of moss, or the sun covered by a cloud, a man enveloped in ignorance is unable to see his true self. Hence it is that the Upanishads have exhorted man to wake up from his sleep of ignorance and realise his true nature. When the husk is removed, the rice is visible. It was there in the paddy. But because of the husk coveting it, it could not be seen. All objects that are enveloped in this manner are liable to change and are impermanent. The Veda has declared: "Whatever is perceived is liable to perish." That is, all objects in the phenomenal world are bound to perish sometime or other. Man sees with his physical eyes all objects in the world, moving and non-moving. All these will disappear in due course in the stream of Time. Neither the eye that sees nor the object that is seen is permanent. All beings in creation are endowed with eyes. What is the special significance of the eyes possessed by man? What is the unique significance of human existence? Having been born as a human being, it will be unfortunate if man is content with the physical vision. Man must acquire Jnana netram (the eye of Wisdom). Without it, of what avail is one's education? What is the use of one's intelligence or one's mental powers? What is a man worth if he is unable to recognise the divinity within him?

Man is the crown of creation. That is why the scriptures have praised the noble virtues man is capable of manifesting. Hence, as a human being one must strive to acquire the eye of wisdom. The physical eyes are inept. You cannot see your own eyes. These imperfect eyes, how can they see the highly subtle mind? The eyes which are unable to see the mind, how can they see the Atma (the Indwelling Spirit)? One who is unable to understand himself, how can he expect to understand others? The physical eyes will never be able to see the Atma.

Man is unable to comprehend his true nature

The most important thing in this world is the Atma-Jivitham (life of the Spirit). Bodily existence, mental life or intellectual life cannot be considered true living at all. Man's main preoccupation appears to be with nurturing the body

and wasting it until death. Falling a prey to the forces of time, space and circumstances, man is unable to comprehend his true nature. From dawn to dusk man is engaged in enquiring into various matters. He studies many books and makes many investigations. But what is the outcome of all this? He has learnt nothing. The satisfaction he derives from time to time from these endeavours ends in disappointment. They are like the pursuit of a mirage. They do not serve to quench one's thirst. They may appear like water, but there is no water in them. All pleasures derived from Prakruthi (the phenomenal world) may appear to confer happiness, but they do not confer real happiness and bliss, because they are not lasting. They come and go, leaving a trail of misery.

Real conqueror is one who has subdued his mind

Sankaracharya posed the question: "Who is a real conqueror in this world?" His disciples gave different answers. One disciple said that a real conqueror was one who had subdued the world and brought it under his sway. Another said that the man who scaled the Himalayas and planted a flag on its summit was a great conqueror. Another declared that one who crossed the oceans was a hero. Sankaracharya listened to these replies with a smile and said: "Dear students! you are looking at conquests solely in worldly terms. Viewed in this way, anyone can achieve victories. An animal can fight another and establish its victory. Likewise, there can be a victor among birds. Birds cross oceans and fly over the Himalayas. Where is the victory in all this? Nothing at all." Sankaracharya declared: "Only the person who has subdued his mind is a real conqueror." It is a mental aberration to think that one has achieved a victory without subduing his mind. The mind is associated with the moon. It resembles the moon in not being self-luminous. If the moon shines at night, wherefrom does it derive its light? The moon shines by reflecting the light of the Sun. It must be noted that the Sun shines effulgently, His light is very powerful. One cannot dare to look at it directly. But moonlight is cool and comforting. Although the light from the sun and the light from the moon have the same source, what accounts for the difference between them?

With regard to the mind, it will be seen that when filled with desires, it has a

thamasik quality. Where the thamasik quality prevails, there is darkness. When the mind's desires are fulfilled, it experiences coolness. When desires are not satisfied, the mind is restless. But it does not get heated. Such is the nature of the mind. It is not easy for anyone to control the mind. The mind has been described as a bundle of thoughts and fancies. It is not possible to stop the thought process even for a moment. The mind experiences a ceaseless flow of thoughts like the endless waves of the ocean. Sankaracharya said that the true victor is one who is able to conquer this ceaseless flow of thoughts in the mind.

The senses' sway over man

Today men boast about their myriad achievements. But all these are accompanied by anxiety. So, these achievements are not significant. Man assumes that he is investigating various phenomena. This is not so. It is man's senses which are experimenting with him. Man imagines that he is making use of his sense organs. Not at all. The truth is the senses are sporting with man. Man is not alive to this fact. If man really mastered the senses and had full sway over them, he would not be subject to vicharam (anxiety). It is the senses that are holding sway over man. They are utilising man for their enjoyment, with the result that man has become a weakling. He is a victim of peacelessness. He is a prey to many troubles. How, then, are the senses to be brought under control? It should be recognised that the senses are merely instruments. They are called Karanams, that is, instruments. These instruments should be wielded by you. You should not become their plaything. Unfortunately this is not the case now. Man has become an instrument in the grip of the senses. As a result, he is powerless to act properly. Nor is that all. He is even misusing the senses. Hence, it is essential to bring the senses under one's control. Only then will the senses be powerless to cause any harm to man.

The Atma is the seer - not the eyes

Take for instance, the power of sight. You think that it is the eyes that see (any object). No. The eye is inert matter. Who is it that sees? The seer is

Atma. When you notice the lights of a car, you think that the bulbs are burning. But the bulbs are burning because of the current they are getting.

Consider the ears. People are listening to the broadcast from their loudspeakers. They may consider the loudspeakers as the source of the sounds they hear. But if there is no current, the loudspeakers will be silent. Here, again, it is the current that is the basic factor. The ears are like a loudspeaker. It is because of the current of Atma that the ears are able to hear. Hence, for the functioning of all sense organs the Atma is basic. Without mentioning this term, the scientists call this prime mover as power or energy. This energy is of no use without matter. Equally, matter is of no use without energy. God can be defined as Matter + Energy -God. The functioning of the Divine must be seen in this combination. For instance, one cannot see without eyes. This is true. The eyes are able to see a person only by the help of sunlight. At the same time, the sunlight by itself is of no use. There are any number of blind people in the world. They are unable to see the effulgence of the sun. But for that reason can they deny the existence of the sun? The blind cannot see the sun, but those with eyes can see. However great a scholar may be, when he is asleep, he cannot see the world. But a totally illiterate person, who is awake, can see the world. To see things in the waking state, no scholarship or intelligence is needed. Man needs the eye of wisdom to see the good and bad things in the world.

Special significance of Yugadi

Today is the beginning of the new year (Yugadi). What is the first rithu (season) of this year? It is Vasantha-rithu (the season of Spring). What is the most important month in the year? It is Chaithramasa (the first month of the new year). The Shuklapaksha (bright fortnight) is the better part of the month. Among the days, the first day of the lunar month is important. As all these important elements are present today, it has special significance as marking the commencement of a new year (described as Yugadi). This is the Kali Yuga. There are four yugas (aeons) Kritha, Thretha, Dwapara and Kali. How do Bharathiyas celebrate the advent of the new year? After a sacred bath in the morning, they put on new clothes, eat sweet preparations and

celebrate the day as a festive occasion. These celebrations have gone on for many years. But how far have the people imbibed the truths underlying these celebrations? The garments are new, but the natures are unchanged. It is not enough to wear new clothes. The qualities must change. Without a reformation in character there is no meaning in observing these festivals.

Yugadi is related purely to the phenomenal world

Bharathiyas have been observing the birthdays of Avatars as festival days. The birthdays of the founders of various faiths have also been observed as festivals. The death anniversaries of wicked persons as well as of holy men have been observed as festivals. But the Yugadi celebration is not related to the birth of any Avatar or the birth or death of any saint or prophet. It is related purely to Prakruthi (the phenomenal world). It is important for one and all. It is an occasion for comprehending the nature of the universe. When we want to know who is God, the answer is found in Prakruthi. It is the visible manifestation of God. This earth revolves round itself hundreds of miles in an hour. What is it that happens because of these revolutions? You have night and day. Because of this succession of night and day, man is able to take rest. Moreover, the earth is moving round the sun at the speed of thousands of miles an hour. Because of this motion, the seasons occur and we have rains, crops and harvests. Thus, without expecting any return, Nature is nourishing man.

Good prospects for the year "Angeerasa"

There are sixty years in the Hindhu almanac's cycle of years, starting with Prabhava and ending with Akshaya. The present year is the sixth in the cycle, bearing the name Angeerasa. It conveys the message relating to the six primary enemies of man (lust, anger, delusion, greed, pride and envy). All these enemies are present in every limb of man. There are nine deities presiding over the events of the year. They are the Sun and other planets. Among these nine, six are beneficent in this year. During this year, by and large, only auspicious things will occur. Moreover, there will be no shortage of food-grains and other agricultural produce. The monsoon will be normal.

Prices, however, will continue to rise because of the misguided policies of governments. But the administration in general will be peaceful and orderly. Political disorders will be less. Individual differences and antagonisms may exist, but there will be no serious disorders. This is because all the principal ruling planets are friendly towards each other and are of good disposition. When a ruler and his commander-in-chief are at variance, the nation suffers. This year, the ruler and the commander-in-chief among the planets are friends. This has beneficial effects on the world. Angeerasa is one of the names of the Lord. It means that God as Rasa (essence) flows in every anga (limb) of man. Because the year bears the Lord's name, it is bound to be a godly year. Devotional activities will grow. But they are likely to be more in the nature of preaching and propagation than practice and performance. Devotion should express itself in conduct. Ninety-nine out of every hundred persons in the world profess devotion, but not one of them displays any godly virtues. Devotion is preached and professed out of selfish interests and not as a means to God-realisation.

You must hold fast to one ideal. Today man lives his life without any ideal. He has to understand what is his goal in life. The goal is Atma (the Divine). It is Sath-chith-ananda (Being- Awareness-Bliss). This Sath-chith-ananda is within man. People eat inert things and worship inert objects, wasting their lives, but ignore the divinity that is present in the same objects in subtle form as Chaithanya (Consciousness). Any act done with love will be immensely helpful. Animals serve man by toiling and helping to grow crops. But man treats such animals harshly. He harms the creatures which serve him. But he offers worship to images of animals such as Nandi. What folly is this!

Firm faith and clear vision are essential

God is omnipresent. But he should be experienced as present in subtle form as Consciousness. This divine feeling should arise in man. The entire Cosmos is pervaded by the Divine, declares the Upanishad - "Isavasyam idham Sarvam" Divinity is present in every human being. Man today is more intent on dividing the One into the many than on realising the unity that subsumes the diversity. To recognise the unity that underlies the multiplicity is the

primary task before man today.

You must develop faith and see to it that it is firm and unchanging. Firm faith and a clear vision are essential. Men proclaim their faith in God when their desires are fulfilled, but deride Him when they are not realised. These desires are often petty and trivial. Men do not realise that God is waiting to fulfil much greater desires. Ignorant of the immensely valuable treasures in God's treasury, man seeks cheap trinkets. Instead of a diamond, man asks for a piece of charcoal. Not getting it, he feels disappointed. God wishes to give you a diamond. You do not have the patience to wait until you get it. Men will wait hours in a queue to catch a bus or buy a film ticket but will not devote five minutes to think of God.

Develop an optimistic attitude in life

Your attitude to God should not be based on the fulfilment or non-fulfilment of petty desires. You must feel that whatever happens to you is for your own good. You must have the firm belief that whether your wishes are fulfilled or not, nothing harmful will happen to you. Be firm in your faith in weal and woe. Develop an optimistic attitude towards life. When there is a glass half full of water the optimist is glad to see the water in it while the pessimist is sorry it is half empty. One must recognise both the truths. For instance, it is true that there is no rose without a thorn. The wise man must pick up the rose without touching the thorn. The optimist looks up at the night-sky and enjoys the cool moonlight. The pessimist looks down at the ground and feels depressed over the darkness below. Hence, you must look up. Aiming low is a crime. Do not look downwards. Develop sublime thoughts. It is because man today lacks sublime thoughts that he is a prey to disappointments. Why is he disappointed? Because he has built up expectations. If he does his duty without expectation, there will be no disappointment. Duty is God. Work is worship. The results come of their own accord. The weak-minded man meets with failures. The strong-minded man accomplishes whatever he wants. Turn your mind towards God. You will then be free from bondage. It is because you are all the time involved in worldly pursuits that you get bound.

Love is God. Live in Love

A pure mind is like a pearl in the oyster. Worldly life is like an ocean. In that ocean you can find the pearl of a pure mind within the oyster of the human body. This pearl is the Atmic truth. It is immaculately pure, without attributes, eternal and unchanging. Its effulgence and purity are beyond compare. The Atma has no legs but moves faster than anything else. It has no hands but can grasp anything. It has no eyes, but there is nothing in the universe it cannot see. To experience this Atma, the only means is the way of Love. When you are filled with Love, the Lord is easily attained. Love is God. Live in Love. Our life must be lived in Love. Years may come and go. Seasons may change. Wars may be going on. But if only you have a drop of Divine Grace, you will be able to accomplish anything. To receive the benefit of such grace, you have to direct your vision inwards. Unfortunately, all your vision is turned outwards. What you see depends on the direction of your vision. Therefore, convert your vision into Premadhrishti (a vision of Love). It is said that the cosmos is mithya (illusory) and the Brahman (Absolute) alone is real. This is not correct. The Jagath (Cosmos) is also real. When you have the love-filled vision, the whole cosmos appears Brahmanayam (permeated by the Absolute). When you see the world with the physical eye it appears as a bundle of miseries from birth to death. Love of God is the only way out of this misery. Acquire this love at least now. There is nothing greater than this that I can convey to you.

Practise at least some part of what you hear

Embodiments of the Divine Atma! You listen to many discourses and exhortations from great speakers. They do not become part of you unless you practice at least some part of what you hear. Whatever position one may hold in any bank, what belongs to him in it is only the amount of his deposit in it. Likewise, whatever great teachings you may listen to, only that part of the teachings which you practice belongs to you. All that you merely hear is not yours. Wealth and education are not good or bad in themselves. This depends on how each individual uses them. When they are used for right ends, they become good. This calls for purity of the heart.

Treat all experiences with equanimity

On Yugadi day, it is the practice among the rural folk to eat what is called "Yugadi pachchadi" (New Year savoury). This chutney is made from neem flowers, mango juice, honey, sugar and other ingredients with different tastes. The inner significance of this preparation is to indicate that life is a mix-rare of good and bad, joy and sorrow and all of them have to be treated alike. All experiences have to be treated with equanimity. Everyone should make a resolve that he will face calmly whatever happens in this year, accepting it with good grace. Welcome everything. Do not bemoan over anything untoward. Consider everything as for your own good. Men should rise above sorrow and happiness, success and failure. This is the primary message of the Yugadi festival. Everything that occurs should be treated as a gift from God. This world is a mixture of pleasure and pain, which are inseparable. Pleasure is the outcome of pain. By developing equal-mindedness, you must cherish faith in God. Fill your hearts with Love of God, and perform your duties with dedication. This is the foremost duty of man.

Greed is the monstrous evil that drags man down. When Ravana lay dying, Rama directed His brother, Lakshmana, to go to him and learn from him the secrets of successful statecraft! Ravana taught him that a king who is eager to win glory must suppress greed as soon as it lifts its head, and welcome the smallest chance to do good to others, without the slightest procrastination! He had learnt the lesson through bitter experience!

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

11. Parents and Teachers Must Set The Example

Date: 06 May 1992 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Easwaramma Day

In this worm life is transient, Wealth and youth are not permanent; Equally impermanent are wife and children; Only Truth and reputation are lasting. Concerned only with one's good and teaching the truth, The preceptor may chastise or beat one, Like the mother who administers unpalatable medicine For the good of her child Do not forget this truth. What greater gift is there than the gift of food? What greater deity is there than one's parents ? What greater morality is there than promoting the public good? What righteousness can excel more than compassion ? Is there any gain superior to the company of the good? Is there any disability worse than enmity ? Is there any death on earth worse than infamy? Is there anything more valuable than lasting fame ? Can anything be more sustaining than remembrance of the Lord? Is there a heaven higher than inner joy ? Embodiments of the Divine Atma! If children are to be persons of good character, adhering to good practices, the parents should be of good character and exemplary conduct. The great teacher, Adi Sankaracharya, was the child of parents who were highly virtuous and noble in their conduct. For the great name attained by Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda, the credit goes to their parents. Many great men achieved name and fame by following in the footsteps of their parents.

A lesson Gandhi learnt as a boy

If Gandhi, who was an ordinary person, was able to achieve greatness and world renown, it was because of the lessons in good behaviour which he learnt from his mother. The mother used to observe a vow: she would take her food only after the cuckoo sang in the morning. Once when Gandhi was a boy, the mother was waiting for a long time to hear the call of the cuckoo. Observing this, Gandhi went out of the house, imitated the call of the cuckoo and came in and told his mother that the cuckoo had sung and that she could take her food. The mother, who saw through her son's trickery, slapped him on the cheek and said, "You wicked fellow; what sin must I have committed to bear a son like you?" She felt sad that such a child should have been born to

her. Her grief touched the heart of Gandhi. From that moment Gandhi took a firm resolve never to utter a lie again.

In his childhood, Gandhi used to be full of fear. There was a maid in his home called Rambha. Gandhi disclosed to her how he was always afraid. Rambha told him: "Child, always recite the name of Rama. By chanting Rama's name, your fear will go away." From that time Gandhi was always chanting the name of Rama. The habit of reciting Rama's name, which began in his boyhood, continued right up to the moment of his passing. Nor was that all. By adhering to the chanting of Rama's name, Gandhiji was able to achieve his aim of winning the country's freedom by non-violent means. For such a life of purity and virtue, the parents were primarily responsible.

Today parents themselves lack refined qualities

Unfortunately, today, because the parents themselves have no purity of character and lack refined qualities, and do not lead regulated lives, evil practices and wickedness are growing all over the world. When the parents get up from their beds abusing each other, their children get up assailing each other. Because of the malefic effects of the Kali age, parents tend to be quarrelsome. Fathers are behaving like Hiranya Kashyapa. Because of such parents, Bharath is witnessing the spread of unrighteousness and evil practices. In days of yore the people of Bharath earned name and fame by leading virtuous and sacred lives and were an example to the world. The children of today take after their parents. The tree is based on the seed and the seed determines the nature of the tree. For the evil ways and bad behaviour of children today, the parents alone are to be blamed. Few parents choose to tell their children to speak the truth, to act righteously and earn a good name. Because of such bad parents, the nation is forfeiting its good name. It is better that such children are not born at all. They are a disgrace to their parents and to their country. Their education and their jobs may help to bring to them power, position and wealth but do not serve to promote in them such virtues as compassion, kindness and sacrifice. All their acquisitions have no permanence. Whatever strength one may possess, without the strength of the Divine, he is a weakling. What happened to a valiant person like Kama?

He had physical prowess, intellectual abilities and great scholarship but lacking Divine support, he met with a pitiable end.

Teachers' failure to teach the right path

For all the ills with which the nation is afflicted today, the parents and teachers are responsible. The teachers do not punish the students (for their lapses). Because the students are not punished for their mistakes, they behave as they please. The teachers are responsible for the sins of the students. They do not teach the students the right path. They transmit only book knowledge, but do not teach right knowledge, wise living and higher values. If there are no morals and no human values, a man becomes a demon. Only he is a real man who harmonises in his life the body, the mind and the Atma. A life based on the body and the senses is an animal existence. One who is totally dominated by the thoughts and fancies of the mind is a demon. One who ignores the calls of the body and the mind and follows the call of the Spirit is Divine. The animal, the demonic and the Divine possibilities are immanent in the human condition. Hence, one who values only the body and follows the inclinations of the senses is comparable to an animal. In a sense, the animal may be considered superior to such a man because it has "a season and a reason" for its behaviour. But one having the human form, who craves for sensuous pleasures alone, is worse than an animal.

Character is more important than wealth

Even for these three kinds of behaviour, the parents and teachers are responsible. They are responsible for the good or bad conduct of the students. It is the parents who lead children to the highest levels or cause them to fall to the lowest depths. Parents are concerned solely about the material welfare of their children and have no concern for their moral and spiritual well-being. When a child is born, the parents desire that he should be educated, sent abroad, encouraged to make as much money as possible there by whatever means. This is all that they teach their children. People today earn money in so many different ways, from begging to dacoity. It is not wealth that is important. Character is primary. Parents do not teach the

children to cultivate good qualities. They do not control children who go astray. They condone the lapses of the children and often encourage them in their bad habits. They are encouraged in their wrong ways even as Duryodhana was encouraged by his father, Dhritharashtra. It is because of such parents that the children today take to wrong courses. Dhritharashtra was not only physically blind, but lacked also the eyes of wisdom. He was totally blind. Parents today are tending to be equally blind. They don't correct the mistakes of their children or chastise them. They are afraid that the children might run away and commit suicide. Parents have the right to warn and correct their children. Why should they be afraid to do so? What does it matter what happens to such wicked children? Instead of being a running sore for the parents, it is better they are no more. Death is preferable to infamy. Nor is there greater wealth than fame. Better to have a renowned son who is short-lived than an infamous son with long life.

Ensure world peace by winning God's love

The foremost thing which man has to acquire today is God's love. This love will secure world peace, peace in society and peace in the home. Through the individual's love and morality, there will be peace and security in the home. By individuals winning the love of God, society secures peace and order. When the people have got the love of God, the world as a whole enjoys peace and happiness.

Happiness and peace are not to be found in wealth, position or power. All these generate only fear and anxiety and not peace and happiness. Today, even highly educated persons do not recognise this truth, pose as devotees, but follow the examples of their parents. Hiranya Kashyapa tried all methods to divert his son, Prahlada, from devotion to God. The child was subjected to every conceivable kind of torture and ordeal: trampling by elephants, biting by cobras and immersion in the sea. But Prahlada's devotion to the Lord saved him. Disregarding his perverse father, Prahlada held fast to the Lord.

Noble and Divine feelings are absent today

There is nothing great about being a father. No father can rejoice merely when a son is born. Only when the people praise the virtues of the son will the father rejoice over his birth. A righteous son redeems himself and his family. Verily, they alone are fit to be called parents who bring up such virtuous children. Prahlada declared, "He alone is a father who tells his son: Child, realise God. He is a true Guru who leads the disciple to God." Such teachers and parents have become rare these days. All that had brought fame and glory to the country in the past has become a waste because of the decline of moral values and behaviour. The educational system is utterly vitiated. There is no attempt to promote human qualities. Noble and Divine feelings are absent. It is utterly unbecoming of those who call themselves human beings to behave like animals with no devotion to God. What does the word "Bhagavan" mean? It is not a nominal title. "Brahmethi, Paramatmethi, Bhaga Ithi Sah," says the Veda. That is, Bhagavan is the One who is the Supreme Absolute and Over-Soul. The word Bhaga means Sambhartha and Bhartha. Sambhartha is one who is responsible for creation of the cosmos. Bhartha refers to one who sustains and protects the cosmos. This means that Bhagavan is One who has the power of creation and protection. "Bha" means kanthi (effulgence) and Shanthi (peace). "Ga" means one who is all-pervading, "van" means the one who has the capacity. Thus, "Bhagavan" refers to one who illumines and confers peace on the universe.

Man today does not seek to comprehend the inner meaning of Divinity. There is nothing in this world apart from the Divine. All that is seen in the phenomenal world is permeated by the Divine. The egoistic conceit of man, which makes him feel that he is the doer and enjoyer, is the cause of his ruin. This egoism has to be routed out. Man must seek to manifest his divinity. Only then can peace and security be established in the world.

Responsibility of parents towards children

Every effort has to be made to experience Divine love and purity. One who has secured love can accomplish anything. Nothing is beyond his reach. Hence, one should be worthy of God's grace. Without Divine grace, man is no more than an animal. Man should strive to control his senses, develop good

qualifies and lead an ideal life. Parents are primarily responsible for bringing up children who will lead such ideal lives. Â· Therefore, they have to reform themselves. Today parents all over the country are worried about the conduct of their children and are not at all happy. They lament about the behaviour of their children, but do not realise that they are themselves to be blamed. If the parents had brought up the children on fight lines, would they go astray? Pampering the children in various ways, they are allowed to go about like street dogs. How can such boys be reformed? It is impossible. When wealth grows, arrogance increases and morality declines.

Men should realise that without God's love, human existence is utterly valueless. A bird like Jatayu earned God's grace. A simple old woman like Sabari won God's love. But men today, despite their scholarship and scientific knowledge, are making no attempts to secure God's love. What is the use of this education or science? True science should serve to promote the progress of the nation. But today, in the name of science, the world is being destroyed. Education should not breed a class of parasites, who exploit others. It should help to promote good qualities.

Victory can be won only with God's grace

Students should remember that this country was known in the past as a land where people led truthful and righteous lives. Krishna told Arjuna that he should consider God and Dharma (Righteousness) as most important. Because the Pandavas adhered to Righteousness and had firm faith in God, they could ultimately enjoy all prosperity and happiness. Because of their love for God, they could bear with fortitude all troubles and difficulties. What was the fate of the Kauravas who ignored God? Not one of Dhritrashtra's hundred sons survived. Despite all the resources they had and the valiant commanders who were on their side, God was not on their side.

True victory can be won only by God's grace. Students! Strive for securing the love of God. Today, love is being misused for satisfying the senses, with deplorable results. (Swami related the dialogue between Yajnavalkya and his wife, Maithreyee, over attachment to the things of the world and pointed out

how Maithreyee was as ready to give up worldly possessions as the sage himself).

Today, such couples are rare. There must be such couples who will give birth to virtuous children. Only virtuous children can bring a good name to the country. Of what use is a son who does not use his hands to perform good deeds, who does not use his tongue to utter the Lord's name and who does not cherish in his mind truth and compassion? This is the triple purity that makes human life sublime. Students should dedicate their lives to the service of others. Cultivate love. Remember the great mothers in the past who gave to the world Avatars from time to time. What is the inner significance of observing today as Mother's day? It means that women should become such great mothers. The fathers should be exemplary in their conduct. When the fathers are not setting the right example, the children should be such as to have the courage to correct the parents. But unfortunately there are neither exemplary parents nor exemplary children. Students! Fill your hearts with love.

I am always emphasising the value of Service as a Sadhana for realising the Oneness of all in God and the oneness of one's self with God. I do not recommend the giving up of Karma, for it is not possible. What is generally meant by Karmasanyas is the giving up of rites and rituals prescribed by the Scriptures. I call upon you to adhere to a new rite, Seva a new Yaga, Sacrifice of the Ego, a new ritual of worship, Saranagathi, dedication of all thoughts, words and deeds at the Lotus Feet of the Lord and acceptance of all that happens as Grace from Him

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

12. No Greater Sin Than Ingratitude

Date: 10 May 1992 / Location: Brindavan

When rain falls on a sandy bed, it seeps down;
When the same rain falls on a bed of clay, it remains sweet water;
When raindrops fall into an oyster, they become pearls.
Likewise, devotion results in what one deserves.

Embodiments of Divine Love!

For all names and forms in the world, there is one that is basic. Without that basis no object can have a name or form. For instance, here is a tumbler. It has name and form. But its primary base is silver. When the tumbler is melted, what remains is only the silver. What happened to the earlier name and form? They have merged in the silver. Likewise, the basic truth underlying all the myriad names and forms in the world is the Sathwik principle. It is pure Sathya. It is Divine. It is this Divine Principle that enables everything to have a name and form.

"Ekoham Bahushyam"
(I am One, let me become the Many).

It was by the Will of the Divine that all the myriad objects came into existence. The basic principle in this multiplicity is oneness. Between the numbers one and nine, nine is the larger number. But, in fact, the number nine is made up of nine ones (1 + 1 + 1...). One is the basic number. So also all the diversity has emanated from the One.

Life is an interlude between birth and death

What is the meaning of human life? It is an interlude between birth and death. In this interlude, men are victims of a variety of desires. There is no harmony between men's thoughts, words and actions. What is the reason? Man's actions are not in accordance with his thoughts. Man's thoughts are full of ideals. But he makes no effort to act up to these ideals. He thinks in one way, speaks in another way and acts in a different way. Consequently, he is subject to all kinds of sorrow and disorder. This is because he fails to satisfy his conscience. A man without self-satisfaction can have no peace. When can self-satisfaction be realised? When there is unity and harmony in thought, word and deed: to speak as you feel and to act up to your words. Man today is racked by all kinds of troubles. Are these troubles designed to make man miserable or to elevate him to a higher level of existence? Every trouble is really a step in elevating man. If there are no troubles, man will have no proper lessons. Troubles constitute good lessons. Trouble and pleasure are inextricably mixed and cannot be separated from each other by anyone. Pleasure has no separate existence. It is the fruit of pain. This basic truth is not recognised by man. When grief smites him, he succumbs to it. He gloats over some happy experience. His entire life is bound up with these varying experiences of pleasure and pain. Therefore, man has to cultivate the sense of equanimity in pleasure and suffering. There is a joy in sorrow. There is suffering in happiness. It is only when man cultivates the sense of equanimity in all circumstances, in pleasure or pain, that he will be able to experience peace.

Thoughts are basis for the actions

All experiences of pleasure and pain have their origin in the thoughts of man. Thought is like the seed of a tree, which in due course puts forth branches, leaves, flowers and fruits. All that you see in a tree has come from a small seed. Likewise, although man's thought is subtle, it contains potentially the entire universe. The atom is the microcosm of the Universe. Students are aware of the huge size of the banyan tree. Its seed, however, is very small. The seed and the tree are essentially one.

Man has to keep a watch over his thoughts because they form the basis for his actions. When his wishes are fulfilled, he is content. When they are not realised, he feels disappointed. Man does not enquire into the causes of these divergent results. His failures are the result of his own shortcomings. When his heart is pure, his actions yield beneficial results. His thoughts are the cause of the success or failure of his efforts. Hence, man must utilise his thoughts in the proper manner. His vision of the world depends on how he looks at it. "As he feels, so he becomes." When one's thoughts are sublime, the results are also sublime.

Man owes the society for all his achievements

Man receives help from various people in the world. Without such help, men cannot progress towards a higher level of existence. In childhood, the mother looks after the child. In boyhood, the father provides for his education. Later, he is involved in activities with friends. And then his kith and kin involve him in family relationships. Thus various persons assist man in his life. Without the help of various people, no one can progress towards a higher life. A man who has derived help in this manner, what help is he rendering to his fellowmen? It is good to render help to one who has helped you. It is even greater to help one who has done you harm. When this is the case, it is essential that man should serve the society that has helped him in so many ways. He owes to society the name and position he has achieved. Hence he must render service. This was the dictum of sage Vyasa as the distilled essence of his eighteen Puranas: "It is meritorious to render help to others; it is sinful to do them harm." This means:

Help ever, hurt never.

Do not cause harm to anyone. If you can help anyone, do so.

The difference between mistake and sin

Once Duryodhana declared, "I know what is good and what is bad. I also know that bad consequences will follow bad actions. But I am impelled to do only bad deeds. I know what is good. I know that good deeds will yield good results. But my mind is not inclined towards doing good. What is the reason for this? It is the absence of purity in my thoughts. My heart is filled with selfishness. My life has grown in the soil of selfishness. Out of selfishness I am seeking gains for myself. For selfish reasons I am harassing the Pandavas. I am aware of this. I am doing all this consciously." If one commits a wrong unwittingly, he is guilty of committing a mistake. But if he commits it deliberately, he is committing a sin. This is the difference between a mistake and a sin. In this context, it may be pointed out that Karna is a great example of one who cherished gratitude for the good done to him. He was not only a great donor who gave away whatever was sought from him. His loyalty to his master was unbounded. He was ever ready to lay down his life for his master.

The ruler of Panchala announced that his daughter Draupadi would be given in marriage to any bowman who could bring down an overhanging fish-yantra by looking at its reflection in water. Rulers from many countries had assembled there. Draupadi was no ordinary woman. She emanated from a blaze of fire. Who was worthy of her hand in marriage? Those taking part in the wedding contest had to abide by one of two conditions. Either he should be a ruler or a Kshatriya. Karna was a great warrior. He had come to take part in the contest. Unfortunately, he was not the ruler of any state and he was a charioteer's son, not a Kshatriya. For these reasons, he was asked to withdraw from the contest. He felt depressed that in spite of all his other accomplishments he could not take part in the contest. As he was walking back, Duryodhana got up with the feeling, "There is no one equal in prowess to Karna excepting Arjuna. With Karna on my side I can always deal with the Pandavas." He came to Karna's help at that moment. In that assemblage, he made Karna King of Angadesa. For that one act of magnanimity, by which he was made a ruler, Karna pledged himself to serve Duryodhana by shedding the last drop of blood for him. Later on, the Kauravas and Pandavas had gathered their forces for war. Krishna had tried his best to prevent the

Armageddon as he knew the infinite calamities war brought in its train. He went as an envoy of the Pandavas to plead for a peaceful settlement with the Kauravas. Arjuna told Krishna that it was futile to parley with the wicked Kauravas and that they should get ready for battle.

A mother's love is unbounded

A day before the battle was to begin, Kunthi, the mother of the Pandavas, realised what was impending. She was the mother of Karna also. Karna was her first-born who was the child of a boon from the Sun-God. She was aware of his extraordinary powers and sought an opportunity to meet him. There may be bad sons, but there is no bad mother. A mother's love is unbounded. One day, Karna was performing Sandhya vandanam in the morning after taking a bath in the river. Getting news of this from her maids, Kunthi went to the river bank. Karna was in meditation. Kunthi stood behind him. As she stood, she was overwhelmed by grief at seeing him after a long time. She was also stricken with sorrow at the prospect of her near and dear ones dying in the impending battle.

Kunthi reveals that Karna was her son

Unable to bear the grief, she wailed aloud. Karna emerged suddenly from his meditation. He saw Kunthidevi before him. He did not know that she was his mother, though he knew she was the mother of the Pandavas. He asked her, "Mother! Why are you in such great sorrow? I am Karna the son of Radha. I offer my salutations to you. Please let me know the cause of your grief." Kunthi replied, "Dear child, you are not the son of Radha. You are my son. You were born to me as a boon from the Sun-God. To avoid public ignominy, I left you on the Ganga. I am a great sinner. I pitilessly abandoned you on the Ganga though you were a new-born babe. For selfish reasons, to safeguard my name, I abandoned you in this manner. You are my eldest son. The Pandavas are your brothers and Dharmaraja is your younger brother. Dear son, give me one promise. If all of you were united, you could rule the entire world. You could become the emperor. All the Pandavas will obey and follow your footsteps like a shadow. I give you my word. Do not bear any enmity

towards the Pandavas in the impending battle. Consider them in your heart as your brothers. Ponder over the sorrow that afflicts your mother." When Karna heard these words, he was caught in a whirl and his mind was in confusion. "I had heard now and then about the secret of my origin, but never before from the mouth of my mother. The Pandavas are indeed my brothers. I am Kunthidevi's son. But at this juncture, am I to abide by my mother's words? Or am I to show my gratitude to my master?" Karna debated thus within himself.

Karna's refusal to betray his master

He told Kunthi: "Whether he was a wicked or an unrighteous person, it was Duryodhana who gave me a position of honour and raised me to my present state. I cannot betray my master. But, because you are my Mother, I will give you one promise declared Karna. "Promise to the mother is one thing; loyalty to the master is a different thing. The former is in the nature of a fight. The latter is a responsibility. They are like the two wheels of a chariot or the two wings of a bird. They go together. Mother, I give you this promise. When the occasion arises, I shall spare Dharmaraja, Bheema, Nakula and Sahadeva. I will not harm them. But I will not spare Arjuna. If in this battle I lose my life, the five Pandavas will be your sons. In case Arjuna dies, you will still have five sons. I will take the place of Arjuna among the Pandavas. In any case, there will be no diminution in the number of your five sons. This is my plighted word." Saying this, Karna caught hold of his mother's feet and said, "Mother! The other day, in the court of Dhruvadhya, Duryodhana saved my honour. I know he is a wicked man. I also know that the Pandavas are the very embodiment of Dharma. But I will be worse than a cruel animal in the forest if I forget the good done to me by Duryodhana. I have to show my gratitude to my master. In this respect, there can be no change in my attitude," declared Karna.

No atonement for betraying the Divine

Later, Karna gave away even the earrings given to him by the Sun-God. And he offered to Indra the armour he was wearing. He even laid down his life for

his master. But he did not give up the gratitude he owed to Duryodhana. It must be remembered that there is a means of atoning for the killing of a Brahmin or a cow or an infant. But there is no way of atoning for betraying the preceptor or the Divine. If you turn ungrateful you will be worse than a wild beast. Kunthi then declared: "I shall be happy if you remain a man with such high ideals. Let me tell you there is no one who can slay Arjuna. You bear animosity towards Arjuna. I am content with your promise. It is enough if you spare Dharmaraja, Bheema, Nakula and Sahadeva." In this context, observe how much gratitude existed among the Pandavas. Dharmaraja, Bheema and Arjuna were the sons of Kunthi. Nakula and Sahadeva were the sons of Madri (the second wife of Pandu). When Madri was about to commit Sari on her husband's funeral pyre, Dharmaraja gave her a promise. He said, "Mother! You are about to give up your life for the sake of my father. I shall look after your sons with even greater concern than for my uterine brothers. Whatever differences may arise between us, I shall treat them as my own brothers." He gave this pledge to Madri.

In the Mahabharatha, during the stay of the Pandavas in exile, the four brothers - Bheema, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva - died at a pond where they had gone to bring water because they refused to answer the questions which the guardian Yaksha (spirit) of the pond wished to put to them before they were allowed to take the water. Dharmaraja then came to the pond and answered all the questions put to him by the Yaksha. The Yaksha was so pleased with the replies that he granted a boon to Dharmaraja. He was prepared to restore to life one of the four brothers whom Dharmaraja would name. Dharmaraja promptly asked that Nakula or Sahadeva might be restored to life. The Yaksha wondered why Dharmaraja did not ask for the restoration of one of his own brothers, Bheema or Arjuna, but preferred one of the two stepbrothers. Dharmaraja replied that as he was there as a surviving son for his mother Kunthi, he wanted that a son of his stepmother, Madri, should be alive. Dharmaraja mentioned the pledge he had given to Madri. Appreciating the large-mindedness of Dharmaraja, the Yaksha restored all the four brothers to life.

Gratitude is a great virtue

Gratitude is a great virtue. When the power of gratitude is realised, it will be seen that it can give benefits much more than anyone can imagine. If out of narrow-mindedness, men become ungrateful, they will suffer grievously. If such is the case in regard to purely human relationships, how much more rewarding gratitude can be when it is offered to God?

Dear Students!

This is a period of innocence and inexperience in your life. You are filled with desires. You tend to be selfish and self-centred. But even so, you can make your lives sacred and meaningful by carrying out the injunctions of the Divine. If you adhere to this one rule, you will redeem your lives and promote the welfare of your families and your society. Although Dharmaraja asked only for the restoration to life of only one stepbrother, the Yaksha revived all the brothers.

Karna stands out as the supreme exemplar of gratitude. He demonstrated what it means to be grateful to one who has helped you, even if he happens to be a wicked person.

13. Love The Motherland: Serve The World

Date: 21 May 1992 / Location: Brindavan

English education has become all-important; Spiritual education has receded; How, then, can purity of heart be experienced? That purity alone is the backbone of education. Ignorant of the high ideals of The Divine culture of Bharath, Bharathiyas make no effort to know their heritage. What greater misfortune can there be than this? Dear Students! True Bharathiya education consists in instilling in the students reverence for Bharath and its cultural heritage. It is not politics that will protect Bharath. Nor will bombs and arms protect it. It is the patriotism and spirit of sacrifice enshrined in the hearts of the people and their spiritual outlook that will protect the nation. Hence students today should be filled with the spirit of sacrifice, cultivate selfless devotion to the country and prepare themselves to pursue the spiritual path. Only such students - boys and girls - can protect the nation and safeguard its security.

Bharathiya education is not a prison-house

Bharathiya education is not the kind of education which makes one spend a lot of money to acquire a degree and then go about with a begging bowl for jobs. It aims at promoting selfreliance, instilling in the student the noble idea of promoting the progress of the country in a spirit of sacrifice and leading a joyous life of dedicated service to the people. It seeks to promote unity in diversity. It prepares the minds of students to fight against all forms of injustice, corruption and wickedness afflicting society. Bharathiya education is not a prison-house for creating mental slavery or bondage to a job. It proclaims in strident terms: "The One abides as the Inner Spirit in all beings." It calls upon everyone to manifest his divinity. Thus, true Bharathiya education seeks to instil patriotism, promote the spirit of sacrifice, and encourage spiritual pursuits and thereby lead an ideal life. Students! Education does not mean imparting worldly knowledge for leading a mundane existence. True education should inspire one with feelings and thoughts to lead an ideal life. When a man is born, he is endowed with limited capacities.

But owing to the misuse of the senses and the limitless growth of desires, these capacities are wasted away. As a consequence, he becomes prematurely old and dies. Hence, these limited capacities should be properly used by controlling the senses, thereby prolonging one's life, and dedicating one's knowledge and talents to the service of society. It is only when students develop character and integrity that they will be able to transform the moral climate of the world around them. It is because education has failed to transform human behaviour that there is no mental or spiritual development among them. For this purpose, a system of Dharma (moral order) has to be established that will promote both worldly and other-worldly well-being. Only then will humanity be divinised.

Three qualities and three Gunas

A student has to possess three qualities. "Sarva loka hithe rathah" (Rejoicing in the well-being of the entire world). This is the first quality. The student must wish for the welfare of every country. The second quality is "Sarvajnana Sambhavah" (acquire all knowledge). This means that his knowledge should not be confined only to worldly matters. His knowledge should comprehend the spiritual. Every man is endowed with Jnana (knowledge). This assumes many forms. It is not mere intellectual exercise or mental speculation. It does not mean living in a dream world. It is not a product of the imagination. Jnana, in its profound sense, is the experience of oneness - "Ekaika dharshanam." "Adwaita dharshanam jnanam" (Perception of the One alone is Wisdom), declares the scripture. There is no duality in this Jnana. Ajnana (ignorance) is the reverse of this awareness. This awareness should be reflected every moment, in every step of a human being. To acquire such awareness or knowledge, one has to secure three capacities. One, a healthy body, two, sense control, three, restraining the mind. If any one of these three is lacking, the awareness will be incomplete. All three should be in the right condition. If there is a defect in any one of them, full Sathwik knowledge cannot be got.

Abuse of the senses

The reason for the prevalence of various ailments among students today is

the dissipation of energy caused by the abuse of the senses. For instance, the eye has a limited capacity to see. So the eyes should be used up to their capacity. This is the rationale for the motto: "See no evil. See what is good." The ears also have limits to what they can hear. You should not let the ears hear whatever you like. Thereby, the ears lose their power of hearing. The tongue is a powerful organ, but it also is subject to certain limits. By indulging in excessive speech, using harsh words and unpleasant language, the tongue's power is weakened. The tongue's power of speech is diminished by four practises: uttering falsehood, abusing others, indulging in slander, and excessive talking. In this manner, the powers of the senses are being wasted by their misuse. As a result, one's life itself gets debilitated.

It is not difficult to go through the education process. By some effort, marks may be scored. But neither the blossoming of intelligence nor the unfoldment of good qualities can be witnessed in such students. The scoring of high marks or winning of high rank is not great in itself. What is important is the transformation of the mind. In the pursuit of education, practising what one learns is most essential. The external gains derived from education are accompanied by an equal amount of losses. The powers of intelligence and discrimination are lost. Knowledge of what is good, what is significant and what is supreme wisdom is lost. People are becoming slaves of the senses. The Kathopanishad declared: "The slave of the senses is a fool. Only the man who subdues the senses is a hero."

Anyone who misuses his senses is a fool

Here is an illustration. Ravana was a greater scholar than Rama. He was a master of sixty-four categories of knowledge. He knew also knowledge about the training of cows and elephants. Despite all these accomplishments, Ravana was described by Valmiki as a *muurkha* (a stubborn fool). Rama was described as *Dharmamuurthi* (the very image of righteousness). Despite all his knowledge, Ravana failed to keep his senses under control. Because he let his senses have free play, he became a fool. Anyone who misuses his senses is a fool, whatever the extent of his knowledge. Rama had full control of his senses and maintained perfect equipoise in all circumstances, whether of joy

or grief. When he had to leave for the forest at the very moment that had been fixed for his coronation, he left for the forest with serene equanimity. He was unaffected by gains or losses, pleasure or pain. Life is a mixture of happiness and misery. Students! Your first task is to cultivate control over the senses. Only the student who has mastery over the senses can be heroic in his life and be strong and effulgent as a diamond. The one who is a slave of the senses will be a slave of the world. Self-control must be the primary aim of education.

Students today are not filled with love for the country. They are also lacking in self-confidence. And there is no sign of faith in the Spirit in them. Students therefore should cherish patriotism and develop self-confidence. Only then will they be in a position to make use of their education for serving the country and promoting the well-being and prosperity of the nation.

Ideals in life are very important

Educated persons today are totally immersed in selfish pursuits. They do not think of service to others or the good of the nation. They are concerned about their jobs even before they complete their education. The link between education and employment should be completely snapped. Education should be for life and not for a living. It is not earning a livelihood that is important. What matters is the ideals for which you live. The primary purpose of education is to enable one to manifest the divinity within him. When students pursue education in this spirit, they will promote the welfare of the nation, of society and their own good.

Therefore, education should not be pursued as a means for achieving a desired end. This is a degrading attitude. All worldly desires can confer only limited pleasure. How, then, is one to achieve lasting bliss? It cannot be got through the body. Only through inner experience can lasting bliss be secured. Then alone is there fulfilment in life. Today there is no harmony between thought, word and deed. Thinking in one way, speaking in a different way, and acting in a different way, men are getting themselves bound by their own contradictions. In the process, they are deceiving themselves.

Keep desires within limits

Education should be pursued, not merely for acquiring degrees, but for cultivating human values. All riches are ephemeral. Do not become slaves of wealth. Become subjects of good qualities. Wealth without character is worthless. Life becomes an ideal one when character constitutes one's wealth. The blossoming of one's character leads to radiance in life. When a child is born, he is innocent of all desires. As he grows older, desires multiply. These desires have to be kept within limits. Life is a long journey and the less luggage you carry, the greater the comfort. Reducing desires is the true mark of civilisation. The government has imposed ceilings on land, on houses, and on many other things. But there is no ceiling on desires. Education should lead to restraint on desires. It should be realised that every organ in the body has a limit to what it can do. It is dangerous to use it beyond that limit. This applies to almost everything in life. Whenever the limit is exceeded, there is an adverse consequence. Excessive light will burn the retina. A deafening noise may damage the eardrum.

Students! You are not unaware of the situation in the world today. Wherever you turn, there is disorder and violence. Man has been given two boons. Sukham and Shanthi (happiness and peace). Every person in the world, from a king to a beggar, desires only these two. But what is the happiness that he should seek? Is it physical, mental, or material pleasure? Men are not sure about what kind of happiness they want and wherefrom they can get it. If it is sensory pleasure that they want, they will find that these are only momentary and that they are weakened at the end. This is no pleasure at all. What about peace? People consider freedom from worry as peace. Thyagaraja declared that there can be no pleasure without peace. How is peace to be secured? Only when desires are reduced will peace be secured. As desires grow, peace is lost.

Develop contentment to put an end to desires

Man is a prey to insatiable desires. As soon as he realises one desire, he

develops a desire for something more attractive. He wants to become a legislator. Soon after he becomes one, he wants to become a minister and thereafter the Chief Minister. He is not content with that. He desires to go to Delhi. There is no end to these desires. Man should develop contentment. The discontented man loses in many ways. A student may desire to score high marks, but he should not wish that others should not fare equally well. This selfish attitude is unbecoming. All should fare equally well in the examinations. All should achieve excellence. Students should have this broadminded attitude.

Rejoice in the success of others

The stage of the student is like that of a tender sapling. When it is tended properly, it will grow into a good tree. From this young age you should see that the mind does not go astray. Do not give room for envy, hatred and arrogance. Rejoice in the success of others. Success will come to you of its own accord. Yield place to persons weaker than yourself in queuing for the bus. Shed the desire to get ahead of others. Do not always think narrowly about your own position. It is only when you develop a broad outlook that you will be able to emerge in the years to come as leaders of the nations. You are the leaders of tomorrow. It is only if you develop right attitudes now that you will be able to play your roles properly in the future. Purify your hearts. Control your senses. This is the right path. Spirituality does not mean mere meditation or worship. It means getting rid of the pollution in the mind. Students should be known for their serenity and orderliness. Instead, we find that there is excitement and agitation wherever a few students gather. This should not be allowed to happen.

Students! Yesterday Natesan brought two life-size figures of lions in bronze from his collection of antiques. You may wonder why these lions have been displayed on the stage. Many may be under the impression that they are kept for decorative purposes. But I considered them from a sacred point of view.

The lion is esteemed as the king of animals. It is not prone to commit anything mean or lowly. It is only when it is hungry that it kills an animal. It

does not kill animals wantonly. Because it is known for its nobility of character it has been dubbed the King of animals. It has been said that human birth is rare among living beings. Hence every man should strive to become a lion among men. You should not fall a prey to weakness or fear. Be lions and not sheep. Our students should become lions who will protect the people as leaders. They should be content to use their abilities for satisfying their minimum needs. Do not get involved in foolhardy adventure. Observe the proper limits in the use of your talents, wealth or position. Pledge yourselves to promote the advancement of the country with determination, courage and spirit of sacrifice. Go forward with courage. "God is by your side. God is the Indweller in the heart." Have this confidence in yourself. This confidence begets courage. Mr. Justice Chandhrachud said that the first requisite is courage. What kind of courage? The one who is filled with doubts perishes - "Samshayatma vinasayathi." Never become "Doubting Thomases." Only when you are free from doubts will you become heroic. Doubts will disappear where there is self-confidence. "Shradhavan labhathe Jnanam" (The earnest aspirant gains supreme wisdom). It is lack of earnestness that gives rise to doubts. Students should develop firm faith in sacrifice, patriotism and the spiritual goal. There is no need to tell you more about this, as you are familiar with all this as students of the Sathya Sai Institute. But there are quite a few new things which you have to learn. And there are many things which you have learnt which you have to put into practice and experience the fruits thereof. Moreover, you have to share and rejoice with others your experiences. That is the way to experience real bliss.

Develop firm faith in God

Students! The Vice-chancellor expressed a wish that Swami should bless the students with knowledge of Bharath's culture as embodied in great works like the Mahabharatha and the Ramayana. These works are of value not only to Bharathiyas but to the whole of mankind. However, it is not enough if you merely listen to these discourses in the Summer Course. You should try to transform yourselves as a result. Without such transformation the Summer Course will be in vain. Therefore, cherish in your hearts whatever is said here. Develop firm faith in God. It is the loss of faith in God that has led to the

degradation of mankind today. The existence of the Divine is demonstrated, even by science, in many ways. For instance, the sun, the moon, the earth and other planets are moving in their different orbits according to certain speeds. It will be disastrous for the world if they change their courses. There must be an unknown power which determines their movements. Without such a power they would not be following their prescribed courses. Who has determined these orbits and limits? We must ponder over this. We drop an object from the hand. We see the object falling to the ground. But we do not see the power of attraction of the earth - the power of gravitational attraction. The gravitational force is there even though you don't see it. To deny what you cannot see is a mark of ignorance.

How the Divine works

To give another example. During World War II, millions of men died in Europe. Two years after the war ended, the children who were born were predominantly males. What is the reason for this? It is the need for maintaining a balance between the ratio of men and women in the population. If such a balance is not maintained, the human race will be extinct. What is the power that maintains such a balance? It is the will of the Divine. Whoever enquires deeply into the workings of the Divine cannot fail to notice this. There is at the base of everything a power that is at work. That is divinity. Ignoring this, and placing his faith egoistically in some other power, man is falling a prey to *ashanthi* (unrest). He is a slave to his conceit as a doer and enjoyer. This is wrong. There is a principle that is the Prime Mover. There is a power which governs the Cosmic process. Few attempt to recognise this. However, it may be asked, if God is controlling everything, what is the need for human effort? God is like the electric current. But even if the current is there, you must have a bulb to obtain light. It is only when the bulb is switched on to the current that the bulb will burn. Students should understand how the four values Sathya, Dharma, Shanthi, and Prema, are interrelated. If a bulb is to shed light, it has to be connected to a switch by a wire and current should flow in the wire. Sathya is the current. Dharma is the wire. Shanthi is the bulb. Prema is the light. When the current of Truth is connected to the wire of Righteousness and enters the bulb of Peace, you

have the light of Love. You can see how all the four are essential. Human effort and Divine Grace should come together like the joining of the negative and positive ends of an electric circuit, to accomplish anything.

Students! Fill your hearts with the resolve to promote the welfare of the nation. Do not succumb to selfishness and careerism. Dedicate your lives to the well-being of the world and the promotion of world peace.

Drop the delusion that you have become old or diseased, or that you have become weak and debilitated. Some people count the years and grieve over advancing age and shudder like cowards afraid of Death. But remember, elation is Heaven, despondency is hell. Have always some work to do and do it so well that you get joy.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

14. From Knowledge To Wisdom

Date: 22 May 1992 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 1992

Not one in a hundred among today's students Cares to study the prescribed texts. They are anxious only to secure a pass Modern education has become a farce. Vidya dhadhathi Vinayam (Education confers humility). Humility does not mean merely an external show of respect. The true meaning of humility is the absence of a feeling of Ahamkara and Mamakara (egoism and the pride of possession). Education should aim at inculcating such an attitude among students. Every man should cultivate such feelings of egolessness and detachment and lead his life on this basis. "Adhyatma Vidya Vidhyanam" (Among studies, I am the study of the spiritual), declared Lord Krishna in the Gita. He also observed, "I am the embodiment of spiritual knowledge," in the Gita. Pursuing spiritual studies, the ancient sages realised spiritual truths and divinised their lives. The greatness and glory of Bharath are based on its spiritual heritage. The true wealth of Bharath consists in its spirituality. If spirituality declines in this land, the nation will go to seed. Together with this spirituality it is essential to have morality. Morality means ethical behaviour. It is the supreme duty of students to demonstrate such conduct in their daily life. A characterless student can never enjoy peace or happiness. Morality, thus, determines humanness and leads to spiritual illumination. Students should recognise this truth. It was for this reason that in ancient times the people of Bharath propagated constantly the value of morality and proclaimed the greatness of spirituality.

Goodness is present within everyone

Students! "Through perseverance anything can be accomplished," is a well-known adage. For instance, goodness in a person is like a piece of burning charcoal. However, the fire in it is covered by the ashes of worldly desires. When the ashes are removed by sadhana (spiritual practice) the fire of goodness is revealed. Without this sadhana, the goodness will not be manifest. In fact, in every man, goodness is shining within as an effulgent light. But this remains invisible because it is enveloped in a cloak of worldly

attachments. Science and technology are making rapid strides today. But along with scientific knowledge, ignorance is also growing pari passu. Vijnana means light. Where there is light there can be no darkness. So where there is Vijnana there is no room for ignorance. But today we notice that everywhere, every moment ignorance is apparent. This means that the light of Vijnana (scientific knowledge) is not shining brightly enough. If we had the full light of Vijnana, there would be no sign of ignorance at all. It is clear, therefore, that the light of Vijnana (science) today is not comparable to the light of prajna (the light of complete awareness). Vijnana is form of ignorance.

It is obvious, therefore, that more than knowledge, what is essential is the refinement of human behaviour and Samskara (conduct). Sacrifice and charity are more important than wealth or position. Hence, for every individual, practical knowledge of the world is more essential than mere adhikaram (position or authority). The first prerequisite for this is the promotion of human values.

Human values come first

Because of the absence of human values, it has been impossible to demonstrate the value of human existence. Man, therefore, has to start with the cultivation of human values. These human values can be developed only by spiritual practices and by no other means. Only when a seed is planted in the soil and watered can it sprout and grow from a sapling into a big tree. But if the seed is kept in a tin and watered, it will only rot. Likewise with human values, it is only when they are implanted in a heart that is sacred and spiritual and nurtured there, that they will flourish and shine in all their splendour. Unfortunately, today man's heart is filled with narrow selfish concerns. His love is confined to himself and his nearest kith and kin. He does not realise that his welfare and the welfare of his family are dependent on the well-being of the society. This interrelationship should be grasped by students. They should take a firm resolve to eschew selfishness and self-interest and dedicate themselves to the service of society. When the society fares well, the nation also will be prosperous. Students should realise the integral unity of their individual well-being and the well-being of the society

and the nation.

Spirituality should manifest in your behaviour

Man aspires for a fruit that is ripe and sweet. Whatever the quality of the seed, if the fruit is unripe it will not be enjoyable. No one likes a tasteless fruit. Likewise, society will shun an individual who lacks a social consciousness. A student who seeks to earn the respect and regard of society should conduct himself properly. He should be a person of integrity. Spirituality should be manifested in his behaviour. He should set an example to others. Most students today are lacking in such idealism.

Students tend to have narrow ideas and petty objectives. They have no conception of human values. Whatever studies one may pursue or position one may occupy, one must cherish human values.

As a youth, one tends to be hot blooded and conceited. Puffed up with pride, he treats others as men of straw. Most students today are immersed in trivial chatter and meaningless pastimes. Sacred and ennobling ideas have no appeal for them. In this situation, when they enter on their studies, they develop arrogance and ostentation and get into evil ways. They are filled with bad thoughts, bad feelings and indulge in bad actions. In the process the primary purpose of education is forgotten. Education is regarded as an exercise in getting acquainted with books. He forgets that the aim of education is to understand the purpose of life. He relies on the strength of body, wealth, position and scholarship and forgets that true strength is derived from Righteousness and Divine Grace. Without the power of Righteousness and the grace of the Divine, all other forms of strength are of no use. The world has plenty of men with wealth, physical prowess, position and authority. Have any of these given them mental peace? No. They can only confer name and fame in the mundane sphere. They cannot confer peace or happiness. Recognising this truth, students should consider the royal road that will take them to the fight goal in the future.

Man's best friends and worst enemies

The foremost thing that should be considered by the students today is how to get rid of the bad thoughts and bad desires in which they are enveloped. They are the worst enemies of man. Man's best friends are good thoughts and good intentions and good behaviour. From ancient times it has been the greatness and glory of Bharath to proclaim to the world the message of human welfare and praying for the good of all mankind. The world acclaimed the fame of Bharath. In those days no other country enjoyed such peace and prosperity as Bharath. Bharath was esteemed as the spiritual leader among nations. She was regarded as the preceptor for all countries. It is a sign of thoughtlessness for students to forget the greatness of Bharath's sacred culture, develop a fascination for exotic manners and customs, and give up Bharath's own traditions and practices. It is good for the well-being of every nation to adhere to its own traditions and practices. Students should learn to stand on their own legs and not depend on others. You must rely on the Divine and not become subservient to others in worldly matters. That alone is swechcha (true freedom).

Act according to dictates of your conscience

Swechcha means knowledge of the Atma (Spirit). Self-control is true freedom. Spiritual bliss is freedom. Self-realisation is freedom. Swa + Ichcha = Swechcha. Swechcha does not consist in living according to one's whims and fancies, indulging in the fleeting pleasures of the senses and wasting one's entire life in experiencing momentary joys. Swechcha (freedom) means acting according to the dictates of one's conscience. In his address earlier this morning, Dr. G. Ventaktaraman mentioned that the Divine, after creation, did not keep all powers within Himself but gave them to mankind. This is true. God is the Creator. He created everything in the Cosmos. But He did not retain within His hands the responsibilities relating to the Creation. He gave to human beings all capacities. But He laid down a condition relating to the use of these capacities. Men are free to live as they like. They can utilise all the material objects in creation. There can be no objection to this from anyone, not even from God. But, the Divine has declared that there is no escape from the consequences of one's action. This has to be properly

understood.

No one can go against the laws of Nature

For instance, in the morning's lecture a good illustration was given. The wind blows; rains fall. In the Dwapara age, Indra caused a heavy downpour. The people who were affected by the deluge, prayed to the Lord: "Oh Lord! We and our cattle are suffering from this downpour. Save us from the rain." The Lord replied: "I cannot stop this rain. Whatever has to happen in nature has to go on. But I have the right to protect you from its adverse effects. Rain comes according to the laws of Nature. These natural phenomena should go on in their respective ways. But, having regard to your devotion and prayers, I shall lift this hill and provide shelter to all of you. But I will not stop the rain." (The reference is to the lifting of the Govardhana mountain by Sri Krishna). Now, the wind has the power to blow out a lamp. The Divine has endowed the lamp with the power to shed light. The powers of the wind and of light are derived from God. But it is foolish for anyone to order the wind not to blow out the lamp. What one can do is to protect the lamp from the blast of wind by fixing a chimney. This is within human capacity. Through these examples you should learn how to regulate the forces of Nature and not seek to go against natural laws. It follows that man has the freedom to enjoy the things provided by the Creator.

But man should exercise his discrimination to determine what are beneficial for him and what are not fit to be used. Because all things are available, one should not use them as he likes for the simple reason that each use is accompanied by its natural consequences. One cannot avoid these consequences. If you are prepared to face the consequences, you can act as you want. What is happening, however, is enjoyment of something with relish and later bemoaning the adverse aftereffects. This is a mark of mental weakness. Prakruthi (Nature) is like a mirror. It reflects your action. Standing before a mirror, you offer a Namaskar to it. The image in the mirror reflects your actions. If you attempt to hit the image, the reflection will hit back. Basing on this law of action and reaction, the Vedanta declared: "Yadbhavam Thadbhavathi." (Whatever your thought, that you become). Hence, in the

realm of natural phenomena, whatever actions you do will be followed by consequences which are inescapable, sometime or other.

No escape from the consequences of your actions

Students! As human beings, you have to ascertain by the use of your intelligence and Vijnana (discriminating power) what are the actions that are proper and what are to be avoided. Whatever appears to be good, you better do it. But, if knowing that something is wrong, you do it, you can never escape from its consequences. The Lord created the Cosmos and offered it to mankind. Consequently, the responsibility for properly utilising all objects in the world rests on humanity and not on the Lord. If men use things in the right way and benefit from them, they will experience happiness. If you misuse them or put them to wrong uses, you will have to bear the troubles resulting therefrom. This is the lesson to be learnt through Vidya (education). What is the meaning of Vidya? It means Jnana (knowledge). Is it worldly knowledge or spiritual knowledge? Is it experience of the external or the internal? The meaning of knowledge will vary according to whether it relates to the external or the internal. Students should enquire into both of these. After such enquiry, they should try to reconcile both of them in practice.

Do as you would be done by

The divinity present in man is present everywhere. It is not limited to man. It is common to all living creatures. You should realise that, if what is done by others causes pain to you, similar action by you will cause similar pain to others. If you desire others to show respect towards you, show that respect to others first yourself. It is not possible for you to win the esteem of others without your showing the same feeling towards them. The world is governed by three principles: Reaction, Reflection and Resound. Hence you should see that your actions, your vision and your words are right. For every man, humility and reverence are valuable ornaments. Humility is the hallmark of right education. Humility is lost when men are filled with self-pride, or discontentment. Humility should be observed in all circumstances. It should be manifested from the heart. Egoism is an acquisition from outside. The

arrogance of knowledge is an acquired vice. In young persons, it is destructive of human values.

Students! Remember that adolescence is an intermediate stage in one's life. It comes in the middle and passes off quickly. In the brief period that it lasts, it appears glamorous but only for a fleeting moment. Hence, one should be very careful how this period in one's life is used. Adi Sankara declared: "There is pain at birth. Old age is painful. Therefore, be vigilant always." All relationships and all possessions are temporary. One should not get deluded by them. All things pass away in due course. Only the Divine abides forever. Only the present matters, because both the past and future are in the present. Today's sapling has come out of yesterday's seed and is the parent of the tree into which it will grow. Don't worry about the future or brood over the past. Make good use of the present. Then life will be filled with joy. Be happy. That will lead you to union with God.

Insatiable desires result in disappointment

In the railway journey of life, students are like long-distance passengers. They should not burden themselves with too many desires. Reasonable aspirations to achieve distinction in one or other field are legitimate. But there should be a limit to such desires. Insatiable desires result in disappointments which cause mental disability. Man forfeits peace largely because of the desire to amass and hoard wealth. As birds and animals have no such tendencies, they lead a freer and more contented life.

Students! You are entitled to become masters of Nature. Do not become its bond-slaves. Make faith in God the breath of your life. Realise that you have to share with others whatever you acquire by way of knowledge or wealth. It was the spirit of sacrifice and sharing which made Bharath famous in the past. Today the spirit of sacrifice has given place to selfish enjoyment. This has become a cause of disease. The truly educated person is one who uses his knowledge for the good of others. He is entitled to be called a Jnani (a man of wisdom). Knowledge which is used for sense-enjoyment or for the satisfaction of worldly desires is not Jnana (wisdom). Students! Become

messengers of peace and security for the world. Prepare yourselves to make sacrifices for the world rather than to derive personal benefits from it. Derive joy from renunciation and not from sensuous pleasures.

15. Rise From Animality To Divinity

Date: 24 May 1992 / Location: Brindavan

Man is dogged by two defects Which prevent him from thinking of God; He conceals his myriad faults; And proclaims the minor faults in others.

Students!

Bharath was contributing to the security and prosperity of the world from ancient times by its adherence to the spiritual path. From then to this day, the message: "Let all the people of the world be happy" has been the ideal of Bharath. Many persons in various places, at various times, immersed themselves in experiencing the joy of the Spirit.

Today, because of the influence of modernism and modernity, young men and women treat with levity the very term spirituality. There is a reason for this attitude. Over the centuries, the people in the country were mouthing spiritual sayings, parrot-like, without understanding their meanings, with the result that students today are unable to understand the true meaning of spirituality. Even scholars and men of spiritual eminence have been unable to convey the spiritual message to the young people of today in a manner that is meaningful to them and appeals to their hearts.

The impression that is conveyed to the young people is that spirituality consists solely in good actions like performing bhajans, offering *puja* (worship), reciting the names of the Lord, going on pilgrimages and visiting temples. The primary reason for this is the failure on the part of the propagators to comprehend the profound message of the Vedas and Vedangas and realise the underlying truths embedded in the great epics and Puranas.

The true meanings of spirituality

No one among the young men and women today understands what is the meaning of spirituality. They imagine that spirituality means meditation on God, bathing in sacred waters, and visiting holy Shrines. This is not the correct meaning of spirituality. Spirituality means destroying the animal nature in man and making him realise his divine consciousness. Spirituality implies that one should not develop egoistic pride on account of the divine potencies in man but utilise them for achieving spiritual strength. Spirituality calls for the recognition of the manifold capacities manifesting in man as emanating from the Spirit and not from the mind. It means developing the faith that all powers come from the Divine.

Spirituality does not mean proceeding from the human to the Divine. It seeks to unfold the divinity in man. Spirituality does not mean passing from the mundane to the Divine. Spirituality means making man manifest the divinity in him. People today have the wrong impression that spirituality is concerned with the journey from the mundane world to the higher realm and vice versa. Because of this mistaken view, students today are in a state of confusion about spirituality. Spirituality appears meaningless to them.

Spirituality is the realisation of the role of the Spirit in daily life. It is a way of life. Our entire life is bound up with the Spirit. All the powers of man are derived from the Spirit. It is totally wrong to think that Spirituality is divorced from daily life and that our daily concerns have no relation to spirituality. Nor does spirituality mean leading a lonely and secluded life. True spirituality calls for the recognition of the oneness of all mankind and to demonstrate the spiritual truth underlying this Divine unity.

All our actions are related to the Spirit

Our entire life is bound up with the spiritual. Whatever one says, whatever one does, whatever one thinks, all of it is related to the Spirit. Spirituality is the expression of the promptings of the Inner Spirit. The good deeds by the external instruments of the body cannot be deemed spiritual.

The very first thing one has to do is to destroy the animal nature in man. Without eliminating the animal nature, all rituals and acts of charity are of no avail. Of what use is it to foster one's animal instincts, while doing acts of charity or conforming to religious injunctions? As a man grows older, his desires also grow, instead of diminishing. Performing external rituals without subduing the animal nature, men are only pursuing wrong courses. However much one may contemplate on God, from time to time he is a prey to *Raga* (attachment) and *Dweshha* (hatred). These two animal propensities have to be got rid of at the outset.

Strive to overcome the animal nature

People participate in *bhajans*. This is doubtless a good act, but it is only an auxiliary element in spiritual discipline. People take part in bhajans, but are they transforming their attitudes as a result? No. All the animal qualities like bad feelings remain along with participation in bhajans. Without getting rid of such attitudes, the continuous participation in bhajans is of no value. Without removing the animal nature, a singer of bhajans continues to be a sinner. The bhajans should be used as a means for overcoming the animal nature. Participation in bhajans and performing of worship should lead to the elimination of animal qualities. Without the conquest of animal nature, all forms of external worship are of no use.

People expatiate on the greatness of Bharathiya scripture and praise the glory of the Vedas. But all scriptures are intended to promote right practices and not merely to be used as texts for reading. Of what use is it merely to read these scriptures as a routine ritual without practising their teachings? The sacred books of the different religions - whether it be the Vedas, the Bible or the Koran - are intended to promote spiritual practices and not be used for ritualistic reading. Even eminent scholars treat these scriptures only as texts for *parayana* (ritualistic recitation). It is because of the mistaken notions of these scholars that young people today have failed to grasp the true import of spirituality. All the spiritual propaganda that is carried on today is totally divorced from practice, with the result that spirituality has made little impact on the youth today. The young do not get a compelling vision of spiritual

truths.

Here is an illustration. In ancient times, people used to perform *Yagas* and *Yajnas* (religious sacrifices). These sacrifices were being performed according to the rules laid down in the scriptures. But while conforming to the prescribed procedures, few understood the inner meaning of these sacrifices. All their lives were spent in external observances. In the performance of sacrifice, they used to offer cows or other dumb animals as *bali* (sacrifice) and propagated the view that such offerings were in accordance with spiritual injunctions. This was a great mistake. These were meaningless practices.

Offer your animality to God

What does *pashuthva* (animal nature) mean (when it is used with reference to the sacrifice of animals)? Pashuthva (Animal nature) refers to *Jiva Thathwa* (one's way of life). The manner of living in which *dehabhranthi* (delusion regarding the body) is prevalent is pashuthva (animal existence). What is the delusion regarding the body? It is the identification of the body with the Self (the "I"). This is the mark of the animal nature in man. The real meaning of animal sacrifice is the sacrifice of the animal nature in man. Everyone has to get rid of *Ahamkara* and *Mamakara* (egoism and the sense of "mine"). Without sacrificing these animal tendencies, sacrificing dumb animals is unworthy of human beings.

God accepts the bad and gives good in return

The word bali is used with references to the sacrifices in Yagas. What is the bali that is to offered in the sacrifice? It is the offering of one's bad qualities and bad thoughts as an offering to the Divine. How can one offer bad things to God? God alone can accept such offerings and give good things in return. No one else in the world will accept the bad and give what is good in return. This kind of exchange is possible only for the Divine. An example for this may be had from ordinary life.

There is a soiled and tattered currency note with you. No one is prepared to

accept it from you. But when it is tendered to the Reserve Bank, which issued it, it is bound to accept it and issue a new note in return. Likewise, who is competent to accept one's bad thoughts, perverse feelings and evil intentions? Only the Almighty can accept them. He is the Spiritual Reserve Bank that will accept the soiled notes of your mind and give in return good currency (in the form of good thoughts).

Hence, offerings should be made only to those who are competent to receive them. All bad thoughts and feelings should be offered to God so that we may receive, by His grace, good thoughts and feelings in return. Spirituality, thus, means transforming one's life into an ideal one by offering one's bad qualities to the Lord and receiving from Him good qualities in return. In ancient times they used to perform *Aswamedha Yaga* (Horse Sacrifice). What does the "Horse Sacrifice" mean? By *Aswam* (horse) is meant that which is restless. The horse cannot remain steady even for a moment. It will be always shaking one part or the other of its body. The horse is an animal which represents the unsteady mind. The word *Medha* in *Aswamedha* literally means the mind. Thus to perform the Horse Sacrifice really means to offer the restless mind to God.

Meaning of horse sacrifice

The horse is not only restless but it also runs fast while riding thereon. So also, man's mind is both restless and very fast-moving. That is why Arjuna complained to Krishna (during the Gita dialogue) that the mind is restless, strong, obstinate and dangerous. Such a highly fickle mind which is comparable to the horse (an animal) should be surrendered to God as a sacrificial offering. This indeed is the real meaning behind the Horse sacrifice. But nowadays everyone is misguided by the outer meaning only, and nobody takes the trouble of knowing the inner meaning.

Some may try to argue that in olden days animals were sacrificed during Yajnas and Yagas (sacrificial rites). But they are not correct. Only a few ignorant Pandits (scholars) and misguided elders used to indulge in animal sacrifice. But those who recognised the inner meaning of this ritual used to

give prime importance to the sacrifice of the beastly qualities in man while performing such religious ceremonies. The sum and substance of the various religions observances is to destroy the animality in man. Here is one more example to illustrate this point.

Inner significance of Nandi in from of Easwara

In temples of Easwara (or Shiva), you find Nandi (image of bull) in front of the deity. What is the inner significance of this? The usual reply you get is that Nandi is the *Vahana* (vehicle) of Easwara; as if He could not afford to have a better vehicle than a bull. This is a wrong idea. The truth is that just as the Lingam is the symbol of the Lord (Easwara), Nandi (bull) is the symbol for Jiva (individual soul). Therefore, just like the Nandi, man should turn away from Prakruthi and direct all his attention towards Easwara only. There are some more meanings for this symbolism. For instance, it is said that no one should stand between Easwara and Nandi. One should have the vision of Easwara by looking through the space in between the two ears of Nandi. The underlying idea is that through the Sadhana of using its ears to listen about Easwara alone, the animality in the bull becomes transformed into divinity and because of its merger with Easwara it is called Nandeeshvara (Bull-God). Thus the lesson of the symbolism is that man should also try to merge with God, by following the example of the Nandi.

His Story is History

Students!

Try to understand the correct meaning of what is recorded in the Charithra or history of Bharath which is highly sacred. *Charithra* (history) is derived from "*charayalu*" (the actual actions) of people but not from mere writings or discourses. Practising, experiencing, enjoying bliss, and sharing the bliss with others - is Charithra which is called History, in the English language.

In other words, "His Story is History."

It means that the story of God is History. Students should understand such inner meanings. What is meant by Rama Charithra (History of Rama)? What Rama did during His lifetime is His Charithra or History. How He had mastered His senses and mind during all the vicissitudes of life, how He was neither elated by pleasure nor depressed by pain, how He accepted His exile into the forest with the same happy countenance with which he had prepared Himself for His coronation. This story of His which describes His equanimity under all circumstances of pleasure or pain and loss or gain, is what is known as History.

Running towards pleasures and fleeing from pain is characteristic of animality. An animal rushes towards you when you show it the green grass in your hand, but it will run away from you when you show it the cane in your hand. Thus, attraction to what appears to be good and repulsion from what appears to be bad is the nature of animals. But man should be prepared to confront both with equanimity because in this worldly life these pairs of opposites always go together. No one can separate pain from pleasure, sorrow from joy, or loss from gain since they are inextricably intertwined. We can never find anywhere unadulterated pleasure or pain separate from each other. The fruit of pain is pleasure and vice versa.

When a son is born, the father celebrates it as a great festival, distributes sweets to all, and dances with joy. But when that son dies, he becomes depressed with sorrow. Thus the same son is the cause of both joy and sorrow to the father. Birth and death are the root causes for joy and sorrow. But, for whom are these births and deaths? Death is for that which is born, and birth is for that which has died. If there is no birth, there is no death. This body is the root cause for birth and death as well as for Ahamkar and Mamakar (the feelings of "I" and "Mine"). Only because the father had seen and experienced the form of his son, he is afflicted when that form of his son is taken away from him. The very same "father" had never wept for that very same son

before the latter was born in that form.

Do not forget your divine source, Atma

Today we are fascinated only by the form. We are being tormented by this transient form which is but a reflection. We are to take cognisance not of the form but of our divine source. *Atma* (Self) is our source, which is also called *Adhyatma*, because it is Adhi + Atma, i.e. the Atma which is Adhi (the beginning or source). Hence we should get back to our source. Then alone can we experience total (unalloyed) bliss.

If you bring a fish and keep it in a gold vessel studded with all the nine precious gems, it will not at all feel happy. On the contrary, it will struggle restlessly to get back to its source, namely, water. So also, we have strayed away from Atma, our source. Having been enticed by the worldly pleasures like wealth, gold, vehicles and other properties, we are forgetting our very source. When we deeply ponder over this matter, the fish seems to be more intelligent than man. Why? Because that fish has not forgotten its source, while man who, despite all his education, intelligence, culture and sophistication, has forgotten his source.

Our bodies are like vessels. Whatever changes the vessels may undergo, our source will never change. For example a silver plate, a silver tumbler and a silver box - the names and forms of these three articles are different. The ways in which they are made use of will also be different. But when any one of these three articles is melted, what remains is silver alone. In other words, in spite of the change in the names and forms of the articles, there is no change in the silver which is the common substratum of all of them. Similarly whatever names and forms we may assume, the common substratum of all these forms will continue to be the same Atma which is changeless. Always remembering this fact is what is called "Spirituality."

Reduce your desires to escape from miseries

Sacrificing your ego is *Sathwik* (pure and noble), while sacrificing any animal

is *Thamasik* (impure and ignoble). Today you need to enter into the Sathwik life and sublimate your human nature into divine nature. This, indeed, is the primary goal of your life's journey. Every man undertakes the usual pilgrimages and other routine good activities like charity, etc. But all these will not save him from worries, until and unless he gives up Ahamkara and Mamakara i.e. "I" and "Mine." A rich man bundled up all the necessary luggage in his bed-holder and started on a pilgrimage. He visited Kasi (Benares), Prayag, Haridwar, etc. Although tired with the day-long journey, he could not sleep during the nights. During the day time, he used to have *darshan* (the holy sight) of beautiful images of Gods and Goddesses and bathe in the sacred waters of holy rivers. He was happy that by these religious activities his sins were being washed away. However, when he investigated into the reason for his not getting sleep during the nights, he found that there were lots of bugs in his bedding. He should get rid of those bugs. Then only he can have sound sleep. In the same manner, in our bedstead called the body there are any number of bugs, namely, endless desires of various types. As long as these desires are there, one cannot escape from miseries wherever one might go. One should, therefore, reduce one's desires.

Do not entertain imaginary aspirations

Students of today are the victims of several kinds of desires. No sooner does a student step into the college than he thinks of getting his degree immediately and going abroad for higher studies. You should not give room to such fanciful desires which will sap your mental powers. During your stay in the college, concentrate whole-heartedly on your studies. Don't entertain all sorts of unrealistic and imaginary aspirations. What is supremely important is the present. Whenever undesirable feelings like anger, hatred, jealousy etc., raise their ugly heads in you, crush them down forthwith. For instance, when somebody criticises or abuses you, you will get angry immediately. But you should not react to such things on the spur of the moment. You must coolly reflect thus: "Am I having in me any defects which he has pointed out? In case these defects are in me, will it not be a mistake on my part to criticise or abuse him in retaliation? Suppose there are no defects at all in me, then why

should I get angry?" When you reflect like this, your anger will leave at once and you will become calm and cool.

"My life is My message"

Students!

I am an ideal example in this respect.

That is why I say, "My Life is My Message."

Many will be criticising Me, while many others will be praising Me. But I am neither depressed by their criticism nor elated by their praise. Why? Because, if some people mention about whatever qualities are actually in Me, I need not pay any attention to them; if anyone attributes to Me what is factually not in Me, I need not be worded about it. For instance, if someone calls me "Butta Thala Sai Baba" (i.e. Sai Baba with a basket-like crown of hair), I should by all means accept their remark because I have such a bushy hair on My head. On the contrary if anybody accosts Me as "Batta Thala Sai Baba" (i.e. baldheaded Sai Baba), why should I accept it? I have no bald head. So if defects which I do not have are pointed out directly even in My very presence, I do not accept them; hence I am not upset by them. That is the right "determination," indicating self-confidence. It is not good for you to be either elated or dejected by others' remarks, without having confidence in yourself. So, first and foremost, you should develop selfconfidence.

Students!

If anybody asks you, "who are you?" You will reply, "I am a man." This is only a half truth. What is the other half of the truth? It is: "I am not an animal." Thus, the full truth is: "I am a man; I am not an animal." When you recognise the second half of the truth that you are not an animal, you will not give room

to any bestial qualities in you. If, in this impressionable age, you firmly establish such sacred ideas and feelings in your heart, you will turn out to be ideal persons in this world. All histories are sacred - whether they pertain to Bharath, Islam or Christian. It is in their followers that you find all sorts of omissions and commissions. They are full of animality. That is why the hatred between one religion and another is ever on the increase. However, there is nothing wrong with the religions per se. All religions have preached good things only. Men should recognise this fact and conduct themselves accordingly. What is wrong with religions if only your minds are good? Good and bad are creations of your mind only.

Transform from animality to divinity

You should not be misguided by the worldly and superficial meanings, and forget the inner meanings. This is the crux of spirituality. The waywardness of your mind prevails in the gross state of wakefulness as well as in the subtle state of dreaming. How can you change such a fickle mind? If you keep away from animality during waking state, then animality will not enter even in your dreams.

Students! Embodiments of Love!

In the first instance, try to understand correctly the meaning of spirituality. You should transform your nature from human to divine. You must direct your attention to God. Nandi could become Easwara, only because it turned its attention to God. Similarly, Hanuman, the monkey, and Garuda, the bird, became dear to the Lord. Therefore, if you get rid of your animality, you will become *Pashupathi* (the Lord of all beings).

Some tips to control anger and hatred

You should not become a victim of the feelings of anger, hatred, ego or pride which may arise in you. When such feelings arise in you, sit silently for a few minutes. Instead of doing so, you must not give vent to your anger by scolding or beating others as you like. How to put this into practice? As soon

as you get angry, you should immediately leave that place and go out into the open and quietly walk a furlong. Then your anger will disappear. An easier method than this is to stand before a mirror and look into your own angry face. You will dislike your own face and look upon it with disgust or aversion. Then try to laugh heartily and your anger will leave you. If you find it difficult even to do this, go into your bathroom and turn the water tap on. To the accompaniment of the tune of the sound created by the water flowing from the tap, begin to sing a good song. Then your anger will certainly disappear. Or else, drink a glass of cold water. Like this, you have to seek ways and means of regaining a calm and peaceful mood. Instead of doing so, if you allow your anger to grow, restlessness will also grow along with that anger depriving you of peace of mind. You should never give tit for tat, or word for word. The less you talk, the more will become your mental power. With the increase in your mental capacity, there will be increase in your power of discrimination too. Consequently, you will give up "individual discrimination" and resort to "fundamental discrimination." Because of this, you will begin to consider the good of the world at large rather than your own individual welfare. You must cultivate such broad feelings from this young age itself.

Strive to gain "practical knowledge"

What is the reason for the students of Bharath taking to wrong paths and becoming victims of unrest? They are not making any effort to understand matters in the proper perspective and to act accordingly. One should try to understand everything thoroughly, and not rash forward blindly into all matters. Then only you will gain "practical knowledge," and that will guide you along the desirable and sacred path. You will find guideposts here and there on the roadside, to indicate which path you should take to reach any particular place. The ups and downs in the path can be experienced only by those who tread the path, but not by the guidepost. Most of the books today are like the guideposts. However, you must not be like mere guideposts. You should actually practice and get the experience.

Expand your love

Students!

You can gain all things through love alone. Without this love, you cannot obtain anything. Love can win over even the strongest of enemies. True love is desireless and natural. It is based on the Atmic relationship. A small example for such love: a mother is walking along the street, carrying her young baby. If you happen to be walking behind them, that child will smile on seeing you, and naturally you will also smile at the child. Who is that child and who are you? Although there is no relationship whatsoever between the two of you, the child is able to make you smile. What a profound bliss would you experience in such love! If you weep, you have to weep alone. But if you laugh, others too will laugh. It is such love and bliss that will make you one with God. Therefore expand your love and thereby experience expanded bliss.

16. Perennial Message Of The Ramayana

Date: 25 May 1992 / Location: Brindavan

Sweeter than sugar is Rama's name Tastier than curds and Much sweeter than honey.

Full of nectarine sweetness is Rama's name, Chant ever and anon the name of Rama.

Students!

The Ramayana depicts the triple qualities of Sathwa, Rajas and Thamas. The relevance of the Ramayana is not confined to a particular time, place or circumstances. It is of universal significance for all times. Its relevance is not limited to India alone. The Ramayana holds out Rama as an embodiment of ideal qualities. As a son, friend, husband, master and ruler, He was an ideal without a parallel. In the world one may be an ideal son, but not an ideal friend. One may be an ideal friend, but not an ideal brother. But Rama stands out unique as an embodiment of all ideal attributes. Students should note an important aspect relating to the breaking of the bow of Shiva at the court of Janaka. Though the bow was broken, the string connecting the two ends of the bow did not break at all, for the two ends of the bow stand for Sita and Rama - Prakruthi and Purusha. In fact the bond between Rama and Sita, Paramatma and Prakruthi is an unbreakable one. The Ramayana demonstrates the inseparable bond between Prakruthi and Purusha. The Ramayana has been divided into two sections: the Puurva Ramayana and the Utthara Ramayana. The Puurva Ramayana deals with the valorous deeds of Rama, his victory over indomitable heroes like Parashursama, Vali and Ravana. These events speak of the dauntless courage, the matchless valour and the immense physical and mental prowess of Sri Rama. The Utthara Ramayana (the latter half is suffused with Karuna (compassion) and seeks to install the Rama Thatwa (The Rama Principle) in the hearts of the people.

Rama has no equals as a ruler

The Ramayana exemplifies the amity and harmony which should prevail among the members of a family.. It extols the glory of ideal brotherhood, noble friendship and the greatness of love and affection. Rama was an ideal ruler who ruled his people with due regard to their likes and dislikes, having their welfare as his primary concern. As a ruler Rama has no equals. He was a veritable mine of strength, virtue and love. Hence it is essential that every student should take Rama as an ideal to be emulated and derive happiness by practising the ideal of Sri Rama. The first canto in the Ramayana is called Balakanda (the canto describing the boyhood of Sri Rama). Sage Viswamithra came to Dasaratha and sought the help of his two sons, Rama and Lakshmana, for protecting his Yaga (sacrifices). Rama and Lakshmana were fourteen years old when the Sage sought their help. When Dasaratha was hesitating to send his sons in view of their tender age, Viswamithra remarked, "O! Dasaratha! Swayed by paternal affection, you have mistaken them to be mere mortals, of flesh and blood, whereas in fact they are Divine incarnations. Do not give vent to sadness. They are the embodiments of Divinity. Send your sons with me without any hesitation".

The three Gunas in the form of three women

Rama, while going with the Sage, encountered three women of three different temperaments. The first woman he confronted was Tataki of Thamasik temperament. The Thamasik nature makes a person mistake truth for untruth and untruth for truth. It robs one of the capacity for discrimination. Rama killed Tataki while keeping guard over the performance of Viswamithra's Yajna. The two brothers saw to it that the Yajna was performed without any obstruction. After the successful completion of the Yajna, Viswamithra proceeded to Mithila, accompanied by Rama and Lakshmana. On the way Rama came to the hermitage of Sage Gauthama. There he absolved Ahalya of the curse which had turned her into a stone. Ahalya might be deemed a woman of Rajasik temperament. After imparting moral advice to Ahalya, Rama went to Mithila with Viswamithra.

It was in Mithila that Rama encountered Sita, representing the Sathwik quality. Having killed Tataka of the Thamasik temperament and redeemed Ahalya representing the Rajasik temperament, He accepted Sita, who represented the Sathwik quality. The marriage of Sita and Rama is symbolic of the union between Prakruthi and Paramatma. The citizens of Mithila greatly rejoiced hearing about the prospective marriage of Rama and Sita. (Swami recited in His own mellifluous voice a ballad in praise of the wedding of Rama and Sita).

Manifestation of three Gunas in Sita's wedding

One of the rites in the marriage ceremony in India is Thalambralu the act of pouring rice on the head of the bridegroom by the bride. Since Janaka, the father of Sita, was immensely rich, he arranged for the pouring, of pearls instead of rice. Sita held a palmful of pearls in her hand over Rama's head. The white pearls in the palms of Sita shone with reddish splendour as her palms were of reddish hue. When she poured the pearls on the white turban Rama wore for the occasion, the pearls shone with the white hue of the turban. The pearls rolling down the body of Sri Rama assumed a dark colour reflecting the bluish colour of Sri Rama. The pearls shining with reddish hue in the hands of Sita are symbolic of the Rajo Guna, conveying the message that one is of Rajasik nature in the company of Prakruthi. The pearls shining with whitish splendour are symbolic of the Sathwa Guna indicating the fact that one acquires the Sathwik nature in the company of God. The nature of persons who belonged neither to Prakruthi nor God will be Thamasik persons like the colour of the pearls that rolled down from Rama's head. People of divine orientation shine with Sathwik serenity and purity. People with a worldly outlook display Rajasik quality while those who are neither worldly nor Godly are Thamasik.

Three qualities of Rama's friends and enemies

As Sri Rama was a king, His friends too were kings. Jambavan, the king of the forest, was a Sathwik friend. He became a friend of Rama out of sheer love for him. Sugriva, the king of the monkeys, was a Rajasik friend of Rama, who

sought Rama's friendship for securing his help. It is out of desire for getting relief from his troubles and tribulations that he sought the help of Rama. Sugriva wanted his kingdom and wife to be restored to him. The third friend was Vibhishana, the brother of Ravana. He represents the Thamasik quality, as he belonged to a Rakshasa family. Rama had three enemies, whose qualities represent the three Gunas. The first enemy was Vali, a Sathwik enemy because, at the end, he acknowledged his mistakes and accepted the punishment meted out to him by Rama. Ravana was the second enemy, who harboured hatred for Rama. He refused to acknowledge his mistake and was responsible for the downfall of his country. He was a Rajasik enemy because a Rajasik enemy never acknowledges his mistakes. The third enemy, Kumbhakarna, was a Thamasik enemy. A Thamasik person is one who mistakes good to be bad and bad to be good. Rama put an end to all these enemies.

Rama, the redeemer of the fallen

Rama was the redeemer of the fallen - -Pathithapavana. He redeemed and gave salvation to three characters in the Ramayana. They are Sabari, Guha and Jatayu. Sabari was a helpless and hapless old woman with no one to look after her. Her preceptor told her about Lord Rama. She was yearning for the arrival of Ramachandra whom she considered to be her saviour. She was deeply absorbed in the contemplation of Rama's name at all times and in all places. One day sage Matanga said to her, "O, Sabari, Lord Narayana has descended on the earth in the form of Rama. He is living in the garb of an ascetic. He will be soon arriving here. But I will not be alive at the time of his arrival. He is an embodiment of immaculate purity. Greet him and honour him with devotion." From that day, Sabari started preparing herself for the arrival of Sri Rama. Since she thought that Rama might ask her to give him something to eat, she would gather all sorts of fruits, and to satisfy herself that the fruits were sweet, she would taste them first and keep only the sweetest ones for her Lord. That was how Sabari transformed herself into a Sathwik devotee. Rama responded to her inmost prayers and Sabari in the end merged herself in Rama. Guha, the forest chief, was another to be redeemed by Rama. Though he was a friend of Rama, his life as a forester

was filled with wrongful acts; nevertheless, he never gave up contemplation of Lord Rama's name. Among the fallen, he belonged to the Rajasik category because of his worldly life.

The third pathitha to be redeemed by Rama was Jatayu. He yearned to serve Rama and was eagerly waiting for the arrival of Rama from the day Rama entered the forest, as an ascetic. A great opportunity to serve Rama's cause presented itself to him. When he sighted Ravana carrying Sita away he fought to the bitter end to rescue Sita from Ravana. When he fell mortally wounded and succumbed to the injuries, Lord Rama performed the last rites for Jatayu, a service denied to his father Dasaratha.

What the names of Dasaratha and Ravana signify

After crossing the sea of Moha (infatuation), Rama encountered in Lanka the three brothers representing the three qualities of Sathwa, Rajas and Thamas. He crowned Vibhishana, of the serene temperament, King of Lanka, and destroyed Ravana and Kumbhakarna, who symbolised Rajasik and Thamasik qualities. Who was Dasaratha? Dasaratha was the emperor of Ayodhya. The word Dasaratha signifies the body endowed with ten senses. These ten senses are five karmendriyas and five jnanendriyas. Dasaratha is the chariot drawn by the ten senses. The three wives of Dasaratha represent the three qualities, Kausalya symbolising Sathwik quality, Sumitra, Rajasik quality and Kaikeyi, Thamasik quality.

Who was Ravana? Ravana is described as a demon with ten heads. These ten heads are the six vices, namely desire, anger, greed, infatuation, pride and jealousy and Manas (mind), Buddhi (intellect), Chitta (will) and Ahamkara (Ego). Since these ten are present in every human being, all men are Ravana indeed! Whoever beheads all these ten heads in fact becomes a Rama. It is God alone who can behead ten heads! When a man surrenders himself to God, all these ten heads will go and he will merge in Rama.

Four brothers are embodiments of four Vedas

Who are Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha and Satrughna? The four Vedas came in the form of the four brothers to the abode of Dasaratha and sported there. Rama was Rig Veda and Lakshmana, who closely followed Rama, was Yajur Veda. Bharatha who always delighted in chanting Rama's name, was Sama Veda and Satrughna, who obeyed the commands of the three brothers and surrendered himself completely to them, was Atharva Veda. Hence the four brothers were the embodiments of the four Vedas. Lord Rama was Pranava itself (AUM). The three brothers are the syllables of "A," "U" and "M" in Omkara. Lakshmana was "A," Bharatha was "U" and Satrughna was "M," and the Lord was the Pranava.

We can realise the sacredness of the Ramayana when we comprehend its inner significance, instead of being absorbed only in the external form of the narrative.

The easiest path to Self-realisation is the surrender of ego: sharanagathi.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

17. The Mysteries Of Creation

Date: 26 May 1992 / Location: Brindavan

In this world, birds and beasts lead regulated lives though they lack education; Why does man lack this sense though he is endowed with intelligence ? Embodiments of Divine Love! Today's man has learnt to fly in the air like birds, and swim in the sea like fish. But he has not learnt how to live as man on the earth. Science can teach man such things as flying in the air and swimming in the sea. However, it is only religion but not science, that can teach him how to live as man on the earth. So if science were to foster the all-round development of man, it has to seek the aid of religion. Religion does not mean blind adherence to some beliefs. On the other hand, religion helps man to attain the goal of human life based on discrimination and sacred values. All religions teach only what is good, One should understand them properly and regulate one's life according! If our minds are good, what wrong can we see in any religion ? Therefore no religion can ever be bad. That is why the great scientist, Einstein, declared that religion without science is lame and science without religion is blind, thereby stressing the need for a judicious combination of science and religion to serve the needs of humanity.

All religions emphasise human values

Religion is of immense help in fostering the integral development of the human personality. It underlines the unity in diversity. True religion teaches the harmony and unity of all religions. The essence as well as the goal of all religions is the attainment of the purity of mind and heart. Every religion has its own precepts and principles. But no religion preaches hatred, untruth or unrighteousness. "Speak the truth, practice righteousness" - enjoin the Upanishads. Similar sacred injunctions are to be found in all the other religions too. Thus all religions emphasise the human values and serve as beacons for the proper progress and development of mankind. They all facilitate the manifestation of the divinity inherent in man. But the present-day men in general, and the youth in particular, have forgotten our age-old culture and sacred values and are bidding good-bye to God, having been

enticed by the modern science and technology.

However, with the passage of time, scientists themselves are veering round to the view that the universe is being guided and governed by some divine power. The innumerable stars and planets in the universe are whirling at tremendous speeds. If they are to deviate even slightly from their orbits or their speeds, it would result in an universal holocaust. Who has ordained them to adhere to their speeds and orbits?

Contrast between scientists and Creator

Today's scientists are creating artificial satellites which are orbiting around the earth. But these satellites are crashing down or catching fire in a few days or months, whereas the planets in God's creation are orbiting regularly since time immemorial, without any crashing, or catching fire. Light travels at the rate of 1,86,000 miles per second. Even with such a tremendous speed, it takes lakhs of years for light to travel around the families or constellations of the sun and stars. In the Milky Way that is visible to us, there are innumerable stars unknown to us. The light from some of the stars has not yet reached the earth, despite the lapse of aeons since their creation. Even the scientists are in doldrums to understand fully such aspects of creation. What a contrast between the scientist who swells up with pride on account of discovering but a minute fraction of the mystery of creation, and the Creator (God) who is running the whole universe peacefully, silently, patiently and lovingly without any pomp or pride! Not this alone. The way this creation or Nature is functioning is amazing beyond words. For instance, the carbon dioxide exhaled by man is being taken up by the plants and the oxygen released by the plants is being inhaled by man. Who has made this mutually beneficial arrangement in Nature? Poet-saints like Purandaradas have sung the praise of the Lord Almighty in the following terms: "Who has watered, manured and grown the small shrubs and the gigantic trees in the crevices of the rocks in the mountains? Who has painted the beautiful peacock and its tail with such attractive colours? Who has designed the wonderful combination of a green body and a red beak for the parrot?" The scientist may explain away all such things as the "Law of Nature." But are these scientists able to transcend

Nature or to dispense with the materials available in Nature ?

The so called "creation" by the scientists

Whatever the scientists claim as their "creation" is only derived from a combination of the basic materials found in Nature. For example, the scientist produces water by combining hydrogen and oxygen. But then, which scientist has produced or created hydrogen and oxygen? These elements are produced by sunlight. In the same manner whatever the scientist may produce is based only on the permutation and combination of the already existing materials in Nature. This fact is conveniently ignored by most scientists. When one ponders over the mysteries or secrets of Nature, even a fool will have to admit the existence of a divine power behind all these wonderful phenomena.

Let us consider another example. There are nearly 5.08 billion human beings in the world. But it is amazing that in such a huge population, no two persons look exactly alike. Which creator, except God, can do this extraordinarily wonderful feat! The goods manufactured by the modern creators are all alike because they come out of the same mould. What a striking contrast! The students should therefore, try to understand the mysteries of creation.

Scientists upset the balance in Nature

We are prone to take the creation for granted, thinking that it is but insentient Nature, thereby ignoring the Sentient Principle that regulates nature and imparts a proper balance among its various constituents. Scientists and technologists, in pursuit of selfish interests as well as of name and fame, utterly disregard the security and welfare of the society and the nation, by upsetting the balance in Nature, which results in various accidents, calamities, losses and misery to the public at large. For example, the oceans contain air needed by the earth for more than ten years. One lightning in the sky emits enough electricity required for the entire world for twenty years. By building gigantic dams and storing huge quantities of water in one place, the earth goes down in that area and consequently goes up in another area, like a see-saw. The indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources by the scientists

and technologists such as various types of mines for extracting minerals, mica, coal, petrol and other oils results in imbalance and pollution of the five major elements, leading to catastrophes like earthquakes, and volcanoes, etc. The rapid and excessive proliferation of industries, factories, automobiles, etc., with the attendant pollution of the atmosphere is responsible for the increasing incidence of diseases like eosinophilia, asthma, deafness, pneumonia and typhoid, etc. However, science per se is not bad; what is necessary is for man to put it to proper and judicious use.

Students must have faith in God's existence

Students of today have implicit faith and unquestioning belief in what the scientists say; but however much you may din into their ears, they have no faith in God. Dear students! First of all, you must have faith in God's existence. One simple reason for this is that in the dictionaries of all the languages, you find the word "God" among other words. Any dictionary contains only words which refer to things existing in the world such as birds, beasts and other living beings, as well as inanimate objects. Non existing things do not have a place in the dictionary. The very fact that the word "God" occurs in all dictionaries is enough to prove the existence of God. Even if you have not seen or experienced some of the things included in the dictionary, there are other people who have seen or experienced them. So, based on your limited experience you cannot deny the existence of anything mentioned in the dictionary. If you have not experienced God, there are other people who have experienced Him and that is why the word "God" finds a place in the dictionary. Some of you may argue that there are some words like "sky-flower," "rabbit-horn," for which the corresponding objects do not exist in the world. But you must know that they are not single words as such, but compound words coined by combining two different words. Each of the single words "Sky" and "flower" refer to existing things; similarly there are rabbits and horns. But there are no objects in the world corresponding to the artificially coined words, namely "sky-flower" and "rabbit-horn."

Mysteries of God's creation

One scientist wanted to know the meaning of the word Parama Hamsa (Supreme Swan) used in spiritual parlance. He was told that just as the swan separates milk from water by dipping its beak into a mixture of milk and water, the Parama Hamsa through his proper enquiry and the resulting wisdom separates the Atma (Self) from Anatma (Non-self). In turn, when the scientist was questioned as to who endowed the swan with the capacity to separate milk and water, the scientist replied that when the acid secreted by the beak of the swan comes into contact with the mixture of milk and water, the acid curdles the milk, thus separating it from water. But then the question arises as to who has placed this acid in the beak of the swan. Has any scientist done it? No, it is only God who has done this. Such, indeed, are the mysteries of God's creation!

About fifty years back, scientists believed that there is no greater power than the atomic energy. They expressed the fear that if the atomic power is further split, it will lead to disaster. But now after exploring and experimenting during the last fifty years, the scientists have been able to discover that there are greater powers than the atomic power. Similarly, persons who presently have no experience of God may have such experience, say, after ten years. Divinity is allpervading. You must firmly believe this. Without faith in God, human life would go in vain. Along with physical sciences you should also try to understand the spiritual science to some extent at least.

Do not give room to unnecessary doubts

Nowadays students give room to unnecessary doubts. One boy came to me and said, "Swami! Sankaracharya has declared that Brahman is real and the world is illusory. But Brahman who is said to be real is not to be seen anywhere, while we are vividly experiencing the so-called illusory world in our daily lives with all the attendant gains and losses, joys and sorrows - that too not for one or two years but over a period of several years. So, how can we believe that the world is illusory?" To this I replied, "My dear boy! Don't waste your time in-thinking about such questions. Why do you worry yourself about the reality or unreality of Brahman and the world? You leave that question to them (i.e. to Brahman and the world). First of all, find out the truth about

yourself. You may think that you are real. But that alone is considered as real which does not undergo any change during all the three periods of time viz., past, present and future. In the light of this criterion, since your body undergoes change from moment to moment, and also since it is liable to perish altogether at any time, it is considered illusory. The same is the case with the rest of the world." The youth of today argue that they do not undergo any change, forgetting the fact that their body is subject to change from time to time - birth, childhood, adolescence, adulthood (manhood), old age and death. Thus, everything in this world undergoes change from time to time and that is the reason why the world is declared to be illusory. Sankaracharya did not say that the world is absolutely unreal. He called it illusory, because it is a mixture of reality and unreality, appearing at one time and disappearing at another time. However, students should understand that there is a substratum of reality underlying the illusory world. This can be illustrated by the silver plate which you see on My table. This plate can be converted into a cup tomorrow, or into a spoon the day after. But the substance behind these changing names or forms continues to be the changeless silver. Nevertheless the silver and the cup (or plate) cannot be separated from each other. Similarly, the changeless reality of Brahman is the substratum underlying the everchanging, illusory world.

"The doubter will perish"

The students of today are victims of several doubts, because there is a dearth of capable teachers who can come down to the level of the students and explain things clearly to them. Let the students understand the significance of the slogans exhibited on the hind wall of this auditorium, viz. "Samshayatma Vinashyathi" (The doubter will perish) and "Shradhavan Labhathe Jnanam" (The one with faith gains wisdom). Both Nissamshayam (freedom from doubts), and Sraddha (faith and interest) are necessary for enlightenment, just as the positive and negative currents are needed for the fight to emerge. Hence it is necessary that freedom from doubts on the one hand and faith on the other, should constitute the two banks through which the river of your life should flow, so that it may ultimately merge in the ocean of Divine Grace. The woman saint, Meera said, "Braving all hardships, I dived deep into the ocean

of the worldly life and at last got hold of the precious pearl in the name of Krishna. If I lose hold of this pearl, I may not get it again. Therefore, Oh Lord! You are my sole refuge." So also, you students may not get such a golden opportunity (as this Summer Course) once again. You should therefore, try to carefully garner the pearls of precious ideas that are now being made available to you, so that they may stand you in good stead throughout your life.

18. Aham Brahmaasmi

Date: 27 May 1992 / Location: Brindavan

Students!

You are neither sinners nor meritorious. You are not pleasure-seekers, nor are you yogis. You are neither Manthra nor Yantra nor Thantra. You are not committed to action or to enjoyment. Who, then, are you? "Satchindananda swarupam Shivoham, Shivoham." You are ever the embodiments of auspiciousness. Sai Leela (who had spoken earlier) had reminded you of Sarvadevatha swarupam (all deities appearing in one form). There are no such deities. The combined form of all human beings represents the unified form of all deities. The Vedas declare "Sahasra Seersha Purushah Sahasraksha Sahasrapadh" (the Lord has a myriad heads, a myriad eyes and myriad feet).

You are what you are, not somebody else. Whether it be a pauper or a millionaire, a pandit or an ignoramus, a child or an old man, a man or a woman, when they introduce themselves everyone uses the word, "I," "I," "I," (Nenu in Telugu). If birds and animals could speak, they would describe themselves as "I am a cat, I am a monkey, I am a dog," and so on. Thus "I" is found everywhere. The cosmos is based on the consciousness of "I." "I" is not only the basis, it is the very form of the cosmos. Wherefrom has this "I" originated? In fact, it has no origin. It is a principle which exists in all beings at all times.

"I" is the embodiment of the Atma

If we examine the phenomenal world, we can see that terms like "you" and "he" and "we" came into existence only after the term "I." What is this "I"? Who is this "I"? It is the embodiment of the Atma. Where does the Atma dwell? It is all-pervading. The Shrutis have described this allpervading Atma as hridaya. Hrid + dhaya is hridaya. Dhaya means compassion. That which is the embodiment of compassion is hridaya. Therefore, the term "I" refers to

that which is filled with compassion.

If a student is asked "Who are you?" he may reply "I am Rangayya or Ramayya." If you ask him "When did you come?" he will reply, "I came on May 20 for the Summer course." What is it that has come? It is the body. It is in relation to the body that the student says that he came on the 20th. Here the reply is based on identification of himself with the body. The next day the same student says, "My stomach is upset." When he says "My stomach," there is an obvious distinction between him and the stomach. When one refers to "my hand," "my head," "my belly," "my leg" and so on, obviously he is different from these organs. When one says "This is my towel," the towel is separate from the owner. The question naturally arises, "who are you?" This question has to be fully explored. One makes himself separate from all physical objects. The entire cosmos is thus made up of two elements, "This" and "I." "This" refers to what is seen (Drishyam)."I" is the seer. We use the terms, "This is a table." "This is an auditorium." We cannot refer to any object without first using the word "this." By the use of the term "this," the particular object that is referred to is made clear.

There is no Seen without the Seer

That which is seen is perceived only because there is a Seer. When there is no Seer, there is no Seen. People say that the eyes see. But on what basis do the eyes see? It is not the eyes that see. There is something more basic. For instance, when a bulb sheds light, it is not the bulb that illumines. It is the current that makes the bulb shed light. Likewise all the objects in the world that are present are perceptible and made manifest by the perceiver. Thus the principle of "I" is all-pervasive. People may call themselves by different names. But the one thing that is common to all of them is the concept of "I." The very first word in the universe was "I." Aham ("I") is the first name of the Lord "Aham Brahmaasmi." Aham comes first and Brahma comes afterwards. This means that Aham is the name of the Lord. For everyone, therefore, the term "I" is always present. Creation proclaims the will of the Divine. All beings in creation are images of the divine. The advent of man is for the purpose of proclaiming to the world the glory of the Creator. Man is the image of the

Creator. The "I" indicates the oneness of man and the Creator. Hence, the nature of the "I" has to be explored. Physical desires become barriers to the discovery of the true nature of "I." Clouds which have been caused by the sun hide the sun from view. How, then, are we to see the sun? We know that the sun is there, but is not visible because it is covered by clouds. When the wind blows, the clouds are scattered and the sun is visible again. The fire in a burning piece of charcoal is not visible when it is covered by ashes. The reason is that the ashes, which, came out of the fire, have covered the fire. To see the fire, we have to remove the ashes.

Shed Anatma to enable the Atma to shine

Man today performs various spiritual exercises. These are of nine kinds: listening to the praise of God, singing the glories of God, remembering the name of the Lord, adoring the Lord's feet, service to the Lord, prostration, worshipping the idol of the Lord, cultivating friendship towards the Lord and complete surrender of the self to the Lord. People think that these nine forms of devotion are for the purpose of realising the Atma. This is a mistake. These forms of worship are intended to shed the Anatma (that which is not the Atma). When the Anatma is cast off, the Atma shines of its own accord, just as the burning charcoal is perceived when the ashes are removed and the sun is perceived when the clouds move away. The Atma is omnipresent. Only if it is confined to one place, will you have to search for it. But Atma is present everywhere. When you want to experience it you have to get rid of the Anatma that envelops it. What are Atma and Anatma? In reality there is no such thing as Anatma. Anatma is merely the inability to perceive the Atma. For instance, here is a light that is burning. As long as the light is burning, you cannot have darkness. When you switch off the light, there is darkness. Wherefrom did this darkness come? It did not come from anywhere. The mere absence of light produced the darkness. When there is light darkness goes. So, darkness is simply the absence of light. As long as one does not experience the Atma Bhava, he will be immersed in the Anatma. When the Atma is experienced the Anatma feeling disappears.

The mind turns men away from the Atma

It is because one has lost the vision of the Atma that he is caught up in the Anatma Bhava (vagaries of the mind). This is like depending on the light of the moon when the sun is not shining. Forgetting the effulgence of the Sun (the Atma), man relies on the mind, which is like the moon that sheds the reflected light from the sun. All spiritual practices in which people are engaged today are related to the mind only. This is totally wrong. By blindly adhering to certain transitional practices people have fallen a prey to peacelessness. Spiritual exercises should not be performed mentally. The mind is like the thief who cannot be expected to catch a thief. The mind, instead of seeking the Atma, interests itself in other things. It turns man away from the Atma and involves him in illusory pleasures of the world. Hence, spiritual exercises based on the mind cannot lead man out of the darkness of ignorance. When the Atma is experienced, the mind will cease to exist. When the mind is absent, there is no need for control of the mind, Once the Atma is experienced, the mind control becomes superfluous. It is like the light of the moon fading in the presence of the sunlight.

Hence, what men have to seek and acquire is Atmanandam (the bliss of the Atma), not the pleasure of the mind, the body or the senses. All the latter forms of happiness are transient.

The way to experience the Atma

If man enquires earnestly into the nature of "I," his enquiry will lead him to the experience of the Atma. This may be illustrated by an episode from the Bhagavatha. It was one of the sports of Krishna to go stealthily into the houses of the Gopikas and upset pots containing milk and curds. The Gopikas, who were worded about Krishna's pranks, were keen to catch him red-handed. Krishna was an elusive thief. So, one Gopika suggested that the only way to catch Him was to pray to him. The Gopikas started praying to Krishna. "O Krishna, is it possible for us to get at you? You are subtler than the atom and vaster than the vastest thing in the world. You pervade every being in creation. How can we comprehend you?" As a result of the prayer, the Gopikas were shown the means of catching Him. Krishna poured out the milk

from the pot, washed His feet in the milk and ran out of the house. The Gopikas followed Krishna's footprints and caught hold of Him. The symbolic significance of this episode is that the Divine can be experienced only when the devotee clings to the feet of the Lord. This is the teaching of the Bhagavatha. When the enquiry into the nature of "I" is pursued, it will be found that the "I" is the omnipresent entity present in every living being. This is the truth of the Vedic declaration: "Aham Brahmaasmi" (I am the Supreme Self). Some people may ask whether it is enough to meditate on the declaration "Aham Brahmaasmi." This may be done, but when one meditates on the declaration "Aham Brahmaasmi," one has to start with the understanding of the "I"; then you will understand Brahman.

Pray to God: "I am you and you are me"

There is a prayer addressed to God in which God is described as mother, father, brother, friend and everything else. This is not the right way to worship God. This kind of prayer binds man to worldly relationships. Instead of these multiple relationships, a simpler way of describing the relationship between man and God is to say: "I am you and you are me." The divinity inherent in man should be considered as one only, and not many. All the variety of names and forms one perceives are creations of the mind and are bound to pass away. When you and the Divine are one, where is the need for seeking the Divine? Only a fool goes in search of himself. Instead of resorting to all forms of meditation, it is simpler and easier to proceed on the single idea that you and the Divine are one. But this process of identification should not be an artificial exercise. It should come from the heart. In declaring "I am the Divine," you should express a genuine and deep experience. You should feel that the Divine is not separate from you. Instead of that if you merely repeat, "I am God, I am God," on the basis that Swami has told you so, you will be indulging in a foolish exercise. The Divine should be comprehended by earnest enquiry and a profound inner experience. It should, however be realised that as long as you live in this phenomenal world and have to perform worldly duties, it is not easy to express this oneness in the Divine. It has to be a gradual process by which the divinisation of life is achieved.

Get rid of the identification with the body

You have to realise that there are two elements in a human being. One is the Atma and the other is Anatma (one is the body and the other is the indweller in the body). One is the Kshetra (the field), the other is Kshetrajna (the Knower of the field). As in a grinder, one stone is firm and unmoving while the other is movable, it is only when both combine that you can achieve fulfilment.

The body should be considered as an instrument. Only then gradually the identification with the body can be got rid of. Man is perpetually enhancing the attachments relating to the body. Because-of these attachments and infatuation, the ego principle gets inflated. As the ego sense grows, the spiritual aspiration becomes weaker. But there can be no decay of the Spirit. What happens is the fading out of the Spirit (the Atma) from one's vision. This implies that a constant effort must be made to control the impulses of the body. The Divine is only one. The names given to God like Rama and Krishna are incidental. Birth is an incident, like giving a name to one that is born, Life itself is an interlude. But in this artificial interlude of life there is an eternal Atmic principle. That should be made the basis of life. Only then the Reality can be understood. Whatever books you may read, whatever discourses you may listen to, all these are merely mental lumber without application in practice. What sweetness will you experience if you merely read the description of various sweet preparations? But when you eat them, you experience their sweetness immediately. There is a vast difference between the bliss that is directly experienced and the bliss which is intellectually comprehended by the study of books. Therefore, the first step is to begin practising what you learn. Your faith must be translated into action.

Live the life of a human being

Students! You may pass examinations by studying books. After that you may get a job in which them is no use for all that you have studied. You must see that there is a close link between what you have studied and the life which you lead. There must be harmony between the knowledge you acquire and

your speech and actions. It is only when there is this threefold unity that you can live the life of a human being. Today this unity in thought, word and deed is rarely to be found among men. Students! You have to realise the supreme sacredness of human life. It is better to lead a brief but glorious life of a swan than live for long like a crow. Do not give way to the ever-changing promptings of the mind. Use your discrimination in deciding what you should do. You must examine whether what one wants to do is right or wrong and you should be guided by your intellect. Never act on the impulses of the moment.

You must recognise the divine that is present in all beings. The Upanishad declares; "Ishavasyam Idham Sarvam" (All this is pervaded by the divine). The divine is one, although described by different names. There is some basis for the differences in names. The same person may be described in different terms according to the functions he discharges.

The idea of total surrender to God

People tend to blame God for their troubles and say that even though they have surrendered to God their troubles have not ceased. This is misuse of the idea of surrender. If one has really surrendered to God, one should not be worried about what happens to him. The sense of separation between oneself and God should go. As long as the sense of separation exists, the divine cannot be realised. Brahman means that which is infinite. The divine, therefore, has to be experienced in all forms.

In whatever form the divine is worshipped, the offering goes to the divine. In the deep sleep state one is not aware of the names or forms or position or anything else. It is also described as the state of Samadhi. In that state names and forms do not exist. There is no consciousness of differences. There is no feeling of love or hatred. No likes and dislikes. Samadhi is not a state of unconsciousness. It is a transcendental state, in which all differences have ceased. This state is attained when the mind merges with the Atma.

Do not forget your inherent divinity

Students! In the different forms and names, you are like different actors on the stage. As long as you have to play your part, you have to act according to the role assigned to you. But you should not forget your true Atmic self. Whatever role you play, your Atmic self remains unchanged. You should never forget your inherent divinity. Many parents today are responsible for allowing their children to go astray. Students should remember that even if the parents advise them against their pursuing the spiritual path, they are entitled to act against their parents advice. When a father comes between a son and his devotion to God, the son is free to disobey the father. In worldly matters the son may follow the father's advice. But with regard to relationship with the divine you must follow your own way. At the time of marriage, the bride and the bridegroom are enjoined to act together in matters relating to righteous conduct, material interests, and worldly desires - Dharmecha, Arthecha and Kamecha. But with regard to Moksha, attainment of salvation, each must follow his or her path. This means that in the spiritual field you need not have to be afraid of anyone. When Meera was locked out of the Krishna Mandir by the Rana she was advised by Tulasidas that in the quest for God she was not bound to obey her husband's orders. In the case of Vibhishana, he chose to renounce his elder brother Ravana when Ravana was opposed to Vibhishana's devotion to Rama. Bharatha did not allow his mother's wishes to come in the way of his devotion and loyalty to Rama. The Emperor Bali disregarded the advice of his preceptor Sukracharya, when he came in the way of Bali carrying out his promise to the Lord. The lesson to be drawn from all these episodes is that God is above all others. Father, mother, brother, teacher and all others rank far below God. All such relations are temporary and transient. Only the relationship between man and God is permanent and unchanging. The faith in God must be firm and unwavering.

You must acquire steadiness of mind. When a person has a vacillating mind, he is worse than a monkey.

Greed arises from attachment to the senses and catering to them. Put them

in their proper place, they are windows for knowledge, not channels of contamination.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

19. Prajnaanam Brahma

Date: 28 May 1992 / Location: Brindavan

Not all the pleasures and luxuries of the world Will confer contentment on man; Without realisation of the Atmic Principle He cannot experience peace and contentment. There are various kinds of Dharma (rules governing one's conduct) in the world. Brahmacharya (celibacy), Grihastha Dharma (the duties of the householder), Vanaprastha Dharma (withdrawal from the world) and Sanyasa (complete renunciation) are known as the Ashrama Dharmas (the dharmas relating to different stages in a man's life). The Varna or caste dharmas relate to Brahmins, Kshathriya, Vaisyas and Sudras. They are, moreover, dharmas relating to worldly life and spiritual life. In Bharath, man's life is thus regulated by dharmas. All these dharmas are related to the mind. Enquiry will show that these Dharmas are of minor importance. There is one Dharma which is greater than all these. That is the Dharma concerning the awareness of the "I" - Prajna-Dharma. It is the Dharma which pervades equally the body, the mind, the will and the Antha Karana (Inner instrument). It has been defined as "Constant Integrated Awareness." It expresses itself as "I" and shines forth in its fullness. It manifests itself throughout the world. But man does not recognise its effulgence in spite of its presence within him. What is the mason?

How to realise the "I" principle

The sun shines in all his glory, but his light is not felt inside a house because of the walls around and the ceiling above. In relation to man, what are these walls and this roof? The Vedas have declared: "The body is a divine temple and the indwelling spirit is the eternal Jiva." The body is like a temple. But, man has created the walls of Abhimana and Mamakara (attachment and possessiveness) around it and covered it with the ceiling of Ahamkara (egoism). It is only when these walls and roof are removed that the divine "I" principle will be revealed in its true form as the effulgent Prajna.

Out of his egoistic feeling, a man declares, "I did this." "I saw this." "I heard

this." "I experienced this." It is true that it is the "I" that sees, hears and experiences. But when a man uses the "I" today, he identifies it with the body sense and not with an awareness of its Prajna nature. Hence there are two kinds of "I" "One may be equated with the term "eye" and the other with the single letter "I." The "I" that corresponds to the "eye" is related to the body. The single letter "I" proclaims the power of the Prajna (Constant Integrated Awareness). Students! You must realise that when a man with the body-consciousness says, "I have seen," it is not the eyes that have seen. Nor is it the ears that have heard or the hands that have performed actions. Nor is it the mind that has experienced. Behind all these is the power of Prajna which enables man to have all experiences of seeing, etc. It is only when man gives up the ego sense relating to the body and realises the role of the Atmic power of Prajna that he would be able to comprehend the principle of Divinity within him.

Conscience always declares only the truth

The basic human nature is related to Divinity and not to the body and sensory organs. In this human nature, how does one comprehend the meaning of "I"? This "I" shines as an entity that is pure, unsullied and unselfish. In modern parlance this is called "Conscience." Whatever action one does, the Conscience declares whether it is right or wrong. Whatever one may say or do in worldly life, the Prajna Shakti (the power of Conscience) proclaims what is true, what is permanent and what is unaffected by the past, the present or the future. Here is an example. A thief stole valuable jewels from a house one night. The next morning the police arrested him on suspicion. To escape from the clutches of the police, the man uttered a number of falsehoods saying that he had never stirred out of his house and that he had not committed any theft. Although from a worldly point of view, he was uttering all these lies, his conscience was telling him that he had committed the theft and hidden the stolen articles somewhere and that he should not utter lies. This is the voice of the Prajna principle which is related to the Universal consciousness.

The individual and the Divine are not separate

To recognise this Prajna principle there is a certain kind of yoga (spiritual discipline). What is this yoga? Is it Kriya yoga, or Bhakthi yoga or Jnana yoga or Karma yoga? There has been a great deal of misinterpretation of the term Yoga from very early times. It has been wrongly associated with some form of physical discipline. This is not the right meaning. Yoga means Ananda (Bliss). This is the correct meaning. When is this bliss experienced? When there is an awareness of the "I" principle, this bliss is secured. When life is enjoyed with the full awareness of the Prajna Shakthi, bliss is experienced as a result of this yoga. Yoga is the unity of the individual with the Divine. Yoga means an end to dualism. Yoga teaches that the Jiva (the individual Spirit) and the Brahman are not separate but one. This is the significance of the declaration in the Shruti "Ekam Sath: Vipra bahudha vadhanthi" (The Truth is one: the wise call it by many names). This truth is beyond the categories of Time. So, the individual and the Divine are not separate. Some are of the view that they are like an object and its reflection. There is, however, a big difference between the reflection and the object. The Prajna principle explains the relationship between the object and the image. The Prajna Shakthi teaches that when a person sees his reflection in a trough of water, the reflection resembles him, but he is not the reflection. Students today are not taking to the spiritual path because there are not qualified teachers to tell them the spiritual truths in the proper manner.

The truth taught by Prajna-principle

The image is you, but you are not the image. The Prajna- principle explains this by the following example. For instance, if someone beats you, you are hit, but the image is not affected by the beating. This demonstrates the fact that you are affected by the beating. If you and the image were identical, the blow that hit you should affect the image equally. Therefore, it is clear you are not the same as your image. But the image identifies itself with you. For instance, if someone insults the image, you get angry. But if you are hit, the image does not suffer any blow. This is the truth taught by the Prajna-principle. Awareness of this Truth is more significant than all other truths (Dharmas). The essence of all truths is contained in the truth about the "I" as recognised by Prajna (the constant integrated awareness). Its value is equal to the total

value of all other truths, which are only fractions of the whole, like 100 paise making up a rupee. The significance of Sri Krishna's statement in the Gita, "Sarvadharmam parithyajya mamekam Sharanam vraja," is that by giving up all petty dharmas (observances) and surrendering to the Lord you get the benefit of adhering to all the other dharmas. This is contained in the assurance: "Aham Thva sarvapapebhyo mokshayishyami ma suchah" (I shall liberate you from all sins, do not grieve). Do not attach any value to the minor dharmas. Understand the basic truth about the "I" (nenu) - the Prajna-principle - and derive the maximum benefit. Apart from Prajna, there are in man entities like the body, the mind, the intellect, the will and the ego. All these appear to be distinct and disparate. But essentially they are one. It is the functional differences of the mind which account for the different terms like intellect, will, etc. It is the same mind that assumes all the forms. Prajna (Constant Integrated Awareness) is present in all of them.

Prajna is the common factor

To understand the Prajna-principle, what has to be recognised is that Prajna is present in all the constituents of the body and the mind, but under different names and forms. Just as sugar is the common factor in a variety of sweets with different labels, Prajna is the common factor. This common factor is identified with the "I" (nenu). How does this happen? One declares: "This is my body." "My" is an expression of "I." Again, one declares: "This is my mind." Here, again, the "I" is affirmed. "This is my chitta" (will), "These are my sensory organs," "This is my Antha Karana (Inner motivator)." In all these statements, the "I" is repeatedly affirmed in the possessive case. ("na" in Telugu, meaning "my"). But in Sanskrit, "na" means "not." The declaration that "This is my (na) body" also carries by implication the meaning "I am not the body." Similarly when one says, "This is my mind," he implicitly affirms that he is not the mind. It will be seen that even within such simple statements, deep meanings are implicit. The use of "my" in describing one's body or mind also means that he is different from the body and mind.

The "I" principle is like a flowing river

Here is an example. You have a block of ice. No one terms it as water. Nevertheless the ice block is full of water. Without water there can be no ice. This means that ice is one form of water and is entirely based on it. Likewise, for the body, the mind, etc., the basis is the Chith-Shakthi (the spiritual element) known as "I." It is the Prajna-Shakthi. To give another illustration. You go to the Ganga with ten tumblers and fill them with Ganga water. All the tumblers contain Ganga water, but the Ganga is different from them. The "I" principle is like the flowing river Ganga. This infinite "I" principle appears in a myriad objects in multifarious forms. All these objects have emanated from the infinite "I." They are fragments of the Infinite like the Ganga water in each tumbler. Similarly, in the body, the mind, the intellect, etc. the Prajna-Shakthi of (the integrated awareness) "I" is present. All these have emerged from the Infinite and are manifestations of it. Today, in the modern world, there is no attempt at expounding the unity that underlies the diversity. What is the reason for this? It is because many ancient sayings are interpreted in different ways. For instance, there is the saying: "Shareeram Adhyam khalu Dharma Sadhanam" (for the achievement of righteousness the body is primary). The meaning of this aphorism is that the body is given to you for the pursuit of Dharma. Another aphorism is: "Sarvam khalu idham Brahma" (Verily, all this is Brahman). The entire creation is pervaded by Brahman (the Universal Absolute). Then there is "Aham Brahmasmi" (I am the Brahman). It means: "I am the embodiment of the Divine Consciousness." The Sastras make such pronouncements on one side. On the other, some unseemly slokas are recited at the conclusion of traditional ritual worship in Brahmin houses. "Papoham, Papakarmaham Papatma, Papasambhavah" (I am sin itself, I am a committer of sin, I am a sinful soul, I am born out of sin). This is a prayer in which the worshipper attributes sin not only to himself but even to his forebears. You may well imagine how unseemly all this is. Such prayers were devised to induce in the pious a sense of guilt and make them atone for their "sins" by making offerings to the priestly class.

The reason for loss of faith in the Divine

When the Sastra declares that everything has originated from Brahman (the Absolute), when the Upanishads declare that the Lord is the indweller in all

beings - "Eeshvaras sarvabhoothanam," how could the ideas of "birth in sin" and "I am a sinner" have any place? By arousing baseless fears in men, such sayings have served to undermine whatever little faith the people had in the Divine. This also accounts for the loss of faith among students today. Consequently, I introduced changes in this sloka in Prashanthi Nilayam. The priest in our Mandir used to repeat the old sloka earlier. In the place of papoham, the term Prapthoham was substituted. Prapthakarmaham, Praptasambhavam. The changes meant: "I am born as a pure being. My parents were pure persons. My spirit is holy. My actions are sacred." The old sloka (verse) was changed in this manner.

Divine love is the panacea for curing "diseases"

On the basis of what happens in the world, people talk about sin and merit, but inherently there is nothing of the kind. There are misdeeds no doubt, but these should not be characterised as sins. Wittingly or otherwise man is prone to commit wrongs. Man should not commit such wrongs, because actions arising out of attachment or aversion, anger or hatred are expressions of the animal nature. When a man is filled with lust or hatred, he is a prey to a grievous illness. Vices like envy, anger, ego and hatred are various kinds of diseases. These cannot be cured by ordinary medicines or by professional doctors, who can only deal with physical ailments. These maladies are related to the Antha Karana (the internal instrument of action). There is a divine panacea for curing these diseases. That is Divine Love. Once that Divine Love is got, one can experience the "I" (higher Self) present in the Prajna-principle. When the diseases go, health is ensured. Hence, the first requisite is to develop the Love principle as the supreme quality of a human being. But this Love should not be mixed up with the myriad forms of affection and attachment found in daily life. These may be called "love," but they are only different forms of Anuraga (attachment).

Students should understand the difference between Anuraga (worldly love) and Prema (Divine Love). Worldly love knows only how to receive and not to give. Divine Love gives and forgives and does not receive. It does not expect any return. In worldly love, there is no spirit of sacrifice. The Shruti declares

firmly that immortality can be attained only through sacrifice and by no other means.

Preciousness of Atma-Jnana

People indulge in what they call meditation in ekantham (solitude). It is not seclusion in a room or a cave or a forest that constitutes solitude. It is the one-pointed contemplation of God that is true meditation. It means merging the mind in thoughts of the Divine exclusively. The mind is a prey to continuous fickleness. The only way to achieve concentration is to merge the mind in the Prajna-Thatwa, the integral awareness of the "I." The Prajna-principle is also described as Guhyam, that which is hidden or held in secret. It is infinitely precious. Prajnana is also termed Brahma-Jnana or Adwaita-Jnana (knowledge of the Absolute). It is also called Atma- Jnana. This knowledge is so precious that it has to be carefully safeguarded. But when its preciousness is not realised, it is treated lightly. There was a shepherd who found a shining piece of stone in a river and not knowing its value, he tied it round the neck of his favourite lamb. A jeweller saw it and knowing its value as a diamond bought it from the shepherd for ten rupees. When he was gloating over the cheap price at which he had got the highly valuable diamond, the diamond broke into a thousand pieces and an ethereal voice told the jeweller: "I could excuse the shepherd for treating the diamond as an ordinary shining pebble, because he did not know its worth. But when you, who knew its value, got me for a low price, I could not bear the humiliation and my heart broke into pieces." Students are indifferent to spirituality because they do not know how precious it is. Students should first of all realise the supreme value of spirituality. To pursue the spiritual quest with real understanding is yoga. People refer to Raja yoga and associate it with Emperor Janaka. How did Janaka practice yoga? He reigned over the empire as a ruler. He led the life of a householder. He experienced the spirit of a thyagi (renunciant). He merged his entire being in the Atma. To merge the body, the mind, the intellect, the will and the ego in the awareness of Aham (the "I" or the Self) is Raja yoga. The goal of life should be to become a Raja Yogi. This is the means to get rid of all worries.

How to get rid of worry and attachment

Students! How do you get rid of worry? Worry arises out of Moha (attachment). To get rid of attachment for anything, you should turn your yearning towards something that is greater, more beautiful and satisfying than the one to which you are attached. There is an illustration for this from the Ramayana. When Bharatha and Satrughna returned to Ayodhya from their uncle's kingdom, they were stricken with grief on learning about the death of their father. They felt sad that they had been denied the chance to be beside their father at the moment of his passing. When they went to Kausalya to enquire about Rama and Lakshmana, and what their father's last words were, Kausalya broke into sobs and told them about the exile of Rama and how Lakshmana and Sita had gone with him into the forest to stay there for fourteen years. When Bharatha heard this, his love for Rama overwhelmed his grief over the death of his father, and his greater love for Rama made him even bitter with regard to his father as the cause of Rama's exile. The grief over the death of the father yielded place to the sadness over separation from his beloved brother.

Develop noble sentiments and sublime ideas

A greater grief submerges a smaller grief. A nobler feeling eliminates an unworthy thought. Hence, to get rid of petty and mean thoughts, one has to cultivate noble sentiments and sublime ideas.

Man's entire life is a procession of worries from birth to death. To get over these worries, at least from now on turn your minds towards God, because love of God is the panacea for all worries. Develop love of God. This is my sole message to all of you students. Students! Dedicate all your thoughts towards the single object of realising the Divinity in you. "Prajnanam Brahma," declares the Upanishad. The integral awareness which is your real Self is the Universal Consciousness. Ruminates over this truth. Then you will realise your oneness with the Divine.

First, tend your parents with love and reverence and gratitude. Second, Sathyam vadha, Dharmam charaâ; speak the truth and act virtuously. Third, whenever you have a few moments to spare, repeat the name of the Lord, with the form in your mind. Fourth, never indulge in talking ill of others or try to discover faults in others. Finally, do not cause pain to others, in any form.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

20. The Message Of The Vedas

Date: 29 May 1992 / Location: Brindavan

Of what woe is a life lived without chanting the Lord's name ? What happiness is there in reigning over the realm of the Devas ? What is the benefit from possessing all worldly riches? Without Bhakthi can one be free from bondage ? Although in the human, there are animal, demonic, human and divine possibilities, ignoring the human potential, pursuing animal tendencies is a great misfortune for man. There are some who identify themselves with the body. They do not realise that this body is transient and may pass away any moment like a water bubble. Death overtakes the man who identifies himself with his body. The body is made up of the five elements (ether, air, fire, water and earth). It is bound to perish. The Indweller is permanent, has no birth or death and is, indeed, the Divine itself. By treating the impermanent body as himself, man is wasting his life.

Five types of human beings

There are other misguided persons, the second category, who identify themselves with their minds and waste their lives. They are harried continually by thoughts and fancies. Brooding over the past and speculating about the future, these persons ignore the present and land themselves in confusion.

The third category of persons apotheosise the Buddhi (intellect), identify themselves with it, make use of its powers and embark on various plans. By glorifying the discriminating powers of the intellect in this manner, these persons fail to recognise their true (divine) nature. Thereby, man is wasting the divine potentiality of the Buddhi. Life is wasted in endless enquiries and experiments. However long one may conduct enquiries and researches, the intellect cannot help one to realise the Divine.

The fourth category of persons rely on the power of the Antha Karana (the Inner instrument of thinking). Regarding the phenomenal world as separate

from themselves, these persons seek to realise the Divine by taking to the spiritual path. The man belonging to the fifth category declares: "I am everything. There is nothing in the world apart from me." He believes that the world itself is unreal. He is one who comprehends the Prajna-principle relating to the "I." The Prajna is constant integrated awareness). If one seeks to integrate the body, the mind, the intellect and the Antha Karana to realise the transcendental goal, he has to go beyond the mind, the Buddhi and the Antha Karana and transcend the states of waking, dream and deep sleep. Only then can he comprehend the "I" principle of Prajna. The body, the mind, the intellect and the Antha Karana are related to the Prakruthi (phenomena of Nature). They are all functional variants of the mind. Divinity cannot be comprehended through the mind. Efforts should be made to bring the mind under control.

Four great Mahavakyas

In this context, the Vedas have proclaimed four great Mahavakyas (aphorisms). One is "Prajnanam Brahma." What is this Prajnanam? It is Chaithanyam (consciousness or awareness). This consciousness pervades everything in creation, man, demon or deity, birds and beasts. This all-pervading consciousness has been regarded as the Brahman (Absolute Divinity). Brahman refers to that which is pervasive. It transcends the body and the mind and is beyond the three states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep. Because this all-pervasive Brahman is identical with the Aham - the universal "I" principle - the Vedas gave the second aphorism, "Aham Brahmasmi" (I am the Brahman). This emphasised the oneness of the "I" and Brahman. Therefore, Brahman (Divinity), Chaithanyam (Consciousness) and pervasiveness are not entities with different names and forms. They are identical. But Brahman has different organs and limbs. For instance, there is the human body. It has a single name - body. But within the body, you have hands, eyes, ears, etc. In the same manner, the Brahman principle is associated with the Prajna principle, has the attributes of pervasiveness and Paripuurnathvam (wholeness), and Consciousness. All these are its limbs. Divinity is the integral form of all these constituents. Hence, the declaration Prajnanam Brahma means "Brahman is Consciousness." Where is this

consciousness? It is everywhere. There is no place without consciousness. On this basis, the Vedas proclaimed that the Divine is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient.

No difference between Aham and Brahma

In the second great Mahavakya "Aham Brahmasmi," there are three words: Aham, Brahma, Asmi. Aham signifies Paripuurnathvam (wholeness). It is not subject to change on account of time, place or circumstances. Aham has another meaning, namely Sakshi (Witness). This means that the Divine is a witness to everything - in the past, the present and the future. But he remains unaffected by any of these. Brahma refers to the principle that is the basis for akasa (ether) and other Pancha Bhutas (five basic elements). There is no difference between Aham and Brahma. They are interdependent and inseparable. The Aham principle also has the attribute of pervasiveness. Aham is present in the five elements also. Asmi unifies the Aham and Brahma. They are not separate but one and the same. This is the meaning of Aham Brahmasmi. The third pronouncement is "Thath Thoyam Asi." Thath is that which has remained unchanged before and after creation. It has no name or form. That is why it is called Thath (That). The Shuddha-Sathwa (the pure goodness principle) is called Thath. It is changeless. Hence it is called "Being," that which is ever unchanging and transcends the categories of time and space.

The common bond between Formless and Form

The second term, Thwam, refers to that which has name and form. It has body, mind, intellect and Antha Karana. It belongs to the phenomenal world. There is a common bond between the Formless and the Object with Form. In all the objects with forms the Prajna, the awareness of "I" principle is present. Consequently, Thwam also acquires the attribute of Thath. This is illustrated by an example. A sculptor produced an idol of Krishna out of a block of stone hewn from a rock. While chiselling the stone for sculpting the idol, he threw away the unwanted stones. He was concerned only with making the idol. After the idol was completed, it was installed in a temple. The idol was the

object of daily worship in the temple. After the removal of the idol, the other stone chips remained on the hill. These nameless and misshapen chips of stones proclaimed: "We are the same as That (the idol of Krishna). Once we were together in one rock. But because the other stone was given a name and form, we have become different from it. But the Divinity present in all of us is one and the same." Likewise, it is from the Shuddha Thathwa - Thath - that the body, mind, etc. have emanated. By separation from the Sathwik element, the body and others have been rendered useless. In what way are they useless? So far as ordinary worldly life is concerned, all these - body, mind, etc. - are essential. For performing any sadhana, the body is a prerequisite. To think about anything, you require the mind. To enquire into any matter, you have to utilise the Buddhi (intellect). So, for leading a worldly life, the body, mind and intellect are primary instruments. However, they are only instruments, but the agency that puts them to work is different. That is Thath which, residing in the body, the mind, the intellect and the Antha Karana, makes them discharge their respective duties. There is, however, no difference separating them from each other.

Principle of oneness implied by "Thath Thwam Asi"

To take another example. There is the vast fathomless ocean. Innumerable waves arise from the ocean. The waves appear to be different from each other, but are not really different. They are expressions of the same water of the ocean. Only their forms appear to vary. From the waves arise foam. The foam is inseparable from the waves. The foam cannot separate itself from the waves and the waves cannot separate themselves from the sea-water. The ocean is present both in the waves and the foam. The unity of these three is called Kootastha by Vedantha. Kootastha refers to the Thath that is present in all things (that differ in name and form). This principle of oneness is proclaimed by Vedantha in the pronouncement, "Thath Thwam Asi." The fourth declaration is: "Ayam Atma Brahma." Ayam means that which is self-luminous and self-created. It is unmanifested - Paroksha. Its form is self-chosen. Next to it is the term Atma. The Atma is present in all beings in the form of Chaithanya (Consciousness). Such Consciousness, which is present in all beings, has been called Sathyam. The reason for this appellation is that

this Atma is Nithya (ever-present). Moreover, it is called Sathyam because, as pointed out in the Thaitthireeya Upanishad, the Atma is the basis for all good thoughts and good actions.

The Eight Divine Majestic Powers

Thus, the truth underlying all the four Vedantic pronouncements is the same. It is the principle of Aham ("I") as expressed by Prajna (constant integrated awareness). Aham ("I") is the Divine swara (sound) in all beings. All other sounds have emerged from Aham. That is the reason why the term Shabdhabrahman came to be used. Where is this Shabdhabrahman? The answer comes from the term, Characharamayee (the one that is present in the moving and the non-moving). How does this Characharamayee exist? As Jyothirmayee (Infinite effulgence). How does the word Jyothirmayee issue from the mouth of man? As Vangmayee (in the form of Vak or speech). Even after a man dies, his words survive in the form of electrical waves in the ether. Broadcasts from Delhi can be heard simultaneously in distant places. The sounds are carried by radio waves to all places. Because of the power of Vangmayee, we can experience the bliss indicated by the attribute, Nithyanandamayee (Ever-blissful). The blissful nature is the characteristic of one who is Parathparamayee. Para is usually regarded as referring to a heavenly abode like Vaikunta. But it refers to that which permeates everything and is present as a witness. It is also called, Mayamayee. It is the power which makes one believe the unreal as real and the real as unreal. This illusion-producing power is called Maya. A student, for instance, mistakes a rope for a serpent in the semi-darkness of twilight. Immediately he experiences fear. After bringing a torch, he finds that it was not a snake but a rope. His fear disappears. Only the rope existed before he brought the torch. There was no snake in the beginning or later. The snake was a creation of his mind on account of ignorance caused by darkness. Today the darkness of ignorance has to be dispelled. Ignorance is due to Aviveka (lack of discriminating power). Aviveka is due to Bhranthi (imaginary apprehension). These imaginary fears are caused by attachment and anger. The latter are the result of Karma, which is a consequence of Janma (birth).

Ignorance is the source of fears

There is, thus, a close relationship between ignorance and birth. Human birth is the result of Karma (past actions). Actions result in attachments and aversions, which produce imaginary fears. The ultimate source of these fears is ignorance, which has neither birth nor death. There is no specific cause for ignorance. Forgetting his divine nature, man is caught up in the meshes of Maya (delusion) and the fears caused by it. How to get rid of Maya? The answer is: recognition of Srimayee. What is this Srimayee? It is the one that shines effulgently always, being wide awake and fully aware. Inauspiciousness is alien to it. It is ever auspicious. That is Sath. That is Prajna. That is "I" (nenu). Divinity has the above-mentioned eight attributes - forms of wealth. It is necessary to unify them by getting rid of the body-mind consciousness. Then the oneness of the Divine becomes evident. Today men's efforts are governed by selfish desires, narrow feelings and mundane objectives. As a result the meaning of divinity eludes man. The supreme sadhana that has to be practised by man today is to concentrate all his senses on God. This may not appear easy, but with strength of will it is quite possible. It is easier to give up things than hold on to them. Those who declare that Samsara (family life) is keeping them in bondage are misusing the language. It is they who are binding themselves to families and possessions.

Man should develop faith in God. Only then would he be able to experience lasting happiness.

Change your vision, and the worm will appear accordingly. Let the eye be charged with the Divine, it will see all as God.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

21. Power Of Divine Love

Date: 30 May 1992 / Location: Brindavan

Love is the form of the Divine. Love alone can merge in love. When one is filled with Divine love He can experience oneness with the Divine. Happiness arises from pure love Which is also the source of Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Forbearance. Students! embodiments of Divine Love! The ancient renown of Bharathiya culture is tainted today by the proliferation of three evil tendencies: indulgence in self-praise, scandalising others and hypocrisy. What is the reason for this? It is the pursuit of mundane pleasure by man, forgetting the glory of pure love. There is no one in Bharath who does not know the word Prema. The entire cosmos is steeped in it. Prema is incomparable and indescribable. The sage Narada declared "Anirvachaneeyam Prema" (Love transcends speech).

The difference between Prema and Anuraga

At the human level, this love assumes many forms. The word love is used in common parlance in the context of the relations between mother and child, husband and wife, master and servant, the preceptor and the pupil. But this is not true love. It cannot be termed Prema (love). It is only Anuraga (attachment). Prema can be applied only to the total love towards the Divine. It is utterly selfless. It has not come from the world nor has it fallen from the sky. It is Sahaja swaroopam (sui generis). Today man has forgotten this sacred and enduring love. There is nothing equal to love in this world. Even nectar is insipid in comparison with the sweetness of love. This love makes even the Divine dance in ecstasy, as well as the devotee. It expresses itself in dance. Such a love can find no place in the heart of self-seeking persons. It will dwell only in the hearts of the pure, the unselfish and the godly.

The scriptures have compared this love to a precious diamond. Where is this gem to be found? When even ordinary diamonds are preserved with great care in a strong safe, how much more safely should the precious diamond of love be preserved? Who is entitled to offer this diamond to others? Only the

person who is filled with love and who sustains himself by love always. Only the Divine is qualified to offer such love. Only the Divine, who is the embodiment of love, knows the value of love.

Hence, the greater your love for the Divine, the greater is the bliss you experience. Your bliss declines in the measure of the diminution in your love. The extent of your love determines the magnitude of your bliss.

The love which men today show towards God is filled with selfishness. The love is for the purpose of securing some desires. But love is not a commercial commodity to be got in exchange. It is offered spontaneously.

Pure Love is the royal road to reach God

There are many ways of realising God. Among them are: the Shanthi Marga (Path of Peace); the Sakhya Marga (Path of Friendship); Anuraga Marga (the Path of attachment); Vatsalya Marga (the Path of Affectionate Love); Madhura Marga (Path of Sweetness). In all these five paths, there is some element of self-interest. But in the Prema Marga (path of Pure Love), there is no trace of self-interest. Hence, all other paths merge in the path of Love. Pure Love is therefore the royal road.

We should consider that this Love is present in all. It is the form of the Divine. Because the Divine is present in all, whomever you love, you are loving the Divine. Forgetting this sublime and all-encompassing conception of Love, men today have lost themselves in narrow alleys. To promote among men love between humanity and God, the Divine descends on earth from time to time. For what purpose is the advent? To promote the Love Principle is His primary purpose.

Failing to understand the true meaning of this Love Principle, man is undermining his life. Everyone should realise that Love is present equally in all beings. But this love assumes many different forms when it is exhibited in different relationships in worldly life. The love between husband and wife is termed Moha (infatuation). The love between a mother and child is called

Vathsalya (maternal love). The love between kith and kin is called Anuraga (attachment). The love towards God is termed Bhakthi (devotion). Thus, love is one, but is expressed in many ways. Experiences are varied, but the goal is one. To carry on this life in this phenomenal world, love has assumed these manifold forms. The forms of love keep changing according to one's relationships. But Pure Love is unchanging. Such Pure Love is limited today by man's self-interest.

How man's love changes from time to time

Immediately after birth as an infant he clings to the mother's bosom and considers it as paradise. As he grows, he gets interested in education and forgets the mother. In his boyhood, one experiences this love in sport and games, in studies and recreation. After completing his education, he enters on family life and immerses himself in sensual pleasures. Later, he gets interested in earning wealth and loses interest in wife and children. Later on he loses interest even in wealth and turns his thoughts towards God. Thus, man exhibits his love for different objects at different stages in his life. (Swami sang a song describing how man's love changes from time to time and how he wastes his life at the end without developing love for God). Students! Love is not something which enters your lives midway. It is the Atmic Principle which is always with you at all times. You should not allow this love to change from moment to moment. You must transmute all your thoughts into expressions of love. To regard whatever actions you perform as an offering to God is the best form of sadhana. Whatever good deeds or spiritual acts you may perform, if they are not suffused with love they are worthless.

Love is like a mariner's compass

Love is like a mariner's compass, which always points to the north. Love should direct you Godward in every action that you do. There is no greater path or goal than this. Scholarship or ritual worship will not serve to transform your spirituality. Fill your hearts with love of God. Then the nation will enjoy peace. Your view of the world depends on the colour of the glasses you wear.

When your vision is filled with love, the whole creation will appear as Brahma mayam (filled with Divinity). This is what the youth of today needs most. This love is not related to the body. It is based on the heart. It is present equally in all. There may be varied bodily relationships but the kinship based on the Atma is one and the same. "Ekovasee sarvabhootha-antharatma" (The One dwells in all beings). It is like the current that is common to all bulbs of varying power. There should be no trace of selfishness in love. Unfortunately today men's hearts have become barren without love. Hence, there is no compassion in them. Men today behave in a more cruel manner than wild animals in the jungle. There is hatred between man and man. Maternal love has become rare and fraternal feelings between brothers are absent. The love among the Pandava brothers and that among Rama and his brothers are supreme examples of fraternal love.

Dharmaraja's one-pointed devotion to Krishna

The Pandavas overcame all their trials and tribulations by their faith in God. The eldest of the Pandavas, Dharmaraja, had his mind always centred on Krishna. He was known for his onepointed, simple-minded devotion to Krishna. He always thought of Krishna even while experiencing all kinds of difficulties in exile. Even when his children, the Upapandavas were killed by Asvathama, he did not give way to grief because of his faith in Krishna. When he reigned as a mighty emperor, he did not feel elated and he was not overwhelmed by grievous ordeals. For the Pandavas, the Lord came first, the world next and their own interests last. First God, then the world, last "I." The Kauravas had a different order of priorities. First "I," then the world and God last, with the result that they lost everything. Because the Pandavas kept God in the forefront, they were ultimately successful in their endeavours. If you want to succeed in life, you have to develop love of God as the most potent weapon. It was love which enabled the ancient sages to live in harmony with wild animals in the forest. Such is the power of love. But students today are not recognising the power of this pure love. Instead, they are immersed in impure desires and mining their precious lives.

The Gopikas exemplified the highest and purest form of love for God. (Swami

sang a song which the Gopikas addressed to Krishna, praying to Him to fill their parched hearts with nectarine showers of His love). Love of God is greater than nectar. It is called Para Bhakthi, Devotion to the Lord. It transcends the four Purusharthas (goals of life). Man may love the body, the mind, the Buddhi or the Antha Karana (the Inner Instruments). Love for the body ends with the death of the body. Love for the mind results in bondage because of the aberrations of the mind. Love for the intellect results in endless speculation and enquiry. Love for the Antha Karana promotes the ego feeling. It encourages dualism (separating man from God). Only the one who realises his oneness with the Atma can experience infinite bliss - the bliss that is eternal.

Investigate the nature of the "I"

Everyone should undertake an enquiry into the ultimate goal of life. For instance, we find that ghee is the ultimate product derived from milk after it goes through the processes of conversion to curds and butter. This process of enquiry is known as Mimamsa. You have to investigate the nature of the "I," which claims ownership of the body, the mind, the senses and other things ("My body," "my mind" and so on). If you are not the body, the mind, etc., who are you? Does anyone pursue this line of enquiry? Man is called Manava. This Sanskrit term has two meanings. One is, man is a being who lives free from ignorance. The other meaning is that he is not a new being, but has had a long past, in many previous lives. When such meanings are recognised in terms of Vedantic parlance, the greatness of human birth becomes evident. It fills one with joy. Students! The world today is simmering with discord and violence. Peace and security are absent. Fear stalks the land everywhere. To get rid of fear, you have to acquire Abhayathvam (fearlessness). How is it to be got? When you reduce desires and attachments. Students! Develop morality and good conduct. Lead exemplary lives and serve the nation. The sole purpose of education is to develop humility and discipline. Respect your parents and have love for God. This is true education.

Your work as Seva Dal members and as volunteer helpers must correct your vision, clarify your eyes, enable them to see God in everyone. Then, that awareness will transmute every word, thought and deed of yours into a benediction.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

22. God Alone Is The Sadhguru

Date: 14 July 1992 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Guru Purnima

Brahmanandam Parama Sukhadham Kevalam Jnanamurthim
Dhvandhvatheetham Gagana Sadhrisham Tathvam asyadilakshyam
Ekam Nithyam Vimalam Achalam Sarvadhee Sakshibhutham
Bhavatheetham Thrigunarahitham Sadhgurum Tham Namami

Embodiments of Divine Love!

It is not easy to understand the divine principle. The ego of "I" and the attachment of "Mine" are responsible for all difficulties. Man attains divinity very easily the moment he gives up ego and attachment. Atma is omnipresent. Atma is infinite. Atma is the One without a second. But, it appears as many because of the diversity of forms. Spirituality is that which recognises the One that subsumes all diversities as the Atma. Unfortunately, today there are many intellectuals who divide the One into the many. But there are very few who see the One in the many. Here is an example. We have built a mansion. In this mansion we have one room for bath, one for cooking, another for dining and yet another for living. What is it responsible for this division? It is walls in between. If you remove the walls, the mansion becomes one again. Because of the walls in between, there are different rooms with different names and forms. Similarly, the mansion of Atma is only one. Since we have created in this mansion of Atma, different rooms of the body, senses, mind, intellect, will and ego, the diversity appears.

The underlying Guru principle of Bliss

Since this divisive tendency is on the increase among mankind today there is great need for the Guru. Who is a true Guru? What is the truth underlying the Guru principle? Is he the one that teaches worldly education? Is the one who

explores the properties of matter, a Guru? Is the one who describes in detail Natural Sciences, a Guru? No, they are only teachers. A true Guru is the embodiment of *Brahmananda* (transcendental bliss). Who is this Brahmananda? Where does he exist? When we enquire on these lines, we find that there is nothing comparable to it in the universe. All the joys of the world are immanent in Brahmananda (transcendental divine bliss).

The true measure of Brahmananda

What kind of joy does a man experience when he is happy, healthy and contented? What is the type of joy that man derives out of wealth, properties, pleasures and fortune? This is called *Manushyananda* (human joy).

Hundred times more than Manushyananda is Indhrananda; hundred times, more than Indhrananda is Dhevendhrananda; hundred times more than Dhevendhrananda is Dhevananda; hundred times more than Dhevananda is Brihaspathi Ananda; hundred times more than Brihaspathi Ananda is Prajapathi Ananda; hundred times more than Prajapathi Ananda is Brahmananda. This is the true measure of Brahmananda.

Such an expression as Brahmananda (transcendental divine bliss) which is beyond all human imagination is used in common parlance to mean worldly joy. People say, "My daughter's marriage was performed with Brahmananda!" or "My son is in foreign country with Brahmananda!" or "My son has secured good results in the examination with Brahmananda!" But, is Brahmananda such an easy and cheap thing to be attained? Is it worldly or material? No. Not at all. This Brahmananda transcends the material, moral, religious and spiritual aspects of life.

The true Guru is one who experiences the supreme bliss of Brahmananda. Who is he? None except God has the competence to experience such bliss. All the joys are inherent in this bliss.

The next aspect of Guru is *Paramasukhadham* (highest happiness). This happiness is higher than all the happiness in the world. This is not worldly

happiness, which has a beginning and an end and is ever-changing; it comes and goes. But Paramasukhadham neither comes nor goes. Mundane pleasures are just water bubbles. They may burst any moment. The happiness with changes is not true happiness. All the pleasures enjoyed by man in this world change with time and place. A true Guru is one who enjoys and confers changeless supreme happiness.

The third aspect of the Guru is *Kevalam* (the ultimate). What is Kevalam? It means that which transcends time and space. All the things in the world are bound by time and space. But He is beyond space and time and there is nothing higher than Him. That is why He is called Kevalam. He is none other than God.

The vision of oneness is true wisdom

He is *Jnanamurthi* (embodiment of wisdom). What is Jnana or true wisdom? Is it material or worldly knowledge? Is it the knowledge of chemistry? Is it science? No, all this knowledge is related to materials in the world. But true Jnanam is the basis for all types of knowledge and is beyond them. It is infinite, unmanifest and remains ever as the One.

"Adwaita Darshanam Jnanam"
(true wisdom is the vision of Oneness).

All this is one and there is no second object in the world. Even if there is a second object, it is nothing but the reflection, reaction and resound of the first One. Real wisdom is the vision of one's own true nature. Knowing oneself is true wisdom.

Where does the man who seeks to know himself go? With which Guru does he take shelter? Is a person who asks others, "Where am I" a wise one? No, he is ignorant. None would search for oneself in the external world. But, today's

men are such ignorant ones. One who knows himself is the wise one. He is none other than God. God is the very embodiment of wisdom. He is the very form of truth and infinite.

Sathyam Jnanam Anantham Brahma
(Brahma is Truth, Wisdom and infinite).

The next is *Dhvandhvatheetham* or the One who transcends the pairs of opposites. What is this principle? It transcends heat and cold, happiness and sorrow, gain and loss or praise and blame. This principle can only be God and none else has this power - He is the true Guru.

God is more omnipresent than space

Gagana Sadhrisham is the next aspect. Where is Gagana or sky? It is all-pervading.

"Akasham Gaganam Shoonyam."

Really, it cannot be seen. We look upward and say it is the sky. But, it is not the sky, which is just a combination of clouds. Sky is the one that provides space for them. This sky (space) exists everywhere. Is it possible to show it? Yes, it is possible. It is there when you snap your fingers or clap your hands. It is there when Swami speaks. What is the nature of this *Akasha* (space)? Sound is its nature. Wherever there is sound, there is the space. Even inhalation and exhalation are sounds. Therefore, where is the place without space? There is no such place at all. Space is present everywhere. One who is more Omnipresent than space is God Himself. Therefore, such a God is the true Guru.

Thathvamasyadhi lakshyam is the next aspect. What is Thathvam?

There are four great pronouncements.

"Prajnanam Brahma" - this is the essence of Rig Veda;

"Aham Brahmasmi" is the essence of Yajur Veda;

"Thath Thwam Asi" is the essence of Sama Veda;

"Ayam Atma Brahma" is the essence of Atharvana Veda.

All those four great declarations point to One Divinity. Though they state and explain differently, their goal is One Divinity. The first pronouncement is "Prajnanam Brahma." What is Prajna? We call an intelligent person as a Prajnashali. Is Prajna merely intelligence or cleverness? No. Where is this Prajna? This Prajna is present in the body, senses, the mind, intellect, inner will and ego and all over. This Prajna is present in all the living and the non-living alike. It is called Constant Integrated Awareness. What is Awareness? Awareness is nothing To know what? Is it fractional knowledge? No, it is complete knowledge. It is the knowledge of the principle that is immanent in the living and the non-living alike. Actually, Prajna and Brahman are synonymous. Some scholars interpret that Prajna is Brahman. But, they are not two different things. What is Brahman? Brahman is the all-pervasive One. It is the Brihath principle. The universe itself is the Brihath or mighty principle. Brahman is immanent in the whole cosmos. To put it in simple terms, Brahman means pervasiveness. It is all-pervading. The true Guru is the one with these attributes.

Aham as witness is the very form of Atma

The second pronouncement is "Aham Brahmasmi." People think that Aham is "I." No. It has another meaning also. It is witness. He is witness to everything. He is the Atma. Aham is the very form of Atma. The Awareness or Consciousness which is present everywhere is installed as Atma in man.

Atma, Consciousness and Brahma are not different. What is this? (Bhagavan showed the handkerchief in his hand). This is cloth. If you remove the idea of cloth, you see thread and if you remove the idea of thread, you see cotton. The cloth, thread and cotton are one and the same.

Similarly, the same principle takes upon the names of Atma, Brahman or Aham at different times and situations. Therefore, the statement of "Aham Brahmasmi" means that the witness Atma or "I" in me is Brahman Himself. The third declaration is "Thath Thwam Asi." This is the essence of Sama Veda. Thath means "That" and Thwam means "This," Asi means "one and the same." When "I" and "you" stand apart, "I" am different from "you." But when "I" and "you" get together, the difference is lost and they together become "We." The two become one. The one with the *Upadhi* (body) is Thwam and the one without the Upadhi is Thath. One is *Jiva* (the individual) and the other is *Deva* (God). Sama Veda explains clearly that Jiva and Deva are one and the same.

Three in one

"Ayam Atma Brahma." You should enquire into this statement clearly. There are three words - Ayam, Atma and Brahma. But, they are one and the same.

This statement depicts the oneness of the three persons - "The one you think you are." "The one others think you are" and "The one you really are!" i.e. the body, the mind and the Atma.

You act with the body, think with the mind and you witness both as the Atman. In the wakeful state you are the Vishva, you are Thaijasa in the dream state and in the deep sleep state you are Prajna. Who is the Prajna? "Prajnanam Brahma." Prajnanam is the Atma. The real Guru is the very embodiment of the Divine principle, which is the inner meaning of these four great pronouncements. He is the one who has experienced and enjoyed the

essence of these declarations and takes upon Himself a Form to teach the same.

A true Guru recognises the nature of God

Ekam Brahman is the One without a second. It is only One. It is the One that exists before birth, after death and during one's lifetime. It does not change. God is the only one. All other things are diverse manifestations. A Guru is one who has recognised that the many exist in the One. Take for example, a banyan seed. It is one. Within this small seed exists the huge tree with branches and sub-branches with flowers and fruit. Roots are different, the branches are different, flowers and fruits are different. But, all of them come from the one seed. The tree is one but one person may look at the branches, another at the leaf, another at the flower and yet another at the fruit.

The Guru is this *Ekam* (the One). Who is it? It is God Himself. *Nithyam*: The One who never changes under any circumstances. The sun and the moon move and change, but He does not change. When someone is born he is a child, at 10 years he becomes a boy, at 30 a man and at 75 a grandfather. Thus man changes with time. But, He remains the same in birth and death. In fact, He has neither birth nor death, neither beginning nor end. He is God Himself: He is the Guru. *Vimalam* is the next attribute. He is the One without any type of impurity. He is pure, unsullied and sacred. He is not tainted by anything worldly. Whatever is put into fire is burnt into ashes. The things thrown into fire may be pure or impure. Fire remains ever-pure. You may burn the body, wood, iron or gold in fire: but the fire is not tainted. He is pure and sacred. Who is He? He is God.

Achalam: All things change and move. The earth rotates around its axis at a speed of 1016 miles an hour. Not only does the earth revolve around itself, it moves around the sun at a speed of 66,000 miles. But, we cannot see its movement. We think we are moving and the earth is still. No. The earth is moving. The moon and the sun and the planets are also moving. On a cinema screen sixteen pictures of the film move in one second but the screen is steady. Similarly, He is steady and motionless. He need not move anywhere,

because He is here, there and everywhere.

The eternal witness

Sarvadhee Sakhshibhutham: He is the witness of everything. A drama is being enacted on the stage. The king is speaking majestically, the minister is explaining something and the servant is standing with a stick in his hand. But, the light on the stage is not affected by their conversation. It remains ever the same. Harischandra is grieved. Chandramathi is lamenting. Rohitasya is fallen dead by a serpent bite. But, nothing affects the stage-light. All the changes are for the actors on the stage. But the light is not affected by them. It remains as a mere witness. The Guru is such an Eternal Witness.

Bhavatheetham: He transcends mental comprehension and verbal explanation. None can explain His nature. He is beyond all feelings and thoughts. He is the true Guru.

Thrigunarahitham: The three qualities of Sathwa, Rajas and Thamas are the characteristics of Nature. Wherever these qualities exist, happiness and sorrow follow. When these three are absent, there is neither happiness nor sorrow. Who is beyond these qualities? He is God. He is the true Guru.

Guru and the cosmos

Who is a Guru?

Gurur Brahma Gurur Vishnu Gurur Dhevo Maheswarah
Guruh Sakshath Para Brahma Thasmaih Sri Gurave Namaha.

Guru is Brahman. He is the Creator. He Himself is the creation and He is the One that exists in the creation. The universe is filled with Brahman. It becomes clear that the One who Himself has become the universe is the

Guru. Guru is Vishnu. Who is Vishnu? Is He the one with conch, discus, mace and lotus in His hands? No. Vishnu is one who has the quality of pervasiveness. He is the Doer and also what is done.

The universe is the action, God is the Doer. God is the consciousness behind the cause and effect. The whole universe is the form of Vishnu. This Vishnu is the Guru. Who is a Guru? Is one who teaches a "manthra" a Guru? No.

Gukaro Gunatheetham, Rukaro Ruupavarjithah
Gukaro Andhakarasha Rukaro Thannivaranah.

"Gu" stands for *Gunatheetha* (one who transcends the three Gunas) while "ru" stands for *Ruupavarjitha* (one who is formless). Also "Gu" means the darkness of ignorance. What can dispel the darkness? Only light can do it. Therefore Guru is one who dispels the darkness of ignorance. Guru is not the one who gives a Manthra or teaches you Vedantha. Those whom we call Gurus in the common parlance are not real Gurus! You may call them teachers. Those who practice and teach the same to others are called Acharyas. Acharya is one who demonstrates through practice. Today we have neither Acharyas nor Gurus. Today the so-called Gurus whisper a Manthra in the ear and stretch their hands for money.

A Guru is God Himself

Guru is Maheswara. Who is Maheswara? He is the one who rules all beings in the Universe. He commands and ordains everything in the universe in the right manner. Sunrise and Sunset go on according to His command. Seasons, rain, the day and night are His commands. Easwara is one that makes everything follow its discipline without any lapse. Guru is not one who merely teaches. A Guru is omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent, He is God himself. Guru is Brahma, Vishnu and Easwara.

Some people may say that Vishnu and Easwara do not go together. But it is ignorance to think so. It is only the narrow-mindedness of these devotees. Some call themselves *Vaishnavites* (the worshippers of Vishnu) and some others namely *Shaivites* (worshippers of Shiva or Easwara). But Vishnu and Shiva are one and same. Vishnu holds in the four hands the Conch, the Discuss, the Mace and the Lotus. The Conch is the symbol of sound, the Discuss of time, the Mace of power and the Lotus of the heart. He is the master of sound, time, power and the hearts of all beings. Similarly Shiva holds in the hands *Damaru* (the drum), and *Thrishuula* (trident). Here Damaru stands for sound and Thrishuula for a three-pronged time. He is the master of time and sound. Thus both are the same, only names and forms are different.

Only narrow minds create differences

Here is an example in the context of Indian traditions. Both Vaishnavites and Shaivites visit Tirupathi. There is only one God there. Shaivites call Him Venkateswara and Vaishnavites call Him Venkataramana. There may be difference in their feelings but God is one. They create differences in order to satisfy their petty minds. Another example. Shiva is called Pashupathi, the Lord of pashu or beings. The individual with mind-principle are beings. Vishnu is called Gopala, the Lord of Cows or beings. Actually both mean the same. Only narrow minds create differences. Narrow minded people can never attain higher states whatever practices they undertake for any length of time. We should recognise the unity in diversity. This is true spirituality. You are yourself God. As long as you do not know this truth you are *Jiva* (individual); once you know, you are *Deva* (God).

The power of faith and surrender

Today you have heard Anil Kumar speaking with joy about the devotion and the experiences of devotees in Japan, Thailand and Hong Kong. Some people think these people from far off places have such intense devotion, sense of surrender and many experiences, but how is it that being so near to Swami for so long we do not experience these? Swami does not shower any extra compassion on them. God responds according to one's faith. Their faith is

responsible for everything.

Of course, there are right and wrong things both here and there. But because of the great distance, they develop more intense devotion and sense of surrender. Intense feelings remain secure under all circumstances. When the devotion is not intense, it becomes fickle. Here is an example. There are huge trees on the roadside. These trees remain green in spite of famine and draught. On the other side there is the paddy crop nearby. You have to water it every day. Even if you do not water it one day, it will dry up. Foolish ones may think, "Paddy crop dries up if it does not get water for a day. How is it the trees remain green even in a long period of draught?" What is the reason for this? The roots of the tree have gone deep down to the water level, whereas the roots of the paddy crop remain on the surface.

We do not have steady and strong faith. Faith is our breath. We listen to Swami's discourses every day, but we do not derive any benefit. There are some who hear only once but remain strong forever. Anil Kumar has delivered discourses all over India. His discourses are highly attractive and colourful. But his monkey mind is full of jumps and bumps. Sometimes, he doubts these things which he himself says. In order to remove his doubts I sent him to Tokyo. He went and saw for himself their devotion and sense of surrender. He has understood that their faith is responsible for everything. All the difficulties begin when one's faith wavered. Prahlada loved Hari (God) and his father Hiranya Kashyapa hated Hari. The father went on arguing and denying the existence of God, whereas the son went on establishing His existence. Who protected Prahlada when he was thrown down the mountain? His faith protected him and not Vishnu. His faith took the form of Vishnu.

Divinity in all forms - the Shirdi episode

Once in Shirdi, Thahtya's wife prayed to Baba to visit their home and partake of food there. Baba accepted her request and promised to visit their home. She prepared everything for Baba's visit and kept everything ready. But Baba did not come at the appointed hour. She served food in the plate and went to Baba's photograph and said, "Baba why are you putting me to shame? More

than my humiliation, you will be called a liar if you do not come. Why do you utter a lie? You should keep up your word!" Meanwhile, a dog came into the house and started eating the food in the plate served for Baba. When she turned round to see what was happening, she found the dog. She got angry and beat the dog with a stick and sent it out. She was very sad that food served for God was eaten up by a dog. Next day she went to Baba and pleaded with him, "Baba! Should you not keep your word? Why should you utter falsehood?" Baba got angry and shouted at her. "Saitan! What is the need for me to utter falsehood?" In Shirdi, Baba used the word "Saitan!" often, now Swami uses the word "Dunnapotu" (he buffalo in Telugu). Baba continued angrily, "There is no need for me to utter any lie even if it is to satisfy you. My form is Truth, but you are not able to recognise it because of your narrow thinking. You assume that Sai Baba is only this body measuring five and a half feet. All forms are Mine! You do not have such broad mindedness. You are narrowminded. The dog was none other than Myself."

God can come in any Form. All Forms are His

Divinity is that which identifies itself with all the forms. It is a narrow-minded feeling to adduce Divinity to be in one physical frame and have all our acts of devotion on such an assumption. God can come in any form. All forms are His. Swami tells something to some boy; He may tell something to Anil Kumar. He may send the message through anybody. One may die of serpent bite, another by being struck by a lightning and yet another by slipping and falling. People might think, "Why should he die in this way? Why did not God protect him?" But serpents and lightning were sent by God Himself. They are none but the messengers of God.

We have built the Super Speciality Hospital here. Why did we start it? Many people suffer from many diseases. It is difficult to expect everyone to develop divine feelings of devotion and surrender. Some people have faith in medicines, some in operations and some others in doctors. Whether it is a veranda or a choultry, it is enough if one sleeps. Similarly, here our purpose is that people should get rid of their ailments, given good health and live happily. Further, many medical experts like Dr. Venugopal and his team from

Delhi, and the team from Hyderabad are performing the operations with great devotion and dedication. What is the reason for all these people to come here and carry on the operations? Apart from their faith and devotion, they have the good aspiration to give joy to one and all. They do all this keeping Swami in view.

Faith is the cause of fearlessness

Earlier, a heart operation was a very frightening thing and people would shudder at the prospect of this operation. They would be afraid of the consequences. The patients would cry and make their kith and kin cry. But in Prashanthi Nilayam today, a heart operation has become an easy thing like removing the thorn from one's foot. None has any fear. That is fearlessness! Even little children come to our Hospital with a smile on their faces. When Swami went to the Hospital a little child in the cot who was operated, saluted Him with a broad smile on her face. Neither her parents nor relatives were there but she was full of joy. What is the cause? It is because of the environment. Their faith is mainly responsible for this. All the things are going on very joyfully. Everyone thinks it is God's work. There is no trace of ego in those who work here. We may get fresh vegetable from the market. We prepare good sambar with dhal, tamarind, chillies and salt. But the sambar is spoilt. Is it the mistake of the salt or dhal or tamarind? No, the vessel is not tinned. The operation may be done spending lakhs of rupees. If there is no love and devotion in the work, it is like cooking sambar in an untinned vessel. Faith is most important for success or failure. It is faith or lack of faith which is responsible. Without this faith if you get into argumentation in the name of devotion, it is only the effect of ego and ostentation.

God is the only Guru

Embodiments of Divine Love!

If you want to understand divinity, you should have the firm faith that divinity is everywhere. There is no place or object without divinity. Guru Pournima means full moon without any defect or lacuna. Moon is nothing but mind.

When the mind is completely perfect, it sheds light. Guru Pournima is not performed by circumambulation and offerings to the Guru. What is the real offering? It is the offering of one's love. To know that God exists everywhere is circumambulation. If you understand these terms, every day is Guru Pournima. There is only one Guru, that is God and there is no other Guru. Contemplate on that Guru.

Drop the delusion that you have become old or diseased, or that you have become weak and debilitated. Some people count the years and grieve over advancing age and shudder like cowards afraid of Death. But remember, elation is Heaven, despondency is hell. Have always some work to do and do it so well that you get joy.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

23. Training Of Nurses Of Sai Mahaa Vaidhyaalaya

Date: 14 July 1992 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Adress to Medical Professionals

Embodiments of Divine Love!

Bharath is not lacking in experienced doctors and specialists in every field. Many of them have gone abroad, acquired the latest knowledge in medicine and surgery and established a reputation for themselves. Indeed, very few people possess the amount of fortitude and determination which Bharathiyas are capable of. Our doctors take a good deal of trouble for the care of the patients. Even in foreign countries, a very large number of Indians are rendering medical service. There is a very well-known saying in Andhra Pradesh - "The jewels are ours; the display is yours." Much of the medical service abroad is rendered by Indian doctors. But, others get much of the credit. Likewise, in India also, there are any number of highly capable doctors. But people do not value what is very near to them. They are attracted by what is distant. Those who are near to Swami all the twenty-four hours do not recognise His value so much. The value is realised only when one is away from Swami. For instance, there is a lighthouse. The light is visible afar but not to those under it.

Why doctors leave our country

Similarly there are among Bharathiyas many dedicated and capable persons. We do not lack exceptionally able persons. Despite the fact that we have so many able and competent persons, there are few who give them encouragement and recognition. It is for this reason that a large number of doctors, nurses and other paramedical personnel go abroad. They are not given adequate opportunities here. Nor is that all. They are not given the positions and authority commensurate with their abilities. Even the status that is appropriate to them is not accorded. Juniors are promoted as seniors and seniors are demoted as juniors. Because of this treatment many prefer to

go abroad.

Why should we allow such able and competent men to leave our country? Realising that we should make use of their services here itself, Swami has inspired many highly eminent doctors to serve in our hospital. Although Dr. Venugopal appears diminutive in size, very few people can understand the magnitude of his skills and capabilities. Here is another doctor, a short person, Babadas. Both of them work ceaselessly day and night untiringly. When we have such highly capable and dedicated doctors, Swami willed that there should be a sufficient number of trained nursing personnel and therefore training facilities for nursing personnel will be established. It is easy for doctors to perform operations. The real difficulty is in taking care of the patients after the operations. It is easy to slice vegetables. But, to prepare a tasty dish out of that is very difficult. This task of "cooking" is done by the nurses. If there is no good nursing, even the operation may be a failure.

Need for nurses with pure hearts

Therefore in order to train a good hard band of nursing personnel, training facilities are being provided. All those who are pure-hearted and filled with a spirit of service, may approach Dr. Safaya for undergoing training to serve in the hospital. They need not incur any expense. The entire training is free. Elsewhere, if people want to undergo such training, they have to pay all kinds of fees. Here nothing will be charged. Everything will be provided free. Only, we want persons with pure hearts to join the course. Today we have quite a large number of people working in our hospital. But, there is more work to be done because of the ever-growing number of patients seeking relief. Hence, we need many more nursing personnel. We are asking for nurses not for Swami's sake but for the sake of the nation. There is a Sanskrit saying: "Jananee janmabhoomischa swargadapi gareeyasi" (The mother and the Motherland are greater than Heaven itself). Hence, such sacred activities must be spread all over the country. It is not easy to make available such facilities for people in remote and isolated villages. Because in this village this magnificent hospital has been established, it has been possible to provide relief to a very large number of poor villagers. Many are not aware of the

genesis of this Institution. What counts is only action and not advertisement. When a heart operation is performed, the patient has generally to stay in the hospital for at least a month. It is no exaggeration to state, with reference to our hospital, that within a day after the operation, the patient starts eating on his bed the very next morning. On the third day, he starts moving about. On the fifth day, the sutures are removed. On the seventh day, the patients are discharged fully recovered.

Health is the greatest blessing for everyone

Our students are aware of the case of Prof. Radhaswami. He is here in the audience. He was not aware at all that he was suffering from heart trouble. It is a mystery how he was carrying on his duties. But the moment he was examined it was found that an immediate heart operation was necessary. A complicated operation had to be carried out. Today he is very much fit for this work and extremely happy. Health is the greatest blessing for anyone. If a person is in good health, he can accomplish anything. There are now a very large number of people enjoying good health after undergoing an operation in the hospital. What is happening in the hospital is not for today or tomorrow. It is an example to the whole world. People should not suffer from ailments of any kind. Regard this hospital as yours. It is not mine. This exists for your sake. Anyone is free to come to the hospital and seek relief and lead an ideal life thereafter. This is my benediction on all of you.

It is no use indulging in arguments and disputations. He who clamours aloud has not grasped the truth, believe Me. Silence is the only language of the realised

Practise moderation in speech. That will help you in many ways. It will develop Prema, for most misunderstandings and factions arise out of carelessly spoken words. When the foot slips, the wound can be healed; but when the tongue slips, the wound it causes in the heart of another will fester for life.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

24. Bright future for Bharath

Date: 28 July 1992 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Embodiments of Divine Love! Love is the form of the Brahman (Supreme). Love permeates Brahman. God can be attained only when love is merged with love. There is nothing greater than Love in the Cosmos. Love is sweeter than nectar. It is because men have forgotten this love that they have become a prey to all kinds of ills and lost peace of mind. Because men have lost the love of God and fear of sin they have become veritable demons. There are two kinds of love-worldly love and the love of the Divine-according to the scriptures. The love of the Divine is called Bhakthi (Devotion) or Prapatthi. Man lost Divine love because of complete involvement in worldly things and ephemeral desires. Man needs both worldly love and spiritual love. Devotion is turning the mind Godward. Faith is essential for devotion. Without faith man can never realise his true nature. Faith, however, has to be suffused with Love. Such love can make the Divine and the devotee dance in ecstasy oblivious to everything else. The nation is plunged in myriad troubles because it has forgotten the supreme principle of Love.

Our President, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, referred to Swami Vivekananda's message: "Faith in yourselves, Faith in the country and Faith in God-this is the secret of greatness." Dear students! Today the educational system does not promote the spirit of patriotism. Education is pursued to achieve individual aspirations. It is because patriotism is absent that we have differences between individuals and groups. It is essential to promote love of the country among students. Just as you say that this is my body, you must say this is my nation.

The three H's that have to be developed

The President compared Science and Technology to the head of the human body. But it is not enough to have only the head. Spirituality constitutes the heart of the body and that has to be developed equally. Science and Technology is the head, Spirituality is the heart and Dharma is the hand.

Hence man must develop the 3 H's - -head, heart and hand. People refer to EHV (Education in Human Values). It is the cultivation of three H's that is most important; this is called Thrikarana Shuddhi (purity in thought, word and deed) in the scriptures and when you have the triple purity you acquire Divine Love. Dear students! Today all of you should cultivate the love of the nation. The larger the number of persons you love the greater is the joy you experience. Develop the conviction that the Divine is equally present in all beings. It is not enough to utter the Upanishadic saying that the Divine is present everywhere and dwells in every being. Your actions must be based on a recognition of the truth of these sayings. Many of those who read the Ramayana are not really practising the message contained in it. Rama is praised for acting according to the behest of his father. But how many obey the injunctions of their parents today? Of what use is it in reading the Ramayana without practising any of the lessons contained in it? Practise is very essential to realise the fruits of such study. Students should realise that time is infinitely precious. God is the embodiment of time. Even a single moment should not be wasted.

Obtain peace by rendering service to society

The President referred to the importance of Seva (service). More than wealth, rendering Seva is vital. A great devotee in the Bhagavatham prayed to God as follows: "I do not seek any kingdom. I do not seek any heaven nor do I seek freedom from rebirth. But I desire only the opportunity to relieve the sufferings of fellow human beings." The Divine cannot be experienced by Yaga and Yajna (sacrifices), nor by indulging in charity and other good deeds. Only when you engage yourselves in service to society, eschewing egoism, you can really get peace. The Upanishadic message of harmony and co-operation is relevant to all mankind. The differences of caste and community are utterly irrelevant to the practice of these truths. All the basic elements in the Cosmos do not have differences of caste and community. All human beings benefit equally from air, fire, water, earth and sky. All differences arise because of man's self-interest. The truths proclaimed in the Upanishads - -Sathya and Dharma (Truth and Righteousness)- have to be practised by everyone irrespective of caste or community. The practice of good conduct is

the natural duty of man. You should realise that the happiness of the individuals is dependent on the welfare of the society as a whole. The transformation of the individual is a prerequisite for the transformation of the world. Together with changes in the political, social and economic spheres, we need transformation in the mental and spiritual spheres. Without such transformation all other changes are of no use. Therefore, make your actions pure. Only then can the human rise to the level of the Divine.

The President's career a lesson for the students

Students! You must realise the process by which our President, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, rose to such an eminent position. In the early years he pursued education diligently. He completed his studies in the University and acquired refinement of a deep culture. He became an M.L.A, and a Member of Parliament in due course. Starting as a minister at the state level, he became a minister at the Centre. Then he became a Governor. He then rose to the position of the Vicepresident, and from Vice-president he became the President. You can see that he rose step by step and had no setback. Other persons have had ups and downs in their careers. In the case of Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, his refined culture, his faith and his sacred ideals have served to carry him to the most eminent position. He considered reverence for the mother and love of the motherland as greater than heaven itself. He adhered to the ideals of devotion to the mother and service to the motherland. His mother is alive today. He begins his day's activities after offering prostrations to his aged venerable mother. The status he has now achieved is due to these qualities. In the election for President he sought no one's help. He has full faith in God. He believed that God would give him whatever he should get and left everything to the will of the Divine. Honours come unsought to the pure-minded. (Swami here recited a song in which the mind is asked not to seek any favour but to leave everything to the Divine Will. Did not the Divine shower His grace on Sabari and Jatayu without their seeking any favour?).

Good men at the helm will yield good results

As is the seed so is the fruit. Likewise, with good men at the helm of the

nation, it will experience good results. All of you should pray for such fruit. You are the future builders of the nations. The welfare of the country is dependent on the students. You must therefore strive to follow the lead of such good men at the helm and lend your support to them for the progress of the nation. Through unity, you have purity; and through purity, Divinity is realised. You all should be united. Union is strength. But alas! There is no unity today. It is the duty of the students to promote unity by all possible means. It is not enough if you maintain unity within the Institute. You must go out into the world and promote unity. This year is also notable for another significant fact. The first President of India was Babu Rajendra Prasad. He entered the Rashtrapathi Bhavan wearing the Gandhi cap, symbol of the nation's struggle for freedom. After so many years, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma made the entry into the Rashtrapathi Bhavan wearing the Gandhi cap. With such a President and Prime Minister we can look forward to a better future for the country with peace and prosperity. The President referred to the advent of the Divine as Avatar whenever there is decline of Dharma - "Dharmasya Glanir Bhavathi." How is the victory of Dharma achieved? The answer is given by Sanjaya in the Gita. Where the Divine and the pure-minded (like Arjuna) come together, there is bound to be the victory of Righteousness. Purity leads to unity and unity leads to Divinity.

Combine the mundane with the Divine

From the point of view of the students the message given by the President of India today is supremely important. Whatever aspirations and ideals he had as a student, he has presented them to you today. He has therefore set an example. The true role of a Acharya (preceptor) is to practice what he teaches. This is the meaning of the term Achara. Students! Bharath is entering a sacred and glorious period. Many sacred developments are bound to happen. The nation's prosperity and glory will grow. Man has to pursue both the Preyo Marg (worldly path) as well as the Shreyo Marg (Spiritual path). Man should combine the mundane with the Divine. Students should learn to combine these two paths. Develop faith in God. Without faith in God life is useless. Everything depends on faith in the Divine. The Divine is the basis of all that happens. Therefore, develop faith in the Omnipotent Divine.

Anything in the world can be accomplished with faith in God. Discourse at Poornachandra Auditorium, on the occasion of President's visit to Prashanthi

Every act done with the consciousness of the body is bound to be egoistic. Selfless Seva can never be accomplished, while being immersed in the body-consciousness. However, consciousness of Deva instead of Dheha, of God instead of the body, will bring forth the splendour of Prema. With that as inspiration and guide, man can achieve much good, without ever knowing or proclaiming that he is selfless in outlook. For him, it is all God's will, His Leela, His work.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

25. Krishna - Prema Avatar

Date: 21 August 1992 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Krishna Jayanthi

Prema (Love) is like a most precious diamond. It will not remain even for a single moment with selfish persons. It will not stay for even half a moment with egoistic persons. It will not remain at all with ostentatious persons. Love is alien to persons who are selfish, conceited or ostentatious. Where, then, is this love to be found? This precious diamond can only be got in the Kingdom of Love, in the Street of Love, in the Shop of Love. It can be obtained only through a loving heart. It may be asked, "Is not the whole world permeated with Love? Why, then, is not Love readily available?" The love with which the world is considered to be filled is not real love. Prema cannot be associated with the body, the senses, the mind and the intellect. Anything associated with these is only Anuraga (attachment). The Atmic (spiritual) life alone is a Love-filled life. Therefore, people must lead a spiritual life, not a life subject to the body, the mind, the senses and the intellect. A life related to the body, the senses the mind and the intellect can never be free from selfishness, conceit and ostentation. To experience real Prema there is no need to practice any kind of meditation, worship or rituals. That is because in the practice of all these there is an element of selfishness. Prema can only be obtained by complete absorption in spirituality. It was for this reason that Sri Krishna declared in the Gita: "Sarva Dharmam Parithyajya" (transcending all rules). Likewise, Jesus also declared: "I am the Path." Buddha, conveying the same meaning, declared, "Sarvam Sharanam Gachchami" (I am surrendering everything). This means that the essence of all religions, the root of all scriptures, the goal of all virtues, is Sarvathmika Bhavam (the experience of spiritual unity). The Gopikas exemplified such a spirit of surrender and oneness.

Restrain selfishness and self-interest

It may be asked whether in this mundane world it is possible to develop such a spirit of complete surrender. It may not be possible for all to be free completely from selfishness, self-interest and self-conceit. But they should be

a limit to all of them. Nothing great can be achieved without restraint "Na Shreyo Niyamam vina." When the normal temperature of the body is exceeded, the fever is a sign of illness. Likewise, there is a limit to selfishness. When this limit is exceeded it becomes a disease. Ahamkara (egoism) is a disease. Ostentation is a disease. Excessive Swaprayojanam (self-interest) is a disease. All these diseases have been described as Bhavaroga (the disease of worldliness). These are the diseases which are prevalent in the world today. When the Divine is present in everyone it is not fitting that one should fail to recognise this. One may have the faith that God resides within him, but this is not sufficient. It is not a great thing to feel that God resides within you. You have to see yourself in God. That is the true Prema Thathwa (principle of Love). As long as you do not see yourself in the Divine, you remain selfish and self-centred.

Experience of Ananda

Man aspires for Ananda (bliss) in the world. Vedantha defines Divine Ananda as Yoga. Yoga is usually considered as some form of breathing or physical exercise. This is not the true meaning of Yoga. Yoga means Ananda or Bliss. Wherefrom can this bliss be got? Only from the One who is the embodiment of bliss. It cannot be got from possessions of any kind or from position or power. Bliss can only be got from God, who is the embodiment of Bliss. How is this bliss to be got? Srikanth (a student who had spoken earlier) referred to the singleminded devotion of the Gopikas and Radha. The Gopikas have been misunderstood and misrepresented by commentators. Gopikas symbolise thoughts. Radha symbolises the combination of all thoughts in the mind. So, thoughts and the mind should merge in Krishna, represented by Prajna (in a human being). That is the significance of the Vedantic declaration, "Prajnanam Brahma." This Prajnanam pervades every part of the human body, the mind and the intellect. It is constant integrated awareness. All our thoughts, desires and aspirations should be merged in this Prajna. When this Prajna (constant integrated awareness) is present in all beings as the Divine (as Brahman), what is the need, it may be asked, for the descent of Avatars? There are reasons for the advent of Avatars. There are two kinds of perceptions viz. Prathyaksham and Paroksham (direct and indirect). There are

also two kinds of potencies: internal and external. For example, there is fire within a piece of firewood. It is only when the fire latent in it is brought out that it can be used for cooking. Likewise, everybody is like a piece of firewood. The Atmic principle is latent within it. To make it manifest, some form of love has to be practised. Just as you have to strike a matchbox to produce fire, Love has to merge in Love to experience the Divine.

Difference between divine love and human love

You may consider that the love within you and that the love represented by God are the same. But there is this difference. God's love is totally selfless. It is absolutely pure. It is eternal. It is flawless. Human love is self-centred and tainted. Such a love cannot merge with God's love. It is only when one is free from egoism, pride, hatred and envy that God will abide in you. Without Thyaga (renunciation) if a person is immersed in worldly pleasures and leads a mundane life, all his devotion is only artificial and a kind of self-deception. Such devotion will not lead him to God.

Today the world is full of such persons. People claim that they are loving God. I have not seen a single person who really loves God. Everyone loves God for his own sake and not for the sake of God. This is pure selfishness. Man seeks all things in the world for his own reasons. Even God is sought for such a reason. God cannot be got so easily. The heart has only a single seat. There is room in it for only one person. If you install worldly desires on that chair, how can you expect God to sit on it? God will enter that seat only if you empty it of all other things.

Selfless devotion of the Gopikas

Today, in the name of Prema, men are playing a game of musical chairs with their hearts. The chair of the heart is being used for occupation by different persons at different times. The Gopikas, however, dedicated their hearts to one person alone. All their thoughts were centred on Krishna. All their senses were dedicated to the Divine. They spoke only about God. Their thoughts were centred on God. They listened only to the Divine words. Their hands

were engaged in Divine work. All their limbs and senses were dedicated to the Divine. They did not consider anything as their own. Krishna was their all. Here is an episode from the life of Krishna to demonstrate the total devotion of the Gopikas to the Lord. Once Krishna feigned that he was suffering from a headache for which the cure was the application, to His head, of the dust from the feet of a devotee. Sage Narada sought to collect the dust from Sathyabhama, Rukmini and others, whom he regarded as great devotees of the Lord. But all of them declined to give the dust from their feet because they considered it sinful to offer their dust to be placed on the Lord's head. Ultimately Narada went to the Gopikas, who did not have the slightest hesitation to offer the dust from their feet if only it would give immediate relief to the Lord, regardless of the consequences to themselves. The Gopikas did not consider whether it was right or wrong for them to offer the dust of their feet. They were only concerned with giving relief to their Lord by any means. They declared, "Our entire life is dedicated to Krishna. His joy is ours." This was the spirit of oneness with which they offered the dust of their feet. And that very moment Krishna was rid of His ailment. By the time Narada reached Krishna, the Lord was found wreathed in smiles. Krishna told the sage, "You are boasting that you are devotees of the Lord. But none of you has the utterly selfless devotion of the Gopikas."

How to obtain Divine Love

Today there are many who claim to be devotees of the Lord and close to the Lord. But few can be described as real devotees of God. In each one there is some element of selfishness in his or her devotion. As long as there is an element of selfishness and egoism, the Lord will take no notice of such devotees. The love of the Divine is all the time present. But like the cloud that hides the sun from a person, the selfishness and ego of the devotee comes between God's love and the devotee.

To proceed from the human condition to the Divine in man, the only means is the Prema Thathwa (Love Principle). All other means are of no avail. From the Mahabharatha take the example of the fate of Karna and the destiny of Arjuna which indicates the difference between one who does not have Divine

grace and another who has the benefit of Divine grace. While Karna, who was associated with the wicked Kauravas, met with a tragic end, Arjuna, who was a firm devotee of the Lord, was blessed with victory. All Indian scriptures and Puranas demonstrate the power of the Lord's grace to transform the human to the state of the Divine. Although people have been taking birth after birth because of their attachment to worldly pleasures, they have not been able to get rid of their involvement with worldly concerns. Hence they are unable to experience the bliss of oneness with the Divine. All the bad thoughts and bad actions which they have experienced in previous lives continue to prevent them from experiencing the Divine. It is only when one gets rid of these impure thoughts that he can experience Divine feelings.

Cultivate love in its purest form

The Prema Thathwa (Love Principle) is the essence of Krishna Thathwa (Krishna Principle). It is associated with the Divine. Worldly love cannot be equated with Divine Love (Prema). The term Prema is used in ordinary parlance to describe what is really worldly attachment. People are attached more to names and forms than to the inner spirit of things. To get over this false attachment to external forms and names, it is essential to cultivate love in its purest form. There is no greater path to the Divine than this love. To manifest this love, the first requisite is to get rid of selfishness and self-interest. Dear students, dear devotees! It is not so easy to experience the Divine. You may imagine that you have comprehended the Divine. But this is a delusion. You are immersed in the affairs of the phenomenal world. This cannot lead you to the Eternal Reality. Only those who are dedicated to the realisation of the Eternal can attain it. This is illustrated by the Gopikas: total dedication of their lives to Krishna. They sought the complete mergence of themselves in the Divine.

Surrender completely to the Lord

People today are totally immersed in worldly concerns and do not devote any attention to the spiritual quest. It is true, involvement in worldly affairs cannot be given up totally. But all such actions can be sanctified by performing them

in a spirit of dedication to the Divine. The Bhagavatha demonstrates how this kind of dedicated life can be led by a devotee. It is not enough if you claim to be a devotee of the Lord. The Lord must recognise you as a devotee. Only then does one's devotion acquire value. Arjuna, for a long time, felt proud about his closeness to Krishna and about his devotion to Him. It was only towards the end he realised that he had to abide by the words of Krishna and completely surrender to the Lord. He then declared "Karishye Vachanam Thava" (I shall carry out your words). No one should feel that it is beyond his capacity to surrender himself completely to the Lord. If there is firm determination, this can be accomplished. It is only through earnest endeavour that Divine wisdom can be got - "Shraddhavan Labhathe Jnanam." Today the world is afflicted with the epidemic of Ahamkara (egoism). There is really no basis for this kind of self-conceit. It is born of ignorance. It has to be totally eradicated. If everyone realises that the body has been given for the pursuit of righteousness and acts on that basis, he will be able to realise the Divine.

Avatars come to propagate Divine Love

Embodiments of Divine Love! Experience the Love Principle. Thereby you will rid the world of hatred. Once hatred goes the world will be free from violence and strife. For all the cruelty and violence that we find in the world today, the root cause is selfishness. This has to be eradicated. Cultivating the Love Principle and manifesting love in all your thoughts and actions, you will experience the bliss of Love. When one is filled with Love of the Divine, all pains and troubles will be forgotten. It is to propagate this principle of Divine Love that the advent of Avatars takes place from time to time.

Although the Divine dwells in every person, this fact remains latent like oil in the thil seed. To manifest the Divine within you, you have to go through certain trials and ordeals. Love of the Divine should grow as a result of such experiences of adversity. Just as gold improves in brilliance the more it is heated in the crucible, your devotion has to go through a constant purificatory process. Today all thoughts and actions are polluted in one way or another. All one's words or looks or thoughts are polluted. Young people should realise that they have to lead ideal lives. Only then will they be true to

the message of the Ramayana and other Indian epics. Every student should aim at becoming an ideal example to the world. For this purpose they should cultivate good company; the company of persons filled with Divine Love. Unlike in previous Yugas people today pretend to be what they are not. They have to get rid of their animal instincts and progress from the human to the Divine.

Everyone has ultimately to base his life on some one truth; that truth is God. No life can be lived in complete defiance of truth.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

26. Work Together for The Nation's Progress

Date: **29 August 1992** / Location: **Secunderabad** / Occasion: **Inauguration of Vishva Kalyaana Mandapam**

Embodiments of the Divine Atma! Bharathiya culture is preeminent and unexcelled. It bears testimony to the eternal verities which are unaffected by time, place or circumstance. Sanathana Dharma is the inner core of this culture. The obverse of Sanathana Dharma is the doctrine of Karma (the Law of Cause and Effect). No one can fully comprehend how Karma operates. Its operations over time, place or people defy definition. The doctrine of Karma rules over the whole world.

The Vedas are the primary scriptures of Bharathiyas. The Vedas have three Kandas (divisions). The first part deals with Karma-Yoga (the Yoga of action and reaction). The Upanishads came into existence to indicate the path of Jnana (Higher Knowledge). The Upanishads also have three divisions one of which deals with Karma-Yoga. It is necessary to find out why the doctrine of Karma (action) has been given primary place both in the Vedas and the Upanishads. The entire gamut of human life - birth, growth and death - is governed by Karma. All the joys and sorrows man experiences, all his sins and merits, all the praise and blame he gets, flow from his actions. Man is thus bound by the operation of Karma. Not realising the relationship between cause and effect, man indulges in actions which give pleasure for the moment. When he reaps the consequences of his bad actions, he is immersed in misery.

Consequences are implicit in the action itself

Hence, before undertaking any action man has to follow the Upanishadic advice and offer his salutations to the Lord of Karma. He should pray that he should be endowed with the strength and competence to perform good deeds which will produce good results. The consequences of every action are implicit in the action itself. For instance, there is a small seed. Its entire capacity to grow into a big tree is latent within it. The seed contains within it

the potentiality of growing into a tree with branches, flowers and fruits. There is an interval between the planting of a seed in the ground and its growing into a full fledged tree. Wherefrom has this tree come? Krishna has declared in the Gita, "Beejam Mam Sarva Bhuthanam" (I am the seed of all living beings).

All that you see in the world is the result of Karma. Everything has a beginning and an end. Pleasure and pain have a beginning and an end. They are inseparable. Man has to realise the preciousness of human birth. It is highly unfortunate that people born in Bharath do not realise the greatness of Bharathiya culture. Understanding the operation of Karma is one of the essential aspects of Indian culture. Karma is not something remote. It is related to one's actions. Sin is not associated with some distant land. It is related to the actions which one does. Bhakthi (Devotion) and Jnana (Wisdom) are based on Karma (Action). Wisdom is the fruit of action.

Why Bharath is a Karma-Bhoomi

Bharathiyas had recognised how Karma operated. Nowhere else has the secret of the Law of Cause and Effect been explored as thoroughly as in Bharath. That is the reason why Bharath was called Karma-Bhoomi (the land of Karma). Having taken birth in such a sacred, sublime and great country, it is a pity Bharathiyas today are not aware of the truth about Samskaras (Right Actions).

People are making no effort to understand the place of Right Actions in life. They should be aware of the essence of Indian culture. Everything that happens is the result of some action. Everything in creation is based upon action. Whether one believes in it or not, Karma is the cause of creation. Here is an example. You feel hungry. The hunger is appeased after you take food. But there is a chain of events like putting the food in the mouth, masticating it, sending it to the stomach, digesting it and distributing it to all parts of the body. Hunger is relieved only after all these processes. Taking food is Karma, relieving of hunger is the fruit of the action. But between the action and the fruit, a number of events take place. These events may be immediate or

spread over many years, or lifetimes. But the fruits of Karma are bound to be realised sometime or other. Therefore all actions have to be done in the right way. People should engage themselves in noble deeds and serve as an ideal example to the nation.

Human qualities to be cultivated

Fraternal feelings, ethical conduct and the sense of fellowship are the qualities which elevate human nature. People do not strive to cultivate these qualities. People should realise that bad thoughts in the mind affect every part of the human body, just as a small stone cast on a pond generates ripples which cover the entire pond. Similarly good thoughts affect the entire body. Good thoughts lead to good actions, good speech, good hearing and seeing good things. When the thoughts are bad, the consequent actions are equally bad. The ancient history of India is full of the actions and teachings of sages who exemplified, in their lives, great ideals. But today, while we have considerable talk about ideals, they are not reflected in practical living.

The truth of the Law of Action and Reaction can be verified from a simple experience. If you stand before a mirror and offer a Namaskar, the image returns the Namaskar. If you assume a threatening posture before the mirror, the image reflects it back in the same manner. Reflection, reaction and rebound are three aspects of how Karma operates. For all the troubles and chaos in the world today it is our own actions that are responsible. There is no meaning in blaming others. Each person suffers from the consequences of his own actions. How can anyone escape the consequences of his actions? If this fact is realised, men will not find fault with others, or blame others for their troubles.

Inherent divinity in everyone is the same

People must, therefore, engage themselves in noble actions and strive for unity with all their fellow beings. Intellectuals today are more busy promoting divisions rather than in fostering unity. There are very few good men who seek to promote unity in diversity. The oneness of all mankind has to be

realised. Names and forms are many, but the inherent divinity in everyone is the same. You see a variety of bulbs in this hall. They are different from each other. But it is the same current that flows in all of them. The same analogy applies to human beings. They may vary from each other in several respects, but the divine spark in all of them is one and the same. The Divine is common to all. There is no separate God for each country or each religion. God is one.

The people must realise the importance of unity for promoting the welfare and progress of the country. Selfishness is the cause of disunity. Only when Swartha (selfishness) is given up will people realise the Parartha (Supreme). It is essential to cultivate the spirit of Thyaga (sacrifice). People do not realise all that can be achieved by sacrifice. When every action is done in a spirit of dedication to others, it becomes a form of sacrifice and a source of joy. When egoism is shed in the performance of actions and the desire for fruits is renounced, then sacrifice itself becomes a source of pleasure. This magnificent auditorium is the result of the combined efforts of many persons, engineers, workers, electricians and many others. It is the outcome of their labour. Every product is the result of action. Hence, the nature of action should be properly understood. What seems enjoyable at one time has consequences which are saddening later on. At the time of birth, a child cries Koham (Who am I). This cry should not last through life. Before death one should be able to say, Soham (I am He). Man must experience the divine in him. This is the goal of life.

The nation belongs to all

Bharath is a sacred and glorious country. It is our good fortune to be born in this land. You should realise the truth of the saying, "As you sow, so shall you reap." Hence all your actions should be pure and noble and such as would promote the well-being of the nation and give you joy.

Good or bad fortune in life comes in its own time. It is not easy, however, for everyone to leave things to the will of the Divine. Men are prevented from adopting such an attitude because they magnify other people's faults and forget their own defects. People should get rid of such an attitude. If one

cannot be helpful to others, at least he should not do any harm to others. The nation belongs to all. This truth should not be forgotten. People must stand up for truth. There is nothing greater than truth. Truth knows no barriers of caste or community. It is the same for all. Many people are undermining the reputation of Bharath by their actions. This amounts to treason to the nation. One who is not proud of his motherland and its reputation is worse than a corpse. All must protect the honour of the nation. They should be united. This is the message of the Vedas, "Let us all live and strive together in harmony." If only this spirit prevails among Bharathiyas, the nation will shine in all its glory. It is because people have forgotten the greatness of Bharath that our country is suffering from many troubles and difficulties. If people act together in concert, there is nothing they cannot achieve in Bharath. Determination and unity are essential.

Three concepts and ideals you should cherish

Bharathiyas should give no room for differences of caste, religion or language. They should recognise the unity of the human family. Remember: "Caste of Humanity, Religion of Love, Language of the Heart." If you base your actions on these three concepts, the country can make any amount of progress. Cherish these ideals in your hearts and discharge your duties. Bharath is faced with many grave problems and people are worried about what may happen, on seeing reports in the Press. There is no danger for Bharath, because what are happening are only the birth-pangs of changes to come. The changes will be for the good. There must be, however, a transformation in the minds of the people. There is no use in changes in external forms. Qualities must change. There must be a change in the way of thinking. Only then the change will be to the lasting good of the country. Envy and egoism are animal qualities. The qualities which every human being should have are peace, compassion, forbearance, love and sacrifice. These are the qualities that should be developed in all people, not vices like hatred, greed, envy, pride and others. Cultivate the feeling of love. Get rid of old prejudices and differences. Foster divine feelings. Only then the nation can make all-around progress. Embodiments of Divine Love! You must regard the construction of this magnificent mansion as a symbol of universal good -

Vishva kalyanam. Vishva kalyanam means the well-being of all. There should be unity of hearts so that anything that is desirable can be accomplished. People should co-operate with each other. From today resolve to give up selfishness and achieve unity among yourselves to serve the nation. Before I conclude I call upon all of you to regard yourselves as the children of one mother. Develop genuine fraternal feelings and eschew separatist tendencies. Concentrate on the well being of society as a whole.

Forget all your differences and come together to uphold the reputation of the nation. Bharath, which was once known for its moral and spiritual greatness, has been going down in moral stature. Every effort should be made to raise the reputation of the country. Consider today's function as an auspicious beginning for transformation of the nation. I bless you all.

27. Significance Of Vinayaka Worship

Date: 31 August 1992 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Ganesh Chaturthi

The stream of man's life is marked by different stages. In each stage man falls a prey to vices like egoism, jealousy and falsehood instead of cultivating truth, righteousness and humility. A life, which should be holy and pure, is turned into poison. What should be a meaningful and divinised human existence is converted into a worthless and evil life. The first stage in human life is that of boyhood. At this stage he leads an innocent life, without being aware of the Preyo or Sreyo Marga (worldly or the sacred path). But as he advances in age, he takes to the worldly path rather than to the sublime path. Endowed with the vigour of youth and in full possession of his mental and other powers, he forgets his basic human qualities and leads a worldly life devoid of any meaning. He loses the power of discrimination between good and bad and forgets what is high and what is low. He forgets even his essential human nature. He is unaware of the Divine. He descends to the level of the animal. At the end, he ceases to be human.

The necessity to have Sathsangam

Plunging into the river of Desire, tossed by the waves of Delusion, getting immersed in the waters of Family life, and submerged by peacelessness and strife, man is swallowed by the whale of Discontentment. To turn human life from this mundane existence towards the Divine it is essential to have association with Sath - Sathsangam. The term Sath refers to that which is not subject to change over time. It is the Truth which remains the same regardless of time, place or circumstance. Man should associate himself with this Truth. Merging one's consciousness with this Truth he should experience the bliss of such association. Sathsangam (association with truth) means experiencing Sath-chith-ananda (Truth-Awareness-Bliss). The Sathsangam has three facets as indicated in the Manu Dharma Shastra - "Bhadram pashyanthu, Bhadram srin-vanthu, Bhadram kurvanthu" (See only what is good, hear what is good and do what is good). Unfortunately, in the stage of manhood, these qualities are absent in man. At this stage, he may appear to

have devotion but it is neither sincere nor constant. Spirituality is viewed more as a formal observance than an inner experience. What really constitutes spirituality? Do bhajans constitute spirituality? Or repeating the words "Sai Ram" or making pilgrimages to Shrines? All these are signs of human weakness. True spirituality consists in the elimination of all animal instincts in man and manifesting the Divine light within him. This is the true meaning of spirituality. Today, man practices meditation and performs japa, but along with them the animal qualities are also allowed to grow. As long as these qualities remain, the observance of religious practices is worthless. All such spiritual practices amount to practising deception on the Divine itself. Therefore, true Sadhana (spiritual practice) means getting rid of all of one's animal qualities such as cruelty, wickedness, etc. Two qualities make a man alien to God: Asuuya and Ahamkara (envy and egoism). Envy and Egoism are two pests which destroy the tree of life. They deprive man of his essential human nature. With these bad qualities, people get divorced from the company of the good.

Significance of the Ganesha festival

The essential purpose of the Vinayaka Chaturthi festival is to teach a person to avoid the company of bad people and cultivate the company of the good. What does the term Ganapathi signify? "Ga" means Buddhi (intellect). "Na" means Vijnana (Wisdom). "Ganapathi" means one who is the Lord of the intellect and of wisdom. He is also the Lord of all Ganas (spiritual entities). Ganas also symbolise the senses. Ganapathi is thus the Lord of the senses. "Vigatho Nayakah Ithi Vinayakah" (Vinayaka is one who is without a Master above him). All festivals of Bharathiyas are full of transcendental significance and are not related to worldly phenomena. The first thing which is done on a festival day is to hang a festoon of green leaves on the front doors of the house. A festoon of green leaves is a sign of auspiciousness. By having such a festoon, the householder indicates that he seeks auspicious happenings. This custom has also scientific significance. The green leaves hung at the door serve to absorb the Carbon dioxide exhaled by people and they release Oxygen which is inhaled by them. Thus scientifically the green leaves serve a vital purpose.

Importance of inner and outer purity

On a festival day every person in the house takes an oil bath early in the morning. Personal cleanliness is conducive to good health. Moreover, as the Divine dwells both inside and outside the body, external purity is also important. To achieve inner purity one has to get rid of all bad qualities and cultivate good qualities. The significance of wearing new clothes on festival days is to replace the dirty linen in the mind by good thoughts. The heart is called Vastra, which is the term used for cloth. Hence, inner purity has to be achieved by purifying the heart. The wearing of new clothes is intended to serve as a prelude to purifying the heart within. Thus the different festival practices have an inner significance, apart from the external observances. In connection with the Ganesha festival, Prasadam (food offering) is dedicated to the deity in the form of Kudumulu and Undrallu. What are the kinds of edibles that should be offered to the deity? The preparations should not involve the use of oil or fire. They have to be cooked by the use of steam. Using rice flour and some pulses and thil, one kind of offering is made for Ganesha. In this preparation no oil or fire is used. The significance of this offering is: During the month of Bhadrapadha, the farmers bring home the harvest of thil seeds. Thil seeds have medicinal properties for curing lung and eye diseases. When the thil seeds and pulses are cooked by steam, the preparation becomes easily digestible. In offering such food to the deity two purposes are served. The offerings are tasty and wholesome (giving pleasure and promoting good health). These were the reasons for the observance of various festivals by our ancients. It is only when a man is pure that the intelligence blossoms. It is only with the blossoming of intelligence that Siddhi (the spiritual goal) is attained. Vinayaka presides over Buddhi and Siddhi (the intellect and spiritual realisation). Siddhi signifies the realisation of Wisdom. The scriptures say that Siddhi and Buddhi are the consorts of Vinayaka and Kshema and Ananda are his two sons. Siddhi and Buddhi symbolise the powers of attraction of Ganapathi.

First correct your own faults

The Ganapathi festival is an occasion for people to purify their minds. People generally tend to see in others the faults which they themselves have. Thereby they try to cover up their own defects by attributing the same defects to others. This is a bad quality. A man can improve only by recognising his faults and not by seeing the same faults in others. You must see what is good in others and look at your own defects. Only such a person can improve. Man does violence to his human nature by ignoring his defects and magnifying the faults in others. This trait is widely prevalent among students today. Students should aim at achieving harmony in thought, word and deed.

Harmony in the Lord's family

Men today are too much immersed in selfish pursuits. Animals and birds display less selfishness than man. The purpose of festivals like Ganesha Chaturthi is to remind men of their inherent divinity and awakening in them the sense of oneness of all mankind. Easwara's family consists of Shiva, Parvathi, Ganapathi and Subrahmanya. When you consider the vehicles of the four, you find that by nature they are antagonistic to each other. Shiva's vehicle is Nandi (the Bull). Parvathi's vehicle is the lion. By nature the bull and the lion are inimical towards each other. On Easwara's head there is Ganga. In His forehead He has fire. There is natural antagonism between water (in the Ganga) and fire in the Lord's forehead. Ganapathi has the elephant's face and His vehicle is a rat. There is a natural antagonism between Parvathi's lion and Ganapathi's elephant-head. Likewise there is natural enmity between the serpent around Easwara's neck and Ganapathi's vehicle, the rat. There is also enmity between Shiva's serpent and Subrahmanya's peacock. In spite of the natural enmity of these different vehicles of Easwara's family, there is no discord at all among them. Perfect harmony prevails among the members of the family and their different vehicles. This harmony and unity is an example to the world.

Unity is essential for achieving good things. There should be no unity for evil purposes. Whether a person achieves eminence or goes down depends on the kind of people with whom he associates. However, students should not

associate with fair-weather friends. The only true friend is God. All others are friends only for their own selfish purposes. God is always with you, in you and around you. He will not give you up in any circumstance. But if your heart is polluted, God will leave you. There is no room in a polluted heart for God.

The inner significance of the elephant head

Vinayaka has the head of an elephant. What is its significance? No human being has an elephant's head. It is against the order of nature. How then did Vinayaka acquire an elephant's head? This has an inner significance. Vinayaka is known for His supreme intelligence. The elephant is also known for its high intelligence (Gajathelivi). The elephant will not trust anybody except its master. Because Vinayaka is endowed with exceptional intelligence, His elephant face is symbolic of supreme intelligence. Those of you who are staying in the hostel notice cars going up and down the road. On the other side of the hostel is Sai Gita (Bhagavan's elephant). Sai Gita takes no notice of the innumerable cars going on the road. But, without any notice, it smells, as it were, the passing of Swami's car and immediately comes out with a roar to greet Swami. That is the devotion of Sai Gita to its Lord. The faith of the elephant is as strong as its intelligence. His love for the master is equally strong. It is steadfast love. These qualities of devotion, faith and intelligence are associated with the elephant. Whoever has these qualities can be regarded as endowed with the head of an elephant.

Students who may be inclined to entertain doubts regarding the reasons for Ganesha having the head of an elephant, should understand the inner meaning of this appearance, apart from what is seen on the surface.

Sacred ritual reduced to ludicrous practices

Unfortunately, people attach more importance to external forms than to the inner meanings of these festivals. As a result, meaningful festivals are often reduced to superstitious practices. And often sacred rituals are reduced to ludicrous observances. In olden days there was a practice of confining the cat in the house in a basket during the performance of the Sathyanarayana

Vratha so that the cat would not go after the various offerings kept for the deity. The cat was maintained in olden days when there was the fear of rats eating up the grains stored in the house. Even though there are no rats any longer in houses today and there is no need to keep a cat, the practice of confining a cat in a basket is being observed as a part of the religious ceremony. This is how a practice, which was relevant in the past, is observed though it serves no purpose. Students! You should realise that for every action there is a consequence. The results of each action depend on the nature of the action, just as the nature of the tree depends on the seed which is sowed. The consequences of one's actions are inescapable and it was for this reason that the Emperor Manu laid down that all should observe Dharma. The consequences of actions may appear sooner or later but they are bound to occur. Students like to worship Ganapathi. They pray to Ganesha to confer on them Buddhi (intelligence) and Siddhi (the capacity to realise their aspirations).

In the name Ganapathi, "Ga" stands for Guna (virtue) and "Na" for Vijnana (wisdom). When Ga and Na are joined we have the combination of Vijnana (worldly wisdom) and Prajnana (Spiritual wisdom). It is out of the combination of Vijnana and Prajnana that Sujnana (Supreme knowledge) emerges. Sujnana is the distinguishing mark of a true man. Ajnana is the sign of ignorance. Ganapathi is the Lord of Vijnana and Prajnana (worldly knowledge and spiritual wisdom). Therefore, when a devotee prays to Ganesha, he asks for the conferment of Vijnana, Prajnana and Sujnana. Education today lacks all the three types of knowledge (Vijnana, Prajnana and Sujnana). You have only bookish knowledge and superficial knowledge. They are of temporary value, perhaps no farther than the examinations! If the value of education is to last all through life, students have to cultivate faith in God. They should realise that when they constantly think of God and perform all actions with Divine feelings, they will experience the full blossoming of their human qualities. Consider every action as dedicated to God. You cannot avoid actions. You must transform work into worship. You have to perform work in this spirit. You cannot substitute prayer for work. You have to combine both work and worship.

28. The Avatar As Liberator

Date: 09 September 1992 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Onam

Nishkriyo Nithyo Nirvikalpo Niranjanah Nirvikaro Nirakaro Nithyamukthosmi Nirmalah. (Actionless, ever abiding, free from delusions, ever blissful, unchanging, formless, ever liberated and untainted am I). God transcends the Gunas (attributes). He is without cause. He is without form and is unchanging. He is beyond all thoughts and fancies. He is eternal, pure, omniscient and infinite. The cosmos is the embodiment of the Divine. There is nothing, not even an atom, in the world without the Divine.

Embodiments of love! Inside us and outside and all around there is air. But it cannot be seen, nor can it be grasped by the hand. Can you deny the existence of air for this reason? How can one exist if there is no air? To deny the existence of air is to deny one's own existence. God is all-pervading. He is omnipresent. He transcends time, space and circumstances. According to one's level of understanding of the Divine, God exists at that level. The mind is the means, of comprehending everything in the world. In the world, which is a projection of the mind, the Lord exists as Chittaswarupa (Universal Consciousness).

It is foolish to deny the existence of the Divine

All the animate and inanimate objects in the world are Vishnuswarupa (manifestations of the Divine). It is foolish to look at the cosmos and deny the principle that pervades the cosmos. Equally is it not foolish to look at the universe, which is the embodiment of the Divine, and deny the existence of the Divine? That is the reason why the scripture declared: "Pashyannapi na pashyathi Mudho" (The foolish one, even though he beholds the Lord of the cosmos, does not recognise Him).

What is the reason for this failure? Man is looking at the cosmos as a physical phenomenon - - Vishvabhavamu. He does not look at it from the point of view of divinity. It is only when the attitude changes that the Eternal will also be

seen differently. The external world is a reflection, a resound and reaction of the inner feelings. The outer world has been described as a reflection of the inner being. What is felt within appears as a phenomenon outside. Therefore, it is only when every man renounces the worldly point of view and adopts a divine point of view that he can comprehend divinity in the cosmos. For man to acquire peace, he has to cultivate Thyaga (sacrifice) and get rid of the sense of dualism. The highest wisdom consists in seeing the One alone - "Adwaita Darsanam Jnanam" The shedding of all attachment is Thyaga. The Gita declares that supreme peace is obtained only through Thyaga.

Mental transformation of sages Vyasa and Shuka

Once Shuka, the son of Sage Vyasa, renouncing all attachments, left his home. Unable to endure his departure. Vyasa followed Shuka. Vyasa appealed to him: "Dear son, you should not leave your home." Shuka told him: "You are not a father nor am I a son. Both of us are embodiments of Bliss.

Because of the forms which we bear, you consider yourself as the father and me as the son. The world consists of forms. You cannot comprehend the Divine without giving up attachment to forms. You cannot be the Seer without giving up the seen. You are carried away by your attachment to the external world." As soon as he heard this, Vyasa experienced a mental transformation and started considering himself as an embodiment of bliss. It is asked: "Is it possible to sacrifice (worldly things)?" The answer is: "It is not impossible if you make a determined effort." Unfortunately, man today is unable to give up addiction to even the most trivial things. Many are unable to give up cigarettes or bidis, tea or coffee. If one cannot give up such acquired tastes, how is he going to give up qualities like raga and dwesha (attachment and hatred)?

Man is, in essence, the embodiment of puurnaprema (complete love). But this love is constantly changing because of attachment to forms. When he is born, he depends on the mother and is deeply attached to her. As he grows, giving up attachment to the mother, he develops attachment to friends in the outside world. He regards his friends as his life itself. As the years pass, he

gets married. Deeming his wife as the breath of his life, he gives up his friends. As children are born, he wearies of his wife. He gets more attached to the children and interests himself in their education. After some time differences arise between the children and the father. At that stage the father attaches great value to wealth. This becomes the source of discord between father and sons. The affection which started with love of the mother ends in love of wealth. And then, he becomes a prey to greed.

Emperor Janaka's practice of Raja Yoga

It is evident from this that changes in the objects of one's affection bring about changes which cause grief. This kind of love is not proper love. Love which arises at one moment and fades the next moment is not love at all. True love shines like a pure divine flame in the heart of the man whose soul has no birth and death. True love is not subject to growth and decay. Whatever grows or declines is related to the ego. True love should be regarded as an effulgent flame. Once, Emperor Janaka approached the Sage Yajnavalkya and asked him: "Oh Sage! Please let me know the facts about my previous life." The Sage replied: "What is past is past. There is no use in recalling it. You have completed a journey along a road. Do not bother about the road that has been traversed. It does not redound to your glory." Although the sage used many arguments to dissuade Janaka from persisting in his request, Janaka was insistent on knowing about his previous birth. Yajnavalkya then resorted to his divine insight and told the Emperor: "Janaka, your wife in the present birth was your mother in your previous life." On hearing this, Janaka was shocked. He reflected: "What a wicked person have I been to treat my former mother as my wife! I must give up such a wicked life." From that moment he began to treat his queen as his mother, and giving up all attachments to worldly things, began to pursue spiritual wisdom. (The spiritual discipline he practised is known as Raja Yoga). When, while performing one's duties, one cherishes divine aspirations and contemplates on God, leading a purposeful life, it is called Raja Yoga. This kind of devotion to duty, while pursuing one's spiritual Sadhana, was exemplified by Emperor Janaka, who attained liberation in this way. Every person has to discharge his duties in this spirit. Then, duty is God.

Sisupala's mergence with Krishna

Once a great assemblage of kings and sages had gathered at a yajna performed by Yudhistira. In that assemblage Sisupala and Dantavakra levelled abuses at Krishna recklessly. They rebuked Dharmaraja (Yudhistira) for giving precedence to Krishna by offering him Agrathambuula (the first honours symbolised by the offer of betel leaves) at the assembly. They asked: "Are there not more eminent and worthy preceptors in this assembly than Krishna? There are, in this assembly, yogis, rishis and eminent ascetics. There are Acharyas (preceptors) like Dronacharya, Krupacharya and others. Bhishmacharya is pre-eminent among them. When such preceptors are present, why give the place of honour to Krishna?" Sisupala referred sneeringly to the boyhood pranks of Krishna to suggest that he was unworthy of such high honours. Dharmaraja could not bear listening to the abuses of Sisupala. His mind was racked with anguish. At that moment Krishna took the plate on which the offerings had been made to him and hurled it at Sisupala's throat. Krishna did not wield his Sudarsana Chakra (discus). He only threw the plate at Sisupala. That plate severed Sisupala's head. Dharmaraja was happy. The very next moment, the blood coming out of Sisupala's body flowed towards Krishna's feet while a flame from Sisupala's body merged in Sri Krishna.

Who attains lasting liberation and bliss?

Dharmaraja was even more astonished at this phenomenon. Dharmaraja wondered, "Should the soul of a wicked person like Sisupala get merged in the Divine? Should his blood touch the Lord's feet?" Dharmaraja's mind was filled with such doubts. Unable to contain himself, he went to the sage Narada and sought from him an explanation of the inner significance of what had happened. Narada said, "Praise and blame, abuse and appreciation are all related to the body and not to the Atma. You imagine that Krishna is merely the physical form in which you see Him. Because of this misconception, you interpret praise and blame in worldly terms. But the Divine is not confined to the body. He is eternally pure. He is ever pure and omniscient and

omnipresent. For such a Lord, both abuse and praise have no meaning. However, in the world many persons secure Moksha (liberation) by abusing the Lord, many others achieve salvation by adoring God. Others achieve liberation by friendship with the Divine. Some achieve the same through Love. But wicked persons achieve liberation more easily than those who love the Divine. The wicked person achieves merger in the divine very quickly. The devotee goes through many trials and tribulations before attaining liberation. What is the difference between the two types of merger? The devotee who merges in the Divine after experiencing many trials and difficulties, attains lasting liberation. It is a blissful experience. The wicked person attains momentary merger. It is not an experience of bliss." This means that all persons may attain merger with the divine. But the devotee who surrenders himself to the Lord attains everlasting merger.

The inner secret of the spiritual process

The manner in which the Atmic Principle operates has to be properly understood. It appears as if many bad, sinful and unrighteous persons in the world secure liberation while many good devotees appear to be suffering from many difficulties and troubles. These things, however, should not be viewed purely from the external point of view. The inner secret of the spiritual process should be understood. It was to give such an inner spiritual experience to Emperor Bali that the Lord assumed the form of Vamana and came to him. Bali was the grandson of Prahlada, who was the son of Hiranya Kashyapa. No one mentions the name of Bali's father Virochana, who was a wicked asura. While Prahlada's father, Hiranya Kashyapa was a hater of Hari, Bali worshipped Hari. Bali was ruling over his realm righteously. He loved his subjects as his own children. The land enjoyed plenty and peace. "As is the king so are the subjects" is an old saying. The ancients always prayed for righteous rulers. Emperor Manu laid down three prescriptions. They are "Bhadram Pashyanthu" (See what is good), "Bhadram Shrunvanthu" (Listen to what is good), "Bhadram Kurvanthu" (Do what is good). These are the life-breath of Dharma (righteous conduct). It is not enough for us merely to say "See good." These injunctions have to be observed. If these are not observed, righteousness will cease to exist. Emperor Bali practised these three precepts

and inspired his people to observe them.

One returns to the place from which he came

On one occasion Prahlada's father, Hiranya Kashyapa, went to his mother to console her on the death of Hiranyaksha (Hiranya Kashyapa's elder brother). The mother was wailing over the corpse of her son. Hiranya Kashyapa told his mother: "Mother, this whole world is transient. Every being is a traveller in this world of Karma and after completing one's pilgrimage, one returns to the place from which he came. Such being the case, why do you grieve? Moreover, my elder brother, who hated Hari, was slain by Him. That is his good fortune. He did not die at the hands of some ordinary person. The Creator became his destroyer. The one who created him also punished him. How fortunate was my brother! I am praying for a similar end for myself." On hearing these words, the mother was happy and declared, "Be it so." Hiranya Kashyapa was killed by Hari and thereby his wish was fulfilled. This episode indicates how God is realised even through hatred and abuse of the Divine.

Emperor Bali's gift to Vamana

Vamana sought from Emperor Bali three footsteps of land. What is the reason for the Lord appearing as a dwarf before Bali? When the Lord could measure the earth and the heavens with two steps (after Bali had made the offering that Vamana wanted), why did He appear at first as a dwarf?. This shows that however mighty a person may be, when he appears as a supplicant he gets diminished in stature. When one stretches his palm for an offering he becomes small. The giver of gifts acquires a high stature. Bali realised the greatness of his status as a giver. He rejoiced over his good fortune. When Bali agreed to make the gift which Vamana sought, Sukracharya intervened to tell the Emperor: "Don't give Him what He asks. He is not a mere Brahmin lad. He is Lord Vishnu Himself." Bali replied: "Oh Guru, I esteem no one higher than God. I will rather give up the preceptor than renounce God." There are any number of people in the world who are willing to make gifts of wealth, education and many other things, but there are few who offer themselves as a gift. Considering the gift which he was making to Vamana as a total offering

of himself, Bali made the gift. Bali declared: "I am offering my wealth, my family and everything else and surrendering myself totally to you. O Lord' Save me." Bali offered his all to the Lord. After the Lord had used two footsteps to measure the earth and the firmament, Bali prayed to the Lord to place his foot upon his head for the third footstep. What is the inner meaning of this action? As the Lord had measured the entire earth with one footstep it meant that the place occupied by Bali was also covered by the first step. What separate claim could he make regarding his head? The inner significance of this should be understood. By measuring the earth the Lord has covered the earthly realm. By His second step He had covered the heavenly realm. By placing his foot on the head of Bali, the Lord covered Manorajyam (the realm of the mind). This indicates that the Lord accepted and received from Bali the kingdom of his mind.

Vamana confers liberating glory to Bali

The mind is at the root of this phenomenal world. The mind is the cause of both bondage and liberation for men. It is only when one is free from the trammels of the mind that he obtains true Moksha (liberation). Vamana conferred liberation on Bali by freeing him from his bondage to the mind. It should be realised that Vamana did not come to Bali just to seek a gift. He came to Bali to liberate him. He came to Bali as a protector. He sought to make Bali an ideal example to the world. For what reason? Bali was the very embodiment of righteousness. He was a just ruler. In looking after the welfare of his subjects, he was exemplary. He excelled also in his generosity and his adoration of the Divine. He was steadfast in his faith. The advent of Vamana was intended to glorify Bali and make him an ideal example to the world.

Inner significance of Onam festival

Emperor Bali made one request to Vamana. "O Lord, my virtues are not very important. The devotion of my people is of great importance. I could be a great ruler because of the good qualities of my subjects. It is only when the goodness of the subjects and righteousness of the ruler are both present that there is real fulfilment. Lord Narayana, it is not enough if you give salvation to

me alone. My subjects are responsible for making me what I am. You must bless my people also." Bali appealed to the Lord to permit him to visit his people once a year. Bali prayed that in the month of Shravana, when the Moon is in the constellation of Shravana and on a Saturday he should be allowed to appear among his subjects. Unfortunately, this year, the Shravana month is over. Only the Shravana constellation is present today. Vamana granted Bali's prayer. The Kerala people observe this day as a festival day in the belief that on this day Bali visits their homes and blesses them. There is, however, another significance for the Onam festival. Onam means wearing new clothes. But is it enough to wear new clothes? The word Vastra not only means cloth but also means the heart. Therefore, the significance of wearing new clothes is that one should make the heart new by getting rid of all bad thoughts and feelings. Today in Kerala every home is cleaned and a festoon of green leaves is hung over the front door and the trunks of plantain trees are put up in front of each house. The significance of this observance is that both the external dwelling and the internal heart should be kept clean and pure, because God dwells both inside and outside of everything in the world. The real purpose of our festivals is that they should be an occasion for purifying our heart and getting rid of selfishness. There is also a scientific significance of having festoons of green leaves at the entrance of houses and the use of cow-dung for cleaning the floors inside and outside houses. The sweet preparations made from bananas by Keralites on festive occasions has special dietetic properties, besides being tasty.

Give up worldly feelings and develop devotion

The offering of sweets to the Lord on festive occasions has a spiritual significance. The Lord is the very embodiment of Madhura (sweetness). Krishna took birth in Mathura itself. The inner purpose of partaking sweets on festive days is to cultivate sweet thoughts and feelings. Bad thoughts and bad feelings should be given no room. Although Emperor Bali was of Rakshasa (demonic) lineage, he exemplified great virtues and sought to promote among his people noble feelings and Godly qualities. Though born in a family of Rakshasas, he was a devotee of God. What matters is not the lineage or caste of a person. What matters is the way one feels and thinks. Everything is

transformed by the nature of one's thoughts.

Therefore, everyone should give up worldly feelings and develop devotion to God. This is the means to the realisation of oneness with the Divine. One should not make a distinction between the phenomenal world and the Divine. The cosmos is permeated by the Divine, and there is nothing in the world apart from the Divine. But, because of attachment to the body and out of egoistic feelings, men react to praise or blame as affecting them. They ought to be indifferent to them. If one abuses loudly, it will be lost in the air. If the abuse is uttered in a low voice, it remains with him. Why should one be concerned about accusations or get agitated over them? Because there are few who express this point of view, people today are making themselves victims of praise or blame.

The Lord cares only for the purity of heart

People are lost in the observance of external rituals. The Lord is not concerned with formal observances. The Lord cares only for the purity of the heart. The saint Thiruthondar expresses this feeling in one of his hymns. He exclaimed: "O Rama, I am worshipping you with a pure heart." Purity of heart is essential. Without such purity all forms of worship and all pious acts are of no avail. True spirituality consists in getting rid of the demonic and animal qualities in one and cultivating godly qualities. Today people are filled with anger and hatred. When men utter the word "peace" three times, it signifies the desire for peace of body, peace of mind and peace of the Atma. Men should aspire for this triple peace. People go on building rest houses. But they do not build "peace houses." Peace of mind is most important. It can be got only by renunciation. Egoism and possessiveness have to be utterly eradicated. Emperor Bali was a supreme example of one who had completely given up the ego and attachment. It is not enough to offer worship to Bali or praise him. People must practice the qualities which Bali represented. People must develop Bali's spirit of generosity. They must be prepared to offer themselves totally to God as Emperor Bali did. Many people go on reciting the name of Rama, but how many follow his example either in the matter of obeying their parents: commands or cherishing love for their brothers? The

real devotee of Rama should develop Rama's qualities. A devotee of Krishna should at least follow one or two precepts of Krishna. The birthdays of great men are celebrated mainly by feasting and not by following their example. This is not the way to observe their birthdays. You must give birth to the qualities of the great men within you when you celebrate their birthdays.

Keralites' adherence to their old traditions

Embodiments of the Divine Atma! From ancient times the people of Kerala have been adhering, by and large, to their old traditions. It used to be said that Kerala is a communist area and atheism is rampant there. The truth is that Kerala is a theistic state. Other things are only part of the game of politics. At heart the people of Kerala are filled with devotion. Nambudiripad was a communist leader and was for some time Chief Minister of Kerala. But he translated the Upanishads. The spiritual urge is present in all Keralites. Political changes may come and go, but the inner feelings remain unchanged. The Kerala people are fortunate in having been blessed with the advent of three Avatars in their country. I desire that you should develop your devotional tendencies and sanctify your lives. The people of Kerala are especially devoted to the worship of Krishna. It is Krishna as a child that is worshipped in Guruvayur. I desire that they should experience the bliss of the worship of Krishna and share it with all others in the world.

29. Three Cardinal Vices

Date: 17 September 1992 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Students Hostel

Dear Students!

In order to foster one's individual personality, everyone has to acquire knowledge of ethics and morality. Personality is not an ordinary term. It expresses the essential quality of a human being. For the Sanskrit word Vyakthithvam the equivalent term in English is personality. Personality is acquired only on the basis of adherence to moral principles. The term neethi in Sanskrit is associated with manners and good conduct. When a man exercises discrimination in daily activity, then he is said to observe morality. A life without morality is utterly useless. The prestige of any community depends upon its morals. If morality is absent, the community comes to grief. Whether it is a nation, a society, or an individual, when they conduct themselves contrary to morality, the civilisation which they might have fostered for a long time will come to ruin. One may have plenty of wealth, position, authority and much else, but all these are meretricious; morality alone enhances the worth of a human being. Kings and emperors in Bharath from quite ancient times based their lives on morality and acquired honour and glory. It is on account of them that Bharath was called a Divine land, a land of Karma (right Action), a land of Yoga, and a land of Thyaga (sacrifice). The name and fame of Emperor Ashoka have survived for millennia because he practised in his day-to-day life the great virtues. Akbar, among Mogul emperors, has been esteemed as a great ruler because of his conduct as an emperor.

Destroy selfishness totally

Only a moral life can be called sacred. Man is a sacred being. But when he indulges in selfishness, his sacred, divine life is undermined. The sacred Atma is fundamental for every human being. This is also called Anthar-atma. God as the Indweller guides and directs human life as Anthar-atma, the inner-conscience of every human being. In human life today selfishness and self-

interest have assumed prodigious proportions. Whatever he does, whatever he sees, whatever he studies, man makes it subserve selfish interests. Human life has become a plaything in the hands of selfishness. Only when selfishness is totally destroyed in the human heart, will man develop a broadmindedness that will promote unity and sacredness among mankind. When this selfishness grows continually, it takes the form of Kama (lust), Krodha (hatred) and Lobha (greed). These three vices are demonic in nature. When these three demonic vices grow in them, human beings lose faith in God. Besides losing faith in God, they also develop enmity towards God. Worldly desires increase. The Divine quality declines.

Hatred and enmity towards God ruins oneself

You can find proofs of this in the Ramayana, the Bhagavatha and the Mahabharatha. The story of Ramayana shows how one who began his career with lust, developed hatred and enmity towards God and mined himself. Ravana was a great scholar. He had mastered sixty-four types of vidya (knowledge). He was the first one who invented an aeroplane called Pushpaka Vimana. He had mastered the language of animals, birds and insects. There was nothing wanting by way of knowledge in Ravana. In terms of wealth and prosperity his kingdom excelled heaven itself. He did a lot of penance to acquire mastery over the physical world. In spite of all these, he had faith only in the phenomenal world and not in the Divine. He did not choose to enquire who was behind all creation.

The universe is the property of the Creator. Rama was verily the Over-Soul itself. Sita was Rama's Shakthi. She was the daughter of Mother Earth. She was the embodiment of Nature. Ravana developed enmity towards Rama and wanted to abduct Sita. What was the result of all this? Hating God and going after Nature, how did he end? At the end of it all, not only himself, but his kingdom and his entire brood were destroyed. In spite of all his knowledge and powers, he ruined himself because of his moral lapses. He did not recognise the divinity within him. What is the lesson to be learnt from Ravana's fate? It is this: However much of worldly knowledge you may have, you should seek Atma Vidya (knowledge of the Atma). Your parents or

relations may be distant from you. But God is not distant from you. God is always with you, behind you and around you and He will protect you. Giving up the Divine, which is so close to you, and going after worldly happiness, is fraught with danger. Ravana made all efforts to satisfy his own desire, became an enemy of God and was ultimately destroyed.

Lesson from the Bhagavatha

Next, you have the Bhagavatha. The Bhagavatha teaches the lesson that anger destroys people. In the Bhagavatha, Hiranya Kashyapa looked upon God as his enemy. He deemed himself the supreme Lord. He felt that there was no power greater than himself. Hiranya Kashyapa was a great scientist. He plumbed the depths of the ocean. He had control over the five elements. Despite all these accomplishments he developed enmity towards God. He subjected his son, Prahlada, to innumerable ordeals because he was a devotee of Narayana. He tried to drown Prahlada in the ocean and hurl him from the top of a mountain. He got Prahlada bitten by snakes. But Prahlada survived all the ordeals. Prahlada was always chanting the name of Lord Narayana, whom Hiranya Kashyapa hated. Anger causes destruction of wisdom. And when wisdom is lost, everything is lost - honour, wealth, position and life itself. Scientific knowledge without wisdom is of no use. Along with science there should be discrimination. The Ramayana teaches how a person suffers on account of evil desires. The Bhagavatha teaches lessons as to how a person suffers on account of anger and hatred. All their knowledge and powers could not save Ravana or Hiranya Kashyapa. It is only God who can give protection. Developing enmity towards God, Ravana and Hiranya Kashyapa courted disaster.

Greed goeth before a fall

Duryodhana signifies one who has wicked thoughts. His minister was Dussasana. Dussasana means one who promulgates bad laws. A combination of these two led to the growth of greed. On account of their lobha (greed) the Kauravas were totally destroyed. On one occasion Krishna said, "Arjuna means a person whose heart is pure, immaculately." Krishna told Arjuna (on

the battlefield), "Arjuna! Get up, get up Dhananjaya. Destiny is all powerful. Justice always wins. Selfishness will end in ruin. This is the nature of Yuga Dharma. Know the truth (of what is to come). Dhritrashtra may be the father of a hundred children. But, there will not be even one to perform the last rites for him. That is how fate works." Krishna thus revealed to Arjuna the fate of the Kauravas in the beginning itself. Dhritrashtra had a hundred sons. Of what use were they? At the end not even one son remained to perform his obsequies. The reason was greed. The Kauravas were not prepared to give to the Pandavas their rightful share. Duryodhana wanted to keep everything to himself, including what belonged to others. This kind of selfishness is called Lobha (greed). In the Ramayana, because of Kama (desire) Ravana was destroyed. In the Bhagavatha, Hiranya Kashyapa, despite his prodigious knowledge and power, was destroyed on account of his anger against God.

The fate of those who hated God

Ravana, Hiranya Kashyapa and Duryodhana hated God and were utterly destroyed. The basic difference between the Kauravas and the Pandavas was in their attitude towards God. The Pandavas had full faith in God. They thought God was their all. The Kauravas were indifferent to God. All they wanted was only the kingdom. Before the Kurukshetra war, Arjuna went to Krishna to seek His help and Duryodhana also went to Krishna. Krishna saw both of them coming. He closed his eyes and acted as if He was sleeping. He wanted to teach the world the difference between the two. When he was awakened he found Arjuna sitting at his feet. Duryodhana was full of ego. He thought: "I am a king. How can I sit at the feet of Krishna?" He took his seat behind the head of Krishna. On opening His eyes, Krishna saw Arjuna, who was sitting at his feet. Krishna asked, "Brother-in-law, why have you come?" Duryodhana was filled with jealousy. He reflected, "As soon as He got up, Krishna is talking to Arjuna and not to me." He did not realise that it was only natural for Krishna to see Arjuna first because he was sitting at Krishna's feet. Arjuna got up and offered Namaskar. Krishna knew that Duryodhana was sitting behind. He asked Arjuna, "What do you want?" Duryodhana came closer and said, "Krishna I have also come." Krishna said, "So both of you

have come. I have two things to offer. On one side I am alone. On the other side there is my entire army. Do you want my army and kingdom or Myself?" Being apprehensive that Arjuna might ask for the Army, Duryodhana came forward and said, "Krishna, I want your army." He said, "Duryodhana, I give you my army, you can go." Arjuna told Krishna, "Swami, I do not want anything except you. I will be happy if I have you alone." Right from the beginning the Pandavas believed in "God first, the world next and finally the I." The belief of the Kauravas was: "I first, the world next and God last." So, for them God was last.

Those who are close to God gets His grace

In order to prevent a war between the Kauravas and Pandavas, Krishna played the role of an envoy. Duryodhana felt that the Pandavas were successful because of the support of Krishna and hatched a number of plans to get hold of Krishna and do away with him when he came to Hastinapura. Vidura was aware of these plans. Krishna entered the Assembly of the Kauravas along with Vidura. The blind king Dhritrashtra addressed Krishna and said: "The Pandavas and the Kauravas are cousins. When they are children of two brothers, you should have the same attitude towards them. Why are you prejudiced against the Kauravas? Why do you love the Pandavas?" Krishna replied: "Dhritrashtra! You are not merely suffering from physical blindness, mentally also you are blind. I shower my grace on those who take refuge in Me. The one who is close to a fire gets both warmth and light. The Pandavas have been close to the fire. They are getting the wisdom and the grace in the form of light and fire. The Kauravas are staying far from the fire." Here fire refers to Jnanagni, the fire of wisdom. The Pandavas were near and dear to Krishna. To whom can you compare them? In our body the head is very important. Next the shoulder, the stomach, and the legs. The body consists of these four parts, but it is useless without the heart. Krishna told Dhritrashtra: "Oh blind king, I am giving the analogy of a body with reference to the Pandavas. In this body, Dharmaraja may be compared to the head, Arjuna to the shoulders, Bheema to the stomach and Nakula and Sahadeva to the legs.. In it, Krishna is the heart. Without Krishna, there are no Pandavas. Without the Pandavas there is no Krishna. That is the kind of

mutual relationship between them. They are mutually interdependent."

Justice will prevail where there is God

Krishna made this declaration in the open court, so dear were the Pandavas to the Lord. As there was protection for the Pandavas from Krishna, though they had lost the kingdom and everything else, Krishna was able to get back the kingdom and everything else and confer joy on them. Success comes to those who have the protection of God. When Dhritrashtra asked Sanjaya who would win the war, Sanjaya answered: "Where there is Krishna, the Yogeswara, and Partha with bow and arrow, there justice will prevail and there will be victory. This is my firm conviction." The Pandavas firmly believed in Dharma and God. The Kauravas went and prostrated at the feet of their mother, Gandhari, before the start of the war. She had blindfolded her eyes and was not able to see them. She caressed Duryodhana and blessed him. She observed: "Yatho Dharmah thatho jayah." (Where there is Dharma, there is victory). But they had no righteousness on their side. Even their mother blessed them in that manner. Their wickedness was responsible for this. They went to their preceptor Dronacharya, and offered Namaskar. Dronacharya declared: "Where there is Dharma, there is Krishna: where there is Krishna, there is victory." Thus both mother and their preceptor blessed in these terms. Neither the mother nor the preceptor blessed them with success. The Kauravas relied on their wealth and the power of their arms. But, there is need for God's grace. Along with God's grace, there could be wealth, position, power and knowledge.

Earn blessings of parents and God's grace

Dear students! Pursue your studies. But, together with education, earn the blessings of your parents. In addition, earn the grace of God. Despite all his knowledge, authority, power and prowess, what happened to a warrior like Karna? He lacked God's grace. Earn God's grace. That is true spiritual education. Along with spiritual education, you may pursue worldly education. A basic requirement for all this is good character. Morality alone helps one in a number of ways. If your conduct is not good, society will not respect you. As

long as one is in power, society may respect one. Once power goes, the man will be an object of derision. You may not have any power, but morality will confer honour and respect.

Epics to show the power of the Divine

To recognise the power of the Divine, here is an illustration from the Ramayana: Rama and Lakshmana went to protect the yaga performed by the sage Viswamithra. There were demons who wanted to undo the yaga performed by Viswamithra. Mareecha was one of them. He was the son of the ogress Thataki. As soon as Rama espied Mareecha, with one arrow he despatched him far away. Mareecha recognised then the power of Rama. He firmly believed that Rama had the power of Divinity. From that moment he gave up his demonic quality. When he was in this state Ravana came to him to seek his help for kidnapping Sita. Ravana said, "I want to kidnap Sita. Rama and Lakshmana are there. Become a gold deer and divert their attention." Folding his palms, Mareecha told Ravana: "Oh King of Demons! You are having so much confidence in your physical power. Rama is not an ordinary man. I have experienced his prowess. You have lost your senses. Do not embark on this enterprise. You can never achieve victory over Rama." In a number of ways Mareecha sought to advise Ravana. There is a saying: "When destruction is impending, one's intelligence will be perverted." Ravana was in a rage. He said: "Mareecha will you obey my command or shall I sever your head?" Mareecha thought within himself: "When I become a golden deer Rama may kill me. If I go against Ravana, he will kill me. Death is certain either way. Instead of meeting with death at the hands of Ravana, it is better I die at the hands of Rama." Mareecha did not like to be killed by the wicked King Ravana. That is why Mareecha took the form of the golden deer. Dear Students! the Ramayana, the Mahabharatha and the Bhagavatha teach the lesson that desire, anger and greed cause destruction. Fix your faith on God and not on the things of the world. When you have faith in God, your discrimination will be perfect. You will be guided by your conscience, which will always lead you properly. In Vedantic parlance, this conscience is called Chith. God is .Sath-chith-ananda. Sath means Being, Chith means Awareness. Where the two are combined them is bliss. That is the meaning of BABA-

Being + Awareness + Bliss - Atma.

Dear students! You are all aspirants of Bliss. You should enjoy bliss. You have to combine Sath and Chith to realise Ananda. Without Sath (purity), there can be no divinity. Without divinity there is no bliss. Always think of God.

Man has become artificial, crooked, twisted out of his normal shape. He has left behind the simple natural ways and made his mind a lumber-room for ideas, worries, anxieties and terrors. He can live on very much less, with much greater joy for himself and others. If only he remembers that he is a treasure chest with the Divine spark in it, he will be more loving and more useful.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

30. Inner Significance Of Navarathri Festival

Date: 27 September 1992 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara

Navarathri means nine nights. Darkness is associated with night. What is this darkness? It is the darkness of ignorance. The purpose of the Navarathri celebration is to enable man to get rid of nine types of darkness which have taken hold of him. When a reference is made to Devi, it signifies the unified form of Dhurga, Lakshmi and Saraswathi. The three together represent Shakthi. Shakthi is the energy that accounts for all the phenomena of Prakruthi (Nature). Nature is energy and the controller of that energy is the Lord. Prakruthi (Nature) is made up of the three qualities, Sathwa, Rajas and Thamas. Saraswathi represents the Sathya Guna. Lakshmi represents the Rajo Guna and Parvathi represents the Thamo Guna. As Prakruthi (Nature) is made up of these three qualities (Sathwa, Rajas and Thamas), to get control over Nature, man has been offering worship to Dhurga, Lakshmi and Saraswathi. These are not goddesses but deified symbols of the three qualities.

The role of Nature in the creative process

To acquire the grace of the Lord, man has to offer worship at the outset to Prakruthi. On the one hand you need human effort and on the other you have to acquire the grace of the Divine. Prakruthi (Nature) and Paramatma (the Omni-Self) are like the negative and positive poles in electricity. However powerful the Lord may be (as the positive pole), there can be no creation without Prakruthi (representing the negative pole). The basis for creation is Prakruthi. For instance, however good the seeds you may have with you, without planting them in the ground you cannot reap the fruit. The role of Nature in the creative process is similar. When man forgets God and desires to enjoy the benefits of Nature, he becomes ultimately a demon like Ravana who brought about his own destruction. To secure the grace of the Lord, one has to have purity of the heart, purity in speech and purity in action. This triple purity is described in Vedantic parlance as Tripurasundari. Lakshmi, who is the embodiment of all prosperity, is represented by the heart. The mouth

represents Saraswathi. Kriya Shuddhi (Purity in action) is represented by Dhurga. The observance of the Navarathri celebration is to get rid of the darkness in which man is enveloped, by cultivating the triple purity of thought, word and deed.

The human body emerged from Nature. Nature has two forms: Apara Prakruthi and Para Prakruthi. Apara Prakruthi includes Ashta Aishwaryas (eight forms of wealth), and Kama, Krodha, Moha, Lobha, Mada, Matsarya and the three mental faculties in man: Manas, Chitta and Ahamkara. Para Prakruthi (the higher Nature) represents the consciousness in man. Without the Prana (life force) and Chaithanyam (consciousness) man is only a corpse. True humanness consists in controlling the five elements which make up the Apara Prakruthi (lower Nature) and merge in the higher Nature represented by the life force and Chaithanyam (consciousness).

Maintain steadiness of mind during worship

The Navarathri has been divided into three parts the first three days being dedicated to the worship of Dhurga, the next three days to the worship of Lakshmi and the last three days to the worship of Saraswathi. All Hindu festivals have a sacred purpose. Unfortunately, nowadays the festivals are observed only with external rituals without understanding their inner meaning. In the performance of all forms of worship there should be steadiness of mind and body. Only then concentration can be achieved. Today men are unable to maintain steadiness of body and mind. (At this stage Swami referred to the advent of Shirdi Sai and described incidents from his early life. This part of Swami's discourse is published separately in the next chapter. Towards the end of His discourse, Swami again reverted to an exposition of the inner significance of the Dashara festival).

The basic significance of Devi Navarathri is the adoration of Prakruthi (Nature). Devi refers to Bhudevi (Mother Earth). All the vital requirements of man can be found in the earth. Those who travel to the moon have to carry with them the oxygen, water and food they need from the earth. None of these can be found on the moon.

Adoration of Nature

Students! The progress of modern technology, by polluting the atmosphere with Carbon dioxide smoke, is causing a threat to life on earth. This smoke has already created a hole in the ozone ring above the earth which has been serving as a protecting cover against harmful radiation from the sun. If the ozone layer is destroyed, the effect of the sun's rays may be disastrous. All nations are now worried about this threat. All that needs to be done to avert this danger is to reduce the pollution of the atmosphere caused by automobiles and industrial effluents. The uncontrolled development of industries has to be checked. Development should be in the common interest, to promote the welfare of all.

The Navarathri celebration is an occasion for revering Nature and considering how natural resources can be used properly in the best interests of mankind. Resources like water, air, power and minerals should be used properly and not misused or wasted. Economy in the use of every natural resource is vital. Pollution of the air has many evil consequences. The inner significance of observances like Nagarasankirtan and bhajans is to fill the atmosphere with sacred vibrations and holy thoughts.

The power of Manthra

Today we know how radio and television broadcasts are transmitted to all parts of the world by radio waves. Is it unbelievable that Krishna was able similarly to appear in the homes of Gopikas simultaneously? If a Yantra (machine) could achieve such a result, how much more power should be attributed to Manthra? The power of the divine name and form is all pervading. The electromagnetic waves in the atmosphere can preserve sounds and forms for all time. When Swami was recently in Hyderabad, His activities there were seen on the TV in various parts of the country. If a mechanical contrivance could achieve this, is it incredible that much more could be done by the divine power of manthras? What is needed is the power to tune in to the Spirit just as appropriate tuning is needed to receive a radio

or TV broadcast. Regard your heart as a radio receiver. Your concentration is the tuning device. You will experience the Divine when you tune your heart properly. This calls for firm, unwavering concentration. The inauguration of the Navarathri celebrations means that you should use this occasion for offering worship to Nature and resolving to make sacred use of all natural resources.

The mere removal of hate from the heart will not ensure Ananda. Love too should be cultivated. That is to say, uproot hate and plant love. If the absence of hate ensures Bhakthi, hill and anthill, tree and twig, mud and mountain - what do these hate ? They have no dislikes. But for this reason, do we ascribe Bhakthi to them at all? We do not, for that would be absurd. The Bhaktha must first be free from hate and full of Love.

Hate breeds fear, hate is the seedbed of anxiety, scandal and falsehood. It drains your mind of peace. You may have light without oil, fire without smoke, breeze without a bearer fanning you, a chilliness in the air of your room in the sizzling heat of summer - but, unless you are at peace with yourselves and with those around you, your pulse will be quick and your blood will be racing in rage and rancor. Love alone can alleviate anxiety and allay fear.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

31. The Shirdi Sai Saga

Date: **27 September 1992** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam** / Occasion: **Dasara, Vijayadasami**

All festivals have been designed to teach men how to lead a godly life while carrying on worldly activities. It was to teach this truth to mankind that Avatars and saints made their advent on earth from time to time.

This day (the first day of Navarathri) has another special significance.

Shirdi Sai Baba was born on **September 27, 1838**. He was born in a poor Brahmin family in the village of Pathri in Aurangabad District. For various reasons the parents left the child. A fakir found him. As he was a foundling, the fakir had no natural affection for him. After some years the boy was handed over to one Gopal Rao Deshmukh, who was also called Venkusa by the people on account of his scholarship and wisdom. The boy grew up in Venkusa's home for some time. However, he was not inclined to stay there for long. In 1854 he went to Shirdi.

At Shirdi, Mhalaspathi saw him entering the local temple. Looking at his appearance as a Muslim, Mhalaspathi turned him out of the temple. The boy went back and sat under a neem tree. He was sixteen years old at that time. No one knew then what his name was. If anyone asked for his name, he would give no answer. He would sometimes retort saying, "Why do you want to know my name?" Because of this, nobody could find out his name.

Baba the healer

Some villagers from nearby places used to visit him under the tree and get relief for their ailments. He would take out some leaves, crush them and give them to the ailing person as a medicine. In this manner he cured many persons of their illnesses. News of the healing powers spread to all the

surrounding villages. As a result a large number of persons used to come to him, receive the crushed leaves from him and get cured of their ailments. Suddenly, one morning he disappeared. A futile search was made in the nearby areas to trace him.

Later, in 1858, he came to Shirdi again after three years. There was a village called Dhoop in Aurangabad. One Chandhubhai Patel, belonging to a middle class family, lived in Dhoop. As no other form of transport was available in those days, people used to go on horseback. Chandhubhai went on his horse to Aurangabad on some urgent business. When he had finished his business there at the end of three days, he found that the horse was missing. Disappointed over the missing horse, Chandhubhai was returning to Dhoop passing through dense forests on the way.

Chandhubhai's first encounter with Baba

At one place, he saw a fakir sitting under a tree in a forest. The fakir appeared to be lost in his own thoughts. Suddenly, the fakir hailed Chandhubhai with the words. "Hey, Patel! Come here."

The fakir liked to smoke *Chilim* (hookah). As there was no water nearby, the fakir hit the ground with a stick and water gushed forth from the place. He hit again another place with a stick and there was a fire. Using the water and the fire, he started smoking his hookah and offered it to Chandhubhai also. Chandhubhai declined the offer.

The fakir asked Chandhubhai, "What is worrying you, Patel"? Patel asked, "How did you know I am Patel?"

"I know everything," replied the fakir. "You are worried about your horse. You are keeping your eyes on the top of your head! You must lower them to trace the horse. Your horse is grazing under the tree there." He had made the search for the horse in the same place with some workers but could not find it. Now he saw it under a tree close to him. Chandhubhai was astonished that the fakir had produced water and fire out of the earth and had located his

missing horse.

He appealed to the fakir: "Swami! You have rendered great help to me. Please come with me and share my hospitality."

"All right, let us go," he said. About this time, the marriage of Chandhubhai's niece, who was residing in Shirdi, was settled. Chandhubhai had to go to Shirdi for the wedding. He requested the fakir to come along with him. They went in carts to Shirdi.

Mhalaspathi saw the fakir getting down from a cart and went to him and said: "Ayiye, Baba! Ayiye Sai!" (Come, Baba! Come Sai!) The name "Sai" was given by Mhalaspathi. Till then, no one had conferred a name on him.

Sometime later, Baba was involved in a criminal case. He had to give evidence in a case which related to the theft of some valuables from a rich man's house by a gang of thieves. The police caught the thieves and questioned them about the stolen articles. The thieves said that the valuables had been given to them by a fakir. Searching for the fakir, they came to Baba.

They asked him, "Fakir did you give these articles to them?"

"Yes," he said.

"Wherefrom did you get them?" was the next question.

Baba replied: "They have come from the same place from which all things come."

"Who gave them to you?"

"I gave them to myself."

The emergence of the name "Sai Baba"

Baba gave such intriguing answers, which the police could not understand.

"I am the giver of everything. How can anyone get anything without my sanction?" declared Baba.

Feeling that it was futile to question him further, the police prepared a report. Baba received a summons from the magistrate to give evidence in the case. Chandhubhai Patel did not want Baba to go to the Magistrate and so arranged for Baba being examined on commission (in Shirdi itself). During the examination on commission, Baba was asked:

"What is your father's name?"

He replied, "Baba." (Baba means "father" and the reply meant that the father's name was "father").

Q. "What is your religion?"

A. "The religion of God."

Q. "Wherefrom did you come?"

A. "I have come from the Atma."

Q. "What is your caste?"

A. "The caste of the Divine."

Baba answered all the questions in this manner.

Earlier he had been hailed as "Sai." In his examination, he had given his father's name as Baba. By the combination of these two names, he was therefore called "Sai Baba." No one knew when and where Sai Baba was born and who gave him that name.

Baba as incarnation of Datthathreya

Later, many persons began to have doubts about his transcendental powers. One day, the birth anniversary of Datthathreya was to be celebrated (in the month of Margasheersha on Panchami day). Several devotees had assembled in Shirdi. Among them was a wealthy man, a great scholar called Kaijack. He is not to be confused with "hijack"! His name was Balwanth Kaijack.

As he was approaching the masjid, Baba took a stick and waved it at the devotees, asking them to get away. He even beat some of them, shouting, "Saithan! Saithan!" No one could understand why Baba was behaving like this. "I am suffering labour pains. Get away, all of you!" he shouted. In those days, Baba not only used to shout at people, but also wield the stick on them on occasions. He used even to throw the stick at fleeing persons. Everyone used to be afraid of him. They all fled from the place.

Some time later, he called all of them to come. "Balwanth Kaijack, come !" he said. When Balwanth came, Baba went inside the masjid. Balwanth went in and found that Baba was not there. He found a three-headed baby on the floor. Baba had declared that he was suffering from labour pains and there was a baby there. **The three-headed child appeared to represent Datthathreya.** It was a small baby with a number of hands. Balwanth recognised the child as Datthathreya and called other devotees to come inside. They went in and on seeing the child closed their eyes. At that instant Baba reappeared there. From that time onwards, people started looking upon Baba as the incarnation of Datthathreya.

Baba's lesson to Muslims

A controversy arose among the local people as to whether Baba was a Muslim or a Hindu. At one time he used to say: "Allah Malik! Allah Malik!" At other

times, he would say "Datthathreya Malik"! Whenever he shouted "Allah Malik!" Muslims used to come to him in the masjid. His appearance was very much like that of a Muslim. Hence, many Muslims used to come to him. Hindus also used to come and offer incense to him. The Muslims did not approve of what the Hindus were doing. The Hindus did not like the way Muslims revered Baba. Consequently, bitterness developed between the two communities.

One day, Mhalaspathi was sitting near Baba and doing some service to him. Mhalaspathi was the priest in the Khandoba temple. The Muslims, who were opposed to the presence of a Hindu priest near Baba, came with sticks and beat up Mhalaspathi. At every stroke, Mhalaspathi cried out: "Baba!" "Baba!" Each time he shouted the name of Baba, the blow was borne by Baba. Mhalaspathi fell to the ground. Baba came out. Muslims had great reverence for Baba. Baba roared at the Muslim crowd; "Saithan! On the one side you worship me and on the other you beat me. Is this your devotion?" Baba was bleeding all over the body. The Muslims saw it and asked Baba who had beaten him. "Did you not beat me? Did you not beat me?" said Baba pointing to several men in the crowd. They said: "We did not come near you at all. We only beat Mhalaspathi." "Who is in Mhalaspathi? I am in him," declared Baba. "He has surrendered to me and hence all his troubles are mine."

Baba teaches a lesson to all

On hearing this, the Muslims fell at Baba's feet and craved his forgiveness. Baba then summoned the Hindus and Muslims and told them: "Dear Children, you are all the progeny of one mother." Thereby Baba demonstrated the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man. He wanted all differences of caste and creed to be eschewed. What mattered for mankind was the heart. One who is only concerned about his matham (creed) will never discover the Divine (Madhava). You must seek the Divine within you. Baba pointed out that all caste and creed distinctions related only to the body. Therefore, you should seek the Supreme in your inner consciousness. Baba, who came to Shirdi with Chandhubhai Patel in 1858, did not leave the place until his passing in 1918. Baba lived for eighty years.

How Hemanth Panth wrote the life of Baba

One day, a pandit came to Baba and said that his biography should be written. His name was Hemanth Panth. He is the author of "Sai Sath Charitha." He entreated Baba to disclose facts about the place of his birth, his parentage, his name and his early life. He could not get any information. Baba did not reveal anything to anyone. But on one occasion, when he was alone with Mhalaspathi, Baba disclosed his date of birth to him. Mhalaspathi was no scholar. He had learnt only a few manthras to conduct the puja in the temple. He noted down the date of birth on a piece of paper. This came into the hands of Hemanth Panth. With this, he began to write the life of Baba.

No one knows the real truth about Baba. The world knows some facts about his life after his sixteenth year. He was born on September 27, 1838, and attained Samadhi on Vijayadasami day in 1918. During his lifetime he taught many sacred things to the people and performed many remarkable deeds. He was worshipped by many devotees. Dada, Nana, Shama, Abdul Baba, Mhalaspathi, Chandharkar and Dhas Ganu were always with him. Abdul Baba was active till recently. He was a fervent devotee of Baba. In his view it did not matter to what religion one belonged. All were one in their devotion to God. Kaka Dixith was a Judge whose son stayed in Brindavan (Whitefield) for twenty years. The latter's wife is now in Brindavan. Kaka Dixit maintained a diary in which many facts about Baba have been recorded including his statement about when he would pass away.

Acquire spiritual bliss through Thyaga

No one can make any affirmations about the nature of the Divine. One's relationship with the Divine is spiritual - Atma to Atma. In this Kali or the evil age, however, many become a prey to doubts because of their preoccupation with the physical form. This is because of their being immersed in worldly attitudes derived from their perception of the physical elements. The phenomenal Prakruthi (world) is replete with sensory experiences. The spiritual life is based on Thyaga (detachment). Enduring bliss is experienced

only when there is sacrifice or detachment. Man today is not prepared for sacrifice. On the contrary, his desires are insatiable and he is losing all human qualities. The mind is polluted and truth has become a rarity. At every step, man is indulging in wrong doing. Noble thoughts have taken flight. Envy and hatred are rampant. Men should learn to follow the dictates of their heart and act according to the promptings of their conscience. This conscience is related to the universal consciousness.

Love alone can overcome obstacles, however many and mighty. There is no strength more effective than purity, no bliss more satisfying than Love, no joy more restoring than Bhakthi, no triumph more praiseworthy than surrender.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

32. See The One In The Many

Date: 04 October 1992 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Embodiments of the Divine Atma!

For all living beings on earth, the earth is the basis of life. The Life Force for the earth is water. Out of water come sasyam (food grains). Food grains sustain Purusha (man). Speech is the highest expression of man. Ritham (the Cosmic order) is based on Vak (the Divine word). Ritham is cognised in Riks (Vedic hymns). The beauty of Riks is found in Sama (one of the four Vedas). Omkara (the primal sound Pranava) is the essence of Sama.

Human existence arises from the Divine, is sustained by the Divine and finally merges in the Divine. Omkara has three constituents. Akara, Ukara and Makara (the three syllables - A, U, M). Akara represents the vital principle Prana Thathwa. Ukara represents the Mind. Makara represents the body. Omkara is thus the unified expression of the Atma, the mind and the Body.

The cosmos emerged from Akara. It is the Prana (Life-Force). The Mind principle came from Ukara. The Body emerged from Makara. The Atma, the Mind and the Body, which emanated from the three syllables "A," "U" and "M," permeate the sun, the firmament and the entire universe. Omkara is the essential basis for the entire creation.

The three forms of Omkara principle

The Omkara principle has three forms: Nadha, Bindu and Kala. Nadha is the sound that comes from the life-breath. This means that Omkara is associated with the sound coming from the life-breath. The five kinds of life breath - Prana, Samana. Udana and Vyana - are expressions of the Life-Principle. These five represent the Pancha Bhutas (five basic elements). Bindu is the unified form of the Atma, the Mind and the Body. Kala is the reflected image of the Paramatma (OmniSelf) through the Buddhi (intellect). The triple principle Nadha, Bindu, Kala - permeate the entire universe. What is the

purpose served by these three? All three are forms of Maya (deceptive appearances). Even the sounds, "A," "U" and "M," are deluding. Prana, Mind and Body are also forms of Maya (delusion). Hence, the ancient sages declared: "Tasmai namah." Salutations to the One that transcends all forms. The yogis prayed to the One who is beyond Nadha, Bindu and Kala (Nadabindukalatheetha). The cosmos, thus, is made up. of Nadha, Bindu and Kala. How is man to recognise this fact? The sages declared that Sathsanga is essential for this purpose. Sathsanga is commonly understood as referring to good company. This is not the proper meaning. Sath refers to that which is permanent, pure and unchanging. It is unaffected by time. Sathsanga means association with Sath in this sense. Sath refers therefore to the Cosmic Consciousness which is present in all beings. The consciousness present in an individual cannot be called Sath. Sath applied to that collective Cosmic Consciousness which is present in all beings. Sathsanga means the cultivation of association with this Cosmic Consciousness by the individual. Most people consider that coming together with other individuals for the purpose of prayer and other devotional acts is Sathsanga. This is not so. Sathsanga represents the striving by man to establish union with the all-pervading, omnipotent, Universal Consciousness.

The inner meaning of Moha

There is, however, an impediment in the way of achieving this, known as Moha. Moha does not refer to attachment to wealth, property or children. Man can get rid of Moha only when he understands its inner meaning. Moha is derived from the words Ma meaning "finite," and Ooha, meaning, "imagining that which does not exist." Moha means, "finite conception of the unreal as real." This is divorced from any concept of divinity. Moha is totally related to the Prakritham (phenomenal world). It is associated with Kama or desire. Kama signifies transient pleasure based on worldly desires. Lasting happiness can only be got from Divine feelings related to the Chaithanya (Cosmic Consciousness). This consciousness itself is based on the transcendental Sath-chith-ananda. Sath is that which is eternal - the Being that is permanent. Chith signifies Paripoorna Jnana (total awareness or knowledge). Chith is total awareness of what Sath represents. Both these transcend the phenomenal

world. But these transcendental entities are present in the phenomenal objects. How are the two to be distinguished from each other? The transcendental element in the phenomenal world must be recognised as reflected images, like the reflections of the sun in a pot of water. The body is like a vessel in which the Divine is present as reflection - like the reflection of the sun, which is permanent, in a vessel which is impermanent. The Divine is present inside and outside everything in the Cosmos. In the body, that may be compared to a vessel, the reflection of the Life principle, or the Atma, can be seen in the mind, which corresponds to water in the vessel. While the body and the mind are finite, the Atma is Infinite.

All the prayers, japas, Yagas and Yajnas performed by men today are confined to the achievement of temporary pleasures and rewards. They are related to a life which is itself impermanent. The mind and the phenomenal world are equally impermanent.

How to recognise unity in diversity?

The Universe is called prapancha - a manifestation of the Pancha Bhutas - the five basic elements, ether, air, fire, water and earth. As these elements are impermanent and subject to change, all human life is related to impermanent objects and pleasures. How is one to achieve that which is lasting within the framework of the impermanent? This should be done by breaking down the separation between the permanent and the impermanent and recognising the permanent in the impermanent - the One in the many, unity in diversity. How is one to recognise unity in diversity? We see the manifoldness of bodies, with a multiplicity of names, forms, speech and feelings. But in all of them there are the five elements common to all. But these are gross elements. Besides these, there is the spiritual element, Chinmaya (Consciousness). The Vedantins described the body as a doll of clay. Because of its predominant earthy nature, the body by itself is unable to raise itself to a higher level of existence. For this purpose, it needs the power of Manthra or Yantra. An aeroplane is Yantra (a machine) which is able to lift man far above the earth.

Development of Life-principle in man

The predominant earth element in man is constantly pulling him downwards. To lift himself above the mundane level man has to reduce the earthy element in him and increase the other four elements, air, fire, water and ether. The fire element that has to be increased is the Jnana-Agni - the Fire of Wisdom. Similarly, man has to reduce the Apana Vayu in him and increase the Samana Vayu. This is the development of the Life-principle in man. What is the purpose of the Navarathri celebrations? It is to acquire mastery over the forces of Nature and use it for obtaining mental satisfaction. Contentment in the mind is not easily secured. As soon as one desire is satisfied, another crops up. There is no limit to Kama (desires). Even the aspiration for Moksha (liberation from mundane existence) is a desire. As long as desires remain, man is bound to the mundane existence.

Prema is love of God

Moksha means the disappearance of Moha (attachment). Liberation signifies freedom from fleeting pleasures. What is it that man should aspire for? There is a Divinity that is permanent and unchanging. That is known as Prema (Divine Love). This Prema is not related to the physical. Men experience this love in its worldly form as affection or attachment. All love in human relationships today is not Prema but Anuraga (attachment). It is inherently of a passing nature - interludes in the human journey. All attachment arises at one stage - between mother and son, husband and wife, and so on - and drops away at another stage. As against these transient attachments, the love of God (Prema) is something totally different. God is eternal - existing before man's birth and continuing after his death. The Divine is without a beginning or an end. True love means the Love of God. When a man and woman wed, we call it "marriage." But when the Jivatma (the individual Self) unites with the Paramatma (the Omni-Self), it is called merger.

During the Dashara festival, the three Goddesses Dhurga, Lakshmi and Saraswathi - are worshipped according to certain traditional practices. The tenth day of the festival is celebrated as the Day of Victory. The celebration has its roots deep in the ancient history of Bharath. In the Dwapara Yuga,

when the Pandavas had to spend one year incognito, they hid all their asthras (weapons), on the advice of Krishna, in a Jammi tree which is thick in foliage and whose branches are filled with latent fire. Vijayadasami was the day on which they retrieved the weapons from the tree and used them to win victory over the Kauravas. Earlier, in the Thretha Yuga, Sri Rama's coronation, after his victorious return to Ayodhya from Lanka, was performed on Vijayadasami day. Dhurga represents the prodigious Prakruthi Shakthi (power of Nature). As against this power of Nature is the Para Shakthi (the power of the Spirit). When spiritual power is predominant, the power of Nature is kept under control. When spiritual power is weak, the power of Nature becomes predominant. This is illustrated by the example of smoke and fire. When smoke is predominant, the fire is suppressed. When the fire is blazing, the smoke vanishes. Hence, to enhance the power of the Spirit and limit the power of Nature, man has to cultivate Vairagya (detachment). To the extent the power of Nature is under control, to that extent spiritual power grows.

The need to develop Will power

Ichcha-Shakthi (the potency of Will) arises from thoughts. This Ichcha-Shakthi is the source of several other potencies like intellectual power, the discriminating capacity and others. To develop this Ichcha-Shakthi (Will power), one has to worship Devi. This calls for the cultivation of thyaga (renunciation or detachment). For instance, if one has a desire for various drinks, he can bring the desires under control by giving up, to begin with, the desire for some of them. Thereby the Ichcha-Shakthi (Will power) is developed and in due course it becomes easier to give up other desires. In Vedantic parlance this is described as Vairagya (renouncing all attachments).

Vairagya is not abandonment of hearth and home and retiring to a forest. It means developing Godly thoughts and reducing worldly feelings. It is when this balanced development takes place that one acquires Prakruthi-Shakthi (control over the power of Nature). When these powers are got, the mental power in a person increases. Dhurga represents the Prakruthi-Shakthi and Lakshmi represents the Thought power - Sankalpa- Shakthi. Vak-Shakthi, the power of speech, is represented by Saraswathi. It is to acquire these three

powers that the various forms of worship are performed during the Navarathri festival. But prayers alone are not enough. Prayers issue from the lips. They should emanate from the heart. The Hridaya (heart) symbolises the Ksheerasagara (Ocean of Milk). Lakshmi emerged from the ocean of Milk. When Lakshmi emerges, purity of speech follows. Whatever you speak conforms to truth.

The concepts of Sathya and Ritha

There are two concepts: Sathya (truth) and Ritha (conduct based on unity of thought, word and deed). The triple purity of mind, speech and body is Ritha. To adhere to Ritha and speak and act accordingly is Truth. What is uttered with this triple purity is alone Truth, not other words. The ancients have declared that adherence to the truth is Dharma (Righteousness). There is no higher Dharma than Truth - Sathyannasthi paro Dharmah. Without the firm foundation of Truth, the mansion of Dharma cannot stand. A life built upon sankalpa (desires) cannot last. The mansion of desires must be converted into a Mansion of Divine Will (Ichcha-Bhavanam). When the Ichcha-Shakthi (Will Power) is converted into Kriya-Shakthi (power of action), it results in Jnana-Shakthi (the power of Wisdom). It is through this Divine Wisdom that spiritual liberation Kaivalyam is secured.

Divine potencies of the three Goddesses

The Navarathri festival should not be observed as a festival for worshipping the consorts of Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma. These Goddesses symbolise Divine potencies. All these potencies are derived from Vishnu. The entire cosmos is a manifestation of the myriad forms of Vishnu. People must recognise this oneness underlying the different forms. All beings breathe the same air as their life-breath. Likewise all the five basic elements are common to all. These elements are the stuff of Nature. But in the Para Thatwa (the Supreme Principle, the Divine), these do not exist. The elements are mortal. The Divine is immortal. To proceed from the mortal to the immortal the easiest means is the cultivation of Prema (Divine Love). The heart is like a sky wherein the clouds in the form of thoughts hide the Buddhi (the intellect) and the Mind

representing the sun and the moon. Vairagya is the means to get rid of thoughts and the desires arising from them. The Devi Puja performed during Navarathri is intended to get rid of worldly attachments and divert the mind towards God. There are four different qualities in man: humanness, the animal nature, the demonic nature and the Divine nature. When man follows the dictates of the body, he is a prey to his animal nature. When he is subject to the vagaries of the mind, he becomes demonic. When he is following the Atma, he is manifesting his Divinity. When he is governed by all three - the body, the mind and the Atma - he is human.

The way to enter the spiritual path

When Ravana fell a victim to the promptings of the mind, his demonic nature predominated over his other good qualities as a worshipper of Shiva and a master of many sciences. Whenever a desire arises in the mind, one should exercise the power of discrimination and decide whether it is good or bad. This is the way to enter on the spiritual path. Each person has to decide for himself in which of these four states he is placed. The Atmic principle is fundamental and everyone should strive to fortify the heart for spiritual ends. This heart is not the physical heart. It is the abode of the Spirit and is located in the spinal column between the ninth and twelfth vertebrae. It shines like lightning in the core of a dark cloud. This is called Sushumna.

Sushumna refers to the state in which all the sensory organs are subdued and the mind and desires are under control. It is not the state of deep sleep, as is interpreted by some. The terms used by the Vedantins (spiritual philosophers) should be understood in their deeper sense. This is a difficult exercise. The easier path is to love God with a pure and unwavering mind. Tukaram confessed that he was unacquainted with the techniques of meditation or the rules for performing sacrifices. "Oh Rama! The only method I know to attain you is to love you with a pure heart! Let me have your grace for cherishing this love," he declared. The Ozone layer above the earth faces great danger owing to atmospheric pollution and intensive afforestation is essential for controlling this pollution and safeguarding the Ozone layer.

Seek the kingdom of the Spirit within

The Navarathri festival was celebrated by kings in olden days for propitiating Nature before embarking on wars of conquest. The Navarathri festival has another significance also. It is intended to secure victory over the Navagrahas (nine planets). Saint Thyagaraja, however, declared that if only he has Rama's Anugraha (grace), the Navagrahas would be utterly powerless.

Men today should not seek the earthly victories sought by the ancient rulers. They should seek the sovereignty of the Atmasamrajyam (Kingdom of the Spirit) within them. This calls for control over the senses and the eschewing of bad qualities like anger, greed and jealousy. This sadhana must begin from now itself when you are young. Do not put it off for your old age. The students are well behaved while they are here. But they should carry their good conduct wherever they may be. Only then will they serve to reform the world. Just as people of all faiths live in harmony here, you should live in harmony with people of other faiths in whatever country you may live. You will be serving your Motherland well only when you set the example to the world.

You have Shanthi. The subtle effect of manthras or mystic formulae mentioned in the Vedas cannot be seen or heard by the senses! They have to be experienced in and through the inner consciousness, the Antha Karana.

It is foolish to try to shape the world. Shape yourself as the embodiment of Peace, Love and Reverence. Then you will see all as Love, Compassion and Humility.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

33. Let Your Buddhi Shine

Date: 05 October 1992 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Sukham athyanthikam Buddhi grahyam atheendhriyam. The Gita declares that everlasting bliss can be secured by the Buddhi (intellect) by transcending the senses. Sukham (happiness) cannot be derived through the senses. Sensory pleasures are deceptive and transient. True happiness is permanent and real. Man can realise this only through the Buddhi. The intellect is characterised by earnestness and steadiness. All the pleasures enjoyed by man in ordinary life are related to the senses. Vishayasukham (sensuous pleasure) is verily visha (poisonous) and not Amrithasukham (eternal). These pleasures result in bondage for man and do not elevate him. All the pleasures man enjoys are based on the senses and have no relation to the intellect. Man should seek the bliss that is real and lasting and this can be got through the Buddhi. The Thaitthireeya Upanishad has expounded the nature of the Buddhi in detail. Comparing Buddhi to a bird, the Upanishad has described its head as Sraddha (earnestness). The two wings of the bird are Sathya and Ritha. Yoga is its tail. The body is Mahath-Thatwa. The five constituents - Sraddha, Sathya, Ritha, Yoga and Mahath Thatwa - are parts of Buddhi. Among these Sraddha comes first. Man cannot accomplish any undertaking without Sraddha (earnest endeavour). All daily actions like eating and walking are prompted by Sraddha. "Shraddhavan labhathe Jnanam," says the Gita (The higher wisdom is obtained by the earnest seeker). Nor is that all. The Gita has declared that Sraddha as well as Buddhi are forms of the Lord. Buddhi, therefore, should not be regarded as an ordinary appendage of man. It is associated with Sraddha, Sathyam (Truth), Ritham (the Cosmic order), Yoga and Mahath (the Supreme Principle). To treat an attribute that is related to these five significant entities as an ordinary quality in man is the result of viewing it from a mundane perspective.

Supremacy of Buddhi over mental cleverness

Buddhi should not be equated with Medha Shakthi (mental agility or cleverness). The superiority of Buddhi over Medha Shakthi was proclaimed by

King Vikramaditya at an assembly of scholars whom he had gathered for discussing this issue. Without Buddhi, with its five important associates, all mental faculties are useless like a fruit without juice, a tree without fruit, a temple without a lamp, or a counterfeit coin. Most intellectuals today, not realising the supremacy of the Buddhi and relying only on their intelligence, are ignoring their inherent divinity. Buddhi is the divine element in man, which is shining effulgently always. The Gita declares: The Buddhi transcends the senses (Atheendriyam). It is related to the Divine. What passes for the intellect today is divorced from the Divine and is not Buddhi in its real sense. This intellect is limited in its capacity and is motivated by Self-interest. Hence the Buddhi's power of discrimination is used by man for selfish purposes. All actions are based on swartha (selfinterest) and not on Parartha (higher values). Actions which are free from self-interest lead to Tharakam (liberation). Actions based on self-interest lead to Marakam (mortality). The difference between these two should be properly understood. All actions based on the Atmabhava (the Atmic feeling) lead to liberation. All worldly actions are Maraka (self-destroying).

The object of reciting mantras

In olden days, many persons who were observing transitional practices, used to recite some mantras before taking food. "Annam Brahma" (The food is Brahman). "Rasam Vishnu" (The sweet drink is Vishnu). "Bhoktho Devo Maheswarah" (The partaker is the Lord Maheswara). Reciting these mantras, they would start eating. The object of this prayer was: "May the food that we consume be converted to the vital fluid that circulates in every part of the body and endows the body with all powers. Confer on our mind the capacity to make right use of these powers. Purify our speech in conformity with the nature of the mind." The physical part of the food that we consume serves the needs of the gross body. The subtle element in it goes to the mind. The subtler element enters into Vak (speech). The Buddhi is thus related to the functioning of the body, the organs and the mind. These three are represented by Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara. The Prana (life-principle) is related to Brahma. The mind is related to Vishnu and vak (speech) is related to Shiva. These three faculties should not be wasted. They should be utilised

properly. The power of speech should be used for speaking the truth. The mind should be directed towards sacred paths. The body given to man should be used for achieving righteousness. Sareeram-adyam khalu dharmasadhanam. (The body is the primary requisite for realising Dharma). Thus, the mind, speech and body are manifestations of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.

Sathya and Ritha are vital in a man's life

If people today indulge in meaningless and impure activities, it means that they are wasting their Divine gifts. Before undertaking any action, one should utter the prayer: "May my actions be holy. May my speech be helpful to others and not cause any pain to them. May all my thoughts be sacred, godly and purposeful." The rulers and people in ancient days used to sanctify their lives by such prayerful actions. Two things are vital in a man's life: Sathya (Truth) and Ritha (Unity in thought, word and deed). In most people today, this triple unity is absent. One reason for this is that people have allowed their intellect to be polluted, as in the case of a lamp in which the chimney is covered by soot from the flame inside and dust from outside. The light from the lamp will be effulgent if the soot inside and the dust outside are removed. In the case of the Buddhi (intellect), the soot comes from Ahamkara (ego) and the dust from Mamakara (mine-ness). These two reduce the effulgence of the intellect. They have to be removed to make the Buddhi shed its light fully.

The role of Ahamkara and Mamakara

To explain how Ahamkara (egoism) and Mamakara (Mine-ness) affect even those who claim to be renunciants, there is an episode from the life of Adhi Sankaracharya in which Ubhayabharathi, the wife of the great scholar, Mandana Mishra, acted as a judge in the debate between Sankaracharya and Mishra. In the first debate Ubhayabharathi declared Sankaracharya to be the winner and Mandana Mishra took Sanyasa (renunciant stage). Thereupon, Ubhayabharathi challenged Sankaracharya to vanquish her in a debate as she was one half of her husband. She also took to Sanyasa after losing in the debate. One day Ubhayabharathi saw a Sadhu (mendicant) using his drinking

vessel as a pillow while resting on the ground and meditating. She remarked to her disciples: "Look at this Sadhu! He claims he has renounced everything, but in his attachment for his drinking vessel he is taking care of it by keeping it under his head lest someone should take it. Is this renunciation?" On hearing her words, the Sadhu threw away the vessel. While Ubhayabharathi and her disciples were returning from the Ganges, Ubhayabharathi noticed what the Sadhu had done and remarked: "I thought the sanyasi had only one defect - attachment. I find he has another: Anger arising out of ego, Ahamkara. He threw away the vessel enraged by my words. Both attachment and anger are enemies of thapas." On hearing these words, the Sadhu fell at her feet and declared that she was her preceptor.

The purpose of worshipping Devi

Every man who aspires for experiencing the Divine, should strive to remove the blemishes affecting the Buddhi by getting rid of egoism and attachment. When the ego goes, attachment also can be given up easily.

The ego affects in various ways. It induces people in various professions to resort to pomp and ostentation for impressing their clients. Egoism is a demonic quality. Devi has been described as a destroyer of demons. Worshipping of Devi is for the purpose of destroying the demonic qualities in each person.

During the Mahabharatha war, Arjuna got dispirited on the ninth day when he saw Krishna bleeding all over, as he shielded Arjuna from the rain of arrows showered by Bhishma. Krishna jumped down from the chariot and advanced towards Bhishma, declaring that He would himself slay Bhishma. Bhishma was so much charmed by the beauty of the Lord that he declared: "If Sri Krishna is coming to kill me, let the same Krishna be my saviour." Devotees nowadays would act differently. If they lost their faith in one deity, they would seek favours from another. But, in fact, there is only one God. Irrespective of names and forms, God is one only. Dhurga represents Prakruthi-matha (Mother Nature). To overcome the demonic qualities arising out of the influence of Nature, the power of Nature has to be invoked. This is the

meaning of the worship of Dhurga. Nature is the protector as well as the chastiser. Lakshmi represents the protecting aspect of Nature. When Dhurga has destroyed the demonic qualities, Lakshmi purifies the mind. Then there is purity in speech, represented by Saraswathi. The worship of Dhurga, Lakshmi and Saraswathi is thus undertaken to get rid of the impurities in the mind and purify one's thoughts, words and deeds. Prakruthi (Nature) is the embodiment of the Divine. Man perceives Nature and experiences Nature, but is unable to recognise the Divinity in Nature. To see the external manifestations of the Divine and yet fail to recognise the Divine is a sign of stupidity. Man sees Nature in the form of the Universe, which is Virata-Swaroopa (Cosmic form of Vishnu). Has the Lord any particular form or abode? No. He is everywhere. He is you and you are He. The day you recognise this, you will comprehend God. If you want to see the Divine in you, you have to use your Buddhi, just as you need a mirror to see your own eyes, which are able to see everything else in the world. It is folly to seek the Divine elsewhere. God is nearer to you than your own mother. With purity of heart, you can experience the Divine within through your intellect. Love is the means to have this experience, for Love is God.

34. How Devotees Are Tested and Found Wanting

Date: 06 October 1992 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara, Vijayadasami

In my previous body (as Shirdi Sai Baba) everyone was taught through actions. For example, Dhamu and Nana were rendering service to the Lord (Shirdi Baba). Baba collected a few copper coins and was playing with them by tossing them from one hand to another and also testing them in various ways. He appeared to examine them individually. He did not exchange a word with Dhamu and Nana. He went on playing with the coins for half an hour in this manner. Curious to know what Baba was doing, Nana asked him why He was scrutinising the same coins, again and again. Baba replied, "Beta (Dear Son), it is true I am repeating the same action again and again, repeating the same words. Look at that mango tree in front of you. It is in full bloom. The leaves are hardly visible. If all the flowers in the tree were to become fruits, will the branches be able to bear the weight? But it does not happen that way. Most of the flowers are swept away by the wind. Many others drop of their own accord. Only some of them become fruits. Of these some are eaten by squirrels, birds or monkeys. In this way ninety percent of the flowers do not result in fruits. Only ten percent remain in the tree. Is it not so?" They agreed, that it was so.

"No one comes for My sake" - Shirdi Baba

Baba continued, "In the same manner thousands of devotees are coming to me. Are they all ripening into good devotees? Many drop away in the middle. Some come for getting their desires fulfilled. Some seek wealth. Many are coming either for study or in connection with jobs or marriage or other personal desires of their own. In each of them there is some defect or other. No one comes for My sake. I have a precious thing to offer in my coffers. But no one seeks it. It is for this reason that I am examining them (coins). Among these coins there are some which are worn out, some which are debased and some which are twisted and worthless." "Just as I am examining the defects in these coins, I am also looking for the defects among the devotees who come

to Me. I am trying to find out what defects are there in these people and whether, with those defects, they can really comprehend My Truth. They want Me, but all their desires are related to mundane objects. How can they attain Me with this attitude? How can you reach your destination if you get into a wrong train going in some other direction? They want Me, but they don't make efforts for realising Me. Among the many who come to Me, it is only one in a thousand who really makes the effort to realise Me. "The minds of the so called devotees are turned in the wrong directions. If their desires are fulfilled, they praise Me. But, once a desire is not realised they go to the extent of even reviling Me. Even while they are attempting to understand Me, they harbour doubts from head to foot. Some even leave Me when their worldly desires are not fulfilled. These are not sincere devotees at all. They are in fact the worst sinners. How can they reach Me?" said Baba.

Experience of Baba's devotees

At one time a wealthy man came with a lot of money to Shirdi Baba with the object of gaining Brahma Jnana (Supreme Wisdom). He boasted about his wealth. Baba asked him: "How long will you be here?" He replied that he had come by a taxi fixing to and fro charges and had to return in a day or two. Baba said: "When you have greed for wealth, how can you realise God? It is not a goal that can be accomplished in a fixed time. Get away." Baba noticed that he was still sitting and became furious. He chased him out, wielding a stick. To one who sought His grace with purity of heart and selfless devotion, Baba conferred His grace abundantly. Mathaji Krishna Priya was one such devotee. Living in Nagpur, she used to worship Krishna and considered Baba also as another form of Krishna. She frequently visited Shirdi to seek Baba's blessings with genuine devotion. Once she went to Simla. She was offering worship with unstinted devotion to Krishna considering Him as Baba. She came to know that Baba had left his mortal coil at 2.30 p.m. on Vijayadasami day in 1918. Immediately after this Ekadasi followed. Baba had told his close devotee, Kakaji, in the year 1916, that Dhadha would be shedding his mortal coil in 1918. Kakaji thought that Baba was mentioning only about Dhadha Sahib, another devotee, and never thought the reference was to Baba himself.

The last days of Shirdi Baba

On September 28, 1918, Baba developed high temperature. Two days earlier he had collected food by seeking alms in some houses. He took that food and at noon, He expressed His wish to his devotees that he should be taken from the choultry to Bootywada. He hoped to have a quiet time there. In that ward, a Muraleedhar temple had been built by a devotee by name Booty. He wanted Baba to install the idol of Krishna in the temple. But Baba was putting off the installation on one pretext or other. Booty did not want to install the idol without the blessings of Baba. Until his end Baba did not say anything about installation of the idol. He directed Booty and Kakaji to go and take their lunch. Feeling that Baba was better, they went out. Baba had nine rupee coins under His pillow. He took them out and gave them to Lakshmibai. Then Baba summoned Shyam to come near Him. Shyam sat close to Baba. Baba reclined on Shyam's shoulders and passed away.

Baba reappears in Simla after passing away

Krishna Priya came to know of this and felt very sad the whole day. The next day she closed all the doors and windows in her house because of the severe cold in Simla. While she was resting in the house, a tall and well-built monk arrived at the next door and enquired about Mathaji's house. He made enquiry not because He did not know where Mathaji lived, but only to make others know that he was physically present in Simla. The neighbour sent a servant with an umbrella as it was snowing, to show the stranger Mathaji's house. He knocked at the door. Mathaji opened the door and could not believe the evidence of her eyes. She wondered how Baba, who had passed away the previous day, could come to Simla. She asked: "How did you manage to come so soon? It takes at least three days to come from Shirdi to Simla." Baba said: "Beti (dear daughter), I am everywhere. You have worshipped Me in the form of Krishna. Is this all that you know about Me? I am feeling the cold. First get Me hot tea." She prepared tea and offered it to Baba. After taking the tea, Baba said that He was hungry after His long journey. Krishna Priya brought Him chapathis and brinjal curry which Baba

used to like very much. After taking the food Baba washed His hands and wiped them in a towel. He then told her: "The purpose for which I came is over and I am going away." In those days nobody dared to exchange words with Baba. If anybody opposed or said anything to the contrary, Baba would wield the stick against them. He never brooked any contradiction. Hence Krishna Priya could not tell Him anything. He gave her a jasmine garland. Krishna Priya watched Him as he went out walking through the bazar. In Simla, on the roadside, there are usually deep valleys. As Baba was walking along, some workmen were engaged in some road work. Noticing that Baba had fallen down from the road, they ran to rescue Him. But they could find nobody there. Baba had just disappeared. Before taking leave of Krishna Priya, Baba whispered in her ears: "See me in 1926." She did not know where to see Him, how to see Him. When I went to Simla about fifteen years ago Krishna Priya came to see Me. She was shivering on account of age and the cold weather. She asked: "Baba, have you forgotten the promise that you made to Me long ago?" I told her: "It is you who have forgotten, not I. I never forget what I promised." These are some of the aspects of the Shirdi manifestation. When Shirdi Sai sought to impart wisdom, it was not through discourses. Everything was taught by stern methods. It was because of the conditions prevailing in those days.

Baba takes on child's illness

Once, Dhadha's wife brought her child to Baba with the intention of staying for some time in Shirdi. She got her husband's reluctant approval for the visit. At that time plague was rampant in Shirdi. On the second day of her arrival the child developed fever and boils all over the body. The mother felt sorry that she had not acted on her husband's advice and lamented who would protect her child from the affliction. She immediately rushed to Baba and cried aloud: "Baba! Baba!" Baba asked her why she had come. "Is your child having fever? Are there boils on his body? Not only the child but I am also having boils. You look at them." So saying, he lifted his Kafni (coveting garment) and showed the boil on his body. Mhalaspathi, who was standing near, exclaimed: "Swami! What large boils are these?" He touched Baba's body and found that he was having high fever. The temperature might be as

high as 105° or 106° F. The mother cried: "Oh Baba! Has the disease affected not only my son, but you also? Who will protect you?" She was in deep distress. Baba said: "Is there any other to protect the one who is the protector of all?" The mother immediately begged for Baba's forgiveness. A short while thereafter, Baba's fever came down.

The mother returned home feeling happy. She saw that the fever and the boils had vanished from the child. She exclaimed: "Baba! Did you take on my child's illness?"

Total faith that people had in Baba

In this manner, Shirdi Baba used to demonstrate His powers as and when the occasion arose. What was the reason for this? It was solely due to Paripoorna Viswasam (total faith) which people had in Baba. The devotees followed implicitly whatever Baba directed them to do. It is not so these days. Whenever anything is said by Swami ten questions are raised. Besides the questions, they are racked by doubts from head to foot. This is traceable to the influence of modern education. This system is undermining faith in human values. Whatever help a man may receive, he is utterly ungrateful. He forgets all the good done to him and remembers only the harm done to him. Consequently, the demonic nature has grown in human beings. In the old days, human beings retained at least human qualities. Today, men have only the human form but behave like animals. All their impulses are selfish. When their desires are fulfilled, they come smiling and uttering: "Baba! Baba!" If their desires are not fulfilled they have a different attitude. In such beastly beings, how can devotion to Baba exist? Only when men shed their animal natures, can they become human.

Baba leaves His physical body

This is the anniversary of the day when (Shirdi) Baba gave up his mortal body. The facts relating to his passing need to be understood. On September 28, 1918, Baba developed fever. For seventeen days thereafter he was quite well. On October 15, Baba was not to be found anywhere. Nana, Kaka, Dhas

and Lakshman Rao made a search for him all over the place. There was a small well nearby and they went to see whether he had fallen there. When they returned to Baba's abode, they found him standing near the door. Baba told them: "Where are you searching for Me? I am in one place and you search for Me elsewhere. I am in all pure hearts. You are searching for Me in all polluted places. How can you find Me?" He then sat down. Baba left his body only on October 15. He developed high temperature on September 28. He was keeping well for the next 17 days. After Baba left his body, several controversies arose. Mohammedans came there and claimed that the body belonged to them. The Hindus claimed that the body belonged to them. Baba used to declare from time to time, "Allah Malik! Allah Malik." On account of this, Mohammedans claimed that Baba was a Muslim. At other times, Baba used to say: "Rama Malik! Krishna Malik!" For this reason the Hindus claimed he was a Hindu. Because of these rival claims, the body was kept for thirty-six hours as no decision could be arrived at regarding the manner of disposal, of the body.

How the last rites of Shirdi Baba were conducted

To prevent clashes between the Hindus and the Muslims, the Collector, the Police Superintendent and other officials arrived there. They asked all the residents of Shirdi to assemble there. They decided to take the vote of the people to find out how the majority of the local population wanted the last rites to be done for Baba. Everybody favoured the Hindu way of disposal of the body. When this decision was arrived at, a pit was being dug in the Booty Mandir. Some persons opposed the digging. The dispute went on and ultimately the Collector and the Police arranged for the Samadhi to be consecrated in the Muraleedhar temple. That temple is the present Samadhi Shrine of Baba. At this time a remarkable incident occurred in Simla. The garland given to Mathaji Krishna Priya was placed on the idol of Krishna by her in the presence of all in her residence. Many wondered why she was garlanding the Krishna idol when she was a devotee of Sai Baba and there was a picture of Baba there. Bhajans were going on at that time. The garland placed on the Krishna figure dropped on the picture of Baba. The garland placed on the picture moved to the figure of Krishna. Everyone in Simla

rejoiced in the discovery that Krishna and Sai Baba were one. When all the people came there the next morning, they found that the garland given by Baba was no longer on the figure of Krishna. That garland was found on the Samadhi of Baba in the Booty Mandhir.

Miracles and the messages of Shirdi Baba

Why did Baba manifest such miracles? In those days there were bitter differences between Hindus and Muslims. With a view to ending such communal differences, Baba wanted to show, through his miracles, the truth that Baba is the Supreme master of all beings. He has no differences of caste or community. His religion is common to people of all faiths. It is good for everyone. It is observed by all godly persons. This is the creed for all mankind. Spiritual wisdom is not something received from others. It has to blossom from within. Each one has to develop the faith by his own efforts. Those lacking such faith make themselves remote from God. Their own past actions account for such lack of faith. Many spend years here (in Prashanthi Nilayam). But for some reason or other, they go away. This is due to the effect of their karma. No man can escape the consequences of his actions. Whether one is a scholar or an ascetic, Whether one is in a forest or a temple Can anyone avoid the

Consequences of his karma ? Many who claim to be great devotees, fall away sometime or other. The truth is that they were not true devotees even earlier. It is all a make-believe. Whatever devotion existed will not go away; nor will devotion come where it was absent. This means that devotion was absent from the outset. Those who used to proclaim their devotion by saying, "Swami is everything for us," really had no devotion at all. It was all a show. No true devotee will ever leave Swami. The one who leaves is never a real devotee. In this context, it must be realised that the true nature of devotion cannot be comprehended by anyone. Can one remember the name of God in his last moments, When the messengers of Death are waiting And all one's relations are weeping, If he has not been devoted to God all his life ?

God is moved by unwavering and firm devotion

Only when there is dedicated devotion from early in life can it remain steady and unchanging. The devotion of selfish and self-centred persons will be vacillating. Those with total love for God will never change. That is unwavering devotion. Where there is such yearning for God, the heart melts. God is moved by such firm devotion. That is the kind of devotion everyone should cherish.

During festivals like Navarathri, devotees should develop such divine feelings and strive to secure a direct vision of God in their hearts. God is in and around us. But no effort is made to experience this. People are immersed in dualism, separating God from themselves. Through love, this sense of separation can be ended. Love is the binding force between the Jivatma (the individual) and the Paramatma (the Omni-Self). It is this feeling of Paripuurna Prema (total love) that has to be cultivated today.

God has no use for indolent persons

Embodiments of Divine Love! Do not give room for the doubts which arise on account of the food you consume, the company you keep or the environment in which you live. Meet the doubts with courage and faith.

Don't pray to Baba for changing your mind. It is your duty to change your mind. If you expect Baba to do everything, what is it you are doing? God has no use for such indolent persons. You must do your sadhana and go ahead. God's help will come when you do your part. Do your duty and leave the results to God. Praying to God to do this or that is a sign of weakness. If you have full faith in God, your mind is bound to change. Baba's role is not to change your minds, but to redeem you from the consequences of your actions. Everyone should realise and act up to this truth. To start with, get rid of the blemishes in you, strengthen your devotion and make it firm and unshakeable. That is Purusha prayathna (the effort which everyone should make). Then you will earn Daivanugraha (God's grace). Entering on this path of truth, traversing the road of Jnana (spiritual wisdom), merge yourself in the Divine.

The way in which the Avatar has to be used for one's liberation and uplift is: watch His every step, observe His actions and activities, follow the guiding principles of which His life is an elaboration. Mark His love, His compassion, His wisdom, try to bring them into your own life.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

35. Spiritual Basis Of Dashara Festival

Date: 06 October 1992 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara, Vijayadasami

The Lord created everything from Truth and everything is permeated by Truth. Realise that there is nothing in the world that is not based on Truth and everything is composed of Suddha Sarva (the divine essence). Man has forgotten this fact. Man has emerged from the Divine (Madhava). Forgetting this truth is the Maya (delusion) from which man suffers. A true human being cannot suffer from this delusion.

Embodiments of Divine Love! Humanness is inextricably linked to divinity and is not separate from it. The same Atma resides in all beings. There are various limbs and organs in the body such as hands, legs, eyes, nose, mouth, ear, etc. All of them are integral parts of the body. There is an intimate connection between these different limbs and the Shareeri (Indweller) in the body. The Jivatma is the Indweller. The limbs constitute the body. The relationship between the Indweller and the body is integral. All limbs belong to the individual. Hence the Indweller will not hate any limb. The Shareeri (Indweller) will not feel happy if any limb suffers because all limbs belong to him and their experiences are also his.

Likewise, Vishnu pervades the cosmos as His body. All things in the cosmos are limbs of the body of Vishnu. Hence no one should have any aversion to anything in the universe. You should not hate anyone, because the same Divine is present in you and in everything in the universe. The cosmos has three forms: the gross, the subtle and the causal. The physical universe represents the gross form. The subtle form is the mind and subtler than the mind is the Atma.

The five Kosas or inner coverings

A human being has five sheaths. These five sheaths have been grouped into three. The gross sheath is the Annamaya Kosa . The three Kosas, Pranamaya (vital breath), Manomaya (the mental sheath) and the Vijnanamaya (the

intellectual sheath) together constitute the subtle sheath. The causal sheath is the Anandamaya Kosa (the Bliss sheath). Even the last sheath does not represent total bliss, because there is a higher entity above the Anandamaya Kosa. This is known as Mahakarana or supracausal entity. This is the Atmic principle. Because every individual has these three bodies, he is called Tripurasundari . **Every human being has these Thripuras (three cities). The three puras are the body, the mind and the heart.** Since the Prakruthi element, which is feminine in nature, is present in greater measure in the body, it is termed as Sundari (a beautiful damsel).

Spiritual truth of Navarathri

During the Navarathri festival Tripurasundari is worshipped. Unfortunately, from ancient times people have been observing only the external forms of worship without understanding the inner significance of these festivals. The entire cosmos is a temple. The Lord pervades the cosmos. Prakruthi (Nature) teaches the spiritual truth about Navarathri. Realise the love of Sai through spiritual practice. The Lord has to be realised through sadhana. Sadhana does not mean adoring God in a particular place or in a particular form. It means thinking of God in all that you do wherever you may be. It may be asked whether this is possible. The answer is that it is possible by dedicating every action to God. During Navarathri there is a form of worship called Angarpana Puja . In this form of worship, all the limbs of the body are offered to the Divine in a spirit of surrender Sharanagathi. **Surrender means offering everything to the Divine and giving up the idea of separation between oneself and the Divine. There can be no true surrender if there is a sense of separation.** There must be the conviction that it is the same Divine who dwells in all beings:

Eko Vasee Sarvabhutha-antharatma

The true meaning of Angarpana Puja

In the performance of Angarpana Puja, there is a form of self-deception. When a devotee says, "Nethram Samarpayami " (I offer my eyes to the Lord) and offers only a flower to the Lord, he is indulging in a kind of deception. The proper thing would be to say that he is offering a flower. Actually manthras like "Nethram Samarpayami" are intended to indicate that one is using his eyes only to see God. The real significance of the Manthra is that you think of the divine in whatever you see or do.

Therefore, the true meaning of the Angarpana Puja is to declare that you offer all your limbs in the service of the Lord. This means that whatever work you do should be done as an offering to God. Nowadays selfishness is rampant among devotees and they love God not for God's sake but only to get their selfish desires fulfilled. As long as selfishness prevails, the Divine cannot be understood.

The Navarathri festival should be used as an occasion to examine one's own nature whether it is human, animal or demonic, and strive to transform the animal nature to the human and divinise the human nature. Wisdom cannot be acquired from outside. It has to be got through inward Sadhana.

Vyamohas is the dust that settles upon the glass of the chimney of the lantern and dims the light. The attachment to sensual objects and to the pleasure they give is the soot that sticks to the inside of the chimney; that too dims the light. Clean the chimney by Namasmarana every day and the flame will shine for you and others.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

36. Purify The Heart To Realise God

Date: 24 October 1992 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Diwali

Though, at the time of birth, man has no good or bad qualities, changes occur in his nature due to the food he consumes, and the influence of associates around him. One develops ego and attachment based on the company he keeps. As a person gets educated, he or she develops pride and entertains vainglorious thoughts about one's superiority over others. This conceit pollutes the heart.

When dirty water gets mixed with milk, the milk has to be boiled to make it pure. Likewise man has to undertake various types of Sadhana to purge his heart of impurities. Exercises such as meditation, Yajna or thapas can only provide mental satisfaction. It is only when the heart is melted in the heat of Divine love that one can succeed in getting rid of bad qualities and make the heart shine in its pristine effulgence. Just as the sun's rays can burn a heap of cotton if the rays are concentrated by passing through a lens, the rays of the intellect will destroy one's bad qualities only when they are passed through the lens of Divine love.

The growth of demonic nature in man

Although man has come from Madhava (God), he is enveloped in a Bhrama (delusion) which obscures the Brahma (Divinity) within him. So long as one is in the grip of this delusion one cannot understand God. Because of this delusion one gets attached to the body and develops limitless desires. This leads to the growth of the Asura (demonic) nature in him. In the word "Nara" meaning man, "na" means "no" and "ra" means "destruction." So, the term "nara" describes man as one without destruction (that is, one who is eternal). When the letter "ka" is added to "nara" it becomes "Naraka," hell, which is the opposite of heaven. When one descends to the demonic level, he forgets divinity and follows the path to hell. The Divine is realised by pursuing the spiritual path (the Atmic path). According to the Puranic story, Narakasura is said to have been destroyed on this day of Deepavali (Naraka Chathurdhasi).

Narakasura was a demon filled with attachment to bodily pleasures. He was full of bad qualities like lust, anger and greed. He was a terror to women and perpetrated many evil deeds, inviting his own destruction at the hands of a woman, Sathyabhama, the consort of Sri Krishna. It is worthy of note that the Lord gave this opportunity to Sathyabhama only after subjecting her to a cleansing process to rid her of her pride and jealousy as revealed in the Tulabharam episode, where Sathyabhama was advised by Narada to make a gift of Krishna to him and win him back by offering an equivalent weight of gold and jewellery. When Sathyabhama offered all the valuables she possessed, it had no effect. Ultimately a Tulasi leaf offered by Rukmini with a prayer to Krishna tilted the balance. Thereby Sathyabhama was cured of her pride and jealousy. Apart from this Puranic version, there is a cosmic explanation for the observance of Deepavali. Naraka was a planet moving in orbit with the moon around the earth. Once it appeared to be heading towards the earth. People prayed to Lord Krishna to avert the impending catastrophe. The Lord had to take action to destroy this planet and save the world from disaster. From that day, Deepavali was being observed as a joyous day of deliverance from evil.

Among men, each one is himself the cause of his fortune, good or bad. He is himself the builder, the architect. Fate, destiny, predetermination, the Will of God - every one of these explanations is toppled by the principle of Karma. God and man can be reconciled and affiliated only on the basis of this Sutra or principal of Karma. When man realises that God has no share in causing his suffering and that he is himself the sole cause, that no blame attaches to any other person, that he is the initiator as well as the beneficiary - the cause and the effect of his acts, that he is free to shape his future, then he approaches God with a firmer step and a clearer mind

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

37. Recovery Of Moral Values

Date: 22 November 1992 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Convocation - 11

Dhaivadheenam Jagathsarvam Sathyadheenam thu Dhaivatam Sathyam
Uthamadheenam

Uthamo paramo dhevatha. (The Cosmos is controlled by the Divine. The Divine is governed by truth. Truth is subject to the high-souled. The high-souled are supremely Divine). Students! Educationists! Patrons of Education! The entire Cosmos is under the control of the Divine. But the Divine is bound by truth. Truth is under the control of high-souled persons. These persons are the embodiments of the Divine in the world. The universe is infinite and marvellous. Unable to comprehend the nature of Creation, man is a prey to divisive forces. Creation proclaims the Will of the Divine. It is known as Prakruthi (Nature). Every man, who is a child of Nature, should have Divine nature. Man is born in the world to proclaim the Will of the Divine. Man is a part of Creation. He is bound by all the material objects in the world. His awareness is based on his perception of the world. Man has to order his life for the purpose of furthering the creative process.

Abuse of nature's resources by men

Unfortunately today, as a consequence of scientific and technological progress, humanness has declined and man considers the world as only intended for his enjoyment. As a result, the powers of Nature are being used in a manner which poses a great threat to the world. The world has not been created for mere enjoyment. Abusing the resources of Nature and forgetting his own basic human nature, man is going against the purpose of Creation. Many natural catastrophes are entirely due to man's behaviour. Earthquake, volcanic eruptions, wars, floods and famines and other calamities are the result of grave disorders in Nature. These disorders are traceable to man's conduct. Man has not recognised the integral relationship between humanity and the world of Nature.

In the human body, all organs like eyes, ears, mouth, etc., are integrally related to each other. Just as these organs are important for man, man is equally important for society as a limb of the social organism. Man is a part of the human community. Mankind is a part of nature. Nature is a limb of God. Man has not recognised these inter-relationships. Man is a kind of stage-director of what goes on in Nature. Forgetting his responsibilities, man fights for rights. If a deep enquiry is made, it will be realised that man has no rights at all in this world. He has only duties and no rights. It is foolish to fight for fights without discharging one's duties. All the chaos and conflicts in the world are due to men forgetting their duties. If everyone discharges his duty, the world will be peaceful and prosperous. When the master performs his duties, the employees will work well. When the parents discharge their duties, the children will realise their responsibilities. When the children do their duties by the parents, the latter will be honoured. Likewise, when teachers discharge their duties, the students will conduct themselves well. When the students perform their duties well, the authorities will secure due respect. Today men are forgetting their obligations. The Cosmos is an integral organism of interrelated parts. When each one performs his duty, the benefits are available to all. Man is entitled only to perform his duties and not to the fruits thereof.

Need for ideal persons

Students! Today the educational world is immersed in multifarious problems which are baffling the authorities concerned. The educational system is contributing to the collapse of human values in society. Educational institutions, which ought to give a lead in promoting the nation's allround welfare, are leading the country astray. Human values like sacrifice, integrity, fairness and morality have almost disappeared. Reverence and respect for elders are totally absent. What we need today is not a new system of education, nor a new social order, nor even a new religion. There is a good deal of speculation about how to bring about a new social order. All these are exercises in futility. What we need today are Uttama-purushulu (noble and high-minded men and women). The nation will be prosperous only when there are such persons with noble minds and hearts. Such persons will emerge in

society only when there is purity of mind and morality in society. Only a society with a moral foundation can foster such noble persons.

Spirituality is the means for redemption

Morality and integrity are based upon spiritual consciousness. Spirituality alone will take man to the sacred path leading to his destiny. Spirituality alone can elevate man and raise him to higher levels. It is the means to real national progress and prosperity. World peace can be secured only through spirituality. It is the means for the redemption of mankind. Forgetting spirituality, man is leading an artificial life based on worldly pleasures. Education should be used for promoting the nation's welfare. Knowledge gained through education should be used selflessly for promoting the welfare of humanity. Truth is the ornament for the mouth. Charity is the adornment for the hand. Education is the ornament for the ear. Apart from these ornaments, what does anyone need? A man with these ornaments can reach great heights. He alone is a full man. Mere knowledge by itself is of no avail. Ravana had studied as many branches of knowledge as Rama. Educationally both were equals. But Valmiki described Ravana as *muurkha*, a self-willed fool. Rama was hailed as a perfect man. Wherein lies the difference between the two? Rama utilised all the knowledge he had gained for noble purposes and the welfare of all. He had mastery over the senses. He gave up his rulership. He was pledged to the upholding of truth. Dedicating his knowledge to the cause of truth, to set an example of ideal life to mankind, he dedicated his life to the welfare of the country. Rama exemplified human perfection by his sacrifice, his adherence to truth and his spotless character. On the other hand, Ravana utilised all his knowledge for enjoying sensuous pleasures. He became a slave of his senses and brought rain upon himself and his country.

Whatever knowledge one may acquire, one should use it for the well-being of all-"*Sarvahi the rathah*." Only then he can be deemed *Jnana-sampannah* (rich in wisdom). Such a wise person will be endowed with all good qualities. It is for these noble purposes that the ancient system of education was devised.

Bharathiya education in ancient days

All that students learn today is unrelated to the Bharathiya system of education. A system which enslaves the mind and promotes the office-hunting mentality can have no relation to Bharathiya education. It was a system which sought to combat injustice and corruption and promote truth and righteousness. It was not designed to make a student acquire a degree at great expense and then go about with a begging bowl in search of jobs. It aimed at promoting self-reliance and encouraging one to take up social service in a spirit of dedication. Bharathiya education was based on the twin mottoes: "Sathyam vadha; Dharmam chara" (Speak the truth, practice righteousness).

Love is the spiritual discipline governing human life. Truth is one's life-breath. Bharath produced any number of men in the past who were dedicated to these two ideals. Bharathiya education made the human personality shine effulgently like a multifaceted diamond.

Bharath: then and now

Bharath is like a myriad-petalled lotus. The variety of creeds and communities, languages and customs, manners and traditions to be found in Bharath cannot be found in any other country. With its many languages, customs and cultures, Bharath is a magnificent garden blooming with flowers of many hues. Bharathiyas today are oblivious to the greatness of their country. People of many faiths lived in harmony as members of one family in ancient times. The harmony has now been lost. The love-principle has become extinct. People are unable even to recognise what is truth.

Students should enshrine in their hearts the greatness of Bharath. Their lives should not be offered as a sacrifice to self-ishness and self-interest. Give up selfishness completely. Only then will you have acquired education that is Divine and-holy. In the olden days, after the students had-completed their education, the Gurus (teachers) used to offer them words of advice before they embarked on Grihastha ashrama (the life of householders). It was a kind of convocation. The advice the preceptors gave them was: "Serve the world.

First of all, revere your father and mother. Develop love for the nation." What kind of patriotism do students have who, after completing their studies here, go abroad for work? Live in society and earn the esteem of your fellow men. These are the essential lessons to be learnt by students.

The gospel of service

Today you took the Institute pledge as to how you will conduct yourselves after you go out into the world. You have pledged yourselves to lead ideal lives. This pledge should pervade every corpuscle of your blood. You will be guilty of treason to yourselves if you fail to live up to the pledge.

Students! From now onwards you should engage yourselves in service to society and cherish Indian culture. Do not aspire for positions. Practise at least a fraction of what you have learnt. Action alone counts. Only through practical experience is wisdom gained. Money is not everything. Acquiring good qualities is vital. Education without character is utterly worthless. Go to the villages and serve the poor and the downtrodden. The essence of education is service to one's fellowmen. There is no greater occupation than service to society. Become leaders through service. Only when you lead such exemplary lives can you be deemed truly educated. Whatever may be the situation in other universities, the students from the Sathya Sai Institute should behave in an exemplary and ideal manner. Foster moral, spiritual and social values. Dedicate your lives to the upholding of morality. Officials without morality can never serve society properly. They can never protect the greatness of Bharath. Dear students! Uphold the ideals of education. Cultivate the love of God and inspire in everyone devotion to God. Live in God! Make others live in God!

I did not insist that a person should have faith in God, I refuse to call any person a Nasthika, an atheist. Beings exist as a result of his will, in accordance with his plan; so no one is beyond His Grace. Besides, everyone has love towards some one thing or other, and that love is a spark of the

Divine. One has to pay heed to truth and speak the Truth to someone in order to make life worth living. Now, that moment is God's Moment and at that moment when he utters the truth, or loves, or serves or bends, he is a theist.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

38. Revere The Mother: Serve The Motherland

Date: 23 November 1992 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Birthday - 67

By being borne by Kausalya Rama fulfilled His divine role; Brought up by the noble exemplar of womanhood, Sita, The twins, Lava and Kusha, achieved glory;

The loving care of Jijibai made Shivaji a heroic warrior. Fostered with love by Puthlibai Gandhi became a Mahatma. The first letter of the Spiritual alphabet is "Atma" (Mother). Is there anything greater in the world than the

Spirit that protects all living beings all the time ? Embodiments of Divine Atma! There is nothing sweeter than maternal love. Forbearance lends beauty to man. Truth and integrity constitute the hard penance for man. The Divinity inherent in man is not recognised by him. Failing to realise that neethi (morality) is greater than one's Jathi (community) and that Guna: (virtue) is greater than one's Kulam (caste), man is laying waste his life.

The ancient sages regarded human life as something sweet. Man's primary duty is to preserve the sacred sweetness of this life. This can be accomplished only through sacrifice. and not selfishness. To lose the sweet nature of life is to forfeit man's humanness.

Maternal love is Divine

The Divine sweetness in human life is derived from Mathru bhavamu (maternal love). For the protection and rearing of her children, the mother is prepared to make every sacrifice. It is this spirit of sacrifice that makes motherhood infinitely precious. The Upanishads have declared that there is no other means than Thyaga (sacrifice) to achieve immortality. There is no diviner or purer feeling than maternal love. Today people make no effort to cherish this feeling. Sri Rama declared: "The mother and the Motherland are greater than heaven itself." God is formless and attributeless. The unmanifested Divine is worshipped in various forms. God is not easily

accessible to everyone. Nevertheless God is worshipped with faith in various ways and joy is derived therefrom.

Among the sacred aphorisms cherished by Bharathiyas, the foremost are: "Mathru dhevo Bhava! Pithru dhevo Bhava!" (Adore the mother as God. Adore the father as God). The mother is the foremost deity for man as the visible embodiment of the Divine who can be directly experienced. Every son is aware of the mother's affection, care and concern. He knows how to please the mother and keep her happy. No one knows how the unmanifested Divine showers His grace or displays His displeasure, what He desires or disapproves. One can lead a sacred life by adoring the mother, instead of worshipping the unmanifested Divine. The Chaithanyam (Atmic Consciousness) that is present in the Divine is also present in living beings.

Macrocosm in microcosm

If this is the case, a doubt may arise. What is the need for giving a unique place to God? When you look at an array of electric bulbs, they may all look alike. But there are differences in wattage amongst them according to the filament in them. The wattage may vary from 40 to 5000 watts. Likewise, in all human beings the five elements, the five organs of action and the five organs of perception, and other organs are common. But in their thoughts and fancies there are differences. The sacred and remarkable Divine potency in each of them is also different. It is because this Divine potency is present in God in infinite measure that the uniqueness of God is recognised. It has been said: "Yatha pinde, thatha Brahmade" (What is in the microcosm is in the macrocosm). Brahmanda, the macrocosm is regarded as Virata Swarupa (the Cosmic form) and the microcosm is regarded as the atomic nucleus. This is a wrong view. What is present in the atom, is present in the Cosmos. There is no difference between the two. A small seed carries within it the potential of becoming a big tree. The Cosmic Form is not a mere aggregation of various objects. It does not signify the one in the many. The Cosmic Form means that which contains within itself everything.

Illumine your lives by the sunshine of Vairagya

You cannot see the vast tree contained in the tiny seed. Likewise, the atomic principle contains the macrocosm in microcosm. Equally, the divinity present in God (the macrocosm) is present in man in a subtle form like the fire in a match stick. You cannot get fire out of a damp match stick. Man is filled with the fire of Divine wisdom and sacredness. But it is not perceptible in spite of spiritual exercises, severe penance and many good deeds. The reason is the fact that the mind is dampened by Ahamkara and Mamakara (egoistic and acquisitive tendencies). It is only when this dampness is removed by the sunshine of Vairagya (detachment) that an illumined life becomes possible.

Man today is well informed about myriad things. But he is ignorant of his own true nature. Of what avail is all knowledge if one cannot get rid of his bad qualities and realise his true nature? All accomplishments and possessions are of no use to man. Only a godly life can redeem him. A nation's prosperity does not come down from the sky or sprout from the earth. It is based on man's actions. Man's conduct has to be purified. Men today have forgotten the greatness of the mother and the duties of the son. How can man expect to get the bliss for which he aspires if he fails to discharge his duties, forgets his humanness, turns his face away from God, and goes after worldly pleasures?

Rama's deep devotion to His parents

At his father's behest, Rama accompanied the sage Viswamithra, protected his Yaga and reached Mithila with the Sage. After Rama had handled the bow of Shiva, Emperor Janaka, according to his earlier declaration, wanted to offer in marriage his daughter Sita to Rama. But Rama was not willing to go through the marriage without the approval of his parents. Viswamithra tried to persuade Rama in many ways, but Rama deemed the sanction of his parents more essential than obeying the words of the preceptor. Rama did not venture even to look at Sita until his parents arrived and agreed to the alliance. Bharath today has forgotten this divine message of Rama, revealing his deep devotion to his mother and father. To carry out the injunctions of his father, Rama went into exile and spent fourteen years in the forest. He

deemed adherence to Truth as the highest penance. When Rama was in the forest, Bharatha, accompanied by Vasishtha and others, went to him to persuade him to return to the Kingdom. Rama told Vasishtha: "Guruji, life is not more precious than respect for truth. I have entered the forest to comply with my father's command, If I go back to the Kingdom, I will be betraying my father's pledge. I would sooner give up my life than give up my adherence to truth." The story of Rama has been teaching to the world the supreme greatness of a life based on truth, sacrifice, integrity and morality.

Krishna's lesson to Gandhari

That man is to be pitied who has not earned the grace of his mother, who has not enjoyed the loving looks of his mother and who has not tried to please her. This is illustrated by an episode from the Mahabharatha. After all the Kauravas had been slain in battle, Krishna went to their blind old father, Dhritrashtra, and his wife Gandhari to console them. Unable to restrain her bitterness and grief, Gandhari blamed Krishna in harsh terms. Krishna told her: "Gandhari! You are making a grievous mistake. From the time of their birth, did you look at any of your children? If the Kauravas did not benefit from your own sight, how can they be seen by me?" This means one who has not received the loving look of his mother does not deserve the gracious look of the Divine. In Bharath today, this Dharmic principle has been erased. Immersed in selfish concerns, people are forgetting the Divine and giving up all principles of morality and justice. Looking at the state of things in Bharath today, it is clear that the nation has gone down in moral stature a great deal.

Embodiments of Love! Recognise the truth that morality is the primary requisite of human society. You have to perform your duties and discharge your obligations. You must be united and take part in social service. Union is strength. It promotes the welfare of all. If one does not strive for unity and progress, how can he serve society? Even small ants acting in union can destroy a serpent. Today unity is being undermined in the country. There are differences in every home. Institutions without unity ultimately collapse. A divided nation faces destruction. Hence, for the welfare of the nation, all must live in unity. Distinctions of high and low should be given up. The nation's

welfare alone must be kept in mind. You are well aware of the divisions in every political party. These divisions are breaking the parties into fragments. If this fragmentation goes on, how can the nation progress? The individual who is concerned about the welfare of the nation should eschew self-interest, cultivate the spirit of unity and work for the progress of the nation. This should be the first motto of the country.

Uphold the culture of Bharath as a true citizen

Those who claim to be citizens of Bharath are oblivious to the honour and prestige of the nation. The man who is not proud of this motherland and his mother tongue is worse than a corpse. If you proclaim yourself a citizen of Bharath, you should uphold the culture of Bharath. You should conduct yourself according to Bharathiya culture. If unity is lost, what can anyone accomplish? If there are three persons in a house, there can be peace in the house only if the three live in harmony. In every individual, there are three entities in the body that is his dwelling: the Manas (mind), the Vak (tongue) and Kayam (the organs of actions). It is only when these three entities function harmoniously that the individual can have peace. When there is discord between them, how can peace be got?

No room for lazy persons in Bharath

Manifest the divinity that is in you. Only then you can be a true vyakthi (individual). Practise sadhana for this purpose. Jettison your worldly attachments. Develop love so that you may get rid of divisive feelings in you. It is extremely unfortunate that men should waste their human lives, which are so precious and sacred. Life is short and men should make good use of their divine potentialities without wasting time. Two hands have been given to man for feeding himself and rendering service. There is no room for lazy persons in Bharath. One who does not work has no right to eat. Work, work and work! That is your duty. Consider what is appropriate in a particular situation and act accordingly.

Few try to understand the ways of the Divine. They are beyond the

comprehension of the intellectuals. God is omnipotent. This is beyond doubt. The lamp shines because of the Divine. The power of the wind which can blow out the lamp also comes from God. It is ridiculous to expose a lamp to a strong wind and pray to God not to allow the light to go out. The powers of the Divine are to be rightly understood and used in the appropriate way. Once a devotee asked Swami why He should not convert all sea water into petrol because of the steep rise in the price of petrol. The devotee had read a report of Bhagavan's conversion of water into petrol on one occasion. Swami told him. "You are no doubt intelligent, but your intelligence is not functioning properly. If the seas around India are converted to petrol, what will happen if a witless person like you, walking on the beach, throws a burning cigarette in the sea. There will be a holocaust. Have you thought about this possibility? Have you any concern for the welfare of the country? It is stupid to make suggestions of this kind." There are many such scatter-brained persons in the world. They are posing as highly intelligent persons. They come forward to criticise God. No one has the right or the competence to criticise God. God can do anything by an act of will. All actions performed selflessly are godly. God is present in all beings. Everything in the Cosmos is a form of the Divine. The Divine power sustains everybody at all times. Hence every man is an embodiment of God. Once you have that faith, you will not be inclined to follow the wrong path.

Who is Sai?

Everyone should strive to recognise the divinity that is present in all. This effort has to be made by everyone. Human birth has been given for this purpose. It cannot be left to God. There are many who do not understand the Sai principle. Who is this Sai? Why are certain things happening in this manner? These questions are asked. I am not a sanyasi (renunciant). I am not a yogi. I am not a bhogi (pleasure-seeker). I am not a thyagi (one who sacrifices). I am I. This "I" is the first name given to the Atma. A renunciant is bound by certain restrictions. The pleasure-seeker is bound in other ways. I have no limitations. Mine is boundless bliss. My name is "I." It is not a name given after one's birth. To understand Me, everyone has to realise that the "I" is present in everyone. The "I" is used by everyone in every context, whether

he is a millionaire or a pauper. This "I" is Brahman - "Aham Brahmasmi." Everyone uses the "I" from dawn to dusk without understanding its meaning.

Offer every action of daily life to God

Students! As future citizens of the nation you have to conduct yourselves in an exemplary manner. Remember that there is no special merit in so-called spiritual exercises. Every action in daily life calls for Dhyana (concentration) and has to be sanctified by performing it as an offering to God. A farmer tilling his field should feel at the same time that he is tilling the field of his heart. While sowing seeds, he should sow the seeds of good qualities in his heart. While watering the field, he should think he is watering the field of his heart with love. In this way, everyone can pursue the spiritual path without the aid of rosary or betaking himself to the forest. Today, the foremost need is the promotion of unity. Irrespective of physical and ideological differences, the Atma principle is common to all. It has to be recognised that individuals are integrally related to Society like the different organs in a body. Humanity itself is a limb of Nature and Prakruthi (nature) is a limb. of God (the Omni-Self). If this integral relationship is understood, where is the ground for hatred? No one should consider himself as insignificant or unimportant. Everyone, small or big, is a vital part of the whole and is essential for its proper functioning like all the parts in a rocket. Any small defective part may cause the rocket to explode. Likewise, in this vast Cosmos every being has a significant role to play to ensure its smooth functioning. We celebrate many festivals in connection with birthdays or other occasions. It is not the festivities that are important, not the dresses, not the speeches. Feelings are what are important. Without purity of thought, purity of wisdom cannot be got. Seek to purify your minds. Cultivate selfless love towards all and engage yourselves in social service. I have often declared: "Grama Seva is Rama Seva" (service to the villagers is service to Rama).

Enshrine Rama in your heart

It is a mistake to think only of constructing a temple for Rama. In this vast land of Bharath of what use is it to raise a temple for Rama in any particular

place? Everyone's heart should be converted into a temple for Rama. The land of Bharath should be cherished as the Ramarajya (Kingdom of Rama). What does Ramarajya mean? It does not refer to any particular state. Unity in thought, word and deed constitutes Ramarajya. Today, there is no unity, no purity, no awareness of Divinity. People are wallowing in the mire of "community." This is not the primary duty of man. When there is discord between thought, word and deed, humanness is undermined. Unity has to be promoted to foster humanness. Bharathiya culture belongs to all mankind. Time, place and conditions of life may vary. But the basic principles governing human conduct are the same. If people want to proceed to a higher state, the first requisite is improvement in one's conduct. When the foundation under your feet is shaky, how can you expect to build up the mansion of life? Your conduct is the foundation, Your actions are the means. Develop faith. Without faith life is a waste. Man today believes in everything except God. This is his misfortune. God is omnipresent. The man who has no faith in God has no faith in himself. Develop selfconfidence, which is the basis for any nation's progress. On that foundation of faith erect the walls of Ananda (Bliss). Then place the ceiling of Vairagya (detachment) on them. Live under the roof of thyaga (sacrifice). This is the way to Self-realisation. Chant the name of the Lord to secure mental peace and purify the heart. You can then lead a Godly life.

39. Unity Based On Divinity

Date: 25 December 1992 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Christmas

Embodiments of Divine Love!

In the world today all those who are held in high esteem as great personages have earned their good name only by their character and conduct. To accomplish anything one wants, one should have firm determination. Those with fickle minds cannot achieve anything.

All religions and scriptures agree that going to the aid of fellow-beings in times of need and saving them from distressing situations is the greatest virtue of a person. Every human being has equal rights in the world. All belong to one family. To enjoy peace of mind, it is essential to practice forbearance and equanimity. There are persons good and bad, rich and poor, educated and uneducated in every country of the world. Though born in the same family and breathing the same air, some persons are narrow minded and have crooked ideas and indulge in selfish deeds, while others are good and selfless.

"Suhrudham Sarva bhuathanam"
"Ekatma Sarvabhuutha antharatma"

are well known aphorisms from the scriptures. To be friendly towards all beings is the duty of everyone, since the same Atma is there in all beings. Comprehending this truth, it is the duty of everyone born as a human being to do good to others on the basis of love. There is no need to search for God anywhere, since God resides in every being. The body is, therefore, to be considered as the temple of God. Today man is breeding bad thoughts in the mind, thereby polluting the heart which is the seat of the Divine.

Four kinds of potentialities of human beings

In every human being, there are four kinds of potentialities, namely, animal, demonic, human and Divine.

The one with the divine quality will be a *Brahma-Nishtha* or one engaged in the contemplation of the Atma within and will enjoy Atmic bliss and sanctify every moment of his life by doing good deeds. He realises that the same Atma is them in all beings as the *Antharatma* (Inner Self) and leads a blissful life, discarding selfish thoughts. He is a *Brahma Jnani* or *Atma Jnani*, a realised soul, who is aware of the truth that revering others is revering the Lord and hurting others is hurting the Lord. Such persons radiate divinity though they are in a human body.

The "human" type of persons follow the path of Truth and Righteousness -

Sathya Dharma paro marthyah.

They are engaged in activities in strict accordance with Sathya and Dharma (Truth and Righteousness), using their sense of discrimination in the right manner. They discharge their responsibilities without craving for position, power, pelf or fame. Such a person lives in harmony with his fellow beings and discharges his duties with firm belief in the three precepts:

fear of sin, love of God and morality in society.

The next type is the demonic person. Such a person does not care for the code of conduct for human beings, indulges in the shameless pursuit of sensual pleasures, is filled with ego and pride, and does not hesitate to hurt others for selfish purposes. He goes on nonchalantly committing sinful deeds.

Egoism is his life breath and attachment is his backbone. Such a selfish person is termed as demonic.

One who lacks wisdom is like an animal

"Jnana Viheenah Pashubhih Samanaha"
(The man lacking wisdom is like an animal).

A person who is steeped in ignorance is considered to be no better than an animal. Such a person's life is centred only on sense gratification. His thoughts never go beyond the senses because of his ignorance of the divinity within him. He deems the transient earthly pleasures as heavenly bliss and lives in delusion devoid of discrimination. Every man must make an effort to rise to humanness, shedding his animal and demonic qualities, and then strive to realise his divine nature. Nowadays, we find that men are going down in the reverse direction, from the human to the demonic and animal states.

The message of Jesus Christ

On December 25th, when Jesus was born, three kings came to his birthplace. These three gave expression to three different views about the new-born babe. One of them, looking at the infant, said: "This child looks like one who will be a lover of God." A second king said: "God will love this child." The third king declared: "Verily, this child is God Himself." The first one viewed the child from the physical point of view. The second saw the child from the mental viewpoint. The third saw from the Atmic (spiritual) point of view. The three declarations indicate how one can progress from the human to the divine level. What is needed is the destruction of the animal and demonic qualities in man. Man today worships inanimate idols and images, but makes no attempt to love his fellow human beings in flesh and blood. This was the first message of Jesus. Though one sees his neighbours day after day, he does not

choose to love them. How can one believe that such a person can love an invisible God? If a man cannot love a fellow human being who is visible before his eyes, how can he love what is not visible to him? This is not possible. Only a man who loves living beings around him can love the invisible Divine. Love must start with love for beings that have form. It must be extended to all beings. This is the primary stage in spirituality. Spirituality does not mean preoccupation with meditation, worship, etc. It involves total extinction of the animal and demonic qualities in man and the manifestation of his inherent divinity. When the attachments and hatreds in which man is enveloped are removed, the inherent divinity in man, the Sath-chith-ananda in him will manifest itself. There is no need to search for the omnipresent Divine in any specific place. When you are yourself divine, why search for the Divine elsewhere? It is a mark of ignorance.

How Jesus Christ's message was accepted

Jesus performed many miraculous deeds, relieved the sufferings of many in distress, preached sublime truths to the people, and ultimately sacrificed his life. For over a hundred years after his martyrdom, Christ's message did not have any impact. Four centuries later, Christianity was accepted by Roman emperors. Even after many centuries, humanity is yet to realise the inherent divinity of man.

Man is searching for a reason for every belief or action. Should you seek a reason for sanctifying the time spent by you on any action? **When you are engaged in unselfish activity for the common good of society and discharging your duties with dedication, you are sanctifying your life.**

There are four basic elements in every action. They are *Karana*, *Karma*, *Kala* and *Karthavyam*. *Karana* is the reason, *Karma* is the action, *Kala* is the time and *Karthavyam* is the duty that has been discharged. We can cite an example for this. Supposing you want to go to Madras to see your relatives; you go to the bus-stand in the morning, sit in the bus, travel for eight hours and reach Madras in the evening. Now, seeing your relatives is *Karana*

(cause). Sitting in the bus and travelling is karma (action). Spending eight hours is Kala (time factor) and seeing your relatives in Madras and getting satisfaction therefrom is Karthavyam (goal). If you do the same things in your dream, there is no time factor. The cause and action factors are also absent. As soon as you wake up, you find that you are only in the bed and discover that your seeing your relatives in Madras was unreal. All the four factors are absent in the dream state. Only where all the four are present will it be real. The purpose in view is termed *Lakshyam*. You are born as a human being for doing your Karma (duty). Life is given to you only to recognise Divinity and the body is the instrument for achieving this Karana (purpose). When you have spent your life, you have done the karma (action) in the duration of your life - kala. You should have the satisfaction of having achieved the karthavyam (goal).

Christ preached only this truth and taught the people that the body should be used for service to society. This is the teaching of Vedanta. Vedanta declares that the body is intended only to do actions in the world in a selfless way.

The genesis of the Christmas tree

Jesus was crucified on a Friday and He rose from the tomb on a Sunday. That is why Sunday is taken as the day of worship and service in churches. Catholics gave importance to Virgin Mary, the mother of Christ, while Protestants gave importance to the birth of Christ. Catholics celebrate Christmas by worshipping Mary on the evening of 24th and Protestants celebrate the birth of Christ on the 25th. There is a custom of putting up a Christmas tree on this day and worshipping it. The genesis of this custom can be traced to Germany. A preacher by name Jensen from England once visited Germany. When he was travelling in Germany on his mission, he noticed some Germans attempting to offer a child's life as sacrifice to propitiate God who, they believed, lived in an oak tree. The priest was worried and questioned them why they were offering an innocent child as sacrifice to a tree. As they asserted that God lived in the tree, he took an axe and cut the tree. To his surprise, he was shaken by an inexplicable vibration from head to foot. He noticed the form of a child between the two portions of the tree that

was cut by him.

System of worshipping Divinity in many forms

This incident teaches the truth that God lives not only in human beings but also in plants and trees. From that time onwards people started putting up a Christmas tree and worshipping it on this Christmas day. The system of worshipping Divinity in many forms including plants and stones, which originated in Bharath, has been prevalent for a long time in other countries also. There are sanyasis even among Christians. The men are called monks and the women are called nuns. There is no difference in this regard among the various religions. In all religions the goal is one. Christianity propagated this oneness of God. But nowadays the pure, permanent Atmic principle is forgotten in the preoccupation with worldly pursuits. (Bhagavan then described how the practice of having grandfather Christmas wearing a red robe and distributing gifts to children on Christmas day came into existence. Swami related the story of Nicholas, who began this practice when he became head of a church).

Heart is the seat of Truth

In all religions, birthdays of great personalities are celebrated but the ideals for which they lived are not remembered and followed. If you do not care to follow their teachings the celebrations lose their meaning and become artificial observances. It is not doing justice to the good people whose birthdays are being celebrated. Christ taught people to love all beings and serve all with compassion. It is only by practising these ideals that one can truly celebrate His birthday. The Divinity within should be reflected in every action. The seat of Truth is in your heart. Worship means loving others with your full heart. You must live in love and lead a life of selfless service based on love. This is the only right way of celebrating the birth of Christ. God, in fact, has no birth and no death. No change is there in God, who is changeless and permanent. The Atma within is but a reflection of God and it is the same in all beings as an eternal witness. Birth and death pertain only to the body. It is not correct to worship the body. Through *Sakara* (the transient body) man

has to merge in *Nirakara* (the ultimate Supreme Reality).

Embodiments of the Divine Atma!

Christmas is celebrated in innumerable places all over the world. Nowhere in the world is it done in the way it is celebrated here in Prashanthi Nilayam. People elsewhere may attend some church service and revel in drinking and dining parties. But, here, people from many countries in the world, speaking many languages, following different faiths and cultures, assemble together unitedly, start the day with singing God's name and glory regardless of their differences, join in spending the day in carrying the message of Universal love. This is Unity in diversity and true Adwaitha in action. Every minute we are experiencing this. Whenever one makes *Namaskaram* to elders, what is its significance? It signifies the bringing together of the five senses of perception and the five senses of action into one, thus unifying the different senses. In namaskaram you have "na" and "maskaram"; "na" means "no", which indicates that your ego is given up, and you have no body consciousness. The unity of all the sense organs will wipe out the Ahamkara. This will lead to purity and purity will lead to divinity. This unity can be seen only in Prashanthi Nilayam. Nowadays politicians and preachers talk of unity and purity but in practice it is not followed by the preachers themselves. It is only in Prashanthi Nilayam that this unity and purity are pervading naturally without any effort from anyone. All are living here like brothers and sisters of the same family.

The power of love in Prashanthi Nilayam

There are a number of foreigners here, who are very affluent and command princely comforts in their places, who have to put up with an austere life. They live in sheds in a spirit of fellowship and camaraderie though bereft of even the minimum comforts. They could not enjoy their life in their big mansions as much as they enjoy their stay here in such uncomfortable conditions. The reason is the Divine Love in them. If there is no such love in you, you cannot live here in such uncomfortable conditions even for a minute.

Embodiments of Divine Love!

Devotees who have come from far off countries! You are putting up with the life here in spite of the lack of amenities to which you are normally accustomed back home and are feeling happy. This is indeed a big Sadhana and can be termed even as Thapas or penance.

The foreigners, in spite of their discomforts and difficulties, radiate joy through their smiling faces. This is because of their love for Swami. They are spending a lot of money to come here and undergo the rigours of the disciplined life here most willingly and yet are always happy. But in spite of all comforts, the people of our own country who gather here do not present a cheerful countenance.

Embodiments of Love!

One who is having constant remembrance of God, with love and devotion, will ever be happy whether he is in a village or a city, flying in the sky or in a forest, because God dances in his heart and confers delight. Because of the lack of unity, this nation is experiencing a lot of difficulties and turmoil. Promotion of unity is essential for peace in the nation and the world. There is no use in simply greeting others with words coming from the lips; greetings should come from the heart with sincerity and love.

The grace of God cannot be won through the gymnastics of reason, the contortions of yoga or denials of asceticism. Love alone can win it, love that needs no requital, love that knows no bargaining, love that is paid gladly as tribute to all living. Love that is unwavering.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

