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38. Realise God through Pure Love 293

1. The Power of Divine Love

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STUDENTS! To see an effulgent light you do not need another lamp. Likewise to know the selfluminous Athmik Knowledge there is no need for any other knowledge. Every human being has in him the knowledge of his true form. Owing to his failure to know this stupendous fact, man pursues all kinds of worldly knowledge. All the diversity you see in creation is a manifestation of the Indivisible One. The cause is the same for both differences and oneness. All the changing entities are based upon the One that is unchanging.

Creation has to be viewed as a Cosmic Stage. God is the director and dramatis personae in this play. He assigns all the roles of the characters in the play. All creatures in the world are manifestations of the Divine. The good and evil in the world are expressions of the Divine consciousness. Man should not be misled by these expressions. Behind all the various actions of the actors, the Divine director is at work. It should be realised that though names and forms may vary, languages and nationalities may be different, the human race is one in its divine essence. All are sparks of the Divine. The Lord declared in the Geetha: "All beings in the world of the living are aspects of my Eternal Self."

Manifest God's love

God is the embodiment of Love. Love is His nature. His love pervades the cosmos. This love is present in one and all. Just as God manifests His love in the world, everyone should manifest his love.

Prema (Love) has been described as beyond speech and mind, It is said to be Anirvachaneeyam (indescribable). This love cannot be got through scholarship, wealth, or physical powers. God, who is the embodiment of love, can be attained only through love, just as the effulgent Sun can be seen only through its own light. There is nothing more precious in this world than Divine love. God is beyond all attributes. Hence His love also is beyond attributes -

Gunatheetha. But, human love, because it is governed by Gunas (attributes), results in attachment and aversion. Love should not be based on expectations of a reward or return. Love based on such expectations makes it a business deal. Love is not an article of commerce. It is not like a loan and getting it back. It is a spontaneous offering. Pure love of this kind can emanate only from a pure heart. Prema should be like a mariner's compass. Wherever the compass may be placed, the needle will point only to the north. Likewise, man's love, in all circumstances, should be directed towards God. That alone is true love. It should be unaffected by pleasure or pain. It makes no difference between "mine" and "thine." Love has to be acquired only through love and not by any other means whatsoever.

No one can describe the nature of Divine love. It is beyond the reach of poets. The one who is immersed in the waters of Divine Love will be unable to speak to anyone. When he is only upto neck-deep in the water he may be able to say a few words. Those who speak about God in the world do so only from superficial experience, but those who are wholly saturated with God's love will find no words to describe their bliss. That is why the Vedas declared that the Divine is beyond the reach of the mind and speech.

Transcendental love

Divine love transcends the three qualities of Sathva; Rajas and Thamas. It is beyond the dullness of Thamas, the passionate form of Rajas and the coolness of Sathva. God's love is pure, unsullied and utterly selfless. Everyone should make an all-out effort to experience this love. The ancient sages identified this Love with the Atma (Supreme Self). The Self and Love are not different from each other. The Self is love and love is Self. In every human being this love is present. But, not recognising this, man is a prey to greed, hatred, pride and envy, Man can get rid of these evil traits only by developing the Love principle that is inherent in him.

Love is present not only in human beings, but also in all creatures, birds or beasts. Nor is that all. It is in fact all-pervasive. Love pervades everything in creation. Man's humanness is vitiated when he fails to recognise this love.

Today men worship wealth and power, which are transient and ephemeral. They must fill their hearts with love, which is greater than all the wealth of the world. What use is there in imparting knowledge to those who have no love in their hearts? It is not got by education, Nor by knowing the rules of logic, Nor by secular studies, Nor by professing any religion, Nor by Vedhik speculation. It is present only

In a heart filled with compassion. Every man should have a compassionate heart. Without compassion, all wealth or scholarship is of no use.

Acquire Divine Love

Students! You may seek various positions in life. You may desire to earn wealth. But Divine love, which is the source of everything, should be acquired first. Grasp the significance of this truth. Everyone should experience and manifest this love. Men today have become playthings in the hands of demonic forces like egoistic pride, envy and ostentation. Can they be called human at all?

People talk about Bhakthi, Yoga and Jnana. What do they mean by these terms? Does Bhakthi mean getting involved in bhajans and enjoying the tune and beat of the songs? Does Yoga mean sitting in a corner and exercising breath control? Does Jnana consist in reading some books and getting by rote a few shlokas? What is Sanyasa? Is it wearing the ochre robe? Bhakthi (true devotion) means getting rid of the vices of attachment, hatred and envy and manifesting pure love. Anyone who loves pomp, who is filled with pride and is consumed by envy cannot be a devotee by any test. Devotion will go nowhere near him. The devotee has to overcome hatred, envy and attachment and experience the peace and bliss of love. That devotee will then acquire the attributes of the Divine.

Yoga, Jnana and Sanyasa

As regards Yoga, people speak about Hatha Yoga, Kriya Yoga, Transcendental Meditation and some new-fangled ideas. All these are not Yoga. "Yoga is

control of the vagaries of the mind." True yoga is control of the senses. One should treat alike both praise and censure, pleasure and pain. This kind of self-restraint is yoga. What is Jnana? "Adhvaitha dharshanam Jnanam" (To see the One without a second is the supreme knowledge). To recognise the Ekatma-bhava (the same Atma dwells in all beings) is true knowledge.

True sanyasa (renunciation) consists in the transformation of one's qualities and not in a change of garb. The mind must change, not the apparel. A true sanyasi (renunciator) is one who has mastery over all his senses and has given up all desires. Sanyasis today have more desires than householders. Why have these desires? For whose sake? Not for the sake of the body, which is a perishable leather bag filled with nine holes. He is a sanyasi who seeks the feet of the Lord, giving up all attachments to the body, which is subject to disease and decay. He must treat life and death, pleasure and pain alike. Students, however, should learn to lead ideal lives even in the mundane world in which they have to get on in life. Most of them, boys and girls, are carried away by the attractions of the phenomenal world and go after worldly comfort. While utilizing their education for earning a decent living, they should share the fruits of their knowledge with others. Education should inculcate in them good thoughts, good character, truthfulness, devotion, discipline and dedication to duty.

Jnana cannot be secured without Bhakthi

Adhi Shankara proclaimed the supremacy of the path of knowledge for the realisation of the Self. In his "Anandhalahari" he declared that Anandha (Bliss) is man's goal and it can be secured only by God's grace. He firmly asserted that Brahman alone is real and there is no second. Even for such a staunch exponent of Monism, devotion became necessary. Without cultivating devotion, Jnana (Knowledge of the Divine) cannot be secured. What is the cause of the erosion of wisdom among the people today? It is the sway of bad thoughts and evil impulses over them. Capping all these bad qualities is egoism. The individual human being is such a pitifully petty creature in this vast cosmos that he has no basis at all for getting conceited. Egoism is demonic quality. Those who are proud about their wealth or power should

realise that both these are maladies presaging ruin. Learn to give respect and receive respect. This is the first lesson students have to learn. When you revere and love others, they will also love and respect you. Practise humility and reverence, which are the hallmarks of true scholarship. Students! By your conduct you have to demonstrate the basic difference between the Sathya Sai Institute and all other universities in the world. The teachers should also set the example in this respect. If the teachers and higher authorities go astray, how can the students be expected to behave properly? All teachers and administrative officials should act in harmony and unity. Without unity and cooperation, they are no better than wandering buffaloes. Students! The first and foremost thing you have to observe is respectfulness. This is the essence of education. Cultivate reverence and behave without pride and ostentation. Give no room for jealousy. Do not feel envious when some one is better than you in scoring marks or in sports. Even if you live for only three days, you should lead ideal lives. Better be a swan for a brief while than live long like a crow. Today is a sacred festival day. It is a day for the celebration of plenty and prosperity. This day of Sankranthi brings with it an abundance of crops and wealth. This Pushya month brings with it a cool breeze, a bright sun, golden fields and trees echoing the songs of birds. The earth shines in the glory of Nature.

People admire the beauty of Nature, but are not aware of the beauty in their hearts. Make your heart beautiful by adorning it with the sacred love of God.

Spread the Lord's name

Students! Members of this august gathering! From today harness the enthusiasm of youth for carrying to every street and alley, the glory of the Lord's name! The entire atmosphere is surcharged with electro-magnetic waves. Because of the pollution of these waves, the hearts of human beings also get polluted. To purify this atmosphere, you have to chant the Lord's name and sanctify the radio waves. There is pollution in the air we breathe, the water we drink and the food we consume. Our entire life has been polluted. All this has to be purified by suffusing the atmosphere with the Divine name. Chant the name with joy in your hearts.

Sugar-dolls are valued for the sugar, not the shapes they are given by the manufactures. Their sweetness makes men purchase them. Elephant, dog, cat, rat, jackal or lion - it does not matter. That is a matter of individual fancy. Each is sweet, that is the essential thing. The sweetness draws Manavas (human beings) towards Madhava; the Pravritthi (deed) towards Nivritthi (dedication); the Ananda towards Sath-Chith-Anandha (Highest Bliss). When the appetite for these grows, all low desires and hungers cease.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

2. Prema and the triple purity

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EMBODIMENTS of Divine love! He who recognises that the Atma in him and in all beings is one and the same, dwells in the constant presence of God, whether he is a householder or a renunciant, whether he is alone or in a crowd. Everyone has to recognise the divinity that is inherent in all human beings.

The sage Naradha declared: "Prema amrithasya svaruupah" (Love is the embodiment of ambrosia). In the mundane world, man considers the four Purusharthas (the four goals of life) as the means to Moksha (Liberation). This is not correct. Dharma (Righteousness), Artha (material wealth), Kama (the satisfaction of desire) and Moksha (Liberation) which are considered the four aims of human existence, are not all. There is a fifth aim for mankind which transcends even Moksha (Liberation). This is Parama-prema (Supreme love). This Love Principle is Divine.

Love and God are not distinct from each other. God is love and love is God. It is only when the truth of this Love Principle is understood that the meaning of human existence can be realised. Says a Telugu poem: The Sai Lord is the embodiments of Love, Who taught the Love principle, Proclaimed the equality of all beings, And revealed the preciousness of humanness. In a home where three persons live, if they have harmony amongst them and cooperate with each other, verily that home is heaven itself, where divine bliss reigns. If, on the contrary, the three persons lack harmony and adjustment, dislike each other and behave as enemies, there can be no hell worse than that.

Ancients considered triple unity as a form of yoga

Heaven and hell are dependent on the conduct of people. The body is a home wherein reside three entities called manas (mind), Vak (speech) and limbs (organs of action). True humanness consists in the unity of thought, word and deed. In Vedantik parlance, this unity was described as Thrikarana Shuddhi

(triple purity). True moksha (liberation) consists in giving expression in words to the thoughts which arise in the mind and to practise what one says. The ancients considered this triple unity as a form of yoga. "Manasyekam, vachasyekam, karmanyekam mahatmanam" (Those whose mind, words and deeds are in complete accord are high-souled beings). "Manas-anyath, vachas-anyath, karmanya-anyath dhuratmanam" (The wicked are those whose thoughts deviate from their words and actions). Hence every man should strive to achieve unity in thought, word and deed. That is the hall-mark of humanness. This profound truth is proclaimed by the Vedanthik pronouncement that the body is a temple in which the eternal Atma is the Indweller. The Veda is dualistic. Vedantha is monistic (Adhvaitha). The essence of Vedantha is the triune unity of thought, word and deed. In this unity, true bliss can be experienced. It will also demonstrate the spiritual basis of divinity.

Vedantha is of no avail if precepts are not practised

There are today countless numbers of scholars who expound the Vedantha and they have numerous listeners. The outcome of it all is precious little. This is because there is no practice of the teachings of Vedantha. All study of Vedantha is of no avail if the precepts are not practised.

People have to find out what are the easy methods of putting into practice the precepts of Vedantha. The easiest way is to cultivate harmony in thought, word and deed. Here is a Telugu poem: Can the world's darkness be dispelled by talking about the glory of light? Can a diseased man's afflictions be relieved by praising panaceas? Can a destitute's poverty be relieved by listening to the greatness of wealth? Can a starving man's hunger be appeased by descriptions of delicacies? Rather than listening to a ton of precept, it is better to practise an ounce of teaching. What we have to practise today is something very easy and very subtle. The spirit of service is the royal path to be followed. How is this spirit of service to be cultivated? The Geetha lays stress on the word Suhrith (friend). Who is a true friend? Can he be utterly selfless? Will he help you without expecting any return? Whether it be one's mother, husband, wife or son, they love you for their own selfish

reasons. A totally selfless friend cannot be found in the world. It is hard to find anyone who renders service totally without self-interest. God alone is totally selfless as friend and benefactor. God has been described as Suhrith - a friend who is your alter ego. God seeks no reward of any kind. There is no trace of self-interest in Him. God alone can be utterly selfless and loving, expecting nothing in return.

Follow the royal road of God's injunctions

If you ask a friend where he is residing, he will give a certain address. But this address relates only to the residence of the body. But the true residence of one is his Atma (the Self). This Atma is the embodiment of Love. Therefore, you have to dwell in Love and live in Love. You must dedicate your life to that love. If you devote your life to the pursuit of impermanent things, you will only get ephemeral things. You must seek what is lasting and permanent. What is it? It is the Bhagavath-Ajna (injunction of the Lord). When you take to the royal road of following God's injunction, you will realise all your desires. You must remember, however, that these desires only bind you the more you cherish them. The bonds get reduced when desires are reduced. There must be a limit to desires. Similarly there must be restraint in developing attachments. There is grief when a person dies in a family. Is death the cause of grief? No. It is the attachment to the dead person that is the cause of grief. The process of getting rid of attachment has been described in Vedanthik parlance as vairagya. Gradually attachments should be eliminated. In the journey of life the less luggage you carry the greater the comfort you will experience. It may be asked: "How is it possible to reduce attachments and desires in worldly life?" The answer is "Carry on your business or other activities in a spirit of dedication to the Divine." All actions should be done with the conviction that they are dedicated to the Lord. This is an easy path to follow. Consider all actions as actions performed-by the power of the Divine, whether it be seeing or hearing or speaking or doing. Without the power of the Divine, can the eyes see or the ears hear?

Divine potency is the source of all talents

The primary requisite for man is to realise the divine potency in him that is the source of all the faculties and talents in him. This is true whether one is an atheist, a theist or an agnostic. No one in the world can get on without this energy. It may be called by different names. Names are not important. The energy is one. It is this divine energy which directs mankind on the right path. Men should strive to recognise the presence of the Divine even in small things. In his speech earlier today Anil Kumar spoke about the Sai Organizations. The Sai organizations are carrying on their activities with devotion and dedication. But they do not try to find out what should be the ideal to be achieved. "Are you engaged in this work for your own satisfaction or for the satisfaction of the Divine?" This is the question they should ask themselves. In this context an incident from the Bible may be recalled. Once a devotee went to Jesus and asked him: "Oh Lord! What is the power by which one can protect oneself?" Jesus replied "Son! When you love God, that power itself will protect you." In the Bhagavath Geetha, Arjuna asked Krishna, "What should one do to earn the love of the Lord?" The Lord replied "You simpleton! You imagine you are loving God. The truth is God is seeking a true devotee." Crores of people all over the world are in quest of God. But where are they searching for Him? In my view, the 'very ideal of a quest for God is mistaken. There is no need for you to search for God. God is 'omnipresent. He is everywhere. Devotees imagine they are searching for God. This is not true. It is God who is in search of devotees. "Where is the-devotee to be found who is pure in thought, word and deed?" God is searching for such a devotee. You need not search for God. God is nearer to you than your mother and father. You yourself are divine. How can you go in search of yourself? This is the mistake you commit. When everything is permeated by the Divine, who is the searcher of the Divine? It is because the world has lacked men who could proclaim this Vedanthik truth with authentic experience that it has sunk to such degrading levels.

Best way to love God is to love all, serve all

It is needless to search for God. Verily you are the Divine. Strive to realise this truth. There is a simple and easy way. Have the faith that every human being is an embodiment of the Divine. Love everyone. Serve all. The best way to

love God is to love all serve all. You must love everyone because God is in everyone. Every human being is a manifestation of God. On the cosmic stage every man identifies himself with the form and name given to him. But he does not realise what is his true form and name. Last night you witnessed the film in which Anjalidevi acted the role of Sakkubai. In the film she appeared as Sakkubai and not Anjalidevi. But both are one and the same person. God takes on a human form and appears as a human being. But when the human being recognises his basic divine nature he becomes the Divine. As long as one-thinks he is a mere human, he remains a human. But 'when he considers himself as Divine' with deep conviction, he will be transformed into the Divine.

See the cosmos through the glass of spirituals oneness

Hence, thoughts and feelings determine what you are. Change your thoughts. If you give up your worldly outlook and view the world from the spiritual point of view, the Vishvam (world) and the Vishnu (Divine) will become one. Therefore, change your viewpoint. Instead of altering his dhrishti (vision) man wants to change Shrishti (creation). No one can change creation. It is one's vision that has to be changed. If you wish to experience oneness,, you have to see the cosmos through the glass of Ekatmabhava (spiritual oneness). Otherwise, the world will appear as a bewildering multiplicity because you will be seeing it through the glasses of the three Gunas-Sathva, Rajas and Thamas. Put aside these three glasses. Wear the glass of Ekatma-bhava, the feeling of unity in Spirit, Love is one. "The Supreme is One though, the wise call it by many names. The Divine has to proclaim this unity when God comes in human form and lives and moves among human beings. The Divine has no likes or dislikes. He has no distinction of "mine" and "thine" He is beyond praise or censure. How, then, should the Divine (in human form) conduct Himself? Everyone should understand this.

Svami and devotees

Many bemoan the fact that Svami does not speak to them despite their frequent visits. "Is Svami angry with us?" they ask. These are not mental

aberrations. They are due to total ignorance. Such questions arise in their minds only when they have not understood Swami's real nature. I have no antipathy towards anyone. I do not hate anyone. All are mine. And I belong to everybody. But in dealing with devotees, I have to behave like a doctor who prescribes a specific diet for each patient. For instance, there is a patient suffering from diabetes. He should not consume sweets. If a devotee feels, "I enjoy sweets, why should the Sai Mother prohibit me from eating sweets?", the answer is that it is for his own good. If Svami did not have the patient's well-being in view, He would let him suffer by giving him sweets. It is out of love for the devotee that the Sai Mother denies sweets to him. Svami adopts these different regimens in the interest of curing the devotees' ailments. There are others with a different kind of grievance. For instance, the students often complain that Svami does not talk to them because He is angry with them. I have no anger towards anyone. Whether you believe it or not, I do not know what anger means. But, occasionally I appear as if I am very angry. This is unavoidable because without such assumed behaviour on my part, the students will not heed my words. I tell them to behave in a certain way. Some students heed my words and try to act upto them. Some others go against my injunctions. In such a situation, I have to ensure respect for my words. Of what use is it to speak to those who attach no value to my words? I don't intend to devalue my words. Truth is the life of the plighted word. My words bear the imprint of truth. I cannot depart from truth. I don't speak to those who attach no value to My words. This should be realised by those who complain that Svami does not talk to them. When people heed My words, I am ready to help them in every way and confer happiness on them. I do nothing for my own sake. This is My truth.

"Everything I do is for your sake"

The Super-Speciality Hospital has been built at the cost of many crores. Was it for my sake? Similarly, the University has been established by spending crores of rupees. For whose sake? Is it for my sake? This magnificent hall (attached to the mandhir) has been erected to protect devotees from heat and rain. Am I sleeping in this hall? Everything I do is for your sake. I am surprised that you do not recognise this. Can devotees be so lacking in

intelligence? There is no trace of selfishness in Me anywhere. I have no fear of any sort. Only the guilty man is racked by fear. I have done no wrong to anybody and so I have no fear. But I am subservient to devotees. Not realising this truth some people imagine that Svami is angry or ill-disposed towards them. Get rid of such mistaken feelings. Be convinced that whatever Svami tells you is for your own good and act upto it. I gain nothing-by your good behaviour. I don't lose anything by your misconduct. Because I love you, I do not want you to suffer from the consequences of your misconduct.

Understand God's love

Turning to God's love, let me make it clear that 99 percent of devotees do not understand what this prema means. This love is construed in a worldly sense. This leads them astray. The attachment between husband and wife, mother and child, between friends, between kith and kin, all are loosely described as Prema (love), but these attachments are the result of temporary relationships and are by their nature transient. Prema is Thrikala-abadhyam (Love is that which lasts through all the three categories of time - the past, the present and the future). Such love can exist only between God and the devotee and cannot apply to any other kind of relationship.

It is not easy for you to comprehend' the true nature of God's love. You are aware only of worldly attachments which are subject to ups and downs. What is liable to such changes cannot be called love. True love is unchanging. It is Divine. Love is God. Live in love. Embark on this path of love. You are liable to feel elated over trivial pleasures or depressed over petty losses. God's love is permanent and unvarying. Try to understand that love. How is it to be done? By cultivating the feeling that whatever happens to you, whether pleasant or unpleasant, is for your own good. When you have that firm conviction, the value of God's love for you goes up. Most people feel the boundless joy of God's love as long as they are in the presence of Svami. But this feeling evaporates once they are in the environment of the outside world. You must see that the same sacred environment exists wherever you may be, by carrying your devotion wherever you go and spread the Divine message to every nook and corner of the country. Chant the name of the Lord wherever

you are - in the village, in the street, in every home and in your speech and songs. This is the way to ensure that your love of God remains unshaken and unabated.

God derives no benefit from this, as He has no desires. He wants nothing. It is only for your own good. "Uddhareth Atmana Atmanam" (Elevate yourself by your own self-effort). Failing to recognise this truth, many people imagine that Sai Baba is holding Akhanda bhajans and celebrating various festivals to glorify his name. They are utterly foolish persons. Sai Baba seeks nothing from anyone. You improve yourselves. Become better. Experience your bliss. Make your lives sublime. Utilize these festivals and devotional activities for this purpose.

Sathyam, Shivam, Sundaram

Embodiments of love! As love is verily your form, manifest it in every way. Share it with others. The Lord is the Hridayavasi (Indweller in the Heart). Sarvabhootha-dharam Shantham Sarvanama-dharam Shivam Sath-chith-anandha Roopam Adhvaitham Sathyam Shivam Sundaram (The sustainer of all beings, Peace incarnate The bearer of all names, Goodness incarnate Embodiment of Being-Awareness-Bliss, the One without a second. He is Truth, Goodness and Beauty).

The Greek philosopher Plato - who was the teacher of Aristotle, under whom Alexander studied - declared three things as fundamental verities-Truth, Goodness and Beauty. These are the same terms as Sathyam, Shivam, Sundaram, used by the Indian sages to describe the Divine. Thus in all religions and philosophies through the ages, these three have been declared as the forms of the Divine. Love is the form of the Divine. Dharma (Righteousness) is the form of the Divine.

"Mother and motherland are greater than heaven"

The first impulse that emanated from man was Prema (divine love). All other things came thereafter. Every child that is born develops immediately love for

the mother. Every child tries to recognise at the outset the mother and the father. In the same manner every individual should recognise the land of his birth and his Samskrithi (cultural heritage). One's nation and one's culture should be revered as one's parents. The nation is one's mother. One's culture is the father. This profound truth was proclaimed by Rama when he declared: "The mother and the Motherland are greater than Heaven itself." Love the mother. Love your country's culture. These are the two primary duties of every man. They should be the main aims of life. When people follow this path of truth and righteousness, love will sprout naturally in their hearts. All knowledge and scholarship are of no avail if there is no practice of virtue. Practise at least one of the teachings and experience joy. Embodiments of love! Devotees from East and West Godhavari, Guntur and Krishna districts rejoiced in the celebration of what they described as the Golden Jubilee of the Sai Movement. There is no need to seek a reason for experiencing joy. "Sarvadha sarvakaleshu sarvathra Harichinthanam (Always, at all times and in all places contemplate on Hari). Make every moment a holy day. Invest every word with the power of a manthra (sacred formula). Sanctify the ground you tread on. Make this the mission of your life. Without wasting a single moment, use all the time you can find to spread the message of the Lord's name to every nook and corner of India.

Desires can be reduced by chanting God's name

Today we are witnessing corruption, violence, wickedness and malpractices everywhere. The basic reason for all these is selfishness. Insatiable desires are at the root of these evils. By chanting the Lords' name, desires can be reduced, while legitimate wishes get fulfilled. Sakkubai prayed and yearned to go to Pandharpur for dharshan of Panduranga. She endured all kinds of troubles and indignities and earned the Lord's grace. How can you get God's grace without undergoing trials? You know what severe processes gold goes through from the crucible onwards before an ornament is made. There can be no happiness without pain. When you desire the welfare of someone, you must be prepared to let him face the ordeals which are necessary before he can experience what is good for him. Pleasure and pain go together in this world. In the Geetha the Lord says He is both the Kshethra (the body) and the

Kshethrajna (the Indwelling Knower).

What people have to learn today is to give up attachments to the things of the world and seek the love of God. When one cultivates the love of God, renouncing worldly things becomes as simple as leaving hold of a handkerchief. Clinging to property is difficult. Giving it up is easy when people have understood the meaning of God's love. Let people, wherever they may be, in villages or towns, cultivate faith in God, develop love and share it with one and all. Then they will experience ineffable bliss. Liberation will not come though meditation or penance. Love is the only means. When you render service with love, it will become meditation, penance and all else. Love is the fifth Purushartha, the supreme goal of life. Love is also the panacea for all the ills that afflict society today. Hate is the cause of all ills. Hence hatred should be banished, as declared by the Geetha. Don't give room for any evil feelings in your heart, which is the seat of God. Dedicate your minds to God. In due course, you will merge in-the Divine and become one with God.

This is the proper plan of study: Reading, Reflection and Regular Application in life. Study is Work. Inquiry into the value and applicability of what is studied is Worship.

The experience of the validity and value of the practice is Wisdom.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

3. Noble mothers breed noble sons

Date: 15 February 1995 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

EMBODIMENTS of love! This entire cosmos is under the control of God. God is subject to Truth. Truth is governed by the noblest persons. These noble beings are embodiments of the Divine.

Students! Today you must all become messengers of peace and security to the world. To prepare yourselves for this role you have to cultivate the spirit of sacrifice. Only the individual who cherishes sacrifice and renounces pleasures can be qualified for a life of sacrifice. It is only when the distinction between this renunciation (of pleasures) and acceptance (of a life of sacrifice) is rightly understood can one experience the joy of sacrifice. Even if the soil is fertile, if the seed is of poor quality, it cannot grow into a good tree. On the other hand, if the seed is good but the soil is unfertile, a strong tree cannot grow. If children are to become culturally refined young persons, the parents should have the refinement of culture. When the parents observe exemplary conduct based on culture, the children will also imbibe these practices. As Dr. Sushila Nayyar observed (in her speech earlier), students have to cultivate simple living and high thinking. Students must learn to lead simple lives. At the same time their ideals must be of the highest order. There are many examples of people who have led simple lives with high ideals.

Puthlibai and Gandhi

Gandhiji's mother, Puthlibai, was a lady who believed in the two principles of truth and right conduct. She adhered to the practice of taking her morning breakfast only after hearing the first call of the cuckoo. One morning, the cuckoo's call was missing for a long time and Puthlibai did not take her breakfast. Seeing this, the young Gandhi went to the backyard, cooed like cuckoo and came and told his mother that she could now take her breakfast. Puthlibai, who could easily guess the trick her son was playing, felt very sad about his behaviour. She thought: "What sin have I committed that such a son should be born to me? There is no use blaming you for what is the result of

my own sin. How sinful am I that I gave birth to an untruthful son." Unable to bear her grief, she slapped the boy on the cheek and went inside. That very moment Gandhi took a vow "I must never again utter an untruth in my life. What life is it that causes grief to a mother? In a country in which everyone is enjoined to revere the mother and father as God, I have caused grief to my mother by an act of deception." From that day he resolved only to speak the truth and never indulge in falsehood. Mothers of those days were women of great piety and noble character. They practised virtue and set an example to the children. Only from wombs of such noble women were born sons of high character.

The mother of Adhi Shankara, Aryamba, was a high-souled woman. Hence, Sankara could achieve greatness and world fame. Vivekanandha was another illustrious figure Adhering to the instructions of his mother, he led an exemplary life and achieved name and fame. Their lives shine in the pages of history as examples for mankind. As is the seed, so is the tree. Similarly some are born with noble character and some are born differently. These differences are the result of their careers in previous lives.

Chaithanya's yearning for the love of the Lord

Once Chaithanya went to Puuri and prayed to Lord Jagannath- "Oh Lord of the universe! Lord of Life! Master of my body! Lord of Creation! I am not concerned with surrender and salvation. I am incapable of doing Yoga or Dhyana. Nor am I interested in mundane pleasures. I only desire one thing. Give me the all-consuming love for you. With that love I can accomplish everything. Without your love, of what use are all the pleasures of the world, all the talents and powers one can command? Of what avail is scholarship or intellectual brilliance? I must earn the love of the Lord. Confer that love on me, Oh Lord!" By revering their parents and following their noble examples, many great men achieved glory and fame in the past. If today we do not have high-minded youth, it is the parents that are responsible. In this context, let me relate the story of Eeshvar Chandhra Vidhyasagar, the great scholar of Calcutta, who was inspired by his mother to educate himself for a career of dedicated service to the people. His mother, told Eeshvar Chandhra: "True

education must lead you to God. Academic education must help you to serve society and promote the welfare of mankind. You must be an example to other men and lead an ideal life." Despite their poverty, the son followed the mother's advice and by his own diligence got a degree. In due course, he got a job, pursued higher studies and attained a position of eminence. Having accumulated some money he approached his mother and asked her whether she wanted anything. She said: "I have no desires. I only want you to earn a name as a man of good character, dedicated to the service of the nation."

The three wishes of Vidhyasagar's mother

The son pressed her again after some time to indicate what she wanted by way of jewels or clothes. She told him: "I am now past the age for wearing jewels or flaunting gaudy dresses. However, I desire three ornaments about which I shall tell you later on." After a period, having saved some more money, Eeshvar Chandhra asked his mother' "What are your three desires?" "The first one," she said, "is a primary school for the children of our small and backward village. The second one is a small village hospital for the local population. My third desire is that you should not sell your knowledge, nor feel proud about it. Cultivate humility and consider yourself the servant of all. Service is the pathway to leadership. These are the three ornaments I seek." Carrying out his mother's wishes, he established a primary school in the village, a hospital for the villagers and dedicated his entire life to the service of his fellowmen. He became famous as Eeshvar Chandhra Vidhyasagar, known for his knowledge and spirit of service. He became well known as a speaker who attracted large audiences of men and women. His talks were ennobling and inspiring, summoning the people to a life of sacrifice and service'

A young officer learns a lesson

Once, a senior officer was keen to listen to Vidhyasagar's speech and set out for the place of the meeting by train with a suitcase. On alighting at the station, he called for a porter to carry his suitcase. As no one appeared, an old man who had got down from the same train offered to carry the suitcase.

From the simplicity of the old man's dress, the officer took him for a poor villager and allowed him to carry the suitcase upto the place where he was to stay. After depositing the suitcase, when the old man was about to leave, the officer offered him a rupee for his labour. The old man declined the money and said that what he had done was in a spirit of service and not to earn money. After thanking him the old man (who was none other than Eeshvar Chandhra) told the young officer before leaving: "Your practice does no credit to your education. After so much education you are not able to attend to your own needs. You have made yourself unfit. Humility is the ornament for education. Education without humility is no education at all. Self-conceit is also not an index of good education. Arrogance and attachment are bad qualities, which you must get rid of." Later in the day large crowds were assembling at the place of meeting. All were eagerly waiting to welcome Vidhyasagar. As Eeshvar Chandhra got up on the stage, he was profusely garlanded. The young officer was in the audience. He saw the speaker on the stage and wondered whether he could be Vidhyasagar: "Is he the same man who carried my suitcase in the morning?" He felt ashamed of himself. "What a shame that I should have treated with disrespect such a venerable person out of my pride and arrogance!" The officer felt that he had learnt a good lesson that humility is the true hall-mark of real education. Eeshvar Chandhra Vidhyasagar was in the habit of examining his faults, if any, and trying to correct them. But students today entertain bad thoughts or do wrong things and justify their behaviour by the specious argument that "to err is human." They should realise that because they are human they should observe right conduct. They should not take to bad ways. Bad conduct is utterly unbecoming of one who calls himself human. The natural qualities of a human being are good thoughts and good conduct. Students should strive to live in this manner.

Parents are responsible for children going astray

The world has witnessed any number of great personalities who have led ideal lives. Today mothers who 'brought up such noble beings are becoming rare. Parents often tend to encourage the improper behaviour of their children rather than correct them. Parents today are primarily responsible for

their children going astray. Here is another story of a mother and son who came as refugees from Burma. The son starved himself to feed his mother from the food he was getting by begging. One day when a house owner offered to give him food as he was starving, the boy said he would not eat the food there, but must carry it home. He fell down in front of the house and the owner heard the feeble words coming from the boy's lips: "First mother, then myself." With those words, he breathed his last. Such examples of filial and maternal affection are becoming rare these days because of the trends in modern education. Maternal love has vanished. Filial duty is absent. What a testimony to the tragic results of modern education! There is no reverence for elders, no recognition of obligations to parents. Selfishness has become the bedrock of life. The nation is a prey to all kinds of ills because of this all-pervading selfishness.

Education should make students service-oriented

There was a time in the past when men were prepared to sacrifice their all for the sake of the people and the welfare of the nation. Today this spirit is absent. Selfishness is rampant. The educational system is responsible for this situation. Education should make students serviceminded, not job-seekers. Parents have also a duty in this regard. They must reform their children by setting the example themselves. You must be prepared to make any sacrifice for the sake of the nation. Welcome sacrifice, banish pleasure-seeking. Discover the joy to be derived from sacrifice. When Bharatheeyas got their independence, Nehru was the prime Minister and Vallabhai Patel was the Home Minister. Dr. Sushila Nayyar was then the Health Minister. It was at that time she came to see me in Delhi. Later in 1962, she came to Puttaparthi together with Vinoba Bhave. Since then she has been associated with 'Svami. Vallabhai used to tell Sushila Nayyar: "Sushilaben! You lead a simple life. As a minister you should appear more impressive." Patel used to tease her in this manner. Vallabhai's daughter used to live with him. She was an exemplary daughter. She used to spin the yarn from which the clothes were made for her father and she used to make a sari for herself out of the old dhotis of her father. The national leaders of those days were ideal leaders. They fought for the freedom of the country. In those days, it used to be said that the white

rulers were oppressing the black natives. Alas! Today the black natives are oppressing the black natives. In those days there were men who were prepared to sacrifice their all for the nation. Today we have men who are prepared to sacrifice the nation for their self-interest. What kind of leadership is this? Whither have the ideals fled? What we need is devotion to God, which will fill us with the spirit of sacrifice. Only then can real humanness prevail. Sacrifice is the key to immortality. Today people seek nectar in intoxicating drinks. Is this a mark of culture? No. Sense-control comes first. Life is a challenge. Meet it.

Students should become crusaders for peace

Students should become crusaders for peace in a country riddled with conflict and disorder. Sanctify your education by a life of dedicated service. I told the girl students yesterday that Duty and Discipline should be like two bodyguards for Devotion. All of you should set an example to the nation in leading a life marked by Devotion, Duty and Discipline. I bless you all that you should become worthy servants of the nation.

Dedicated services of Sushila Nayyar

I have seen Sushila Nayyar on several occasions. Recently she came to Brindavan and stayed there for two days. After the passing of Gandhiji, she has been working in Gandhigram with dedication. She has faced many trials and tribulations. Whenever she comes to Svami she experiences peace and joy. She is working hard to promote the activities in Gandhigram. Svami's grace has been available to her in plenty in this mission. She need not worry on this account. She is far advanced in age (96). Despite the infirmities of age, she is actively engaged in social service. What ails our young people that they are not attracted to social service? The only service they are rendering is to feed themselves. But the body is given for the pursuit of Dharma (Righteousness). if it is not used for this purpose, why have it at all? Don't bother to fatten your body. Rather, you should wear it away in the service of others. It is .through such service that you should redeem your lives.

Develop devotion to God through meditation and contemplation. Take a pledge to render service to your fellowmen.

4. Idol worship and God Omnipresence

Date: 27 February 1995 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Shivarathri

One kind word pleases everybody. Why, then, should you be miserly in soft speech? By pleasing words all beings are happy. Therefore speak lovingly always Why be chary in the use of kind words? EMBODIMENTS of Love! Pleasing speech confers immense joy on man. There is no scarcity of pleasant words. Hence everyone should speak sweetly to all. "There is an atomic particle subtler than the atom. There is something vaster than The vastest you can imagine. The atom is in the immense and The immense is in the atom. The Atma is in the atom as the Spirit"

says a Telugu Poem.

The entire phenomenal universe is a manifestation of the atom. The water you drink, the air you breathe, and the sounds you hear are all composed of atoms. The five basic elements (space, air, water, fire and earth) are all made up of atoms and pervade the universe. The Cosmos is the embodiment of the five elements. For this reason, the ancients regarded the universe as a manifestation of God.

Long before men started exploring the secrets of the atom and discovering the nature of atomic energy, even before scientists began to understand the nature of spirituality, Bharatheeyas worshipped the Bhuumi (Earth.) as divine. Because the five elements were present in the Earth, they adored the Earth as Bhuudhevi, the Earth Goddess. Moreover, they worshipped water as Ganga. Dhevi, recognizing the divine element in water. The Fire God comes next. The fourth is Vayudeva (the Lord of Wind). The fifth is Shabdha Brahman, the Divine as primal sound. Thus, all the five elements were considered manifestations of the Divine and worshipped as such by the Bharatheeyas, Outsiders who did not understand the profound significance of the worship of the elements, treated them with levity.

The worship of forms or idols

Every atom has a form. There is no object in the universe without a form. The form is Vighraha (an expression of the Divine Idol). Members of other faiths considered idol worship as irrational. They ridiculed idol worship as a form of superstition, but they made no attempt to explain the worship of the formless.

Every person begins to learn about all objects only in relation to their forms. People could not conceive of God as omnipresent, who is in every object and in every individual. Some were able to conceive that the atom is present in every, object and everywhere. But it was only in the seventeenth century that atomic physics came into existence. But long before this, the child Prahladha realised the omnipresence of the Divine. He told his father: "Do not have any doubts that the Divine is present here and not there. He is omnipresent. You can find Him wherever you seek Him." What Prahladha declared millennia ago, the scientists of today are discovering, namely, that the energy that is present in the all-pervading atom is divine. I point my finger at the mike and tell you: "This is a mike." After you have seen the mike, you don't need the finger to point it out. I point to a flower and say: "This is a flower." After you have seen the flower, there is no need for the finger to point it. Likewise, idols were used to point out God. Until God-realisation comes, idols are essential. After God-realisation there is no need for idols.

Why worship idols?

If a girl before her marriage is asked to describe her future husband, how can she do it? She can describe the husband only after the marriage. Likewise, after worshipping an idol and gaining experience of divinity by such worship, one would be able to describe one's experience of God. Before worshipping God and gaining spiritual experience, how can anyone say anything about the nature of Divine? Hence, it is necessary to develop faith in idol worship. It should be realised that every object is a manifestation of God. Every atom is divine.

Respect for the National Flag

Some people ask whether it is not foolish to worship an inanimate unconscious figure as God. This question is born of ignorance. Today ninety crores of Bharatheeyas hoist the National Flag and revere it. Before the Flag could attain this status, many sacrificed their all for the freedom of the country. Many suffered long terms of imprisonment. They went through all this suffering so that they could have their own flag in a free country. On August 15th and January 26th, the National Flag is hoisted all over the country and revered as the symbol of national freedom. In the same manner people in other countries revere their respective national flags. Moreover, people respect even their party flags. Is this flag animate? Has it any vitality or power in it? When you enquire like this you discover that it is the faith in the flag that makes it adorable. Likewise, if the question is asked whether a stone idol that is worshipped has any life or consciousness in it, they will find the answer from the example of the honour done to the national flag.

How does a square yard of cotton cloth made into a flag acquire its value? The value is derived from the fact that the flag is a symbol of the victory achieved in the freedom struggle. That victory has no form. The flag demonstrates the achievement of that victory. Without the flag how do you demonstrate the victory in the freedom struggle? Take another example. There is a 100-rupee note. It is lifeless. But you take good care of it because it represents wealth. All people seek wealth. Money as such has no qualities like goodness. But the possessor of money has qualities. Money is a symbol of power. The fragrance emanating from a flower has no form, but the flower has a form. Take love, for instance. It has no form. But the mother who exhibits love for her child has a form. If there is no mother, how can there be love?

Every form deserves to be worshipped

The idols that are worshipped are the answers to those who go about asking, "Where is God?" The truth is, God is present in every atom. Every atom represents the power of the Divine. Every atom deserves to be worshipped. All objects in Creation have to be respected. Men have to cultivate this feeling

of reverence for all things. But, believing that the physical body is permanent and is all in all, men are wasting their lives in the pursuit of the ephemeral and the transient. There can be no action without the body. Without action there can be no fruits, Hence the body is at the base of everything. The body is a Vighraha (embodied form). The mother is a form. The preceptor is a form. All are forms. The term Vighraha also means an idol that is an object of worship. But these Vighrahas have a certain value It is through them that we can realise the Divine. It is impossible to conceive in this world any kind of Aradhana (worship) without a form. Worship of the formless is misconceived. It is these misguided persons who preach against idol worship. In every religion there is a distinct form for worship. For example: Prakrithi (Nature). Nature has the power of attraction. It contains all the five elements. It is from Nature that we get our food. Nature is the source of all minerals. Nature is the sustainer of man in ordinary life. That being the case, what is wrong in adoring Nature? Should we not be grateful to that which provides so many things for our needs? That gratitude is a form of worship. Every man is composed of the five elements. Man cannot exist without these elements. Is there no obligation to express one's gratitude to them? Nature has the power of attraction. This is called magnetism. Nature has immense magnetic power. Every object is affected by this magnetic power. The object also gets magnetized in the process and acquires magnetic power.

The power of idols

Today scientists are trying to understand this power of attraction in Nature. Take, for instance, a temple. Thousands of people go to the temple for worship. The magnetic power in the earth extends to the idol in the sanctum. The thoughts of the worshippers are also attracted by the idol. Thereby the power of attraction in the idol gets intensified. The rituals performed for the idol also enhance its power of attraction. This process can be noticed if a couple of nails are kept near a magnet. After two days it will be found that the nails also have been magnetised. In the same manner when worshippers go to a temple the power goes forth from thousands of worshippers, the power or a action in the idol gets immensely intensified. The idol surcharged with this power is able to energize the worshippers. Thus, in the world there is no

object without this power. Atomic energy is present everywhere. It is only when the true character of this atomic power is understood that the power of the Divine can also be understood.

"Shankara" is made up of the two words, 'Sham' and 'kara.' What does 'Sham' mean? 'Sham' is that which is all-pervading like air. The air is filled with bliss. Shankara is one who offers this bliss to all. Nithyanandha (everlasting bliss), Brahmanandha (Supreme Bliss) and every kind of bliss is conferred by Shankara.

"Eeshvara" is the embodiment of wealth

There is the term "Eeshvara." It refers to one who is the embodiment of Aishvarya (every form of wealth and prosperity). Aishvarya is not confined to material wealth alone. It includes also the wealth of health, of intelligence, of physical prowess. Aishvarya represents this omnibus opulence, including Anandha (bliss). Eeshvara is the one who confers every kind of opulence. What is the form of this Anandha? Experience alone is the form of this bliss. This bliss can be experienced only by God-realisation and not by any other means. Bliss is all-pervading, but it not visible. For that reason, its existence cannot be denied. Eeshvarathva (Divinity) is all-pervading. By losing faith in the Divine, turning into unbelievers, moving away from bliss, men are becoming a prey to worry. This is totally wrong. A life without faith is like water poured on a sieve. Bliss must be secured through faith. The Divine is omnipresent. All of you are forms of the Divine. All of you are endowed with electromagnetic energy, atomic power, heat and other forms of energy. The magnetic energy is the most important power in man. From this magnetic energy comes electrical energy. The strength of the electrical energy is related to the strength of the magnetic energy. When the electrical and the magnetic energies come together, the divine power operates. This divine power does not come from outside. It is within human beings. Our very form is divine. That is why I address you all as "Embodiments of the Divine Atma." By failing to recognise this truth, people are going in search of God here and there. God is everywhere. Make every effort 'to recognise this fundamental truth.

Meaning of "the search for truth"

People talk about Sathya-anveshana (the search for truth). What is this search? Truth is everywhere. Consider this example. Your eyes see the mother, the child, the wife, the cook, and the daughter-in-law. The eyes are the same but they see different persons with different emotions. The search for truth means seeing everything in its own true, specific nature. All the persons may be feminine and the eyes that see them are one and the same. But to find out the truth one has to determine how he should view each person in relation to that person's state. Consider, again, the role of the tongue. The same tongue may indulge in falsehood or stand for truth. The same tongue may revile at others or praise them. The tongue's role in the quest for truth is to determine when a lie may be uttered or the truth should be spoken, when blame or praise is justified.

Truth resides in you. It is the appropriate application to specific objects which determines what is true.

Hence, if you want to discover the Divine who is omnipresent there must be a change in outlook within you. When you realise your own inherent divinity, you will be able to recognise the divinity in others.

Significance of idol worship

Idol worship should not be regarded as a meaningless exercise. It is a good practice because on the basis of the idol the higher consciousness is attained. In a home, there are pictures of grandparents and great-grandparents. The present generation has not seen them. But they offer garlands to the pictures and revere the ancestors. Is there life in the pictures? Do they exhibit any love? Do the pictures by themselves reveal any relationship? Not at all. But the pictures are revered out of the feeling that they represent one's ancestors. If such a loving feeling did not exist, the pictures will not be kept in the house. Likewise it is the attachment for an object that inspires respect and reverence. This is termed devotion. This devotion should be shown

towards all objects because the Divine is in everything, in every atom. It may be difficult to cultivate such devotion. But once its rationale is properly understood, the practice of devotion will become easy.

There have been controversies and doubts about this in the past. For instance, a school of philosophers known as Charvakas used to deride idol worship. But later on, they also recognized its value. They realised that everything in the world has a form, from the atom onwards, and that everything with a form was Vighram (an idol) fit for worship. What is the form of water? Here in this tumbler is some water and its form is derived from the tumbler. Likewise air acquires the form of the balloon in which it is confined. Similarly when the body is filled with Divine energy, the Divine acquires the human form. The all-pervading Divine thus acquires the form in which it manifests itself. Perform your worship to the Divine with awareness of the truth that the Divine is omnipresent and is therefore in the idol that is worshipped. And then you are bound to have a vision of the Divine. The truth about the omnipresence of the Divine was evident to the Gopikas who sang in praise of Krishna: O Krishna! How can anyone know your mystery? You are subtler than the atom and vaster than the vastest thing in the world! You are present in myriads of beings in this vast universe in innumerable forms. How can we ever know you? "You are a thief among thieves, a good man among the good. You manifest the qualities of the object in which you dwell. You are everything."

Infinite forms of the Lord

Those who have studied the Vibhuuthi Yoga in the Bhagavath Geetha will know the infinity of forms which the Lord assumes. All forms are His. If one has faith that the lord is present in the atom, one will have a vision of the Lord even in the atom. But if you make a distinction between different objects, treat some as pure and others as impure, you will not get that vision. Till the realisation that everything is permeated by God comes to one, he must worship an idol as a sacred symbol. A sculptor creates an idol out of a rock. Because of the form given to it, it is installed in a temple and worshipped. In fashioning the idol, the sculptor chisels away many chips of

stone. The chips may proclaim verily their kinship with the idol worshipped in the temple. They may say: "You and we are one. The only difference is, you have a form and we have none." Thus, the Divine exists both in the form and in the "formless". It is because this concept of the Universe is not understood that faith has declined. Faith is at the root of spirituality. If you believe that God exists, He exists. If you have no belief, so far as you are concerned God does not exist. When you believe in God, you develop faith in the divinity of all things. Faith is the basis of worship. Worship leads to oneness with the Divine. The sense of separateness will persist as long as there is no God realisation. Separateness ends with Realisation.

Science and Vedantha say 'the same in substance

Scientists are tending to realise the basic unity of the energy that fills the universe. Vedantha describes that Unity as Brahman (the Supreme all-pervading Absolute Consciousness). The terms used are different, but in substance they are saying the same thing; namely that the One subsumes the many.

With regard to divinity, there is no meaning in making a distinction between the Divine with form and the formless divinity. How can you conceive of the Formless Divine? You cannot avoid idol worship until you have experience of the Divine within you. Ramakrishna Paramahansa once told a disciple - who asked why he (the disciple) was not able to see God - whether he yearned for God with the same intensity with which he sought many worldly things. If he did so, he would certainly have a vision of God. When a similar question was put to Buddha, he said that without indulging in speculation about God if one practised truth, righteousness and non-violence he would have the highest experience.

The ways of Svami

Many people who have some questions regarding Svami do not realise the ways of the Divine. They look at all things from the worldly point of view. They should look at things from the Divine point of view. Change the angle of your

vision. When you practise seeing the world from the point of view of the omnipresence of the Divine, you will get transformed. You will experience the power of the Divine in everything in creation. You cannot hide anything from God. Many imagine that Svami does not see what they are doing. They do not realise that Svami has a myriad eyes. Even your eyes are divine. But you are not aware of your true nature. When you have faith in yourself, you will have faith in God. Realise that there is nothing beyond the power of God. Love God with that supreme faith. Then you will be drawn towards God. It needs purity. A magnet cannot attract a piece of iron covered with rust. Similarly God will not draw to Himself an impure person. Hence, change your feelings and thoughts and develop the conviction that God is everything. God will not give you up when you have this conviction. Today is Shivarathri, the Night of Auspiciousness. This is the occasion for cherishing auspicious thoughts and praying for auspicious action and conduct in life. You must get rid of narrow and petty feelings.

Men today have lost the spirit of sacrifice. Three things are essential for every man love of one's country, sacrifice and following the godly path of spirituality. One is a true human being only when he has these three qualities. To know is the function of the mind. To act is the duty of the body. To remain as the Eternal Witness is the function of the Atma. Mind, body and Atma together constitute humanness. The Divine is present in all three. God has provided everything for man's good in the world. But there is one condition that has to be observed. The results of your actions will be according to their nature, whether they are good or bad. Men today want to reap the fruits of good deeds without performing good deeds. This is impossible. Nor can they escape the consequences of their evil actions. God is only a witness. At least from now on, develop good thoughts, do good actions and redeem your lives. You have to start with the Karma Marga (the path of Action), and end with Jnana Marga (the path of knowledge). In between there is the Upasana Marga (the path of Worship). This is the path you have to follow today. For this you have to get the conviction that God is omnipresent. When you have that conviction, you will not indulge in falsehood or practise deception, you will not abuse others or cause harm to them, you will acquire all virtues. This is the purpose of observing Shivarathri as a Sacred Night. The night vigil should be

dedicated entirely to contemplation of God.

Develop the firm conviction that God is within you and that you are Divine. Love is God and God is Love. Live in love and make your entire life a saga of love.

5. God: The trinity and the cosmos

Date: 28 February 1995 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Shivarathri

EMBODIMENTS of love!

The tongue is the cause of prosperity or poverty. The tongue is responsible for promoting friendship and kinship, for attachment and bondage, and for death and liberation.

It is essential to keep the tongue under control. The manner in which the tongue is employed determines one's fame or ignominy. The tongue determines your friendships and relationships. The entire creation is based on three processes: *Shrishti* (creation), *Sthithi* (sustenance) and *Layam* (dissolution). The cosmos is kept going by these three *Karmas* (processes). Should there not be a director for these processes? You cannot have in this world a *Karma* (an action) without a *Kartha* (a doer). The doer and the deed go together. Who is the doer? What is the action? What is the fruit of the action? It is only when these three are properly understood can the secret of creation be recognized.

Three Divine agencies

It is easy to criticize the Lord's leelas, but it is difficult to understand their inner meaning. Our life should be devoted to understanding the ways of the Lord. In this understanding, the first aspect to be recognized is *Shrishti* (creation of the cosmos). What is involved in this process should be understood. For instance, if a giant bridge has to be constructed, a large number of engineers and other personnel are required. Besides a chief manager, there will have to be engineers and men working under him. It is only their combined effort that can build a bridge. In the same manner, for the creation, protection and mergence of the cosmos, three principal

agencies are required. The principal authority responsible for creation is known as Brahma. He is in charge of all that is related to creation. Next comes protection. What has been created has to be fostered and protected. The authority responsible for this function is called Vishnu. After growth inevitably there comes the stage of dissolution. There is an authority responsible for laying down the rules for dissolution and enforcing those regulations. This authority is called Eeshvara.

Thus there are three authorities who share functionally the responsibility for creation, protection and dissolution. There must be someone who presides over these three functionaries, like the Prime Minister in a Cabinet. Brahma, Vishnu and Eeshvara are presiding deities for three different functions. There is a supreme authority presiding over these three. This supreme authority was called by Bharatheeyas as Bhagavan. Members of different faiths have given different names to this authority. The term is most widely used in this context today is God. Bhagavan refers to the One who governs all the three functions of creation, protection and dissolution.

"G-O-D" combines the three aspects

In the word GOD, you have three letters: G,O,D.

"G" refers to Generation (or creation).

"O" refers to Organization (that is, keeping creation going).

"D" stands for Destruction.

GOD combines the three aspects of generation, organization and destruction. When people refer to God, they regard Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva as each a God. God is the one who wields authority over all the three. This Divine entity pervades the entire universe in the form of atoms.

"Subtle as the atom, vast as the vastest in creation, the Atma pervades

everything as atom"

says a Telugu poem.

Hence, the Divine is called Atma. This Atma pervades everything and is present everywhere. This all-pervading Atma is the Eternal Witness. This role may be illustrated by a simple example. There is light here. There are some who are reading under it, some who are sleeping, some who are talking and some others who are moving about. The light has no connection with all these different activities. The light is only a witness. Likewise, the Sun is shining. Using the sunlight different people are carrying on different activities. The sun is totally unaffected by either the good or bad actions that are being done by different persons. Each is accountable for his actions. But the sun shines as a witness to all that is happening. Without the sun none of these actions is possible. The sun is thus the agency that enables the actions to be done but he is not the dispenser of the fruits of those actions. He is only a witness. The doers have to reap-the consequences of their actions. Brahma, Vishnu and Eeshvara are responsible for enabling the actions to be done, for furthering their fruition and for determining how-the fruits should be enjoyed. These three deities have to be propitiated for favours in these respects. That is what has been done on Shivarathri night.

Nine forms of propitiating the deities

How are they to be propitiated? The methods are indicated in the nine forms of devotion: *Shravanam* (hearing), *Keerthanam* (singing), *Vishnusmaranam* (remembering the name), *Vandhanam* (prostration), *Archanam* (worship of images), *Pad asevanam* (worship of the feet), *D asyam* (service), *Sneham* (friendship), *Atmanivedanam* (total surrender). Today we have to acquire the favours of these deities. With their friendship we can face any troubles just as, if we have friendship of a person in power, we can overcome troubles in life. These deities will help to alleviate the consequences of our actions if they are properly propitiated. For this purpose, the chanting of the Divine name is

essential. Equally meditation and penance are necessary. All forms of worship are designed to please the deities. These deities lay down regulations for observances by the world in respect of their specific functions. These regulations are like the traffic rules and guideposts and the road signs that indicate to people using the roads how they should behave. For instance, there is Brahma. As Creator, he lays down the laws relating to actions and how the consequences of these actions affect people in their lives from birth to death. In addition, he also effects changes in the administration of these rules. On the basis of this function, the Brahma-principle is operative everywhere. The very term 'Brahma' means 'pervading.' The pervasiveness of the Brahma-principle is cosmic. Vishnu also means that which is all-pervading. The Vishnu-principle permeates everything. Wherever the creation principle of Brahma is present, there the sustaining principle of Vishnu is also present.

Where there is protection there is also punishment. This means where Vishnu is present, Eeshvara is also present.

Omnipresence of the absolute

Where is the Supreme Divinity? It is omnipresent. But not recognizing this truth, people pray to God in various ways. These prayers are not to God. They are prayers addressed to the guardian deities of the Lord. These guardian deities examine the merits of each case and make their recommendations to God.

Hence, God is a permanent Witness. He has no attributes. He has no specific form. He can assume any form. The attributeless Divine has attributes also. A pot is made from clay. The clay is formless, but the pot with form is made from it. There is no pot in the clay, but there is clay in the pot. Likewise, the Divine is everywhere. The Divine is in forms and is formless. He is with and without attributes.

How do men relate to God? There is *Chittha* in man (the heart). There is a recording deity known as Chithraguptha. The good and bad actions done by

everyone are duly registered in the heart and taken into reckoning by Chithraguptha. The results of these actions are given a concrete form and the fruits are made available to each according to his deserts. The Divine cannot offer what is not there. He will not take away what is one's due. He lets the respective deities carry out their functions according to the rules. Hence He is called the 'Embodiment of Dharma.'

The Lord will not interfere in the functions of the different deities. He lets Brahma, Vishnu and Eeshvara carry out their respective functions according to the cosmic laws. As He remains a Witness, He is described as the 'Embodiment of Dharma and Truth.' Today everyone interferes with every other's function. This causes the breakdown of the natural order. This is described as the reign of unrighteousness and untruth. This is the difference between the reign of Dharma by the Divine and reign of Adharma by the mundane rulers. The Divine is verily the form of *Dharma* (Righteousness). Hence Rama is described as

"Vigrahavan Dharmah" (The embodiment of Righteousness).

Even if you are unable to worship the form of the Divine as Righteousness and Truth, adhere to Righteousness and follow Truth.

"Sathyam vadha, Dharmam chara"
(Speak the truth, observe, righteousness)

These are the Vedic injunctions.

Surrender to God

The cosmos is governed by the three principal deities. I am letting you into a

secret. So far as Creation is concerned, propitiate Brahma and establish links with the deity. As regards protection, establish links with Vishnu (by propitiating Him). With regard to destruction, establish association with Eeshvara (Shiva). However if your heart is totally pure, you can establish direct connection with God. You need not approach the lesser deities. For this, there is a way. That is the way of total surrender. Through surrender you can establish a direct link with God, heart to heart.

All the bhajans and chantings that are done now are related to the lesser deities. The Divine mystery is incredibly marvellous. It is not easy for ordinary mortals to comprehend these mysteries. People ask questions from time to time about Swami's actions. "Why is He causing this trouble? Why is He acting in this manner?" The answer may be got from a puranic story.

The Bhasmasura story

Once Eeshvara gave a boon to Bhasmasura as desired by him, namely that whatever he touched should be reduced to ashes. Immediately on getting the boon he lost his sense of gratitude to Eeshvara. He wanted to place his hand on Eeshvara himself! Eeshvara could not protect himself. He went to Vishnu, who has the duty of being a protector. Even as protector Vishnu had to observe the laws of Dharma. He could not punish Bhasmasura straightaway. He staged a drama. He assumed the form of a most beautiful damsel, Mohini. On seeing her, Bhasmasura's passion was aroused. He ran after Mohini. Mohini told him, "You perform all that I do, I shall marry you." Bhasmasura readily agreed. He had no sense of discrimination or of gratitude. Mohini started dancing and Bhasmasura kept pace with her. In the course of the dance, Mohini placed her hand on her head. When Bhasmasura did the same, he was reduced to ashes. His hand was his undoing. This episode shows that even in discharging the duty of protection, the divine has to observe the code of Dharma. It should be recognized that the ways of God are governed by *Shasanam* (cosmic laws). Even the Divine cannot act against these laws.

God cannot act against the cosmic code

Men today violate the code of moral behaviour. But the divine cannot act against His own moral code. So, on different occasions, God waits for the appropriate time to enforce the code. On that account, you cannot say God is powerless or incompetent. God is omnipotent, but that does not mean He can act arbitrarily. He acts according to the cosmic code. God is not like a lecturer who teaches a lesson and leaves the classroom. God is like a physical director who teaches by his own example. That is why I say:

"My life is my message."

God teaches by demonstration.

Today some people carry on propaganda to cast aspersions on the actions of the Divine by misrepresentation and misinterpretation. They declare: "God punishes you, God persecutes you." This is totally misconceived. It is not God's business to punish you or harass you. The punishment and the persecution are consequences of your actions. God is the giver of the fruits of your actions. He is like a postman who delivers letters in different homes. In one house the letter brings grief. In another the letter causes joy. Is the postman responsible for joy in one home or the grief in another? It is the message contained in the letters that is responsible for the different reactions.

In the same manner, the Lord is an impartial witness. He, merely hands over the fruits of each one's actions according to their deserts. In case the consequence is unpleasant God may interfere to get the pain reduced by proper propitiation. That authority He has. The three presiding deities over creation, protection and dissolution are the trinity - Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. But there is a fourth entity - *Shironayakam* (the Overlord), who is above these three. He is God. He can overrule the Trinity. How? By mitigating the magnitude of the consequences of Karma. He can counteract any kind of situation. That is the Divine prerogative of God. He can create anything,

protect anything. He creates and brings about its dissolution. Therefore, God should be regarded as having control over Generation, Organization and Destruction. To realise God, you have to surrender yourself completely. When the surrender is total, a direct link with God is established. Without such surrender propitiating the lesser deities is a waste of time.

Bad associations cause doubts

When one surrenders, according to the circumstances, the devotee becomes subject to some doubts and mental agitations. For instance, in the Ramayana, when Rama and Lakshmana were going in search of Seetha, suddenly Lakshmana felt tired and told Rama that he was fed up with the search for Seetha and would like to go back to Ayodhya to have a more comfortable time. Rama smiled and said: "Let us proceed. I shall explain everything later." How did Lakshmana, who previously had declared that Rama was everything to him and that he would not live without Rama even for a moment, suddenly develop this attitude? How did this concern for bodily comfort arise?

After they had walked some distance, they sat under a tree. That moment Lakshmana felt the pangs of repentance. He realised his mistake, clasped Rama's feet and said, "Brother! Forgive me for what I had said. I cannot understand how this bad thought came to my mind. What is the reason?" Rama then replied, "Lakshmana! The region through which we passed recently was the haunt of Shuurpanakha. Shuurpanakha used to rest under the tree there. That place was surcharged with all her evil qualities. Those vibrations aroused in you the bad thoughts. The moment you came out of the place, your inherent good nature asserted itself." The lesson of this incident is that people will have to be careful about their association with certain places or persons. Eschew bad company. Be away from places where evil qualities are rampant. The vibrations from a place affect persons who frequent them.

Divine vibrations in Prasanthi Nilayam

Here you have Divine vibration. Elsewhere you have demonic vibrations. Recognise the difference between these two kinds of vibrations. Realise that

association with good people ultimately leads to God-realisation. You must understand that God's grace is related to your good actions. When your conduct is good, God's grace comes direct to you. People ask, "Where is God?" But, even without knowing it, a so-called unbeliever believes in God.

Once, Prime Minister Nehru visited Madurai in South India. He was not interested in spiritual matters. God had no meaning for him. His agnosticism was a product of the environment in which he grew up. The local leaders took him to Meenakshi temple, whether, he was inclined to visit the temple or not. During the visit, the leaders who were with Nehru praised the ornaments worn by the Goddess and told him that the diamonds and gems in the jewels on the idol were worth crores of rupees. After listening to them, Nehru remarked "Why is it that these valuable gemstones are placed on a valueless idol?" After that he was returning from the sanctum. He did not notice the door and he hit against it and stumbled. At that moment, he cried out: "Oh! my God!" This shows each one has his own God and refers to Him as "my God." Thus, even without being conscious of it, all have some faith in God. The reason is that God is in everyone. That divinity manifests itself without one's knowledge. Faith in God is natural to man. Doubts about God are artificial exercises of the mind. Spirituality calls for the removal of the animal qualities in man and developing his divine qualities. This is the duty of all spiritual aspirants. Qualities like slander, back-biting and speaking ill of others are sub-human qualities. You must learn to respect the divine in everyone, while carrying on your duties.

Total surrender is essential for Divine realisation

The path of direct realisation of the Divine consists in total surrender to the Divine, as exemplified by Lakshmana in his surrender to Rama. He told Rama that after his surrender he had nothing that he could call his own and he existed only to carry out Rama's will in every matter.

Thyagaraja, who once for a brief while entertained doubts about Rama's capacity to relieve him of his troubles, later extolled the limitless power of Rama, which enabled Hanuman to leap across the ocean and which

accounted for Lakshmana's total surrender to Rama. *(Swami sang the keerthana of Thyagaraja in praise of Rama's prowess, which evoked the adoration of Lakshmana, Bharatha and others).*

Likewise, how can anyone determine "Sai-shakthi?" Here are people from Argentina and Australia. Are they dull-witted? Are they not intelligent and affluent people? What is the meaning of their coming to Swami? If Swami did not have the power why would they come? This one fact is enough to show how they recognise the truth about Swami. To recognise divinity there is no need to master the scriptures, or study the Upanishads. A single visible experience is enough.

The nature of divinity cannot be described or defined. It is beyond description. What is needed is development of faith in the Divine, through weal and woe. In the pursuit of the Divine, perseverance is essential. The quest should not be given up in any circumstances. Either God should bless you or you should forget yourself in thinking of Him. People today lack such determination and perseverance. Part-time devotion can only receive part-time grace. Adore God with firm determination. The right time for starting on this quest is when you are young as students. Remain unflinching in your faith. You did bhajans all thorough the night. But that is not enough. Contemplation of God should be kept up always at all places. Whatever work you do, dedicate it to God. Divinise every word and action.

6. Uphold the ideals of Sai Institute

Date: 05 March 1995 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

The one whose heart is compassionate Who is adorned by the Jewel of truth in speech, Whose body is dedicated to the well-being of others What can Kali do to him? EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love! For every man, the body, the tongue and the heart are the elements which constitute humanness. This is the purport of the Sanskrit shloka. A sacred and pure heart, speech wedded to truth, and a body dedicated to the service of others, with these three attributes a man can have no trouble from Kali (presiding deity of the present aeon). Purity of the heart, truthfulness in speech and a service devoted body constitute what is called Thrikarana shuddhi (the triple purity of body, speech and heart). Sai seeks from you good qualities, Friendliness towards mankind, The spirit of sacrifice, Eschewing of selfishness and Rendering service to society. This is the offering Sai desires from you. And this is verily the wealth you should offer to Sai. (Telugu Poem). This is the wealth Sai expects. Good qualities, friendship towards all, selfless service to society are what Sai seeks from you.

Students! Teachers! Educationists! In this world of moving and non-moving objects, man is carrying on his life with two desires. One is Preyas (material prosperity). Although there are all kinds of objects in the world, man seeks first of all things which will please his senses. Deriving pleasure from time to time through sense-organs is described as Preyas. This Preyas is not enduring. It is like a mirage. Sensuous pleasures are momentary and leave trail of pain behind, However, most people seek only such fleeting and unreal pleasures. From the learned to the illiterate, all seek only these sensuous pleasures. Indulgence in sensual pleasures leads to bad practices and bad conduct.

"Constantly entertaining bad thoughts, playing a game of blind man's buff, Strutting about with a perishable body, as soon as one's accumulations From past lives are exhausted, giving up this make-believe existence, The poor player meets with his death, carrying with him the consequences Of his good

and bad deeds," says a Telugu poem. Is this the life one should lead? Can this be the purpose of life? This verily is not the life a true man should lead. One would manifest his full personality. How is this personality to be developed? The first requisite is elimination of the ego. Only when the ego is destroyed, does a man's personality blossom forth.

Shreyas and Preyas

Man today seeks primarily sensual desires. Secondly, he desires Shreyas. Shreyas means overcoming the demands of the senses and achieving that spiritual bliss which is represented by the term Sath-Chith-Anandha (Being-Awareness-Bliss). All actions aimed at Athmik (Spiritual) bliss are related to Shreyas. The one who seeks Preyas (sensual pleasures) is concerned with the body, while the one concerned with the Atma seeks Shreyas (spiritual well-being). Today ninety nine percent of the population are involved in sensual desires and not in spiritual bliss. Education today is mainly concerned with sensory pursuits. All occupations are related to the achievement of sensual desires. All enjoyments are related to the senses. Even the acquisition of wealth is for enjoying trivial sensual pleasures. The involvement with Preyas thus is connected with pleasures of the body, the mind and the senses. There is doubtless need for some concern about physical comforts. "Even the body is essential for the realisation of Dharma," says the scripture. The demands of the body have to be satisfied. Society has to be served. Family responsibilities have to be discharged. The body is the basis for all these. But this should not be the ultimate goal of life. The former relates to the external phenomenal world and is concerned with worldly desires. Together with this, there should be the yearning for a higher Shreyas (spiritual life).

The pursuit of Preyas (worldly desires) is negative, The quest for Shreyas is positive. Without association with the positive, Preyas is of no use, however much there may be worldly goods. It is only when one yearns for Shreyas (spiritual bliss) that even Preyas leads to fulfilment. Worldly knowledge is not to be ignored or neglected. It is undoubtedly necessary. Secular knowledge is for the enjoyment of this world. Brahma Vidhya is for the enjoyment of other worldly bliss. While acquiring secular knowledge, be keen about realising

spiritual truth.

Conflict between sensual desire and spiritual yearning

Good qualities are the key to experiencing spiritual bliss. Love towards all one's fellow-beings and service to society are essential. These three contribute to the sublimation of human existence. There is a conflict between sensual desires and spiritual yearning in human beings. The senses are so powerful that they are able to delude by their attractions even profound scholars. In spiritual parlance this power is described as Viruddhashakthi (negative force). In science this is called magnetic force.

The magnetic power (or the power of attraction) is present in all objects in the world. All the thoughts in a man's mind have this magnetic power. From magnetic energy is derived electrical energy. Electrical energy is the source for the power of light and for atomic power. Atomic energy is present in thoughts and in speech. Thus, magnetic energy is the basis for all forms of energy. It is the energy that accounts for speech, for singing and all other activities. The power of this energy was recognized from ancient times. India is the nation that recognized the divine source of this energy, experienced its power' and propagated the truth about it to the whole world. You must feel elated that 'you have taken birth in such a glorious land. You must feel proud that you are a son of Bharath.

The glory of Bharath

For this land of Bharath, the great Himalayas are the frontiers. The Himalayas convey the message of peace and security for every man. The Himalayas proclaim the message of purity and irremovable firmness.

The land of Bharath is watered by the life-giving rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Sarasvathi. These are the arteries of the nation. And then, you have the Bhagavath Geetha, the Upanishaths and Brahma Suuthras. These three sacred texts teach the philosophy of work, worship and wisdom. The Ramayana and the Mahabharatha teach how to sublimate human life. In the

Ramayana, Rama is an ideal hero. The Ramayana teaches that every individual should lead an ideal life. It is said about the Mahabharatha that what is not in it cannot be found elsewhere. Bharath is made up of the two words 'Bha' and 'Rathi.' 'Bha' means effulgence, illumination, enlightenment. 'Rathi' means taking pleasure. Bharatheeyas are a people who delight in illumination and enlightenment. The concept of Bharath is thus full of significance. Bharatheeyas, who are the inheritors of a great heritage, are today leading meaningless lives, lacking peace of mind, as they have become slaves of the senses. Every student should understand what is his duty even now, because life is fleeting and one's days are numbered.

Students! Do not get involved in metaphysical riddles as to whether the world is real or only Brahman is real. Try to realise the truth about yourself. Ask yourself the question: "Am I real or not?" The answer comes ' "I am real." How long are you real? As long as life lasts. What is Reality or Truth? The answer is' That which remains unchanged through the three categories of time, past, present and future is truth. The world is constantly changing. If that is the case, how can you say that the world is not unreal? You are part of the world. The world contains you.

"I" and "mine"

There are two words. 'I' and 'Mine'. 'I' is associated with the concept of Ekathvam (oneness). 'Mine' is social concept. 'I' represents the individual. Who is this individual? It is not connected with the body. 'Mine' is a collective concept. You describe many things as 'mine'. But 'I' stands alone. Being associated with the One, it stands for the Atma. Ekatma - the Atma is one. 'Mine' is associated with the things of the world. Where does the 'I' (Nenu in Thelugu and Aham in Sanskrith) exist? Wherefrom did the Aham originate? Vedhic scholars and spiritually realised persons declared that the source of Aham is Hridhaya. What is the meaning of Hridhaya? In the worldly sense it refers to the physical heart in the body. But this is not what the term Hridhaya signifies. Hridhaya and 'I' are one and the same. The Shrutis gave the name Hridhaya to 'I'. Where is this Hridhaya? It is assumed that it is in the body. Where is the 'I' presumed to exist in the body? 'I' is not part of the

body. You say, "This is my body." 'My' is separate from the body. 'My' therefore, is not a part of the body. It follows that 'I' is not part of the body. If you understand the nature of 'I', you will understand the whole world. 'I' is in all beings. Everyone uses the 'I' to identify himself or herself. The 'I' is the omnipresent indwelling entity. When the Hridhaya is identified with the 'I' it is equally allpervading.

Mind merely follows Hridhaya like a shadow

Man today has a narrow conception of the 'I' and Hridhaya because he misconceives the relationship between the Upadhi (container) and what is contained (the indwelling Atma). How is this misconception to be removed? At the outset, there should be an enquiry into the nature of Hridhaya. All you students are here (in this hall). If Hridhaya referred to the physical heart, your Hridhaya should be here. But when you think about your parents, in one moment your thoughts turn to Hyderabad. Another moment, you think about Madras. What is it that goes to Hyderabad or Madras? What is that experiences these feelings? You may think it is the mind. The mind is Jada (inert). When you understand the mind properly, you will realise it is .not the mind that is involved, it is the Hridhaya that is at work, and the mind merely follows it like a shadow. There can be a shadow only when there is a real object. The mind is only the shadow of 'I'. Wherever the 'I' goes, the mind follows. When the 'I' is still, the mind will not move. Understanding this truth is real education for students. This is what is involved in Sathya anveshana (quest for truth). The quest for truth should embrace all things. For instance, when you see a flower, you should try to know its name, how it came into existence, etc.

The heart and the senses

You hear some good news which delights you. You also hear some sad news, as well as some harsh abusive words You hear words of praise and blame. All the words were heard by the ears. But when happy news was heard the heart felt elated. When sad news was heard the heart shrunk in sorrow. The heart got enraged when the ears heard harsh words about you. You were filled with

joy when you heard words of praise. What is responsible for these varied responses, though all the words were heard by the same ears? The ears are inconscient by themselves and incapable of any reactions. The responses of joy or sorrow are related to the contents of the messages conveyed by the ears. Thus, the senses are by themselves Jada (inconscient). How can the operations of these senses be deemed as Sathya (Truth or Reality)? How can the experiences resulting from these negative senses be considered as Truth? When the senses are unrealisable, the reactions produced by them are equally unreliable. It is enquiring along these lines that man can overcome sorrow. The basic cause for the occurrence of feelings like hatred, jealousy and anger is the body constituted by the five elements. As long as the body remains, it will be subject to these types of feelings. For instance, all experiences derived through the senses and the mind occur during the waking state. How long do they last? When you go to sleep none of these experiences is present. Even the mind is absent, as it were. There is no consciousness even of breathing. In the dream state you are not aware of the life process. But there is a kind of perception in that state. Is that perception by the physical eyes? You are lying in bed with closed eyes. Which are the eyes that perceive in that state? What is the body that moves about in that state? What is it that receives impressions from outside or experiences grief? It is clear that the experiences in that state are different from the experiences in the waking state. The experiences in the dream state are real as long as the dream lasts. The experiences in the waking state are real in that state. There are no dreams in the waking state and there are no perceptions of the waking state in the dream state. But you are present in both the states. In both the states the "I" is one. The experiences in both the waking and dream states are of the same "I", only the states are different. Hence, the Reality or truth is that which remains in all the states. The "I" was present in the dream state. It is now present in the waking state. This continuity in the past and the present characterizes the Atma. It is wrong to identify the "I" with the body.

"I" is subtle and incomparable

Over the ages, by identifying the "I" with the body, its true nature has been grossly underrated because of ignorance, perversion and false attachments.

The truth is this "I" is subtle and incomparable. It is beyond change. This is the characteristic of divinity. Men have to recognise their inherent divinity.

In the conflict between the Prego marga (materialistic path) and the Shreyo marga (spiritual path), people are deluded into following the former. They are ready to sacrifice their lives for sensory pleasures. Should they not dedicate their lives for higher truth?

Be exemplars of Shreyo Marga

The power of Shreyas (spirituality) can confer boundless bliss. Hence you should pursue Shreyas rather than Preyas. Those who are after sensuous pleasures do not readily listen to the words of those who advise them to give up their evil ways. On the contrary, they try to drag others down to their level.

The one who pursues the spiritual path not only benefits himself but promotes the well-being of others. He is like the incense-stick which consumes itself in the process of spreading its fragrance while burning.

Hence, our students should be exemplars of the Shreyo Marga. Learning for Shreyas or a spiritual upliftment, is true education. Students should avoid imitating the silly practices of persons who sport a long hair or go about in "bell bottoms" and "drainage pipes." Students should use their discriminating power in deciding how they should act. They should try to spiritualize their will power. They should realise the infinite powers latent in man. It is these powers which have enabled men to invent the most wonderful kinds of machinery. Men are, therefore, more valuable than the most precious things in the world. It is man who imparts value to things by the changes he makes in them, as in the case of diamonds or a work of art. In the spiritual field, man is enjoined at the very outset to know himself. He should not be a slave of the senses. Nor should he follow others like sheep. "Be a ship and not sheep." A ship serves to carry others and cross the Ocean. Consider the miraculous manner in which various organs in the body, the heart, the lungs, the stomach, the eyes and the tongue, function. Can this marvellous human

machine be made by any human being? Students should realise how the divine functions in the body; making the organs carry out their different functions. What the scientists have discovered is an infinitesimally small part of what exists in God's creation.

Realise that time lost is lost for ever

Students should realise that time lost is lost forever. Hence time should not be wasted. Moreover, you should realise the power which time wields over men. For instance, it was the impending bad time in store for him and his family which led a lover of righteousness like Yudhishtira to engage in a game of dice in which he lost everything. Seetha similarly was a victim of the misconceived desire for the elusive golden deer. When disaster is impending, the intellect gets clouded.

The lesson from such episodes is clear. Avoid wrong actions and eluding desires. Don't harbour evil thoughts.

Consider the body as a vessel, wisdom as a rope and use the vessel to draw the nectar of divinity from the well of spirituality. Not otherwise can immortality be attained. Students! After the end of the academic year, you will return to your homes and spend your vacation well with your parents and brothers and sisters. This is good. But you must be always on your guard during these two months. Some of your old friends may try to influence you. Don't succumb to their pressures. Try to live upto what you have learnt here. When the Asuras and Dhevas churned the Ocean of Milk, first came poison. They did not give up the churning till they got the Amrith (nectar). Regard your heart as the Ocean of Milk and the intellect as the Mandhara Mountain. Using your yearnings as the churning ropes, carry on the churning by reciting the Lord's name. Do not mind if the first thing to come out is poison. Go on churning till you get the nectar of divine bliss.

When you study the Geetha, you will note that it begins with Vishadha Yoga, the Yoga of sorrow. But ultimately, Arjuna experiences the Vishvaruupa, the Cosmic Form of the Lord. Utilize your holidays in the best manner possible.

Lead exemplary lives so that you may justify your studies in this Institute. Unfortunately many students misuse their great opportunities. Experiencing the Divine is more valuable than all the wealth of the world, as Saint Thyagaraja pointed out. Try to render whatever social service you can selflessly and with dedication. You are bound to get God's grace. Yearn for God's "grace" and not the worldly "grass."

Dedicated service of all Vice-Chancellors

Now about our Institute. Since its inception we have had four Vice-Chancellors. All of them have served the Institute without any desires in a spirit of dedication. The first Vice-Chancellor was Prof. Gokak. After his first term, when he was due to retire, the University Grants Commission allowed him to continue for another term to build up the infant University. This extension was given as a special case. After two more years he was given another special extension on the same grounds. As long as he remained he served the Institute honorarily without any remuneration. Then came Prof. Saraf. He was a member of the U.G.C. Board. He had held important positions in the Government. He also served the Institute with dedication, deeming Svami's grace as the highest reward.

The third Vice-Chancellor was Prof. Sampath. He had been Director of the Indian Institute of Technology at Kanpur and was Deputy Director of the Madras Institute of Technology. He is an authority on Computers. In my view he is a computer himself. He also served the Institute honorarily. If Vice-Chancellors were to be paid on U.G.C. scales, they would have to be paid Rs.15,000 or so per month. None of the Vice-Chancellors received any salary and they served the Institute in a spirit of selfless service. Because of Government regulations they had to retire at the end of their term.

Then came Dr. Hanumanthappa. He used to look after the Commerce Department when the Sathya Sai College was started in Brindavan. At that time he was an M.Com degree holder. Later he did his Ph.D and was appointed Vice-Chancellor of the Bangalore University. He served there for many years and was eager to serve Svami's University. He completed two

years as Vice-Chancellor on March 4th. He also served the Institute in an honorary capacity expecting no remuneration.

In this way, our University from its inception has benefited from the dedicated services of Vice- Chancellors who had no self-interest. Although they served honorarily, our Trust felt that it has an obligation towards them. The Trust has established a tradition of honouring the Vice- Chancellors in an appropriate manner.

Uniqueness of Sai Institute

This University has been fostered and developed by a succession of Vice-Chancellors in different ways. Our University does not collect fees of any kind from the students. You are aware about the agitation of the students in Delhi and Madras against the raising of fees. The colleges had to be closed on account of the agitation. The present scenario in the educational field is like this' the teachers agitate for higher emoluments; the students demand a reduction in college fees. How is it possible to meet both the demands? There has to be a balancing of the teachers' claims and the demands of the students. In our University we have got over this problem by taking no fees from the students. Elsewhere heavy donations are demanded even for admission to the K.G. Class. Here everyone is admitted free, without regard to creed or nationality. No fees of any kind are collected from the students. The Trust is managing the Institutions with due regard to these factors. Unlike students in other Institutions, our students are extremely well behaved and there, is no danger of any kind of indiscipline. Students who are so well looked after here should conduct themselves well when they go out into the world' so that they bring a good name to the Institute. They will be guilty of treachery to the Divine if they appear to behave well when they are here and misbehave when they are outside. Apart from betrayal of God and their teachers, they will be guilty of betraying their own selves if they do so. Do not be guilty of this self-destructive crime. Instead, you must proceed from self-confidence to Self-realisation. Svami's only desire is that students should be taught on proper lines so that they may lead ideal lives.

Dr. Hanumanthappa honoured

Our Vice-Chancellor has completed two years of service. He has contributed to various developments in the Institute. We (in the Trust) have a duty to honour him. (Svami then fastened Gold Wristlets around the wrists of Dr. Hanumanthappa as the audience cheered). Students! It is a reward for all the good you had done in many previous lives that you have been able to get an opportunity like this. I adjure you not to waste this opportunity (as unfortunately many have done before). You may act as you like, lead the kind of life you want, but you should not go against what you have learnt here. Those who live upto the ideals of the Institute are near and dear to us wherever they may be. Those who betray the ideals of the Institute are as good as dead. 'Do not lead unworthy lives like street dogs. Be grateful to your Alma Mater. I do not seek anything from you. But you have to cherish the sense of gratitude for what you have received here. I bless you all.

Love is God; God is Love.
Live in Love; This is the way to God.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

7. Think God, Love God

Date: 01 April 1995 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Ugadi

EMBODIMENTS of Divine love! "Manam hithva priyo bhavathi" (The man without egoistic pride is liked by everyone). "Krodham hithva na sochathi" (The man without hatred is free from grief). "Kamam hithva arthona bhavathi" (One who has given up desire is free from worries). "Lobham hithva sukhee bhavathi" (Overcoming greed a man becomes happy). When you rid the mind of impurities, humanness turns divine. The world is confronted today with many problems. On the one side there is fear of war. On another side, there is fear of famine. On a third front there is the lust for power. On the fourth side, selfishness is rampant. There is discord between man and man, between one caste and another. What is the reason for this? Society is riddled today with conflicts because morality has been banished and humanness has been forgotten.

Desires are dreadfully dangerous

No man filled with greed, fear and anger can achieve anything in this world. Greed comes first. Excessive desires degrade man. You cannot give up desires entirely. But there should be a limit to them. When they exceed the limits a man goes astray. Desires are dreadfully dangerous. Today's enemy may become tomorrow's friend and vice versa. But desires are perpetual enemies. They haunt man ceaselessly. The Geetha declares desire as the Nithyasha-thru (eternal enemy) of man. Hence desire has to be kept under control. Becoming a prey to peacelessness, man seeks the Divine by various means. But why is he unable to realise his desire? What is the cause of his sorrow? Is it due to unfulfilled desire or the failure of his efforts? Is he miserable because he has not got various possessions, or failed to win a lottery? Lamenting over such trifles, man today is forgetting his divinity. These are not real troubles at all. The real cause of sorrow is attachment to the body, identifying one's self with the body. All sorrow arises from the feelings of "I" and "Mine". It is essential at the outset to reduce dheha-abhimanam (attachment to the body). Desires are a source of pleasure for

man, but they are also the cause of his grief. The mind has to be brought under control. Even thousands of men cannot hold back a fast-moving train. But the train comes to a stop the moment the brake is applied. The same applies to the vagaries of the mind. When the mind is controlled, all sorrows will cease. The Divine Atma, which dwells in the heart of every human being, is not recognized by man because it is covered by the clouds of desire. The splendour of the sun is revealed when a wind drives away the clouds that hide the sun. Likewise, when the wind of love blows away the clouds of desire in the heart, the ego ("I"-ness) and possessiveness (sense of "mine") are driven out and the effulgence of the Atma within is revealed in all its glory. Man has to restrain the feelings of Ahamkara and Mamakara ("I" and "Mine"). Uncontrolled desire can bring down anyone, even the deities presiding over human destiny. However intelligent, scholarly or powerful a man may be, he may succumb to desires. Hence everyone has to be vigilant in controlling desires.

Attachment brings sorrow

Even a man of great prowess like Arjuna became subject to the feeling of attachment - "my relatives," "my teachers," etc. He was a prisoner of the feeling of "mine." Sva, Svajana, my people, my kinsmen - this sense of attachment made him throw away his Gandeeva (bow) on the battlefield, overcome by grief. This kind of attachment may plunge anyone in feeble-minded grief at any place, at any time and in any situation. Hence it is essential to keep all attachments under control.

Prema (Love) should be shown not only towards God but towards all beings in creation. Love is a powerful force. No other power excels it. Misunderstanding the nature of love, men are falling a prey to suffering. This is 'the result of misguided expressions of what is considered love. Men today worship God for the fulfillment of desires relating to this world and the other. This is not true love. People pretend to love their kith and kin and friends out of purely selfish considerations. This is only attachment and not love. Only that can be described as love which offers itself without any expectation of recompense. In the Geetha, Bhagavan has been described Suhrith (a true friend). Without

expecting any return, accompanying you like a shadow, God fulfills your desires. Even a mother in loving her son, may have expectations that he would take care of her in her old age. God has no such expectations. Suhrith defines the utterly selfless love of the Lord. The nature of Divine love is not rightly understood by most people. For instance, even a great woman like Dhraupadhi did not understand the ways of the Lord. Once, during their exile, while she and Yudhishtira were strolling in the Himalayas. Dhraupadhi asked Yudhishtira with tears streaming from her eyes, "Dear Lord, you have taken such good care of your subjects, you fed the starving and relieved the needy, you always adhered to Dharma. Why should you be subject to this present suffering? You are the very embodiment of Righteousness. We are leading the life of a destitute here. Why should this happen to you? Have we forfeited God's grace? Is there anything wanting in our devotion?"

Dharmaja's advice to Dhraupadhi

Smilingly, Dharmaja replied, "Dhraupadhi! Look at the Himalaya mountains. How beautiful are the peaks! I am filled with joy looking at those mountains. They do not serve me in any way, but still they fill me with joy. The beauty of Nature gives me joy. Beauty is bliss. That bliss is nectarine. There is no joy equal to the enjoyment of the beautiful. When you look at a flower, you derive ineffable joy, though the flower renders you no service. Nature is the vesture of God. When you behold Nature, you experience bliss. I love Nature for the joy it gives. I derive joy from seeing it and for no other benefit. Likewise, God should be loved in a selfless spirit. I love Krishna regardless of what difficulties I have to suffer, because that is the way I love him. I have no interest in the transient pleasures and possessions of the world. True bliss transcends the fleeting pleasures experienced by this perishable body. Dhraupadhi! Do not seek these pleasures relating to the body. Seek the Divine feet of the Lord, which will confer enduring bliss. Do not grieve over petty difficulties. Concern yourself with the means to experience God. All other things are valueless." The bliss from experiencing the Divine has been extolled by the Vedhic seers and sages from ancient times. It is holy, eternal, ineffable and infinite. It is the bliss of oneness with God.

The Yugas and the Divine

To enable mankind to realise this infinite bliss, the Lord makes His descent from age to age. The Kritha Yuga began in the month of Vaishakha. The Thretha Yuga began in the month of Magha. Dhvapara Yuga began in the month of Margashira. In the Geetha, Krishna declared that among the months He is Margashira. Kali Yuga started in the Chaithra, month. This is according to the lunar calendar. What is the meaning of Yuga? Yuga means divinity. The divinity of the Yuga is derived from the Divine. Thus the Yuga originates from the Divine and merges in the Divine. Yugakrith is one of the names of the Lord. It means that the Lord is the creator of the Yugas (aeons). Yugadhi refers to the commencement of the particular Yuga. The Lord is also the sustainer of the Yuga. He is the very embodiment of Time. That is why He is the master of Time and hence He is worshipped as Samvathsara. "Samvathsaraya namah" (Salutations to the Lord of the year).

The Yugadhi day; which is associated with such sacred significance is being observed as merely the beginning of a new year. The day should be regarded as Divine in origin.

Namasmarana is the best panacea for Kali Yuga

The Kali Yuga is considered a dreadful aeon and the presiding deity, the Kali Purusha, is viewed with fear as the source of difficulties and trials. This is not so. Namasmarana is a mitigating factor at all times. For the Kali Age, there is no greater panacea for all troubles than chanting the name of Hari. This truth is forgotten by people today. Instead of Hari's name, they dote over Siri, the Goddess of wealth. The worshippers of wealth far exceed the worshippers of Hari. People should remember that if God is the source of all things, He alone should be remembered at all times.

The year that commences today is named Yuva. Yuva means those in their youthful age. It implies that it is a transitional stage between childhood and old. People are worried about what is in prospect for the world in this new year. Those who make all kinds of dire predictions for the year are not doing

any good. The new year Yuva, according to astrology, commences in Shani (Saturn). But Guru (Jupiter) is well disposed. He is the ruler for this year. When the ruler is good, why worry about the ministers? He presides over all the other planets. Hence, there is no room for any fear. The world will no doubt experience some troubles, ups and downs. Such things have happened in previous Yugas also, as in Kritha Yuga, Thretha Yuga and Dhvapara Yuga. Were there not wars in Dhvapara Yuga? There is no need to attach special significance to the Kali age. There were wicked men even in Kritha Yuga and there are good men in the Kali age. It is not the Yuga that matters. It is the heart that is important. If people's hearts are pure, what does it matter what the Yuga is? People must strive to purify their hearts. The heart is called Hridhaya. Hridhaya signifies a compassionate heart. People must transform their stony hearts to compassionate hearts.

Portents for the year 'Yuva'

The year Yuva will experience a mixture of good and bad events. There will be some serious mishaps. There will be grave disorders. There will be many political crises. Hence each one should concentrate on protecting oneself by purity of heart and mind. Your preceptor or your deity or your scripture will not serve to take you to your goal. You have to make the journey yourself. Others can serve as guide-posts but they cannot take you to your destination. Each one, therefore, has to chalk out his own path to reach the goal, "Strive to safeguard your Atma." If you adhere to righteousness you can face any ordeal. Strive to earn God's Grace. Young people must be very much on their guard this year. They must control the vagaries of their minds and not give way to anger and envy. Anger and envy are pernicious diseases. Envy has grown to alarming proportions. It is less curable than cancer. Men often ask: "Who is God and who is Yama (the Lord of Death)?" The answer was given by Purandharadhasa in one of his compositions. "Who is Rama for you and who is Yama? For the unbelieving Ravana, Rama became Yama. For the believing Vibheeshana, Rama was God. For Shurasena who had no belief, Krishna was Yama. To Akruura, who was a believer, Krishna appeared as God. To the believing Prahladha, Narayana was the saviour. To the unbelieving Hiranyakashipu, Prahladha's father, Narayana became the destroyer. Rama

and Yama are not distinct from each other. According to one's beliefs, Rama becomes Yama and Yama becomes Rama. One's feelings make all the differences in the role of God as protector or slayer. There is a Telugu poem 'To those who say 'Yes', He is 'Yes,' To those who say, 'No', He is 'No'. 'Yes' or 'No' comes from others' mouths, but He always remains 'Yes, Yes, Yes.' (S.S.S-- Shri Sathya Sai). For God there is no 'Yes' or 'No' These are echoes of your own feelings. Therefore, whatever the year and whatever the difficulties you confront, develop compassion in your heart. Develop your meditation on God. With faith in God you can achieve anything.

Ingratitude is the worst sin

Many strange things are likely to happen in this new year. Ingratitude is rampant. Not only are people forgetting all the good that is done to them, but they are doing harm to those who have helped them. History provides a bitter example of such ingratitude. You are aware of Ghori Mohammed who invaded India several times and plundered the country. At last in one encounter with Rana Prithviraj, he was defeated and captured by Prithviraj. Prithviraj pardoned him and let him off. Later on, by nefarious methods Ghori caught Prithviraj. Then he decided to put an end to Prithviraj's life. At that time, the Divine intervened, in answer to Prithviraj's prayers, and an arrow released by Prithviraj went straight to Ghori's neck and severed his head. Thus the evil-doer was punished by the Lord. The lesson is clear. Don't harbour ill-will towards anybody. Don't do any harm to others. Get rid of doubts and develop faith in God. People today are filled with doubts of every kind. By truthful speech, by generous hands, by listening to what is ennobling, people must overcome the untoward happenings of this Kali age. It is by these means that human life can be redeemed.

The purpose of life is to experience unity in diversity

What is the purpose of life? It is not eating or sleeping. It is to lead an ideal life. Every human being has to accomplish certain aims in life which are in tune with humanness. You have to realise that the Lord is the Indweller in all beings and experience unity in diversity. The entire creation is present within

the human body. This is the mystery of creation. The human body is a marvellous creation. Every organ in the body discharges its specific function and nothing else. Only the Divine can create such a wonderful organism. The Atma is the Master within the body. Never betray the Master. Be grateful to God for endowing, you with such a marvellous body.

India was the teacher for the whole world from ancient times in the spiritual field. It gave to the world the glorious universal message. "Let the peoples of all the worlds be happy." Indians today have forgotten this ancient message and have not recognized their own inherent divinity. The ancient sages knew what power there was in the human being because of the presence of the Divine within. They radiated effulgence as a result of their Yogic power. All of it comes from God. The power of the Divine is infinite and indescribable. People should pray for the blessings of Divine grace. They need not worry about the prospects in the new year. With God's grace they can overcome any situation. People speak about the affliction caused by the nine planets. In fact, people are plagued by only two planets - Ahamkara and Mamakara (egoism and possessiveness). To free themselves from these two all that men require is divine grace. Young people should participate this year in sacred activities. Try to solve social problems. Cultivate unity. Give up pride and ostentation. Develop the courage to face any situation, the courage that is based on faith in God. Strive for the welfare of all people in all countries. Humanity is one irrespective of race, creed or colour. Dedicate this year to the development of a universal outlook.

All bodies belong to the Divine Mother

This is the lesson Ramakrishna Paramahansa taught towards the end of his life when he was suffering from cancer. He could not take any food. At that time, Svami Vivekanandha came to the Master and asked him why he should not pray to the divine Mother to enable him to take food. Ramakrishna Paramahansa replied: "I did ask the Mother and she gave me her answer, when I am taking my food through so many mouths, does it matter if I don't eat through your mouth'?" Ramakrishna felt ashamed on getting that answer. The lesson he learnt was that all bodies belong to the Divine Mother. In the

Geetha, Krishna says that the divine as Vaishvanara enters all bodies and helps to digest every type of food. Only the Divine can perform this kind of function. Whatever the kind of food you eat, it is digested, converted into blood and circulated to every part of the body. Only the power of the Divine can do this. Develop faith in this truth. Very soon you will experience the bliss of God-realisation. The experience will come only if you act in the appropriate manner. But, failing to act, people blame God for their troubles. God is utterly blameless. Only your lapses are reflected in your actions. There are no flaws in God and no one is competent to blame God.

God-realisation is not a time-bound process. Some one went to Ramana Maharishi and asked him how long he should sit in meditation. The Maharishi said that he should meditate "till he is not aware that he is meditating at all." Similarly the love of God should become a spontaneous act. With such love, one can face any situation in life with confidence derived from the consciousness that the Divine is within.

Duty of youth

Do not worry about the predictions made for this year in the almanacs. If you put your faith in God, you can overcome all troubles. Youth in particular should cultivate this faith. It is a pity that Indian Youth today are lacking in love of the Motherland. Becoming bookworms is not education. It is more important to put into practice at least a fraction of what you have learnt. Think God. Love God. Realise that there is no truer friend than God. Merge your love in His love.

Love.. Love...Love First...Love, as long as life lasts. For myself, I can say. I shower more blessing on those who decry or defame me than on those who worship and adore me! For, those who spread falsehoods about me derive joy therefrom; I am happy that I am the cause for their exultation and joy. You too must accept this line of argument and be very happy when someone derives joy by defaming you. Do not respond by defaming that person; then

the chain of hatred will bind both down. Life will become a tragedy.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

8. Install Raama Raajya in your hearts

Date: 09 April 1995 / Location: Brindavan

What can Kali do to the one
Whose heart is filled with compassion,
For whose speech truth is the ornament,
And whose body is dedicated to serving others?

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love!

A tranquil mind, a truth-filled speech, and a body dedicated to service one who has these three qualities is described as the embodiment of *Thriputhi* (the triple purity). Such a one is the noblest of human beings. Tulasidas was the great one who proclaimed that human life is redeemed when every talent and every moment are utilized by humanity for realising the Divine. To God all objects in the universe are alike because they are manifestations of the Divine. The scriptures declared about this Divine manifestation,

"Sarvam khalu idham Brahma" (All this verily is Brahman).

Hence, whoever worships the Supreme Lord should also worship *Prakrithi* (Nature or the Phenomenal universe). He should love Nature and adore Nature. Nature is not different from *Paramatma* (Supreme Self). Nature is the effect and God is the cause. Nature is the expression of this relationship between Cause and Effect. Goodness is a synonym for God. Hence, it is only by contemplating on the qualities of God that human existence finds fulfillment. The body of a human being who does not think in this way is merely a lump of clay.

God's words, actions, thoughts are always pure, selfless and infinitely precious. The truth of this is illustrated by an episode from the Ramayana.

Dramatic acts of God to prove His omnipresence

Once, while proceeding to Mithila, Rama sat on a stone in the sage Gautama's ashram. That very moment, a woman emerged from the stone. However, Rama did not feel proud that by a mere touch of his feet, the stone had turned into a woman. On the contrary he felt sad that his feet had touched the wife of a great sage and thereby he had committed a wrong, This shows that God dwells in the minds of sages. God indulges in dramatic acts like these to demonstrate His omnipresence in the universe and to teach the world the greatness of Nature.

Another episode reveals another aspect of the Divine. For all the mighty deeds done by Hanuman and great help rendered by him, Rama asked him: "Hanuman! What reward can I give you? Apart from expressing my gratitude to you I cannot give you any fitting recompense. The only way I can show my gratitude to you is that whenever you think of me at any time in your life, I shall appear before you." Rama was showing his gratitude to Hanuman in this manner. This indicates that the primary duty of man is to be grateful all his life to the person who has done him a good turn.

Man has to realise his divinity and look at all Nature from the Divine point of view. Instead, man looks at everything only from the mundane point of view. The body is indeed perishable. But it is also the means for realising the imperishable Truth. This means, all speech should be about the Divine. All actions should be godly. Every thought should be about God. That is the appeal which Thyagaraja made to his mind: "Oh mind, think always about Shri Rama."

Bhagavan sang in His own mellifluous voice Thyagaraja's song in which he said:

"Oh Kaushalya, what penance did you perform to enjoy the privilege of calling Shri Rama affectionately as a mother and showering your kisses on the divinely beautiful child Rama. What penance did Dhasharatha perform to call Shri Rama to come to him?"

Thus Thyagaraja was chanting Rama's name all the time and singing his glories. This is an example to the world.

Rama the ideal exemplar of righteousness

Rama is the supreme exemplar of how people should conduct themselves in the world, how a country should be governed, how the integrity and morality of human beings should be protected. High-minded actions, ideal qualities and sacred thoughts are basic foundations of character. Rama is the very embodiment of these three attributes. This means that every human being should cultivate sacred thought, right actions, and good qualities. Rama demonstrated by his words, thoughts, and actions, how such a life can be lived. Rama acted upto the ancient injunction: "Speak the truth. Practise Righteousness." Eschewing harsh words, Rama pleased everyone by his sweet speech. He countered harsh speech by others with his composure, patience, sweetness and smile. He never pried into affairs of others, never took notice of their faults, never indulged in ridicule, and never caused any pain to others by the way he spoke to them. It is essential for everyone to follow the example set by Rama and cultivate his many noble qualities and do righteous actions. People should entertain sacred thoughts.

One should never go back on the plighted word

Man is an image of the Divine. The Lord has declared in the Geetha: "My Spirit is the indwelling Spirit in all beings." God is the indweller in all human beings. Today, in the pursuit of power, men are prepared to commit any kind of crime and to inflict any kind of harm on people to achieve their ends. Rama, on the

contrary, gave up the kingdom and, to honour the pledge given by his father, chose to face the ordeals of life in the forest as an exile. He demonstrated to the world that one should never go back on his plighted word. Rama gave up the throne and became a denizen of the forest. In life, it is not difficulties and calamities that are important. The supreme importance of Truth was that Rama wanted to hold forth to the world.

One should never go back on one's pledge even at the cost of one's life. Today, however, men go back on their words from moment to moment. They indulge in falsehood at every step. Promises are forgotten. How can the Rama-principle flourish in such a human environment? The Rama-principle is remote from such an atmosphere. God will be in proximity only to those persons whose thoughts, ideals and deeds are in accord with Rama's. Rama was a man of his word, but man is the very reverse.

It may be asked - "In this situation how is it possible to say that in human beings there is divinity?" Not at all. In such human beings there is either animality or demonic nature. Whatever *sadhanas* (spiritual practices) one may perform or however much one may recite the Lord's name, God will not judge one by these criteria. What is the transformation in one's heart? If there is no transformation of the heart, of what avail are spiritual sadhanas?

Indwelling divinity within the shrine of the body

Man is not a mere creature of flesh and blood. He is the embodiment of the *Atma*. It is only when man recognises this truth that true spirituality will be evident to him. Concentrating all the time on the physical body as the only reality, time is wasted on external observances. The body should be regarded as a temple of God. To consider it otherwise is a sign of foolishness. Only he is a true human being who recognizes the indwelling divinity within the shrine of his body. The scriptures have declared:

"In the temple of the human body, dwells the individual Self which is the

eternal Self."

In this context, it may be noted that even scholars and intelligent persons tend to get confused over this matter. People who go to endless trouble to acquire positions, power or reputation do not care to devote even a small fraction of that effort to earn God's grace. The lesson taught by the story of Rama is different.

Tulasidas said: "Rama! I am helpless, poor and crippled." Why did he say he was a *Angaheena* (cripple)? He had hands and legs, head and everything else. Nevertheless he declared that he was a cripple. What is the inner meaning of this? "What is the use of having hands when I am unable to serve you, oh Rama! What is the use of having eyes, when I am unable to see you? So, I am verily blind." Tulasidas declared that limbs that are not used in the service of the Lord are as good as lost.

Purandaradhasa also sang in the same manner. "Alas, even when they are endowed with eyes, they do not see your glorious form! Even when they have ears, they do not listen to the songs in the praise of the Lord." Men use their eyes to look at the attractions of the world and not the charm of God. As long as man is fascinated by *Prakrithi* (the phenomenal world), he cannot comprehend the Divine. Even the most eminent persons are subject to this weakness. This is the mark of the powerful influence of the Kali age.

The way to God

Men, however, should strive to get rid of the attachment to the body by persistent efforts. The yearning for God should be nourished. Qualities such as backbiting, spreading scandal and searching for the faults in others are not human but demonic. People should cultivate good thoughts, good words, good hearts, and good conduct. This is the way to God. That man is redeemed who follows this path. History is full of examples of men who used force and fraud to come to power. There are examples from the communist countries.

In Muslim countries also there are examples of persons who did not disdain to imprison or kill their kith and kin to seize power. But Bharath has generally been free from such deeds. This is the result of Rama's glorious example.

The glory of Rama's sandals

Once, while moving about in the forest, Rama and Lakshmana sat under a tree. At that time, they heard the neighing of horses and the cries of elephants at a distance. Rama asked Lakshmana to find out how horses and elephants happened to appear in the forest. Lakshmana climbed a tree and noticed Bharatha coming with a huge army.

Immediately he exclaimed, "Brother! Get ready for battle. Take up your bow and arrows." Rama smiled at Lakshmana and said, "Why are you so excited? Do not be hasty. Calm yourself. What has happened?" Lakshmana replied, "Bharatha is coming with an army to kill us."

Rama said "Lakshmana! What a serious mistake you are making! It is impossible for any action of the Ikshvaku clan to think of such a preposterous idea even in dream. Because we two were not present in Ayodhya when Bharatha and Shatrughna returned to the capital, they are now coming to see us." Rama sought to pacify Lakshmana.

Lakshmana replied: "What is this forbearance and sympathy on your part? If they merely wanted to see us, will they come with a huge army? No. they are coming only to slay us." Rama said' "Lakshmana! You are too much dominated by Rajasik tendencies. You seem to be attached to kingship. Why worry? Bharatha is coming. I shall ask him to crown you as king. You may go with him."

Even as Rama was speaking thus, Bharatha came rushing towards Rama, fell at his feet crying: "Rama! Rama! Rama!" and said: "I am not competent to rule over Ayodhya. To reign over the kingdom Ramachandhra alone is worthy as the eldest son of Dasharatha. You alone are fit to role over the kingdom properly and establish Rama Rajya. Please return to Ayodhya." Thus pleaded

Bharatha.

As Bharatha was entreating in this manner, Rama looked smilingly at Lakshmana. "Compare your feelings with the expressions of Bharatha," he said. Sage Vasishtha also joined in the appeal to Rama to return to Ayodhya. But Rama did not yield to Bharata's entreaties and, acting according to Vasishtha's directions, offered his sandals to Bharatha and asked Bharatha to perform the coronation for the *Padhukas* (divine sandals). You must recognise the inner significance of this episode. People generally regard the sandals as objects to be despised. But Rama taught a different lesson about them. Rama treated the kingdom and the sandals on par. "I don't want a crown. Enthroned my sandals." Acting on Rama's injunctions, Bharatha performed the coronation of Rama's sandals and spent his time peacefully, contemplating on Rama.

Rama's teaches lessons to Bharatha

Rama taught Bharatha how government should be carried on. "Have as your ministers only persons of character and virtue, who are tranquil in mind and devoted to truth. Don't have as ministers anyone lacking in these four qualities. Moreover, they should possess self-confidence, practise righteous conduct, and be capable of giving proper advice. These are essential prerequisites for wise administrators. Give no place for selfish persons. There should be no room in the government for persons animated by self-interest. Nor is that all. Don't allow anyone given to vices like gambling and drink to wield authority. Entertain only those who command the esteem of the people and who are respected and loved by the people. You must have daily conferences with three or four such ministers. Your talks should be in private and no outsider should know anything about them. It is only when such secrecy is observed that the nation will prosper. You will then be able to ensure peace and prosperity to the nation. Moreover, you must send out as envoys to other countries ambassadors who are totally loyal to the king and not timeservers who practise duplicity. Only such men can convey to the king truthful information."

Rama did not stop with that. I request the women devotees not to take it amiss. Rama told Bharatha that he should not permit women to take part in affairs of state. Women have their estimable role in household affairs, but they should be kept out of state politics. "Don't employ women as ministers. The reason is: a nation's honour is based upon its women. It is only when women maintain their respect and honour that the nation will be respected. It is not proper for women to cheapen themselves by roaming in public places."

How to establish Rama Rajya?

Such were the sacred precepts of good administration which Rama taught to Bharatha. How does the situation in the country today compare with Rama's conception of an ideal government? The state of things today is 100 percent contrary to the ideas and ideals of Rama. How, then, can Rama Rajya be established here? If we desire to establish Rama Rajya, there should be harmony in thought, word, and deed. This applied not only to Bharath but to the entire world. All countries should have governments which conform to this principle of triple purity. Only then, the people also will reflect the character of the rulers.

Today, the people reflect the vices of the rulers. If a minister prefers one bottle, the man in the street asks for two (drinks). How can such citizens establish Rama Rajya? They can do so only if there is a complete transformation in their mental attitudes. Despite all the teachings they have listened to, their minds remain in the same state. Without a mental change, they are not entitled even to utter the name Rama. What, then, is the meaning of talking about Rama Rajya? It will be only Rama Rajya in name, but in reality it will only be Ravana Rajya.

Declining trend in respect for parents

If you really value Rama's ideals, you should practise them. You may say that the high ideals of Rama are beyond your competence. But there is one thing which you can do: Rama carried out the words of his father, *Pithruvakya paripalana*. How many today respect the words of the parent? If the father

asks the son, "Son, where are you going?" The son replies: "Shut up and keep quiet in your place." Few have any respect for the words of the father. There is no need to speak about respect for the mother. Such unworthy sons are ruining the world. Mothers are shedding tears over the behaviour of such sons.

This state of things should change. The sacredness of parents should be restored. Young people should cultivate pure thoughts and lead unselfish lives. Children who disregard their parents will be treated likewise by their children in due course. Partly the parents are to blame for the way they pamper the children. The children of today are worse than even Ravana's children, who obeyed him to some extent.

People who acquire knowledge or wealth are making no use of it to help others. They are following a dog-in-the-manger policy. This is not the way to follow Rama's example.

True meaning of devotion lies in practice

Today people celebrate Rama's birthday as a festival, but do not practise Rama's ideals. Enshrine Rama's ideals in your heart. Without it, there is no meaning in celebrating Rama's birthday. You must follow the example of a noble and ideal person. This is the meaning of devotion.

People talk about devotion. Does mere participation in bhajans constitute devotion? No. It is all a stunt. True devotion calls for the practice of at least one of the teachings that you learn. By following at least one good lesson, a man should lead an ideal existence. Remember that the lessons taught to Bharatha by Rama are ideal lessons.

After instructing Bharatha regarding the principles of good government, Rama told Bharatha: "You must revere the parents, the preceptors and all elders. If any person misbehaves within your kingdom, do not punish him. Banish him. That will be punishment enough."

Here I wish to explain what is meant by punishment. There is no need to beat or abuse the erring person. Stop talking to him. What is the use of talking to a person who is going astray? I do not want to waste my words on such a person. I attach great value to my words. They may not know it, but I know their value. None of my words has any selfish motive. Everything is for the welfare of all. If one has no such broad outlook and is only concerned about his personal interests, what is the use in talking to such a person? As long as one remains self-centered, he cannot understand the Divine.

The reign of Dharma is Rama Rajya

At the outset, understand what is Rama Rajya. It is the reign of morality, of truth and virtues. Rama Rajya means that which engenders happiness (*Ramayathi*). There should be no ill-will towards anybody. No one should be harmed. That is Rama Rajya. When such feelings arise among the people. Rama Rajya will come into existence of its own accord. It is with such feelings that Tulasidas extolled Rama. His Ramayana is suffused with his deep devotional experience.

He exclaimed: "Rama! I have no abilities of any kind. I have practised no system of yoga. I have not developed any method of meditation. I have no possessions of any kind. I have only one thing and that is my love. I love you for love's sake."

Spiritual practices of various kinds, including japa, yoga and the like, will not lead you to God-realisation. I do not suggest that you should discontinue these exercises. The devotional activities are better than many other useless pastimes. But, if you want to get near to God and to experience God, you have to transform the heart. As you sow, so shall you reap. Sow the seeds of love and reap the fruit of love. Sow the seed of immortality and reap the fruit of immortality. Today you want sweet fruit, but you sow poisonous seeds. This is thoughtless action.

Some people say that they are too weak to scale spiritual heights. But you have the strength to commit sins and do wrong actions. The strength required

for good or bad actions is the same. In fact, it is more difficult to commit sin than to be good and meritorious. To utter an untruth is difficult. To speak the truth is easy. Speaking the truth calls for no effort. But to declare what is not true as true calls for considerable ingenuity. Uttering an untruth is therefore more difficult. Equally, cheating is more arduous than being honest. Many devotees tell Swami that they are caught up in the coils of *Samsara* (family and worldly life) and are unable to break away from it. But what is the truth? Is it you who are clinging to Samsara or is it Samsara that is holding you in its grip? Has Samsara any hands to hold you? You have hands and you are holding on to worldly life. Samsara is not holding you. It is a paradox for you to say that Samsara is holding you in its grip when the truth is otherwise. It is excessive attachment that is the cause of man's troubles. Do everything as an act of offering to the Divine. Without faith in God man ceases to be human.

Diversion of mind in religious gatherings

Devotees who attend bhajans turn their looks this side and that side without concentrating on the bhajans. If they are not interested in the bhajans why should they come at all? Once Ramakrishna Paramahansa slapped Rani Rasmani at a gathering of scholars and worshippers. All people were astonished at Ramakrishna's action. Rani Rasmani felt humiliated. Ramakrishna explained that he found Rani Rasmani thinking about her court affairs while sitting in the religious gathering. This was highly improper and hence he slapped her. It was equally improper for devotees to sit in bhajans and divert their thoughts to worldly matters. Sitting in good company, how can one entertain bad thoughts?

People speak about *Sathsang*. What is Sathsang? It is not mere assemblage of ten devotees. 'Sath' refers to that which exists in all the three categories of time - past, present and future. The term applies to the Divine. Sathsang, therefore, means association with the Divine.

God is pleased only with inner feeling

Each word has profound and sacred meaning. But common people do not relish such interpretations. They enjoy what is trivial and pleasing to the ears. I do not want to please people in this way. The truth has to be taught. Some day or other people will understand it. Worldly sayings may please people for the moment, but they are of no value spiritually. God is pleased with the inner feeling and not the external show. But most people are interested only in the external and do not bother about the inner feeling. If you break the branch of a tree and plant it in the sand, will it grow into a tree? It must be planted in soil where it can strike roots. Similarly, the feeling must arise in the heart and get deeply rooted in it. Then the fruits will appear in the external world. Therefore, cultivate the feeling inside and enjoy the fruit outside.

Such wise teachings were taught to the people in the reign of Bharatha and Rama. When we speak of establishing Rama Rajya, let not Bharatheeyas imagine that it is relevant only to Bharath. The whole world needs the advent of Rama Rajya. What this means is that the rulers should have three qualities. They are: *Sathpravarthana* (righteous conduct), *Sadhalochana* (good counsel), *Sadhguna* (good qualities). There should be a combination of all the three. Today good counsel is a rarity. As for good qualities, the less said the better. High-souled persons, who represent harmony in thought, word and deed, should fill the seats of power. There should be no place for the wicked who think one thing, speak another thing, and act in a different way.

Devotees should till their minds with sacred thoughts. At least from now on, banish all bad thoughts, turn your minds towards God. At least install Rama Rajya in your hearts. When this happens, the world will experience Rama Rajya. Fill your minds with the ideals of Shri Rama and try to put them into practice as much as possible. This will cost you nothing. You do not have to perform any asanas or go to the forest for practice. Staying in your homes, attending to your duties, purify your hearts.

A loveless heart is a dry desert. Love is the foundation of life. The air that is inhaled and exhaled has to be loved in order that it may replenish and

revive.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

9. God, man and the Cosmos

Date: 14 April 1995 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Tamil New Year, Baisakhi, Vishu

Trees yield fruits for the benefit of others, Rivers carry water for the use of others, Cows give milk for the good of others The human body is given for serving others. (Sanskrit shloka) FOR the benefit of others, trees yield fruits. Likewise, for the benefit of others in the world, rivers carry water. Cows, without consuming their milk, take the trouble to produce milk for the benefit of others. Man also, without considering his own personal interests, should use his body for the benefit of others.

"Shareeram Adhyam Khalu Dharma Sadhanam" (The body is the primary requisite for the achievement of Dharma). The body has to discharge a variety of functions for the sake of the family, the society and the nation. "Aham Eva Akshaya Kalah" (I am the indestructible Time), says the Lord in the Geetha. This Time is not a momentary phenomenon. It is the embodiment of eternal and infinite Time. The sages called' this Time as Vathsarah. This name signifies the presence of the Divine as the Time-Spirit in all human beings. Moreover, God is the basis for all that happens, either through instrumentality or by direct intervention. He is the basis for what is permanent and what is temporary, for birth and death, for joy and sorrow. For this reason the Divine Time-Spirit has been called Hethu (the Cause). Hethu means that God is the primal cause of everything. He is also the eternal witness. He is Pramanasvaruupa (validating authority) for everything. Hence He is described as omnipresent, having His feet, etc., everywhere. Time is the basis for everything.

Samvathsara (year) is also called Vikshara. All objects in the world are subject to the process of creation, growth and decay. But the name Kala-Svaruupa was given to the Divine, who is not subject to birth, growth or decay. This changeless Divine is called Vikshara. Since the year is associated with Vikshara, God is Samvathsara Svaruupa (the embodiment of Time and its periods).

Sathya and Dharma in Bharatheeya culture

For the proper utilization of Time, which is Divine, the Vedhik texts laid down basic injunctions for mankind. Among these, foremost are "Sathyam Vadha: Dharmam Chara" (Speak the Truth. Follow Righteousness). This aphorism has a pre-eminent position in Bharatheeya culture. Likewise, we have the injunctions' "Esteem the father as God: Revere the mother as Divine." The Vedas proclaimed these aphorisms to be followed by the whole world. Sathya is the basic goal of human life. Bharatheeya culture has revealed how this goal is to be reached. Bharatheeyas today have forgotten this culture. From immemorial times, Bharatheeyas were engaged in the quest for Truth. Everything is encompassed by Truth. The quest for Truth is linked with the pursuit of Jnana (spiritual wisdom). For the acquisition of wisdom, purity of Buddhi (intellect) is essential. If the intellect is not pure, the senses are likely to go haywire. Purity of the intellect is in fact, essential for every purpose. Sadhanas performed without purity of the heart will be utterly useless, like food cooked in unclean vessels.

The glory of spiritual bliss

Bharatheeya culture and the Vedhik texts have proclaimed the glory of Anandha (spiritual bliss). The Athmik principle can be understood only in relation to this concept of Bliss. What is the Atma? Who has seen it? What is the proof for its existence? To answer these questions, here is an illustration. Today is Friday, the 14th April. Who told you these particulars about today? The day did not announce this when it began. You derive this information from a calendar or an almanac. In the same manner the proofs for great spiritual truths are provided in the declarations of the Vedas. It is only Atmathathvam (spiritual principle) that reveals the oneness of the universe. The entire cosmos has emanated from the Atma. The human being is called Nara in Sanskrith. Nara means Atma (the Self). Nara is made up of two syllables. 'Na' and 'Ra.' Ra (rah) means that which is perishable. Na-Ra means that which is not perishable. This means that Nara (man) is subject to change in bodily form, but is essentially immortal. He is full of bliss. But today people are oblivious to this true nature of man. Human values are also forgotten.

People are behaving either like animals or like demons. It is only when people recognise their real human nature and pursue spiritual values, they will realise their sacred divinity. For all these, devotion is fundamental. Does devotion mean meditation, japa, or observing various austerities? Na Anything done with expectation of reward gets tarnished by the desire for fruits and cannot be deemed real devotion. Devotion has been defined as desireless love for the Lord. Any prayer to God for fulfilment of a desire cannot be called devotion. God should be loved for His own sake. Love should be fostered for its own sake. True devotion is a combination of selfless service and love. This is illustrated by an episode from the Mahabharatha.

Dharmaja's love for Krishna

Dharmaja, the eldest of the Pandava brothers, ceaselessly adored Krishna. While living in the forest or when he was in Dhuryodhana's court witnessing the dishonouring of Dhraupadhi, or when Abhimanyu was killed in battle, or when the infant Upapandavas were killed (by Ashvathama) - in all these situations Dharmaja used to love Krishna with perfect calmness. He used to feel ' Krishna! These joys and sorrows are twins that always go together. Hence there is no need to get elated or depressed. I cannot swerve from my allegiance to your divinity. My love for you is for your own sake and not for the sake of the world. My love is the bond that links you and me. It is like a bridge that connects the OmniSelf and the individual Self." Such sacred and divine love is being abused today and consequently the results are bad. You hail this year as new, but it is not new at all. Nor is Manava (man) a new arrival on earth. Ma-nava means that which is not (Ma) new (Nava). When man himself is not new, how can the year be new? Time is divided into night and day, weeks and years on the basis of the revolutions of the earth and the moon in relation to the sun. In truth, man should regard every moment as new, every day as new. Man is governed by these changes, but God is unaffected, God is changeless.

It is only when such sacred truths are understood properly that real devotion will arise in people's hearts.

Fill your hearts with love

For the growth of crops water is essential. But the crops cannot go upto the sky in search of water. For the sake of the crops, the clouds come down and provide water for them. When you pray to God for His own sake, He will take care of everything. Flowers do not invite the bees, but the bees go to them in quest of honey. When we develop the nectar of love in our hearts, God will come to us, like the bee, to drink the nectar. If, on the other hand, you have a plastic flower, no bee will come near it. Likewise only when we fill our hearts with the nectar of love will the Divine enter it.

Today there is perpetual discord between man and man, community and community, village and village, caste and caste. What is the reason? The absence of unity and feeling of common bond. This accounts for the divisions among people. People should realise that it is the one Divine Self that resides in all beings.

I often tell the students that the one truth proclaimed by all the 18 puranas (epics) is: "Paropakarah Punyaya; Papaya parapeedanam" (It is meritorious to help others; it is sinful to harm other's). The term paropakara should be properly understood. It is not merely rendering help to others in one form or other. The term para-upa-kara means: Bringing (Kara) to the proximity (Upa) of God (Para). Purely mundane forms of help cannot be described as paropakara. They are gross, external and worldly. True paropakara consists in bringing your life close to the divine. That is punya (merit). Punya does not mean going on pilgrimage or giving gifts. Punya means taking your life close to God. This calls for Ekatmabhava (the recognition of the Divine in all beings). Para-peedanam means failing to see the Divine in all beings. That is Papa (sinful).

Growth of selfishness

Man has progressed a great deal in the physical and scientific fields. But with regard to morality and spirituality man has declined considerably. The reason is the deep-rooted growth of selfishness over the centuries. The entire human

life is permeated with selfishness. This selfishness should be brought under restraint. Only then human life can be meaningful. Man should look at the world from the Divine point of view. Life is full of ups and downs. All these are transient. Man should use what is temporary (the body) as the base for realising what is eternal, the Atma. These are inter-related. People should endeavour to understand the Athmik principle. What is the Atma? Where is it? These questions were raised by a king. Where is God? Where does He cast His looks? What does He do? Few in his court could answer these questions. He then summoned a sage and asked him: "Where is God?" He replied, "Like butter in milk, He is everywhere." "Where does God cast His eyes?" asked the king. "In which direction does this lamp shed its light?" asked the sage in return. "It sheds its light in all directions," answered the king. The sage observed- "Likewise, God is effulgent and sees everything everywhere. There is no particular direction for God's vision. He is all-seeing and omnipresent." The king then asked: "What work does God do?" The sage said: "To answer this question I have to assume the role of the preceptor and you should accept the role of the disciple. Are you prepared for this?" The King said "Yes." the sage said: "In that case, you better come down from the throne and sit down, while I sit on the throne." When the king sat down the sage remarked: "This is what God does. He brings down the mighty and elevates the humble, He can make the poor rich and the rich poor. He can do anything. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all pervading." These are true characteristics of God. He is all-pervading like butter in milk. He is all-seeing like the light of a lamp which sends out its rays all around. God is also all-powerful. He can do anything.

Faith is essential for everyone

Everyone should have this faith in the Divine. Faith is essential for anyone, whether, he is a theist or an atheist. People may judge things as good or bad according to their own predilections. But for God all things are the same. In this world nothing will appear bad if one views it from the Divine point of view. Seen from the worldly point of view, there will be differences of good and bad.

To experience the Divine, one has to perform good deeds. The Divine is present in every being as Chaithanya (consciousness). This consciousness is also described as Sath-Chith-Anandha (Being-Awareness-Bliss). Sath means Truth, that which is true and unchanging in all the categories of Time - past, present and future. Truth can be cognised only by truth. Chith means total awareness. To have total awareness you have to have a total vision. You must have complete love to get that vision. To see an object in its totality, and not partially, is total awareness. It is only when there is total awareness of Truth, you can experience the Anandha (Bliss Divine). Anandha is that which is unchanging. To experience Anandha you have to fill yourself with bliss. How is this to be achieved? Where is Anandha? Is it in this phenomenal world? You imagine that if you get a certain object you will be happy. But after getting it, how long does the happiness last?

The source of enduring bliss is within you

A student thinks that he will be happy if he passes his examination. After passing the examination, he wants to continue his studies. After completing his studies, he is again unhappy because he has no job. After getting a job, he is anxious for a promotion. And so on, at every stage happiness is only momentary, but desires are endless. Bliss cannot be found in worldly objects. The source of enduring bliss is within you. There is no meaning in searching for it elsewhere. Turn your external vision inwards. Close your eyes and try to see within. In this process, bliss will emerge from within you. Some teachers declare: "Give up the world and take hold of God." Do these teachers follow what they preach? No. They are very much in the world and still preach in this manner. It is not possible to give up the world. The world also is a manifestation of God. Unfortunately, people go on looking at this Divine manifestation but do not see it as such. All that you see is a form of the Divine. Do not see it as different from God.

Sun presides over the intellect and moon over the mind

In this world, you have to give due recognition to the physical and the phenomenal. From the worldly point of view today is the beginning of a new

year in Tamil Nadu. This relates to the sidereal year. The lunar new year began on April 1st. The lunar and sidereal years are not opposed to each other. The moon is not a self-luminous planet. He shines as a result of the sun's light. When sunlight does not fall on the moon, there is darkness on the moon's surface. The moon is the presiding deity for the mind and the sun is the Lord of the eyes. The Vedas have declared that "The moon came from the mind of the Cosmic Person and the sun from his eyes." The sun and the moon are not separate. The same light comes from both. This truth has to be recognized.

The sages have declared that the sun presides over the Buddhi (intellect) and the moon over the manas (mind). If you succumb to the mind you will be deluded by Maya (worldly illusions). Follow the Buddhi and you will become a Buddha (The Enlightened One). Buddhi (intellect) is in close proximity to the Atma (Self). Hence the effulgence of the Atma falls directly on the Buddhi. The mind receives the light indirectly from the Buddhi. It is Jada (inconscient). It is enveloped in the darkness of ignorance. Man today is inclined to follow the mind rather than the intellect. Hence he is caught up in ignorance, because the mind has no luminosity of its own. It is only when the light from the intellect illumines the mind that man can make a safe journey. "Buddhi-grahyam atheendhriyam" (The intellect has been described as capable of going beyond the reach of the senses). Hence man should be guided by the intellect. Below the intellect is the mind. Below the mind are the senses. Below the senses is the body. Consider the relationship between the body and God. The hands, the eyes, the ears, the mouth and the nose are organs in the body; all these are limbs of the body. The body is a limb of Society. Society is a limb of humanity. Humanity is a limb of Prakrithi (Nature). Nature is a limb of the Divine. This is the integral relationship between the human body and God. Dehi (the indweller in the body) and God are one. The body is a moving temple. Without the indwelling spirit, the body is only a corpse fit to be burnt or buried. Man has to be sustained by faith in the power of God. Without that faith Kama, despite all his prowess, died ingloriously. Arjuna was victorious because of faith in Krishna. Man should recognise the divinity within him and should be guided by the Divine charioteer. Develop love for God. That love will take you to God. Observe three maxims in life: Love of God, fear of sin and

morality in society. Then, in all situations, God will stand by you. Every moment is auspicious if you dedicate your actions to God. If your mind is pure, other things do not matter.

10. Fill your hearts with love of God

Date: 15 April 1995 / Location: Brindavan

HUMAN life is extremely precious. There are five sheaths in the human body. Annamaya, Pranamaya, Manomaya, Vijnanamaya and Anandhamaya Koshas. Of these five sheaths (the food, the vital, the mental, the integral awareness and bliss sheaths), man has in a large measure the Vijnanamaya Kosha (integral awareness) This Vijnana (Awareness) is not present in other beings. For this reason man is regarded as supreme among all living beings. He has qualities and capacities not present in other creatures. Hence human birth is considered exceptional. Moreover, man alone has the capacity to recognise the past, the present and future and to take note of .changes occurring over time. There is one common quality present in all living beings: Moha (attachment). This quality is present equally in human beings. But man alone has the competence to overcome this Moha and attain Moksha (liberation). The Maya (illusion) which envelops man drives him to take to wrong courses. Maya has three qualities. Satwa, Rajas and Thamas (purity, passion and inertia). Through these qualities man tends to forget his divinity and humanness and behave like an animal. The three qualities of Maya and the three forms of Moha combine to make man a demon. The three forms of Moha are: desire for wealth, attachment to the wife and attachment to children. These three make man a slave to Moha The man who conquers these three desires can transcend Moha. When Moha declines, Moksha becomes attainable. Liberation is the elimination of Moha (attachment). Everyone should strive to bring under control these three desires.

Population and spirituality

In earlier times, the world's population was around 100 crores (one billion). At that time the number of persons engaged in spiritual pursuits or in the quest for liberation was sizable. Today the world's population has grown, the seekers of liberation have dwindled. With the growth of population, spirituality should also grow alongside. Man has two essential organs: Head and heart. Pravritthi (interest in the external) arises from the head (the mind), while

Nivritthi (interest in the internal) arises from the heart. What we are witnessing is an excessive growth of thoughts arising in the head. This means that involvement with the external world is growing from minute to minute. But internal feelings are not developing with steadiness and purity. Aeons change. The world is changing. But man's heart is not getting transformed. Man is growing, but his heart is not expanding. It is only when the heart widens that humanness will find fulfilment.

Why is the heart of man not broadening at the present time? The reason is the secular education that is prevalent today. This educational system is diverting man's attention towards the external world. The student concentrates his attention on worldly and technical knowledge. He devotes no attention to knowledge of spiritual and ethical importance.

True devotion, should be firm and unwavering

All pose as devotees. All appear to be spiritual aspirants. But when you enquire into their actions, you find they are shallow and pretentious. The proverb says: "When troubles come, think of Venkataramana (God)." Similarly these so-called devotees think of God when they have troubles, but forget Him when the troubles are over. True devotion should be firm and unwavering, unselfish and free from any expectation of reward. Devotional activities should be unaffected by any kind of troubles and tribulations, by censure or praise. That alone is Bhakthi (devotion). It is when a man develops such devotion that he would be able to experience the Divine. Students today are completely lost in studies which are worldly- and ephemeral. Spiritual knowledge is ridiculed. Spirituality is treated as a kind of hysteria. Once an ochre-robed person, was going in a bazar. School boys and college students followed him, talking flippantly about him. He took no notice of them. He was proceeding from one village to another. The students indulged in all kinds of abusive language with a view to provoking the mendicant. But the mendicant walked on and sat under a tree on the outskirts of the village.

The students went on railing at him and exhausted all their stock of abuse. As they were silent the mendicant asked them, "Children, have you any more

words to be used against me? Come out with them even now, as I have to go to the next village." One insolent youth among them asked: "What will happen when you go to the next village?" The mendicant replied' "Child, I will do nothing. Praise or blame attaches only to this body and not to my Self. But, there are in the next village a large number of people who have high regard for me. If you indulge in your abuses of me there, the villagers will trash you. To save you from this experience I am informing you in advance." On hearing this, the students had a change of heart. They felt: "In spite of all the abuses we levelled at him, this noble being was totally unaffected, did not lose his temper and taught us the right behaviour." They prostrated at the feet of the mendicant and craved for his Kshama (forgiveness).

To forgive is Divine

Forgiveness is a quality that every man should possess. That forgiveness is Truth itself, it is Righteousness, it is the Veda. It is the supreme virtue in this world. Hence, all people should develop the quality of forgiveness. People should remain unaffected by what others may say. A true man is one who overcomes the ups and downs of life with fortitude. One should not recoil before reverses of fortune. One should bravely face them and overcome them. Whoever aspires to win the grace of God should cultivate at the outset the quality of Kshama. It is a divine quality. Man is permeated from head to foot by the six mortal vices' lust, anger greed, attachment, pride and envy. His heart is the source of qualities like sympathy, compassion, non violence and peace. The very term, Hridhaya, means the place - Hridh - which has Dhaya (Compassion). People get agitated over trifles. They should not dissipate their energies in this manner. There are innumerable talents latent in man, of which he is unaware.

Win God's grace through love

Naradha wanted to teach Sathyabhama the supreme greatness of some human qualities of which she was not aware. He brought about a situation in which Krishna was to be weighed in a balance and reacquired by Sathyabhama by offerings in the other balance. All her jewels and wealth

could not tilt the balance in her favour. Ultimately she prayed to Rukmini to come to her rescue. Rukmini came, prayed to Krishna, saying that "if it is true that God submits himself to a devotee who offers with love a leaf, a flower, a fruit or some water, let my thulasi leaf turn the scales against Krishna." The esoteric meaning of this prayer is that the body should be considered as a leaf, the heart as a flower, virtue as fruit and the tears of joy flowing from the devotee's eyes as the water offered to the Divine in a spirit of complete surrender. Tears should be shed only for God and not for anyone else. Whatever one's grief one should not shed tears. Tears may flow out of joy or enthusiasm or ecstasy, but not from a feeling of sorrow. Naradha enacted the entire scene to demonstrate to Sathyabhama what glorious qualities Rukmini possessed and the greatness of her devotion. He told Sathyabhama: "The Lord will not succumb to wealth. He will yield only to goodness. Rukmini is a supremely good woman. Follow her example." In this manner Naradha humbled Sathyabhama's pride. Man is endowed with limitless, latent abilities, which will manifest themselves at the appropriate moment. Every devotee has these unseen and unknown abilities. Man contains within himself all the powers and all the substances that exist anywhere in the cosmos. All objects in the world, including gold and diamonds, derive their value from man. Man is more valuable than all the things of the world. Unfortunately, today the human being, who is inherently divine, is devalued and degraded. Human values are born with man. They are not got from outside. Man in his ignorance is not aware of these values. When man sheds his ignorance, he will experience his divine nature.

Image of God can be seen in the mirror of Nature

People want to see God. How can they do it? Are they able to see themselves? They need a mirror to see themselves. Nature is the mirror in which the image of God can be seen. A mirror needs a mercury coating to be able to reflect an object. To see God in Nature, the mirror has to be coated with the mercury of love. Prema (Love) is vital for everything. Today, in the place of love we have hatred and aversion instead of compassion. What is the inner significance of describing God as Hridhayavasi (Indweller in the heart)? He resides in the form of Dhaya (compassion) in the heart. If there is no

compassion it is no heart at all. I advise, the students to avoid excessive speech and not to give way to anger. Everyone should realise that God is with him, beside him and around him all the time. Mukundan (who had addressed the gathering earlier) said that "If you take ten steps towards Bhagavan, he takes hundred steps towards you." But whither should you take these ten steps? No one seems to think about that. If you take ten steps towards evil, falsehood, injustice and wickedness, will I take hundred steps in that direction? No. Your steps should be in the direction of what is good. What is good? The steps should lead upwards spiritually. So, if you ascend ten steps, I shall help you to climb a hundred steps. You should move in the right direction, not the wrong one. To the extent you yearn and pine for God, God will pine for you a thousandfold. You can have no conception of Thapam (God's pining). Your pining is Thamas, God's pining is thapas (penance). The difference between the two should be understood.

Kuchela and Krishna

God offers you in return manifold what you offer to Him. This is what Kuchela told his wife. He went to Krishna to ask for many material gifts. But on seeing the Divine face of Krishna, he forgot all his desires. On his return to his native village he found that big mansions had sprung up at the spot of his old dwelling. Kuchela's wife came out, finely dressed and wearing many ornaments, and greeted her husband with the remark: "Lord, see what wonderful things Shri Krishna has given to you?" Kuchela looked at everything and said: "I did not ask Bhagavan for anything. I did not speak to him about our domestic situation. Is it necessary for me to say anything to the omnipresent, all knowing Lord?" Kuchela then described in detail to his wife how Krishna had received him in His palace and how He hugged Kuchela to His bosom and showered His love on him. "How can I describe His loving kindness? Is there anyone like him who can confer all prosperity on one after receiving fistful of parched rice? He is Love incarnate and Love is He." (Svami recited a Telugu poem). Today the devotee behaves differently towards God. He goes with a mountain of desires to the temple and offers a small coconut. This is not what you should offer to God. What you should offer is a pure, unsullied heart. If you offer little, God gives you much in return. This means

that some kind of offering should be made to God. Dhraupadhi offered a grain of rice to Krishna with devotion and Krishna, in return, appeased the hunger of thousands of Dhurvasa's disciples. God needs nothing for Himself. Whatever you offer is for your own sake.

What God seeks is a heart filled with love

Today, Kerala celebrates the beginning of the new year. Keralites prepare a variety of dishes (aviyal, poriyal, etc.) to be offered to God as prasadam. The offering is only placed in the shrine. But it is all consumed by them later. If God were to consume the offering, it is unlikely that any Naivdhyam (offering) would be made at all. What you have to offer to God is your heart. What God seeks is a heart filled with love. There is nothing greater in the world than such a heart.

We are celebrating the advent of the new year. But what we should celebrate is the coming of every new moment. A year is made up of seconds, minutes, hours, days and months. Why wait for a whole year? Greet every new second as a new moment for celebration. Contemplate on God: every moment as your life-breath. To make God approach you, you have to engage yourself in the service of others, in conferring joy on them, and in activities which will please God. Subject all that you do to the test of divine pleasure. Although the new year is celebrated by Andhras, Tamils, and Keralites on different dates, the year is only one. How often have these festivals been celebrated? What has been achieved thereby? Nothing! How far have people earned God's grace? How are they enjoying it? Without seeking answers to these questions, people cannot have God-realisation, however long they may be with Bhagavan. The Gopikas prayed for proximity to Krishna in whatever form He manifested Himself - as a flower, or a tree or a mountain or the sky. They were totally innocent of spiritual exercises of any kind. They dedicated all their actions to Krishna. Developing such love in your hearts, You should sow the seeds of love in the hearts of people who are bereft of love today. Water the hearts with love, grow the plants of love and enjoy the harvest of love.

Joy is your birth-right; Shanthi is your inmost nature. The Lord is your Self and support. Do not discard it; do not be led away from the path of faith by stories invented by malice and circulated by spite.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

11. Nearness to God

Date: 06 May 1995 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Easwaramma Day

Vedham etham Purusham Mahantham
Adithyavarnam thamsah parasthath (Purusha Shuktham).

IN ANCIENT days the sages, who were doing Thapas and finally had a vision of the Reality, declared that they had realised the Divine, whose effulgence was that of the sun, beyond the darkness of ignorance. They also taught that God is the embodiment of Truth and had to be experienced as such. They declared that one who does not see this truth is akin to an animal. That is why there is the saying that one who is revelling in untruth is only an animal. Truth issues from *Prema*. In this world there is nothing greater than prema. The more you love, the more blissful you become. Divinity is the embodiment of love. Love shines as the eternal truth in every one's heart. However, it will be dormant in the heart of the selfish. Prema shines only in the heart of the person who is selfless. Love cannot co-exist with ego and pomp. Love is the royal path that can take you to the highest state of the Divine. This love has to be experienced and shared with all. When love is directed towards the ephemeral world it is *Anuraga* (attachment). When it is directed towards God it is true love. Worldly experiences confer only temporary happiness. Love towards the *Paramatma* (the Supreme Self), who is eternal and changeless, will confer eternal bliss. Every individual should know the difference between Prema and Anuraga. Many people profess that they love God. But, in reality; not even one in a million loves God in the true sense of the term. They may love God for securing some selfish material benefits. This is not true devotion at all.

True devotion is unpolluted by selfish motives

What is devotion? It is not merely offering several types of worship or going

on pilgrimage. Unalloyed and true love for love's sake alone constitutes devotion. True devotion is the love flowing from a pure heart unpolluted by selfish motives. Love is the intimate bond of relationship between the devotee and the Lord. There are nine types of devotion. But they are not equal to Prema (Pure Love). All the 18 yogas mentioned in the Bhagavath Geetha, such as Jnana Yoga, Karma Yoga, Vibhuthi Yoga etc., are contained in Bhakthi yoga. There is nothing beyond this. Do you want to realise God? Do you want to tread the spiritual path and redeem your life? Then, it is enough if you pursue the *Prema Marga* (path of pure love). **There is no power greater than Prema (love) in this world because it is selfless and pure.** Though several yogas are available for practice, each and every yoga contains an element of selfishness. But prema, is free from selfishness. It is only because of the absence of such selfless love that chaos, conflicts and confusion are prevalent in the world. One who is interested in the welfare of humanity should practise this principle of true love. The life of an individual bereft of love is a sheer waste.

Sages spent their time in the forests amidst wild animals. They lived amicably side by side with them. The animals did not harm these sages. What is the reason? The sages had no weapons at all. They had the sole weapon of love. With this weapon they were able to tame the wild animals. But, in these days, while calling themselves human beings, men are behaving worse than animals. The reason is rank selfishness. Whatever they think, say or do, selfishness is the basic motive. The result is they are not able to enjoy peace.

From truth to peace

How is peace to be got? When you plant the seed of Truth in the heart and make faith take deep root, with the rain of chanting God's name, peace blossoms, yielding the fruit of Liberation.

Therefore, every human being should sow the seed of Truth in his heart. The

deeper the root of faith goes down, the stronger will be the tree of life. You must provide water for the flourishing growth of the tree by means of *Bhajana* and *Dhaiva Chinthana* (singing the glory of God). Only then the flower of *Shanthi* (peace) will bloom and from this the fruit of liberation will be attained.

Human life has four stages. It can be described as a four-storeyed mansion. Any structure can be safe and sound only when the foundation is strong.

Brahmacharya (Celibacy) is the foundation for the structure of life. The first floor is the stage of *Grihastha* (householder leading a married life). The second floor is *Vanaprastha* (preparatory to renunciation) and the third floor is *Sanyasa* (Renunciation).

This year is called *Yuva* (Youth). Youth should develop strongly the foundation of celibacy so that when they reach the other stages they can be ideal persons. They should develop Prema towards God. This is the only way to build their strength. People think that the world is separate from them. The entire universe is in the heart of each individual.

"Vishvam Vishnusvaruupam."

The universe is but a manifestation of the Divine, which is within the heart of every individual.

Vishnu is the cause and the universe is the effect.

All the three worlds are within everyone

There are three states of consciousness in man - the waking state, the dream state and the deep sleep state. All the three states are in every individual. The three governing powers in these states are *Vishva*, *Thaijasa* and *Prajna* respectively. The Gayathri manthra "Om Bhur Bhuvas Suvah" is related to

these three. We think that Bhuuloka is the world that we live in, Bhuvarloka is svarga and Suvarloka is beyond that. This is not correct. All the three worlds are in our heart only. The outside world we see is the material world formed of inert matter. You may ask how this can be called inert when there is a lot of movement. The world that you see is *Bhu* and the power that causes the movement is: *Bhuvah* or *Prana* shakthi (Life-force) which can be termed as Vibration. It is the force of vibration that activates all the limbs of the body. When air is pumped into a tyre we see this force in play which causes the tyre to bloat. Prana (Life-force) is Bhuvah. Because of the *Prajnana*, which is inside, the Life-force is able to cause vibration and activate the limbs. The source of prajna is *Suvaha* (Radiation). When you analyse in this manner, it will be seen that Bhur-Bhuvas-Suvah represents the forces of Radiation, Vibration and Materialisation.

It is the existence of these potencies in man that makes human birth very precious. But its value is now being mined by people getting immersed in fleeting sensual pleasures. Humanness is entirely forgotten. It cannot be acquired by learning from a teacher or studying text books. It is born with the human being. It is there in everyone. People are not able to understand this truth today.

Reason for codification of Vedas by Vyasa

The Vedas are infinite and human life is limited. How to master the infinite within the short span of one's life? Keeping this problem in view, Sage Vyasa codified the Vedas into four major divisions and named them Rig, Yajur, Sama and Atharva Vedas. Rig Veda is *Manthra-Svaruupa* (consisting of Mantras). The Yajur Veda is a compilation of rituals and the Sama Veda is a compilation of riks set to music. In order to maintain the health of the individual and ensure the protection of the country, the Atharva Veda was compiled. Sage Vyasa, who codified these four Vedas and wrote 18 puranas, finally gave one stanza as the essence of all the puranas, namely,

"It is meritorious to render help to others. It is sinful to cause harm to them,"
"Paropakarah punyaya, papaya parapeedanam."

The inner meaning of the declaration by Vyasa should be understood by everyone. *Para* means Brahma, *Upa* means nearness and *Kara* means go. **So this term Paropakara means travel towards the Atma and go nearer the Paramatma.** Chanting the name of God or doing other forms of worship will not help you to go near God, though they are good deeds. It is only by selfless service you can get nearer to God. This is real Punya.

"Papaya Parapeedanam". According to worldly interpretation, this means that it is a sin to hurt others. But there is an inner meaning for this. *Para* means Atma. *Peedanam* means 'hurting.' The same principle of Atma is in everyone. You should not hurt the Atma. What is meant by this is that you should realise the oneness of the Atma in all. If you do not realise this and act contrary to the principle, it is 'hurting.'

When there is Prema there is no grief

You are considering the bodies which are different in form as different from you. To do so is sin. You must only see the Atma in all. There are many bulbs of different shapes and sizes here in this hall. But the electric current that makes them shine is only one. The *Atmathathva*, the principle of Atma, is the one current that activates all the bodies which are like bulbs of different hues and shapes. "To see diversity is sin" says Vyasa. He taught the world to see the One in the many. You should follow this principle and develop Prema, the principle of love, towards all. When there is Prema there is no grief.

You need not waste time in trying to study all the sacred texts, as they are innumerable and your life-span is very short. All that is needed is to cultivate the Premathathva (Love principle). There is no greater power than this in the world. It is the supreme among all virtues. Real love is beyond the three

categories of time past, present and future. Love towards God, the permanent changeless entity, alone is fit to be called Prema

The meaning of Gayathri Manthra

In the Gayathri Manthra, the unity of body, mind and soul is depicted in the first line as "Bhur-Bhuvah-Suvaha."

The next line "Bhargo Dhevasya Dheemahi " means "Throw away the darkness."

"Dheeyo yonah Prachodhayath " means: "Let the effulgence of the Divine dispel the darkness of ignorance."

Gayathri is pervading everywhere. It consists of three deities, Gayathri, Savithri and Sarasvathi. Of these, the first one is master of the senses. The second is the teacher of truth and the third is the master of speech. Hence it is Trinity of the senses, the mind and speech.

Gayathri is hailed as *Chandhasam mathah* (the Mother of all Vedas).

Gayathri has five faces and is the embodiment of all deities - Sarva dhevatha Svaruupam.

Sthothra (description of the glory), *Dhyana* (meditation) and *Prarthana* (prayer) are all contained in the Gayathri Manthra. When does a prayer become meaningful? It is only when you stabilise your mind and turn it towards God. The basis for this is to meditate, pray and experience. It is essential to achieve harmony in thought, word and deed. Gayathri is teaching this great lesson.

Significance of Upanayanam

Every small word or phrase in a manthra has immense inner meaning. It cannot be dismissed as superstition. Modern education has ruined our ancient Bharatheeya culture. You should know the meaning of the manthras. People want the fruits of meritorious deeds but they indulge in sinful action. How can you get good results when your action is faulty or sinful? Youth today must pledge themselves to speak the truth, develop love and have unshakable faith in God. They will then be able to establish peace in the world. This is the significance of *Yagnopaveetham* (the sacred thread ceremony). *Upanayanam* is a *Samskara* (sacrament) that makes a boy fit for pursuing the highest wisdom. There is no difference between one child and another at the time of birth. All are born out of the mother's womb only. This is the first stage of life (*sudra*). The second stage is getting the *upadhesha* of Gayathri at the time of Upanayanam, when the boy becomes a *Dhvija* (twice-born). He is then purified. The third stage is *Vipra*, when one has mastered the study of the Vedas. The fourth stage is *Brahmana* when he actually realises the Brahman through the knowledge of the Self.

One becomes a Brahmana not by birth but only when one realises the Supreme Brahman. One becomes a Brahmana by action and not by birth. Prahladha said that a father can be proud of his son not at the time of the son's birth but only when the son attains fame as a good man. It is only then that his birthday can be celebrated. Those of you who have had this sacred teaching of Gayathri today are very lucky. On this very auspicious day; you have all taken a second birth. You must forget the past. The present is very important. From today onwards you must develop love of God and get a good name. Though God is the Creator of all beings, you must understand that while God created mud and water, it is the potter that is responsible for creating a pot by mixing the mud and water, similarly God has created *chaithanya* (consciousness) and *jada* (matter). Your father and mother have together given you your body and brought you up. It is, therefore, your duty to make your parents happy. If you don't please them, or if you ignore them, you cannot be happy. You must develop love for your parents, study well, imbibe the sacred culture of Bharath and lead noble lives as ideal sons of

your parents.

Gayathri will protect your body, make your intellect shine and improve your power of speech. That is why Gayathri is considered to be very important for this second stage of your life, which you are entering today.

How should you live? You should live in accordance with the Upanishathic prayer

"Sahana Vavathu Sahanou Bhunakthu Sahaveeryam Karavavahai"
(Let us grow together, live together and develop love together).

From such living, you get divinity. Unity leads to purity, and purity to divinity. Where there is no unity, you get enmity and hatred.

All mothers are Goddesses

Today is Eswaramma day, the day of the *Mathru Dhevatha* (Mother Goddess). All mothers are goddesses. That is why in Bharath, people follow the maxim:

Esteem the mother, the father, the teacher and the guests as God.

Once when Seetha was teaching how to worship God, Rama intervened and said: "Oh simple-minded one! Who is greater in the world than the mother and the father? They know our difficulties and needs. They are able to understand our feelings. They are able to fulfill all our wants. Having such known entities who take interest in your welfare, why should you go after unknown entities?"

At all times, the parents are there looking after you, You have to worship them. The mother can be compared to the earth and the father to the seed. Unless the seed is sown in the earth the plant will not sprout. You cannot ignore the father and mother who are responsible for your birth and growth. Even if you become the Prime Minister you must remember you owe your birth in the world to your mother. You must develop humility and discrimination as a mark of education.

You should not discard love of God at any time. If you forget God, you are not human but demonic. Money, beauty and youth will not last long. Nowadays, people are not getting rid of attachment and arrogance even in old age. I composed a drama when I was young under the title, "Cheppinatlu Chesthara? " (Do you do as you say?) Now I have to ask: "Cheppinatlu Chesinara ?" (Have you done as I told you?").

If you go on concentrating on your family alone till death, what is it you derive finally? None of these people will come with you on your final journey. **It is the love of God that will come with you even after death. Develop love and sanctify your life with that Prema principle. Chant the Gayathri morning, noon and evening.** You do so many things. Why don't you chant this Gayathri? I bless all of you that you may sanctify your life in this way, making it useful and meaningful.

12. Restoration of Moral Values

Date: 20 May 1995 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Summer Course 1995

Knowledge enhances man's status; it is a Hidden Treasure.
Knowledge confers Joy, Fame and Happiness; it is the teacher of teachers,
It is one's kinsman in travels abroad; it is a third Eye for Man.
Even kings adore Knowledge, and not Wealth; without Knowledge one is an animal.
(Sanskrit Shloka)

STUDENTS! Teachers and lovers of education!

In this work-a-day world, knowledge is the adornment for man. It is hidden wealth. It is the basis of fame, happiness, and comforts. It is a teacher for teachers. It serves as a relation when one goes abroad. It is like a third eye for a man. Such sacred knowledge qualifies the person for honour at the courts of kings. It is more precious than riches. A man without such sacred knowledge is verily like an animal.

Embodiments of love!

Just as when a child is born, he is able to recognise his mother, likewise every student should recognise his motherland and its history and culture. The Motherland is the land of his birth. The nation's culture is like one's father. Without understanding the country's culture one cannot understand the true state of the nation. Bharath's culture is unexcelled. Bharatheeyas were known for their adherence to Truth and Dharma . Justice was their life breath. Bharath's culture represents the eternal verities which are unaffected by the ravages of time or the vicissitudes of history. Students should realise that if they cherish Truth and Righteousness, the nation will get automatically protected. Success seeks Truth and Righteousness and not wealth or

possessions.

Decline in human values

Students acquire human values, in addition to their scholastic, intellectual and other attainments. It is the decline in human values that accounts for the degradation of human-beings in the country today.

Technology has made great strides in modern times. The advances in other fields need no mention. The revolutionary advances in technology have brought about many changes in national life. The most important change is the decay of morals. All spiritual and ethical values have been undermined. Moral standards have collapsed. Hence, students today should be more concerned about good qualities than about knowledge. Society can progress only through men of virtue. Every student should have the welfare of society in view and have service as the ideal. What is education? It is not mere acquaintance with books. Can mere ability to read and write be regarded as education or even the acquisition of degrees? True education is associated with the ideal goals of life. Today all ideals have been perverted.

"Qualities like compassion and goodness have been replaced by unrighteous conduct. The ancient teachings have been given up. Education has gone astray," says a Kannada poem.

India gave the message of peace to the world in ancient times because of its spiritual leadership. Then, as well as now, the Bharatheeya message has been "Let all the people everywhere be happy."

Who are to blame for failure of educational system?

Who are responsible for the failure of the educational system? The parents at home, the teachers in schools and colleges, the leaders of society have failed

to set the right examples and hence the students have gone astray. The parents at home tell the children one thing and act differently themselves. Teachers likewise teach one thing and act differently themselves. Leaders also preach one thing and practise another. Students are intelligently observing these double standards. They are induced to take to wrong courses by this divorce between words and deeds. Obviously, the elders are setting a bad example. The parents are not anxious to see that their children develop good qualities and lead ideal lives. Their affection for children is natural but it should not be, as in the case of Dhritrashtra, such as to encourage the children in evil ways. It is only if children are corrected and punished for their misconduct that they will learn to behave properly in society.

Every student today wants to lead a comfortable life. But they have no idea what comfort really means. They argue that comfort consists in eating, drinking and leading a free and easy life. But spending one's time in this manner is unworthy of a human being. The preciousness of human life has to be realised. To lead an animal existence is unbecoming for any student or anyone else. The first need is self-restraint and control of the senses. Only then can true bliss be secured. This alone will confer true freedom.

Freedom emanates from Spirit

Freedom does not mean living as you please. Sva-Thantra (True freedom) emanates from the Spirit. The goal of self-realisation can be attained only through selfcontrol. Knowledge of the Self, control of the senses and Self-realisation constitute true freedom. Bharatheeyas got freedom (from foreign rule) but have not achieved national unity. Unity is essential for achieving anything, as has been declared in the Vedhik saying,

"Let us live together, strive together, impart to others what we have learnt and lead a life of harmony and unity."

India has never lacked, from ancient times, people of knowledge, ability, heroism and courage. But, because of absence of unity among them the country became a prey to foreign conquerors. Students should therefore learn the lesson of unity. The Nation's progress and good name are dependent on the behaviour of the students. Hence, their conduct should be exemplary. Today's students are the future leaders of the country. From now on, you should develop good qualities and cherish ideals of service to the nation. Become heroes in action and plunge into society for service, with self-confidence. Today, people talk about egalitarianism, a new social order and so on. There is no need for a new social system. We need only boys and girls of high character. Only they can save the country and not those who indulge in subversive activities. Humanity is one. If you strive to serve the country unitedly, Bharath will make enviable progress. If all the ninety crores of people in Bharath act as one, Bharath will stand forth as an ideal nation.

The ancient virtues

There are many things about Bharath's achievements in the past which you should know. What did humanness mean in the ancient times?

Forbearance was esteemed as the highest quality.
Adherence to truth was the strictest form of penance.
Maternal love was deemed the sweetest feeling.
Charity was esteemed greater than life itself.
(Telugu poem).

All these have been forgotten, alas, under the regime of our rulers today. Bharatheeyas are unaware of their own past greatness and strength. What glory was there in the past! What spirit of sacrifice! What sense of justice! What devotion to Dharma! All this is forgotten today. Why? Because of limitless selfishness. Only when selfishness and hatred are given up can we enjoy peace. Humanness calls for harmony in thought, word and deed. Today

this harmony is totally lacking.

Pursue studies with welfare of society in view

The educational process should aim at developing character and not merely intellectual abilities. Of what use is it to get a Doctorate without character? Education should have a practical bias which will make the student useful for himself and society.

Students! Pursue your studies with the welfare of society in view. Develop love towards the Motherland, realising that the mother and the Motherland are greater than heaven itself. You owe so much to Bharath. Do your duty to Bharath.

Bharatha-Matha (Mother Bharath) is greatly concerned about the state of her children. You must be good and become ideal students. You must win fame for the country. You must share in the prosperity of the nation with all others. To whatever country you may belong, cherish love for your country.

"All are one. Be alike to everyone."

Don't give room for differences of race, creed or nation.

There is only one race, the race of humanity.
There is only one caste, the caste of spirituality.
There is only one language, the language of the heart.
There is only one God, the Supreme Divinity,
that is present in all beings and permeates the entire cosmos.

The Divine is present in every atom. Everything in the world is composed of

energy and matter. Einstein called it "Supreme Power." Bharatheeyas described it as Dhivya-Shakthi (Divine Energy). In every human being this divine energy is present. It is this which makes man live and survive.

Students! There are many here who have come to study science. Scientists have invented many new kinds of machinery and instruments. But the scientists have not recognized that there is one machine which exceeds all other machines put together. The scientists have produced satellites which go round the earth and spacecraft that can land on the moon. They are harnessing solar energy. They have made atom bombs and hydrogen bombs. There is one machine that is more powerful than all these. That is the human body. Man is the maker of all these machines. The marvellous powers of the human body are not fully recognized by any one. You should examine your own potentialities. It is man's potent power that has created all the wonderful machines. All the powers in the world are within you. The outside world is a reflection of your inner being. Students should recognise this truth. Various scientists are being praised. But all powers are within you, electrical power, magnetic power, the power of light and fire and radiation. Every human being is a computer. Every individual is mini-generator. Every person is a lamp and a radio station.

Tension and temper destroy humanness

Our ancients knew the secret of enjoying peace. Today even a tiny tot suffers from "tension." Where there is tension there is temper. Tension and temper are jointly destroying humanness. How can peace be found? Peace has to be found within each of us. You are the embodiment of peace and truth, You are the embodiment of love. Instead of realising the truth about themselves students are engaged in studying various subjects, thereby missing the main object of education. Just as the most complicated and expensive machine cannot work without electric power, the human machine cannot work without divine energy. Students! You have a powerful machine in your body. Activate it with Divine energy. You have all the power you need within yourself. Being unaware of it, you misuse it You should not waste time, which once lost cannot be recalled. Utilise all your learning for the service of society.

Experience the life Divine, by putting into practice a fraction of what you learn from the Geetha. Practise any one of the human values. Prema is the basis for all the values.

Action with love is right conduct.
Speak with love and it becomes-truth.
Thinking with love results in peace.
Understanding with love leads to non-violence.

For everything love is primary. Where there is love there is no place for hatred.

Cultivate humility and discipline

Make right use of the period of youth. Banish conceit. Respect your parents and elders. Cultivate humility and discipline. A boy is judged by his behaviour and a man by his manners. A devotee is judged by his discipline. In these summer classes you must try to understand how to realise Divinity, how to lead a spiritual life in the work-a-day world, and how to render service in the best way possible and how to lead an ideal life. The poet Eliot defined culture as "a way of life." But Bharatheeya Culture has far wider connotations. Life itself is culture. What is done from moment to moment is an expression of culture. Having been born in this sacred land of Bharath you should learn to behave in such a way that you please Bharatmatha. Mother Bharath is deeply distressed not only over the conduct of students but all others in this nation. No section of the people is behaving properly. Even in the field of spirituality, the Motherland has cause for grief. The garb is changed, but not the qualities. Treat the Motherland as the mother and our culture as the father. Students today have no patriotism. Students must be prepared to give even their lives to protect the integrity and honour of the motherland.

We are unaware of the significance of being Hindus. What does

Hindu mean?

H for Humanity I for Individuality N for Nationality D for Divinity U for Unity

It is when all the five qualities are present, we have a real Hindu. Of these humanity is most important.

Students!

Make best use of the next ten days and try to practise what you learn. You have listened today to the addresses of the Chief Minister and the Education Minister of Karnataka. You must try to imbibe the ideals they have set forth before you and live upto them. The Chief Minister has been deeply concerned about the state of the nation and of Karnataka for many years. Even now he is keen to do some lasting good to the country. Well-meaning persons are always confronted with obstacles. Those troubles only serve to ennoble them, just as a diamond gets added value from more cuts. Students should face all the challenges of life and serve the country well. Discourse at the Inauguration of the Summer Course in Indian Culture and Spirituality in the

13. Experience the Divine

Date: 20 May 1995 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Kunwar Ba Auditorium

STUDENTS! To illumine a lighted lamp, you don't need another lamp. Likewise, it is foolish to try to illumine the effulgent Atma by the light of any other knowledge. It is a sign of ignorance to embark on a search for the Atma principle which is all-pervading, effulgent and unchanging. No individual tries to search himself in the world outside. Similarly, is it not sheer ignorance to search for the Atma when he himself is the Atma? Bharath has been propagating this sacred truth over many aeons. Bharath is the birth-place of spiritual enquiry, generosity and righteousness. It was the home of peace and non-violence. Nowhere else in the world can be seen that interest in the pursuit of Truth which Bharath had. The seven great sages were born in Bharath. It is the land which gave birth to the Adhikavi almeeki and the great codifier of the Vedas, the sage Vyasa. It is the sacred land where Lord. Krishna delivered His message. It is the sacred land where Rama established Rama Rajya. It is the most sacred land of the Buddha. From ancient times, Bharath has never been bereft of people revelling in righteousness and charity and dedicated to the contemplation of God.

Like food for body; God is vital for mind

In the contemplation of God there can be no difference of caste or creed, no distinctions based on age or language. It is open to everyone. Like food for the body; God is vital for the mind. In the practice of devotion there may be some ludicrous exercises. But even in such exercises, there is a spiritual under-current.

For instance, a student may pray to God for passing in his examination. A litigant may pray for success in his dispute. Why go so far? Some people pray even for securing a seat in a bus! In this manner Bharatheeyas have looked to God for help in trivial and serious matters. This may be regarded as a form of craziness or a kind of religious delusion, or even foolishness. Whatever people may say, each one is entitled to his madness. Each has a right to his beliefs,

his faith and his appetite. No one has the authority to deny their right. Their beliefs are their business. However, beliefs may require some basis. The discovery of a bridegroom does not decide the marriage of a bride. Finding some money will not ensure the launching of a business. Other accessories are needed for the purpose. By merely learning the alphabet, one cannot start writing letters. Letter-writing calls for knowledge of words and sentences. Likewise, knowledge of worldly matters will not enable the understanding of God. Spiritual knowledge is also necessary. The acquisition of spiritual knowledge calls for enquiry into truth. To start with, every man has to understand the nature of the universe. He should also understand the life principle. Only those who understand the nature of living beings in the Universe can know the secret of the Divine.

Science and spirituality

From ancient times, wise sages and scientists have been investigating the secrets of the Universe. Galileo discovered some facts about the movement of planets. The earth is going round the sun at the rate of 18000 miles per second. It completes the round in 365 days. Who is responsible for the earth's motion? Why is it rotating? On what basis is it revolving? We find that night and day are caused by the earth revolving on its axis. The earth's motion round the sun is the cause of seasons, which enable man to raise food, etc. Whatever the Divine does, whether it is something small or great, it is for the good of mankind. There is a power at work about which we are ignorant. This was described as the Ajnatha Shakthi (the unknown power). The ancients called it Dhivya Shakthi (power of God). Another scientist, exploring the secrets of Nature, came to the conclusion that understanding the powers of Nature means understanding God. The great scientist, Einstein, discovered the convertibility of matter and energy and declared that energy is convertible into various forms but cannot be created or destroyed. Students who perform experiments in the laboratory should bear in mind an important truth. They know that water is made up of hydrogen and oxygen. But who created hydrogen and oxygen without which there can be no water? Likewise nothing can exist without a basis. Science is concerned with substances that are liable to change. Spirituality is concerned with the basic unchanging

entity.

The term spirituality is bandied about in various ways. We talk about culture and spirituality. Culture was defined as "a way of life." In Sanskrit parlance, it is called Samskriti or the refinement of behaviour. It was declared that for this refinement of behaviour spirituality is the means.

What is spirituality? People regard various rituals and forms of worship as spirituality. Spirituality is concerned with the spirit of love. Science is engaged in "split of love." The splitting process in science results in changes. The "Spirit of love" in spirituality is permanent and unchanging. Hence, culture grows out of the spirit of love. There can be no culture without love. Spirituality implies a power that is associated with love. Einstein felt that the unchanging power that underlies energy may be described as divine. But he could not go any further.

Discovering God

However, many spiritual seekers undertook various exercises to discover God. At one time, some aspirants approached Buddha and asked him whether he had any awareness of God. On this issue, Buddha remained silent. Later on he told his disciple ' "Son, there is no meaning in having controversies over the unknown. Don't go into such questions. Divinity is not perceptible. It is beyond human comprehension, not within the reach of the mind or speech. However, the Divinity that I know has three forms: Truth, Righteousness and Non-violence. I consider these three as the embodiments of Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshvara. First of all, follow the truth and act according to Dharma. Lead a life of non-violence. This is true spiritual sadhana." Truth is God. The Vedas declared' "Speak the truth; follow Righteousness." There is no greater divinity than these two. Where truth reigns, there Divinity is present. Where Righteousness is prevalent, there the Divine exists as Dharma.

One who adheres to Dharma is embodiment of God

It was because Rama stood by the plighted word, pursued Dharma

renouncing the Kingdom and choosing to live in the forest, that Vashishta hailed him as .the very embodiment of Dharma. To honour the promise given by the father, the son was prepared to undergo such an ordeal. He sacrificed everything for truth. He ceaselessly practised Dharma. He was regarded as God incarnate. Any one who adheres to Dharma, whoever he may be, is verily the embodiment of God.

In our own times, some people approached Ramakrishna Paramahansa and put him the question' "Svami! Have you seen God?" "Oh yes, I have seen Him." They then asked: "In what form did you see Him?" "I saw Him just as you are seeing me," declared Ramakrishna Paramahansa. "How is that possible?" they asked. "This is possible. You do not have that intense yearning needed to see God. You take endless trouble to acquire possessions. You shed tears over petty matters, you weep night and day for the sake of riches. Have you shed a single tear for God?" There is a poem of Jayadheva in which he declared that if a fraction of the trouble which people take for the sake of the family and wealth, were to be devoted to God, they would have no fear of death). Ramakrishna Paramahansa told them: "'You are totally absorbed in worldly desires. How can you experience God?"

The apparent and the invisible

Atheists, the Charvakas and the scientists want to have direct perceptible proof for the existence of God. They ask: "How are we to believe in something which is not visible to the eye, and cannot be grasped by the hand?" Scientists who demand such proofs should be considered extremely foolish. For instance, you see an individual. His height is 5 feet 6 inches. You can measure it. His weight is 63 Kgs. as shown by the weighing machine. His complexion is fair. He has a bald head. All these are evident to the eye. Is this the truth about him? Yes, so far as the external measurements and appearances are concerned. But the man has qualities which are not apparent and beyond measurement. He has kindness, determination, spirit of sacrifice, compassion, all of which are not visible to the eye and. cannot be measured. You cannot notice them even if he is dissected. On this account can it be said that he does not have them? It is these qualities which make

him a useful being. It is the invisible qualities which lend meaning to the visible features. It follows that what is not apparent provides the proof for what is apparent. You fool! Realise that

What is not apparent is That which makes you suffer The consequences of past actions.

To consider apparent as the only reality is foolish

To deny what is not perceptible by the senses as nonexistent is foolish. Equally, to consider the apparent as the only reality is foolish. For example, you see a tree full of branches. The scientist sees it and says that is the truth. But the spiritual Jnani looks at the roots, without which the tree cannot exist. The one who looks at the branches will not see the roots, the one who looks for the roots will not bother about the branches. The question arises: Which are more important, roots or branches? If the roots are there, the tree will remain even if the branches are cut. But if the roots are gone, the tree will not survive. It is the unseen roots which enable us to see the branches. Likewise, there is an invisible Divine power which underlies all that is seen in the phenomenal Universe. It is because of that power that we are able to perceive the universe. Here are some more examples- You have the fragrance of a flower. Fragrance has no form but you enjoy it. Can its existence be denied because it is not visible or can be touched or tasted? Likewise, love has no form, but the mother who shows love has a form. Fragrance has no form but the flower which exudes it has a form. Similarly, Anandha (bliss) has no form, but there is a form for the Divinity that confers bliss. What is that form? It is a form beyond comprehension by the senses. It may be associated with anything. Yet another example. Air has no form. What is the form of water? Water is visible. Air has no form but you can experience its presence. When does air acquire a form? When a football or a balloon, is filled with air, it acquires their form. Water assumes the form of the container. Likewise, whatever the form in which the devotee worships the Divine, God appears in that form. What is the reason for this? The feelings of the devotees endow the form for the Divine. This is called Bhavaruupam (the form caused by the feeling). Dhyana (Meditation) is the means by which the form is

experienced. Whatever the feeling about the form which the devotee cherishes, God assumes that form for him. The Lord appears in the form that you envisage. Divinity cannot be defined in this way or that. That is why it is said that God has a myriad feet, a myriad eyes, a myriad heads and He encompasses everything in the cosmos. He is omnipresent.

No one is entitled to ridicule worship of Nature

Everything in the universe, from sub-atomic particles to the biggest star, has a form: It was this fact that impelled the ancients to worship the Bhu-matha (earth as a Mother). Some scientists ridiculed this adoration as a superstitious worship of mud and stone. They asked what is the meaning of worshipping mud and stone? The answer is: "That mud is the source of our food. The air (over the earth) is enabling us to breathe and live. The sun is enabling the crops to grow. Hence, no one is entitled to ridicule the worship of Nature. It is proper to worship those who help us. What help are the five basic elements rendering to mankind? Without these elements, there will be no world' at all. What, then, is the loss in adoring them?" Some others ask: "Apart from the five elements, you are worshipping stones. How can these stones be treated as God?" The answer is' "You crazy one! Everything is an embodiment of God. Why should not they be worshipped?" "They have no qualities. They have no consciousness. Why do you worship something which is inert and inconscient?" In answer to this, mention may be made of an appropriate example. On August 15th the National Flag is hoisted and it is honoured in various ways. Why is the flag respected? It is a piece of cloth, made up of threads. It has no virtues. It is inconscient. It sways if there is wind. Otherwise it is still. Why is respect shown to such an object? Because it is regarded as a symbol of the freedom that we gained after a struggle. Divinity has to be regarded in the same manner. You have to place your faith in some symbol. In every country, its national flag is honoured. If a flag can be honoured though it has no consciousness, what is wrong in worshipping a stone idol if it has no consciousness? The Divine consciousness is universal.

Devotee's devotional feelings are imprinted in idols

In our daily life, there is an object of general worship. It is wealth. People offer worship to Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth and prosperity, in elaborate rituals. People even consider a hundred rupee note as sacred and press it on their eyes before placing it in the pocket. What is this hundred rupee note? It is made from some pulp. What virtue or merit is there in it? Both theists and atheists value the note for its value as currency. People worship the photo of the father or the grandfather after they have passed away. The reason is that the picture is a reminder of one's ancestor. Similarly, the worshipper of a stone idol is entitled to say: "Doubtless, it is a stone. But the stone bears the image of the God I worship." The devotee's devotional feelings are imprinted on the idol. If one goes about enquiring in this manner, he will realise that God is present in everything. No one is qualified to criticize another's beliefs and practices. You may keep out of them if you like. But you have no right to interfere in other's beliefs.

The quest for truth

Although there have been a variety of beliefs, the ancients laid stress on what they called the quest for truth. What is the rationale of this quest? The reason is that Truth is one. Here is an example. With the same eyes a man sees his mother, his wife, his sister, his child, aunt and several others. The eyes that see are one and the same. But the perspective from which the mother, the sister and all the others are to be seen calls for anveshna (enquiry into the truth about what is seen). The mother has to be viewed as a mother, that is, with filial feelings. This is the search for truth. You cannot treat all alike. You can see them with an equal eye, but the feelings will vary.

Likewise, we have the five senses, each has its own functional role. Enquiry into truth calls for an understanding of what is true and false. A distinction has to be made between an apparent fact and the real truth.

For instance, seeing a flat piece of ground one may say the earth is fiat. In a limited sense this is a fact. But when the nature of the earth is explored, it is proved to be a globe. Moreover, apparent facts are liable to change. A man who is seen wearing certain clothes, today; may be seen in a different dress

tomorrow. Facts relate to momentary appearances. Truth relates to the unchanging reality. It is changeless in all the three categories of time - past, present and future. That is Divinity. What pertains to the individual is subject to change. But what is opposed to both the permanent and the changing is false.

Brahmam is only one without a second

In spirituality, you have insight into such truths. This has been termed "the secret of truth." Why should there be any secrecy about truth? There is a secret within this secret. That is why the Vedas declared: "The Truth is one, it is described variously by the wise." The Vedantha declared: "Ekameva adhvitheeyam" (Brahmam is only one, without a second). Why did they not stop with saying that Brahmam is only one? Why should they go on to say that there is no second? It is to emphasise the oneness of Brahman that the second statement is added. By stating that "God is only One and not two," all room for doubt is eliminated. In this manner the scriptures reveal profound truths. The scientists also conducted numerous experiments and came to the conclusion that there is a unique power, without calling it God. People can call it by any name. But the substance cannot be altered. There is water in this tumbler. That water is given different names in different languages. The names vary but the water remains the same. Likewise, different people adore the Divine under different names and forms. But one thing is common to all of them. God exists. There is only one God. He may be worshipped in different names and forms. Without God there is no universe. It is essential to enquire into the nature of God to strengthen one's faith. For instance, when you examine a piece of cloth you find that it is made up of threads, which are made out of cotton. Cotton is the basis. Threads and cloth are changes in form.

Purity and truth

A child believes whatever the mother says because of faith in her words. The faith may be ascribed to innocence. But in that innocence there is Amayakathvam (the transcending of ignorance). Jesus used to say: "How

happy would I be if only I could be a child for some time in a day!" In that childlike innocence there is freedom from all the lies and deceits of the world. That is purity of mind. In that purity dwells truth. Today we are discarding that purity and leading a polluted life.

Students! Don't get involved in controversies about Divinity. Recognise that there must be a basis for everything. Nothing can exist without it. What the scientists have found so far is an infinitesimal part of the totality of knowledge. They are making much of it. But he who knows everything remains calm and quiet. The argumentative man knows little. If you mean to be a true scientist, you must first learn to control the senses and develop love. There is nothing greater than love. Develop Love. It has to emanate from the heart. It expresses itself as kindness and compassion. Today people behave without compassion. God has been described as the Hridhayavasi (Indweller in the heart). It has been said that a heart filled with compassion is a shrine of the Divine. When you develop that compassion, you will have the vision of God.

The Divine is omnipresent. He is inside, outside and everywhere. God is in the air you breathe and the words you utter. The Divine is in sound as Shabdha Brahman. The radio waves are allpervading. They represent Dhivya Shakthi (power of the Divine). It is the same power that manifests itself as magnetism, electricity and atomic energy. You have to realise the limitless Divine powers latent in the cosmos. The Bhagavatha extols the indescribable and marvellous powers of the Divine. The stories of the Lord confer bliss and immortality.

Need for discrimination

Students! You are not being respected for your education, nor for your personality. You are being respected for your conduct. When a man's behaviour is good, he is respected without any enquiry. Did not Rama confer His grace on Shabari and Jatayu without their asking Him? But Rama did not respond to the entreaties of Dhasharatha. Even the sages in the forests who were earnestly praying to him were not recognized by Rama. The Divine

alone knows when and whom to bless, for what reason and where and in what form. You have to seek the Divine's grace in the right form, at the proper time and place. This calls for discrimination regarding time and circumstances. This is mostly absent today. This discrimination is called "Constant Integrated Awareness." It is described as "Prajnanam Brahma," the humanness that is the Divine Itself. The four great pronouncements in the Vedas are: "Prajnanam Brahma," "Ayam Atma Brahma," "Aham Brahmasmi" and "Thath Thvam Asi." They proclaim the oneness of the Atma and the Omni-Self. I once asked a student: "Who are you?" When a question is asked the reply must be well considered and must be related to one's practice, reflecting one's deep conviction. Remembering what Svami used to say, the student replied- "I am you and you are me." I thought this boy had gone very far! "Is it so?" I asked. "Yes!" he said. "In that case, you go to that shed and give dharshan to the devotees and come back," I said. Who will see him? If you say: "I am Svami and Svami is I," will anyone look upon you as Svami? If that feeling is fully and genuinely within you, you will appear so to others. But if you only mouth the words but don't live up to them, it is no use. Practise and realise the truth.

Supremacy of Bhagavatham

Today the Vice-Chancellor requested Me to speak to the students about the Bhagavatham during the summer course. A knowledge of the Bhagavatham is essential for the boys because it expounds the childhood deeds of Krishna. By understanding the Bhagavatham well, you will become bagavatham (better human beings). All the fruits of sadhana are contained in the Bhagavatham. Ba=Bhakthi, Ga=Jnana, Va=Vairagya, Tha=Thathvam, Mu=Mukthi (devotion, spiritual wisdom, detachment, philosophy and liberation). Bhagavatham is the quintessence of all the Shasthras, it is the goal of all paths. I have decided to give in the next ten days all the essential stories in the Bhagavatham in a manner appealing to the young. It is not enough to listen to these stories. You must put into practice the lessons they convey. Therefore, eat and digest the Bhagavatham, purify your hearts and serve society.

14. Immortal devotees of the Lord

Date: **May 1995** / Location: **Brindavan**

THE inextricable relationship between the devotees and the Lord, a relationship maintained by unassailable and unflinching faith on the one side and a continuous and loving care for the devotee on the other, was the central theme of the series of discourses given by Bhagavan during the ten-day Summer Course to students held in Brindavan from May 20th to May 30th. Bhagavan took up for each discourse one episode from the Bhagavatham to bring out illuminating lessons about the nature of devotion and significant role of the Divine in coming to the rescue of the devotee. Produced here are stories narrated by Bhagavan from 21-5-95 to 29-5-95.

The Krishna Avathar

(From the first discourse on 21-5-95) There are four qualifications needed by anyone to understand the underlying significance of the Bhagavatham, which describes devotion as a bridge between the Divine and the devotees. They are: 1. Flee from evil company.

2. Seek the company of the pious. 3. Indulge always in meritorious deeds. 4. Discriminate between the eternal and the transient. Shuura, a king of the Yadhava dynasty, had two sons, Ugrasena and Dhevaka. The former had a son, Kamsa, and the latter had only one daughter, Dhevaki. Kamsa had great affection for Dhevaki and considered her as his own sister and celebrated her marriage to Vasudheva with great enthusiasm. When he was driving the chariot of the newly-wed couple to take them to the bridegroom's place, an ethereal voice declared that the eighth child of Dhevaki would kill him. Kamsa, on hearing this voice, immediately unsheathed his sword and decided to kill Dhevaki on the spot to prevent the predicted catastrophe. Then at once Vasudheva gave Kamsa his assurance, that he would hand over all Dhevaki's newborn babies to Kamsa and appealed to him to spare Dhevaki. Kamsa relented and allowed them to go. The pious Vasudheva kept his word and handed over each child as it was born to Kamsa. On learning from Naradha

that the threat to his life might come from any one of Dhevaki's children, Kamsa killed six of them. The Magadha Emperor, Jarasandha, gave his daughters in marriage to Kamsa, who harboured increasing hatred against the Yadhavas, from whom he apprehended the threat to his life, and also because, according to Naradha's words to Kamsa, the gods were to incarnate as Yadhavas with the advent of Krishna.

God made His master-plan to punish the wicked and help the pious and pure devotees. Vasudheva's other wife, Rohini, was staying at Nanda's house away from Kamsa's tyranny. The Lord by His Maya Shakthi (deluding power) transferred Dhevaki's seventh child to Rohini's womb. He was Balarama (who was always with Krishna after he grew up). He was also called Sankarshana (transferred from one womb to another). The Lord incarnated as Krishna, the eighth child of Dhevaki, and both Dhevaki and Vasudheva had a vision of the effulgent form of the Lord, who directed Vasudheva to take the new-born child to Repalle (Gokulam), a village on the other bank of the Yamuna. According to the Divine Plan all the warders were fast asleep and the doors and gates of the prison, in which Kamsa has confined Vasudheva and Dhevaki, opened of their own accord, and the river in flood gave way, while Adhishesha protected the child from the torrential rains as he was being carried in a basket by Vasudheva. No power can stand against the Divine Will. The child was exchanged with that born to Yashodha, without anyone knowing about it, due to Yogamaya. The child brought by Vasudheva to his cell started to cry and immediately the warders woke up and informed Kamsa, who rushed to the prison. He seized the baby and lifted it up to kill it but the Baby escaped from his clutches, went up in the air, and announced that the slayer of Kamsa had taken birth and was alive somewhere else. Enraged by this, Kamsa started killing all newborn babies. He sent his demons to Repalle also, but Krishna, even as a tiny babe, destroyed all of them.

Yashodha had vathsalya (maternal love) for Krishna at the physical level, while the Gopikas of Gokulam had real devotion which was symbolically demonstrated by Krishna, who used to go after their butter rather than receive that offered by his mother Yashodha. Butter here signifies the spiritual heart of the devotee, which Krishna shared as the Divine. Krishna

demonstrated to the innocent devotees of Repalle, His Divine Power in several ways.

Ambarisha's devotion

(From the discourse on 22-5-95) Ambareesha's father was Nabhaga, who was rewarded by Lord Shiva for his attitude of detachment to worldly things.

Ambareesha was pious and devout and adhered firmly to the truth. He performed a Yajna (ritual sacrifice) with such great devotional fervour that Lord Narayana was pleased and blessed him with Sudharshana, which means good vision, and which manifested as a wheel of prosperity, peace and security to his kingdom. On sage Vashishtha's advice, Ambareesha performed another Yajna called the Dhvadhasi Vrata. An important rite to be observed in this vrata was that the king must start a fast on the day prior to Dhvadhasi (the twelfth day after new moon) and break it at the start of Dhvadhasi and feed all the people. As the moment of breaking the fast was drawing near, the mighty sage Dhuurvasa arrived and was received with all honours by Ambareesha. Dhuurvasa agreed to the king's request to be his honoured guest, and asked the king to wait till he finished his bath in the river and returned. As the auspicious moment approached when the king had to break his fast to fulfill the vow of the Yajna, Dhuurvasa did not turn up. On the advice of the sage Vashishtha, the king broke his fast by taking a thulasi leaf with water, and waited for the arrival of sage Dhuurvasa to offer him food. Dhuurvasa, who was well known for his short temper, felt that Ambareesha had violated the respect due to a guest by breaking his fast before the guest had taken his meal, and in his rage created a demon to kill Ambareesha. Lord Narayana's Sudharshana (discus) intervened, destroyed the demon, and started chasing Dhuurvasa himself. Dhuurvasa went to Brahma and Shiva for protection. Both pleaded their inability to save him. He went to Lord Narayana himself, who said that He could do nothing as He was bound by the blemishless devotion of Ambareesha and suggested to the sage to seek the pardon of the king. Dhuurvasa went to Ambareesha, who prayed to Lord Vishnu to recall the Sudharshana and save Dhuurvasa. The lesson of this episode is that God regards Himself as a servant of His true devotee.

Students need to learn the lesson that it is not enough if they do good work, but should do so with humility and devotion. Ambareesha was the embodiment of humility.

The saga of Dhruva

(From the discourse on 23-5-95) Dhruva was a young lad of five years, who did penance with single minded devotion and determination and was blessed with the vision of Lord Narayana. Uthanapadha, the elder of the two sons of Manu, who gave to mankind the Dharma Shashtra (the Code of Righteousness), had two wives, Suruchi and Suneethi. Uthama was the son of Suruchi, the younger queen while Dhruva was born to Suneethi. Once both of the boys were playing in the garden. Spotting their doting father sitting on the throne, they rushed forward to sit on the king's lap. While Uthama sat on his father's lap, the fiveyear old Dhruva was prevented by Suruchi, who said that only her sons had the right to sit on the king's lap. Dhruva went to his mother Suneethi and sat weeping. When he started criticizing his step-mother for her action, his mother silenced him and said, "Desist from criticizing anyone. If you criticize others the defects pointed out by you will come to you. Accept everything as something good." So saying she advised Dhruva to go to the forest and do penance to secure the Grace of Lord Narayana, who was the only hope for the helpless. Dhruva obeyed his mother implicitly and proceeded to the forest without any fear and with full faith in his mother's words that God was the only refuge for the forlorn. Having noticed this wonderful determination of the young boy who was ready to brave the perils of the forest with firm determination, sage Naradha appeared before him and tried to dissuade him from undertaking a severe penance to earn the Lord's Grace. But Dhruva refused to go back and expressed his confidence that he would surely succeed in winning the Lord's Grace with his mother's blessings and his unshakable faith. This is the ideal that today's students should learn. Naradha was pleased with the young Dhruva's firm faith and initiated him in the chanting of the twelve-lettered manthra, "Om Namoh Bhagavathe Vasudhevaya."

Dhruva did intense penance, giving up food and drink, and was reduced to a

skeleton. He transcended his Annamaya Kosha (food sheath). He was saturated with the Lord's name, which he chanted with each breath ceaselessly. His Manomaya Kosha (mind sheath) was also dedicated to the Lord, driving away all other thoughts. His entire being was filled with bliss in the contemplation of the Lord. This is another ideal taught by Dhruva to students that meditation must be with total concentration on the Divine Form. Lord Narayana appeared before Dhruva, whose radiance went on intensifying as the Lord was approaching him. Looking at the majestic form of the Cosmic Lord, Dhruva burst into ecstatic praise. He exclaimed, "O Lord! Till now you were in me and you have come out to grace me. Are you going to leave me?" Lord Vishnu, who was astonished at the amazing wisdom of such a young child, patted him on his cheek and asked him to say what boon he wanted. Dhruva said, "Oh Lord, after having your Dharshan (audience) and getting your Grace, I don't want anything else." The Lord replied, "Dhruva, you undertook this penance with one thought, namely, to sit on your father's lap, but now you speak differently. Your words and action are contrary to your thought. You must go back to your father with my blessings. He will receive you with full affection. You must rule the kingdom and then come to Me." The Lord also assured Dhruva that after ruling the kingdom for a long time he would occupy a most exalted position in the firmament as a star around whom the constellation of the Seven Rishis (sages) and other galaxies would revolve. Dhruva, on his return to the kingdom, was received with ceremonial honours by his penitent and joyous father. Dhruva consoled his father by reminding him that all are forms of Narayana. Uthanapada entrusted the kingdom to the six-year old Dhruva, saying that a boy who could get the Divine vision and grace at that tender age, could rule the kingdom. He retired to Skanda Ashrama, (hermitage) seeking realisation of the Divine. Dhruva ruled for a long time very wisely and well, maintaining justice and peace. When his sojourn in the world came to an end, a celestial chariot came to take him to God's Abode. He told the charioteer that God was everywhere and so the question of taking him to God's place did not arise. So saying, he sat down closing his eyes in meditation and merged in the Divine. The infinite power of Bhakthi (true devotion to the Lord) must be understood by all. It contains all the six qualities, namely, Bhukthi (food), Rakthi (charm), Yukthi (knowledge of how to love all), Anurakthi (great attraction), Virakthi

(cessation of desires) and Mukthi (Liberation). When from the word Bhagavan (the Lord), the root word, 'Bhag', (relating to the Divine) is taken and combined with 'kthi', which is common in all the six qualities, it becomes Bhakthi. The story of Dhruva must teach the students the value of determination and devotion to God.

The example of Jadabharatha

(From the discourse on 24-5-95) Priyavratha was the son of Svayambhuva Manu and brother of Uthanapadha. Having realised the futility of mundane comforts, which are transient, he renounced his kingdom at the early age of 19 years and left for the forest in pursuit of realisation of the Atma. He had strong belief in the truth that the human body is given only for realising and experiencing the bliss of Atma. The students of those days sacrificed all comforts to pursue their studies, unlike those of the present day who hanker after materialistic pleasures. Priyavratha developed the steadfastness and mental tranquillity and purity of heart. Emperor Manu, his father, was worried and tried to wean him back to the kingdom. He declined, stating that without realising his own nature and reality he could not satisfy the people. Manu sought the advice of the sage Naradha, who prevailed upon Priyavratha to agree to rule the Kingdom as a command from God. After a few years, Priyavratha again felt that association with people and worldly objects constituted obstacles to spiritual sadhana. So he renounced the kingdom and returned to the forest. King Rishabha took over the reigns of the kingdom and ruled with a sense of detachment, while pursuing his spiritual sadhana for the realisation of Truth. Bharatha, the son of Rishabha, was a righteous prince. He would not embark on any work without praying to God and seeking Divine Grace. Our country: Bharath is named after this king Bharatha. Even though he was not attracted by worldly pleasures, he had a special attachment for a deer, which he was bringing up with great affection. At the moment of his death he was thinking of this deer and was born as a deer and later on had a human birth. Students should be careful to remember the Divine name and form always, so that even at the time of death one will have the Divine name on the lips and merge with the Divine. In his new birth, Bharatha was immersed in Athmik consciousness from the very beginning and was totally

oblivious to his physical existence. In this state he was caught by a band of brigands to be offered as a human sacrifice for their deity Kali. He was totally unaffected by what was being done to him. Just as the brigands were about to cut off his head, Goddess Kali Herself appeared and rescued him and bade him continue on his righteous path. Just then the king Sindhu Saveera (Rahugana) was going that way in a palanquin accompanied by some of his attendants. The servants carrying the palanquin were tired and asked Bharatha to help them in carrying it for sometime to relieve their strain. Bharatha took this also as a divine dispensation and assisted in carrying the palanquin. As he was very compassionate by nature, he was careful not to trample on any insects on the ground and swayed continuously and walked slowly while carrying the palanquin. The king became angry at the slow and swaying movement of the palanquin and asked his servants why they were going slow. He peeped out of the palanquin and found that Bharatha was the cause for the slow movement and rebuked him for walking like a corpse. Bharatha replied calmly: "It is not me alone. All of us are corpse. It is only the power of the Divine that is making us function." The King was on his way to meet Kapila, the great sage, to have Athmik Knowledge. He was astounded at the wise reply of Bharatha. He got down and sat there listening to Bharatha's exposition about the Atma. Because Bharatha had obtained the knowledge by his own experience, he was able to influence several kings and scholars with his expositions. Some of his teachings were' â€¢ One should have sense control by which alone one could avert the danger of attachment to the physical.

â€¢ To have no attachment for mundane comforts. â€¢ To reduce desires for worldly objects. Man must not try to propitiate God for achieving paltry worldly desires.

â€¢ One cannot escape the consequences of one's action despite intense meditation, pilgrimages or rituals.

â€¢ As is the heart so is one's experience. â€¢ Everyone should, on his own, forge a path to get over his destiny. Manu and the kings in his lineage were examples of enlightened beings described in the Bhagavatham.

Students should learn to serve society selflessly without expecting any' return. They should combine spiritual sadhana with academic studies.

Thrishanku and Vishvamithra

(From the discourse on 25-5-95) Thrishanku, of the Lunar dynasty; was a noble, pious king, but developed an irrational desire to go to heaven in his human body. His preceptor, Bhrahmarishi Vashishtha told him that his desire was like seeing to pack an unsuspecting dead body and taking it to heaven. Thrishanku was adamant, but Vashishtha refused to help him in his unholy desire. The king approached the learned sons of Vashishtha, who had immense spiritual powers. They refused to help one who had defied the advice of his own preceptor, their father. Finally the king approached sage Kaushika, who harboured an ill-feeling towards Vashishtha because of an earlier encounter with him. Kaushika agreed to take up the case of Thrishanku as a challenge. He performed a Yajna for the purpose of sending Thrishanku bodily straight to heaven. At the conclusion of the Yajna, the gods did not come down to accept the offering. Enraged by this, Kaushika concentrated all the powers acquired by him by his penance on his Brahmahanda (flagstaff) to transport Thrishanku to heaven. But Indhra, the Lord of the celestial ones, blocked his path and Thrishanku came hurtling down towards the earth. On seeing this, Kaushika stopped him in the middle of the firmament and proceeded to create a parallel heaven, with all its paraphernalia. Even today, it is known as Thrishanku Svarga (In western astronomy, this is known as the constellation Southern Cross, consisting of four stars).

Consequences of breach of promise

King Thrishanku had a son by name Harishchandhra (not Emperor Harishchandhra who sacrificed everything for truth). This Harishchandhra had no sons and prayed to Lord Varuna (the Rain God) for a son, with the promise that he would sacrifice his son later to the same God. He got a son, Rahul. As he became attached to the son, he did not keep his promise and was afflicted by a strange disease. Rahul, being afraid of the consequences of his father's

failure to keep his promise, fled to the forest. He got the idea that his father's illness could be cured if someone else was offered to Varuna in his place. Seeing a Brahmana couple with three children, he asked them to offer one of the sons for sacrifice in return for a large herd of cows and other wealth. The Brahmana was attached to the eldest son and would not part with him. His wife was attached to the youngest son and would not let him go. So it was the middle son who was offered and preferred to die as an offering to God, rather than live without the love of father and mother. Rahul was taking this boy with him when on the way they passed through Kaushika's Ashram. The Brahmana boy, Shunassepha, sought refuge with the sage. Pledging to protect him, Kaushika asked one of his sons to go with Rahul, saying that the human body has to be offered in service to others. His sons ridiculed the idea and declined to comply with Kaushika's proposal. Thereupon the sage taught Shunassepha a manthra to propitiate Lord Varuna. The boy chanted the manthra and Lord Varuna appeared before him and chided Harishchandhra for agreeing to offer his son to Varuna and then going back on his word and offering some one else in his place. He said because of his breaking the promise, he would be consumed by the disease afflicting him. Students should learn from this the lesson that they must not develop excessive attachment to anything and should always keep their plighted word. Sage Kaushika himself was a victim of an unbecoming desire (when he was an emperor) to possess the wish-fulfilling cow of sage Vashishtha. Foiled in his attempt, he embarked on severe penances to acquire the title of Brahmarishi on a par with Vashishtha. He forfeited the fruits of his penances several times before he could earn ultimately the title of Brahmarishi from Vashishtha himself.

The all conquering faith of Prahladha

(From discourse on 25-5-95) This is the story of Prahladha, who remained utterly unshaken in his faith in Lord Narayana despite the ordeals to which he was subjected by his father, Hiranyakashipu, who hated Narayana as the slayer of his brother. Hiranyaksha, the younger brother of Hiranyakashipu, was killed by Vishnu in his incarnation as Varaha (Boar). In order to acquire invincible power, Hiranyakashipu left for Mount Mandhara to perform a

rigorous penance. While he was away doing penance, his wife, Leelavathi, was taken by sage Naradha to his Ashram to protect her and the child she was carrying, from the onslaught of dhevas. He imparted to her the knowledge of the exploits of Narayana. Though she did not pay much attention to the teachings of Naradha, the child in the womb absorbed them and started meditating on the Maha manthra, "Om Namō Narayanaya" while still in the womb.

Brahma was pleased with the penance of Hiranyakashipu and granted him the boon that he would not meet with his death either during day or night, either on earth or sky; either from man or beast or from the gods. With this boon, he became lord of the universe and decreed that he alone should be worshipped.

When Prahladha was five years old, he was entrusted to the care of two teachers, Chanda and Amarka, both sons of the sage Kripacharya, with strict instructions to impart all demonic traits to the child and banish Vishnu's name from his mind. The teachers taught him about Artha(wealth), and Kama (desire) but abstained from teaching about the other two goals of human life, Dharma (Righteousness) and Moksha (Liberation). But in spite of their best efforts, the teachers could not create a single negative thought in Prahladha's mind. He persisted in his own belief that Lord Narayana was the Supreme Master of the world to be worshipped by nine modes of devotion, beginning with listening to the glories of the Lord and culminating in total surrender of the self.

Hiranyakashipu tried all means of gentle persuasion to coax Prahladha to accept him as the supreme master and forget Narayana. Prahladha told his father that though he had mastered the entire external world he could not master his senses. Enraged at this son's unshakable devotion to his arch-enemy, Hiranyakashipu decided to put an end to Prahladha by all possible means. Prahladha was totally devoid of body consciousness and was always in a state of bliss chanting the name of Hari. He survived all tortures inflicted on him and came out unscathed. In utter exasperation, Hiranyakashipu finally asked Prahladha: "Who is this God that protects you? Where is he?"

Prahladha, who had realised the omnipresence of God, told his father that God was everywhere in the cosmos, from the tiniest microcosm to the mighty macrocosm. He added "One who is a slave to his senses cannot see Him. As long as you have ego and attachment you cannot see Hari, though He is within and outside every being." Hiranyakashipu then asked Prahladha: "Is He in this pillar?" When Prahladha said, "Yes, He is," Hiranyakashipu smote the pillar with his mace. The pillar split into two and there emerged from it the Lord in the dreadful form of Narasimha (half-lion and half-man). He seized the demon by the throat, placed him on his lap and tore his entrails with his nails. Though everyone trembled at the sight of the awe-inspiring form of Narasimha. Prahladha stood beside the Lord cheerfully, in adoration. When he was asked by the Lord if he had no fear, Prahladha replied, "To me You are only the embodiment of Love. I believe in your Divine form of Love and not this physical form." Lord Narasimha then commanded Prahladha to take over the reigns of the kingdom, transform the demons into virtuous beings and then come back to His divine Abode. Prahladha requested the Lord to pardon his father and take him to heaven. The Lord granted the boon. Prahladha ruled over the world for a long time with justice and righteousness.

Students must imbibe at least one quality of the great devotee, Prahladha, and practise it in daily life. You should always remember God and chant His name and have his Form in mind in any situation.

Krishna and the gopalas

(From the discourse on 26-5-95) Balarama and Krishna were in the habit of taking the other cowherd boys with their cows for grazing in the forest near Gokulam. Once the Gopalas engaged in merry making, in dancing and singing, quite unconcerned about the time, while the cows were out grazing. Suddenly they found that the cows had disappeared and they went in different directions to search for them. They found the cows grazing at a distant place and saw a fire blazing all around. The cowherd boys could not approach the cows. They cried in desperation, "Krishna, Krishna." When Krishna called the cows by their names, they responded, running towards him, crying "Amma." The cows could always recognise Krishna's voice and

understand his call. The cowherd lads were terribly shaken by the sight of the advancing fire. Balarama and Krishna told them: "Why fear when we are here?" Krishna asked them to close their eyes and not to open them until he gave the order. They always implicitly obeyed the command of Krishna, in whom they had full faith. When Krishna asked them to open their eyes they did so, and found themselves in the same place where they had been dancing, and it was cool all round. The fire had disappeared. Immediately they fell at the feet of Krishna and hailed him as the Supreme Lord. When such miracles were performed they used to hail Him as God, but after some time they would revert to their old habit of calling him their friend. Even now people consider the Avathar (divine advent) as God only when miracles happen, but at other times they consider Him an ordinary being.

Krishna wanted to teach the Gopalas about the Atma. It was the rainy season, and dark clouds were hovering over the sky. There was lightning followed by thunder. Krishna said that the dark clouds represent the Thamasik (ignorance) quality in man, thunder the Rajasik (passionate) quality and lightning the Sathvik (enlightening). Because of Thamo-guna you are not able to see the vast sky which is the Divine. Just as lightning shines in a dark cloud, Jnana (wisdom) shines beyond the cloud of ignorance.

A lesson for pandiths

On another occasion, Krishna gave the Gopalas a sublime experience. The cowherd boys had taken the cows to the forest to graze. When they felt hungry, they asked Krishna and Balarama to give them food. Krishna said, "When you have the all powerful Being with you, why do you worry about food? There is a Yajna being performed by some pandiths nearby. All of you may go and tell them that you are hungry. They will feed you." Accordingly they went to the place and asked for food. The pandiths told them that they could serve food only after the Purnahuthi (completion of the sacrificial ritual). The lads returned disappointed and informed Krishna about it. Krishna asked them to go to the wives of the pandiths who were cooking the food, and not to the pandiths who could not recognise the nature of Divinity. Krishna asked them to go behind the yajnashala (hall of ritual) and ask the women to serve

food. They went there and informed the ladies that they were Krishna's friends. While the pandiths could not recognise the greatness of Balarama and Krishna, the ladies asked them with great devotion as to where Balarama and Krishna were. When told that they were nearby; the ladies took all the food in their vessels to the place where Krishna was. They forgot body-consciousness and were in ecstasy at the sight of Krishna. They made all the cowherds sit and served the food. The pandiths came in search of their women and found them serving food to Balarama, Krishna and their friends. The pandiths later realised that the God to whom they had been making their offerings at the Yajna was Himself there in the form of Krishna. Krishna showed the form of Narayana to the pandiths, who prostrated before Him. What was the use of doing yajnas without realising the God who was in human form available close by? Nothing in the world is yours and you are just a trustee for the wealth which belongs to the Divine. Developing the feeling of "mine" and "thine" people get attached to the unreal and the transient and forget the eternal.

Devotion of the Gopikas

The Gopikas were examples of true devotion. Krishna was five years old when He did the Rasakreeda (sporting with the Gopikas). There is nothing sensuous in this; it is the sacred Atma-thathva which the Gopikas experienced, that is oneness with the Divine. They enjoyed the music of Krishna's flute as Nadha-brahman (the Cosmic Absolute in the form of sound). Krishna gave them the essence of the music of the Vedas in his music and talked to them in the language they could understand. The Gopikas had only the name of Krishna on their lips and the form of Krishna in their hearts. When Uddhava was sent by Krishna to teach them the shasthras (spiritual texts) they said they had only one mind and that was given to Krishna and that they had no room in their mind for anything else. Uddhava read out the letter to them which Krishna had sent. The letter said' "I am always with you and around you. I am the Indweller of your hearts. Uddhava will pass on the message. Practise it." The Gopikas had no patience to learn any lesson from Uddhava. Finally they said they wanted one message to be sent to Krishna and that was' "Let Krishna come and make the flower of our hearts blossom." Uddhava went to

Krishna and extolled the pure unalloyed devotion of the Gopikas. You should understand the real devotion of the Gopikas. You should have full faith in and single-minded devotion to God.

Akruura's vision of the Lord

(From the discourse on 28-5-95) Everyone in the world loves objects or persons or even God, for his or her own selfish purpose. No one loves God for God's sake. Man exists in three states waking, dream, and deep sleep. In the waking state all his senses and mind are at work, while in the dream state only the mind is active, and in deep sleep everything merges in the Self and one enjoys bliss. Man should make efforts to experience the reality beyond all the three states. Naradha told Krishna in advance about the impending visit of Akruura and mentioned that Akruura would perceive Him as Narayana and Balarama as Adhishesha. Akruura arrived shortly afterwards with an invitation to Krishna and Balarama to attend the Dhanur-Yajna to be performed by Kamsa. Akruura was very devoted to Balarama and Krishna and so he informed them that Kamsa's invitation was only a part of his nefarious scheme to lure them to Mathura and kill them.

The Gopikas and Gopalas tried their best to prevent Akruura from taking Krishna and Balarama in his chariot. They were not worried about 'any harm that might be caused by the evil-minded Kamsa. Their fear was that Krishna might not return from Mathura. Krishna told them, "We must go to Mathura to fulfill our mission. You are not the body. The Indweller in the heart is directing the whole show. That is the Atma. You are in Me. I am in you. Understand this truth and you will know everything." After thus pacifying the Gopis and Gopikas, Krishna and Balarama left in the chariot driven by Akruura. In the evening Akruura alighted near a river to perform his ablutions. While having a dip in the river he had the vision of Lord Vishnu reclining on Adhishesha, the hydra-headed Divine Serpent. On hurrying back he saw Krishna and Balarama sitting in the chariot unperturbed. Krishna asked Akruura what he had seen to make his face so radiant. Akruura was thrilled at the experience and praised them. He requested them both to stay at his house, but Krishna politely declined, promising to visit him after finishing his mission in Mathura. The

next day, while they were walking along the road, they spotted the royal washerman and asked him for some royal clothes. The washerman rudely replied that the royal clothes could not even be touched by low-born cowherds. Infuriated at this, Krishna struck the dhobi, who fell down. They took some of the royal clothes, and went on their way. Later they met an old hunch-backed lady, Kubja, who was providing scents and perfumes for Kamsa. She had a beautiful face but an ugly body, bent over in three ways. Seeing the two brothers, she was overjoyed and gave away all the perfumes to them. Though God never asks anything from anyone, if someone offers something He returns it a hundredfold. Krishna planted His foot on her feet, caught hold of her chin and lifted it up. Lo and behold! Her crooked back was gone! She shed tears of gratitude to Krishna for restoring her beautiful shape and prayed to Him to visit her house to accept her prayerful offerings. Krishna promised to do so after finishing His mission.

Parents freed

Kamsa heard of these exploits of the young lads and tried to send an elephant in rut, to kill them, but it was the elephant that was killed. Next Kamsa had two of his best wrestlers challenge them in combat. The wrestlers met with their end and realised that the Divine had come in the form of Krishna and Balarama. Then Kamsa ordered his troops to close in on them. But Krishna, in a trice, jumped on the platform where Kamsa was seated and rained severe blows on him till he dropped dead.

After the death of Kamsa, Krishna and Balarama went to the prison where Dhevaki and Vasudheva were confined, and freed them. Krishna reinstated Kamsa's father on the throne. Later Krishna went to Akruura's house. Akruura referred to the inexplicable ways of the Lord in His various incarnations and said that he was greatly blessed by Krishna's visit to his house. He hugged Krishna, who was well aware of Akruura's boundless devotion. Students should develop devotion to God, such as this. Whatever you do must be done as an offering to God; that in itself will be a penance to win the grace of God.

Creation of Dhvaraka city by Lord Krishna

(From the discourse on 29-5-95) People are generally hankering after academic education and worldly attainments, but forget the Super Power, who is the Basis for all knowledge and the entire cosmos. After Kamsa was killed, Nandha and Yashodha made arrangements for the education of Krishna and Balarama in the traditional manner, by sending them to a Gurukul. In those days, even princes had to go to the ashram of a guru to study, and no distinction was made between the rich and the poor or high and low among students. Even though Krishna and Balarama had exhibited superhuman powers in vanquishing Kamsa and other demons, they had to learn the regular lessons in Brahma Vidhya from sage Sandheepani, in his ashram in the forest. They had to go to the forest and gather firewood for the Guru's household. All the students had to share the work in the ashram among themselves equally without any distinction. At the end of the educational course the students used to give Gurudhakshina (offering to the preceptor). Krishna and Balarama asked their preceptor what he would like them to give. The teacher, who was quite aware of the Divine powers of Krishna, told Him that since He was the incarnation of the Supreme, He could do anything, and so he would like to have his son, who had died some time earlier, restored to life, as his wife was very much attached to the son and was in great grief after his death. Krishna and Balarama chanted some mantras and brought the Guru's son back to life. The Guru was immensely pleased and expressed his gratitude to Krishna and Balarama. After they returned to their kingdom from the forest, Jarasandha, the ruler of Magadha, who had given both his daughters in marriage to Kamsa, and bore a grudge against Krishna, invaded the Yadhava kingdom and caused considerable destruction. Krishna's strategy was to weaken Jarasandha after each encounter and finally destroy him. The followers of Jarasandha harboured hatred towards Balarama and Krishna and were harassing the Yadhavas during yajnas. Krishna wanted to settle his people in a secure place. He had an island city constructed by Vishvakarma, the architect of the gods. That city was Dhvaraka, a city of unmatched splendour and beauty. The Yadhavas began to lead happy lives in the new place. Here, students must understand the difference between the Yadhavas and the Gopikas. The Yadhavas considered Krishna as their relative, and were proudly proclaiming Krishna as their own kinsman. Because of their pride,

they finally perished in mutual strife after Krishna's exit from the world. In contrast, the Gopikas considered themselves as Krishna's worshippers, and were humble and devoted to the Divine. I conclude the series of discourses on the Bhagavatham with a stirring appeal to students to learn the following lessons: â Students should learn humility and obedience and serve society. â If you have God's Grace, you can progress fearlessly in the world. â For this, faith in oneself or self-confidence is the foundation. â You should cultivate Ekatma-bhava or oneness of the Atma dwelling in all beings, as taught by Prahladha's example. â Students should have determination, like Dhruva, to follow the righteous godly path. â You should follow the discipline necessary to maintain the balance in life. â Everything should be within limits, and excessive desires should be curbed. â Following examples of great devotees as a guide, you should strive as exemplary individuals leading ideal lives.

I want each one of you to grow into a strong, steady and straight person. Your eyes should not seek evil sights; your ears should not seek evil tales; your tongue should not seek evil speech; your hands should not seek evil acts; your minds should not seek evil thoughts. Be pure and be full of Love. Help those who are in a worse condition and serve those who need your help.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

15. The quest for Aathma Jnaana

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THE universe is full of energy or power. The Divine power is all pervasive. Just as sugar is present in sweets, the divine is present in everything. That is why God is called the Rasa (essence) of everything in the Universe. Though the Divine is in everything and everywhere it is not easily cognisable. The seed sprouts and grows into a tree. The child grows into an adult. This is evidence of Divinity, which is the life force stimulating the growth. You enjoy the sight of the mighty mountains, the big rivers, the vast ocean and the dense forests. Who is the creator of all these beautiful manifestations in Nature? God is the basis for all these. Though it is not possible for most people to realise the existence of God as the eternal truth, yet a few have acquired this highest wisdom, the wisdom of the Atma. Having experienced the Divine they have given to the world the bliss that they have enjoyed. Physical knowledge does not help you to march towards the goal of realisation, though it may make you a scholar. The Rishis did penance by way of spiritual sadhana to realise the Divinity within.

There are certain qualities which are necessary to acquire Athmik knowledge. One should adhere to truth, right conduct and have a spirit of selfless service. He should have the attitude of caring only for the welfare of humanity and strive to make them happy by serving them. The purpose of education is only to breed such good qualities.

Education should foster human values

Students should acquire spiritual knowledge along with secular knowledge. They should delight in the well-being of all creatures - "Sarvabhootha hithe rathah." They should also cultivate total awareness. Paripuurna Jnanam (total knowledge) is essential to acquire the qualities of good conduct, unity and purity which leads to Divinity. Education should foster human values such as Truth and right conduct.

Buddha taught that truth, right conduct and non-violence constituted the most sacred qualities. You consider Ahimsa as merely not hurting others. This is not the whole truth. Speaking too much, working too much, harping on the mistakes of others are all acts of himsa (violence) and should be avoided. These result in the wasting of energy, which causes harm to oneself. You must observe restraints in eating, talking, sleeping, working, and all actions in daily life. Human beings make attempts to know God. They are confused about the meaning of the words used in spiritual parlance, like Jeeva and Dheva, Atma and Paramatma (Divine Self and Supreme Self). Vedantha has explained these terms, but still they are not fully clear to many people. Unless you have the right attitude you cannot understand the Divine. God has been described as smaller than the smallest atom and bigger than the biggest thing in the Universe. Anu is Atom and signifies the Atma. Anu is also Brahman (the Supreme Absolute). This Atma is in every being, however tiny it might be.

Divinity is the same in all

For example, one may take water from the river Godhavari in a small tumbler or a big vessel. Whatever the size of the container, the water is the same in taste and quality. If you understand this principle you can easily understand the truth that the minute atom and the mighty Universe contain the same Brahman. The divinity is the same in all. God is everywhere. Once a disciple asked a sage about this. The sage asked him to get a cup of water and some sugar. He asked the disciple to mix the sugar with the water. Then he could not see the sugar, which was dissolved in the water, nor could he feel the sugar with his hand. But he was sure he had himself put it in the water. In order to know the truth of its existence in water, he was asked to taste a little of that water when he could experience the sweetness of sugar. It was pervading in the entire quantity of water. In the cosmic context, the Atma is the sugar which is present in every being. Just as sugar cannot be seen or felt while in water, you are not able to see or feel the Atma. Sugar has-no form in the water. So also the Atma or Paramatma cannot be seen, but has to be experienced. This is cosmic consciousness and is infinite. It is in the form of consciousness in human beings.

In the Geetha, Krishna says "Beejam mam Sarvabootha-nam" (I am the seed in all beings). The seed is Anu and the tree is Mahath. The Anu is contained in the tree and the tree is in the seed too. Divinity as the seed is there invisible under the earth and is also pervading externally in the tree, branches, leaves, flowers, etc. When you are asked: "Who are you?", you may first give your name. then your profession and address, etc. All these descriptions pertain only to the body and physical features. They are subject to change. You may change your name, profession and nationality. But the Athmik principle in everyone is changeless and eternal. Things pertaining to the world are like rivers while the Divine is like the ocean. The moment rivers merge in the ocean they lose the names and forms.

If you worship the mother you worship God

You have to acquire Atma Jnana (knowledge of the Spirit) along with worldly knowledge. People refer to Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshvara. No one has seen their real forms. Brahma is the creator. The essence of creation is in everyone. The physical bodies of your parents have this essence and they are both the cause of your birth. They bring you up and protect you. This is their aspect of protection. If you worship the mother, you worship God. The child has to be given education and brought up properly. This is done by your father and so he is 'Vishnu' the sustainer. Maheshvara is a giver of boons. He grants boons easily as He did to Bhasmasura, who immediately sought to use his power against Maheshvara himself. Power has to be used with discrimination. By respecting the teacher who imparts this discriminatory knowledge you respect Maheshvara. That is why the Vedas declare "Treat the mother as God, the father as God and the Preceptor as God." This is the basis of Bharatheeya culture. A true son should seek the truth. He should not leave this pursuit for selfish reasons. That is why "Sathyam vadha; Dharmam chara" (Speak the Truth; follow Righteousness) has been the sheetanchor of Indian culture You should not sacrifice the truth for the sake of name and fame. You should have unshakable faith in the Divine.

One should know the basis for whole creation

Scientific knowledge is subject to continual change, while spiritual knowledge is changeless and will help you to realise the Eternal Truth. Today man does everything out of selfish motive to satisfy self-interest. The scriptures declare. "Dharma muulam Idham Jagath" (The whole cosmos is rooted in righteousness). This is the Truth. The planets, the sun, the moon and the stars are all moving in a set pattern according to their Dharma. You must understand this harmony and unity. In the world today there are more than 550 crores of people. Not one is identical with another. Who is the author of all this complex but orderly creation? It is difficult to comprehend the Creator. Scientists have explored a small part of creation. But they have made no attempt to understand the Creator. One should know the Muuladhara (the basis) for the whole of creation.

Students should not waste time or energy in wrong pursuits. They should cultivate Sath sanga not in the worldly sense. Sath is a part of Sath-Chith-Anandha, the attribute of the Divine. You must always internally be in the company of God, who is the embodiment of Bliss. Sath is Truth. Chith is Awareness and Anandha is Bliss. The significance of this can be understood by a small example. Sweetness is the essence of God. We sing in the bhajan "Madhuradhipathe Madhuram Madhuram" (Oh Lord of Mathura You are Sweet). Sugar is sweet. God is like Sugar. Sath 'may be compared to sugar. Chith can be compared to water, because it is everywhere. It is necessary for the sustenance of life whether one is a prince or a pauper. If you mix sugar and water you get syrup. Likewise the syrup of Anandha comes out of the combination of Sath and Chith.

Students! Always think of the Lord. Don't give room for selfishness. Engage yourself in service to humanity with a sense of sacrifice. This is the lesson you should learn from the ten-day course that you have attended now.

You must understand that matter combined with energy is God. Make use of the things in the world with the awareness that it is all God's creation and you should be grateful to the Divine for everything. Have everything within limits, including your desire for comforts. Even the five elements should be used within limits. Otherwise they will spell danger. Students! Work for the peace

and prosperity of society without selfish motives. You have to put these things into practice and shine as ideal students.

16. Health, diet and Divinity

Date: 03 June 1995 / Location: Bengaluru / Occasion: Sri Sathya Sai Hospital, Whitefield

Not by penance, nor by baths in sacred waters, Nor by studying of Scriptures, nor by Japa Can the Ocean of worldly existence. The cycle of birth and death - be crossed. It can be done only by service to good people. (Sanskrit Shloka)

MAN seeks to cross the ocean of Samsara by penance, pilgrimages to sacred shrines, scriptural studies and exercises in meditation. But all these are of no avail without service to good people. All these spiritual exercise are comprehended by seva (service). For the achievement of the four Purusharthas (main goals of life) - Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha (Righteousness, wealth, desire and Liberation), health is essential. Without good health a man cannot accomplish even the most trivial thing. Hence, health is wealth. However, because of the influence of the present Kali (evil). Age, man is a prey to all kinds of ailments and has no peace of mind despite the possession of every conceivable kind of wealth and comforts. There is no dearth of doctors. In spite of the availability of so many amenities, why is man afflicted with disease? Indeed, more than physical ailments, mental diseases are growing limitlessly. Mental sickness caused by tension and worry gives us so many bodily ailments. Man today is afflicted with discontent. As one set of desires are satisfied, other desires go on cropping up. If desires are reduced, contentment will grow. Moreover, because of the perversions of the Kali Age, the five basic elements - ether, air, fire, water and earth - are polluted. The water we drink is impure. The air we breathe is polluted. The food we consume is polluted. As a consequence the mind gets polluted.

Understand the relationship between matter and mind

Today man has to understand the true relationship between matter and mind. When one is asked about the mind, he says, "Don't mind." When he is asked about matter, he answers' "It doesn't matter." By this sort of casualness, man is failing to understand mind and matter. Only when man understands the nature of the mind can he recognise the true nature of humanness. What is

the mind? It is not something negative. It is positive. It represents the power of the Atma, the power of Sankalpa (Will). It can travel any amount of distance in space. It is capable of exploring the powers of the atom. The mind is capable of recognizing the truth that is valid for the three categories of Time - the past, the present and the future. The mind is therefore very essential in man's daily life. It is the source of all strength. Man today is indifferent to the importance and the powers of the mind.

Search for happiness within yourself

Man is seeking happiness from birth to death. The search starts with education. But education does not confer happiness. He desires a job, but that does not make him happy. He then seeks marriage as the means to happiness. Happiness eludes him because the wife claims equal rights. Then he declares' "My life is a total darkness." What is the reason for this feeling? It is the ego that is the cause. As a man grows, his egoism also grows. One after another, desires go on increasing. Their fulfilment does not bring him the happiness he seeks. Where is this Anandha (bliss) to be found? It does not exist in material objects. It is not to be found in physical pleasures. The truth is man is the embodiment of bliss. He is searching for it outside himself. This is the mark of ignorance. When he is the embodiment of bliss, how can he secure bliss outside himself?

Today, inspite of all his wealth, man is unhappy. He is perpetually racked by lack of peace. Devotees come here from all parts of the world. Each of them asks: "I want peace." Here are three words: "I", "want", "peace". "I" is ego. "Want" is desire. Remove the ego and desire, you will have peace. Ego and desire have enveloped peace. When the covering is removed, peace will manifest itself.

Man can lead a blissful life only when he enjoys health. Wealth can offer comforts but not peace. Wealth can provide a multi-storied mansion but not sound sleep. Wealth can provide bodily comforts, but physical comforts do not produce bliss. Air-conditioners and Dunlopillo mattresses may give comfort to the body. But when there is no peace of mind, of what use are

these comforts? The body is like a water bubble, the mind is like a monkey; don't follow the body or the mind, follow the conscience. Man today is not following the conscience. He is sticking to the body and mind which are useless. He must enquire into the problem, "Who am I?" He will discover that the body; the senses and the mind are all the instruments and he is their master. The master has today become a slave of his body and mind, which should be his servants. You are-the Soul. Make it the basis for all your actions.

Realise the human values first

Today man is forgetting his essential humanness. The first requisite is for man to realise human values: Truth, Righteousness, Peace and Love. For a bulb to burn, you need a connecting wire, a switch and electric current. For man, that current is Truth or God. It is energy. This divine energy has to flow through the wire of Dharma (Righteousness) reach the bulb of Shanthi (Peace) and produce the light of' Prema (Love). Love is God. Live in Love. Love is everything.. Without love, life is a living death' for man. Love expresses itself in many forms in relation to different persons, but is essentially one. Today love is tainted by selfishness, whether in relation to the mother, the spouse or the children or others. Man's selfishness is polluting the entire society. Attachment to others is natural. But there should be a limit to it. When this limit is exceeded, it becomes a disease. This is true in every case. Because of man's excessive desires, he is prone to diseases of every kind. The most common source of illness among people today is tension. What is the cause of tension? It is indulgence in excesses of various kinds. Men must learn to moderate the hectic pace of living. Hurry causes worry and worry causes disease. "Hurry, worry and curry (fatty food)" are the causes of heart diseases. Therefore the first requirement is control of food and head (the mind). When you control these two, there will be no room for illness.

Importance of the eye

Today the new operation theatre has been inaugurated in our hospital. Doctors know that in the eye there are billions of cells which react to light rays. If any of these cells are affected, the vision is affected. For man the eye

is the most important organ for comprehending the Universe. Hence the eye has to be regarded as a sacred instrument. You cannot change creation, but by changing your vision you can get the proper view of creation. Here is an illustration. Once there was a king, who developed an acute stomach trouble. All the medicines administered by doctors were of no avail. He then approached a great yogi, who told him that for his stomach ailment he had to treat the sight. He should see nothing but green everywhere. The yogi left and the king ordered that all places in his kingdom should be painted green. Sometime later, the yogi returned and found that people were engaged in splashing green paint everywhere. When asked for the reason, they told him that they were carrying out the King's orders. The yogi went to the king and told him that to see everything green, all that was needed for him was to wear green glasses. It was absurd to attempt to paint everything green. Similarly if we change our vision, we will experience peace. When people view the world with the vision of love, they will have peace. All diseases will be cured. Most diseases have their origin in the mind. Everything has a psychological basis. When a person feels that something is wrong with him, he develops an illness. A healthy mind is needed for a healthy body. But it is not enough to be physically healthy. Man needs Dhaiva-anugraham (God's grace) also. To acquire God's grace you have to cultivate the love of God. Love has become today a kind of show. Genuine love should emanate from the heart. Start the day with love, spend the day with love, end the day with love, that is the way to God. If you develop love, disease will not come near you.

Realise the value of health

I am 70 years now. I can see even an ant that is far away. It is not due to divine power. It is physical power. What is the reason? Diet control. My weight has remained the same for over sixty years - 108 lbs only. Proper balance must be maintained throughout life. There must be balance in respect of knowledge and several other things. Students pollute their knowledge by seeing bad things, listening to bad things and by bad thoughts. Their minds are perverted by addiction to films. They should learn to lead pure lives. Only then will they experience bliss and health.

Embodiments of the Divine! Realise the value of health. Self-restraint is essential to maintain health. Regulate your habits and develop good manners, which are the mark of a true man. Similarly the good devotee is one who does his duty. Duty is God. Everyone has to develop the manners required in daily life. The manners should be such that they confer self satisfaction. You should conduct yourself properly not for the sake of others but for your own sake. When there is self-satisfaction there will be self-realisation. For all these you must have selfconfidence. Most people today have no confidence in themselves and are perpetually racked by doubts. In Jesus's time there was one 'Doubting Thomas.' But today all are 'Doubting Thomases.' Everyone is doubting every other. For every man two things are essential: Arogya (good health) and Anandha (Happiness). Health for the body and bliss for the spirit. With these two wings you can soar to any height. You need both the things, for which you must secure God's grace. To get God's grace, you have to engage yourself in sacred action. Bear in mind the three P's - Purity, Patience and Perseverance. With these three you are bound to acquire good health and bliss.

Bhagavan's example

You may believe it or not. But the truth is that these three are responsible for my Arogya (health) and Anandha (bliss). I am always happy. I would like to run but there is no place where I can do so. I can lift anybody at this age. This strength is present potentially in everyone. But it is being wasted. If the energy in everyone is properly conserved he can do anything. The Hospital here began in a small way with a single room. Over the years it was expanded. Dr. Rajeshwari, mother of Srinivas, (former Warden of Brindavan Hostel) worked hard to develop the hospital. She devoted all her earnings to the expansion of the hospital. She worked ceaselessly day and night. Ultimately she passed away in the hospital itself. The hospital was her home.

Thereafter, Dr. Savithri has been carrying on the work. Savithri has been working tirelessly. She attends to everything herself. By her work for patients she is becoming a patient herself. She must take care of her health. Only when the doctor is healthy, the patients can be well cared for. As is the doctor

so is the patient. Hence Savitri must take care of her own health. This is all the more necessary because the hospital is growing day by day. Srinivas is rendering every help for the hospital. There are others who are also serving the hospital in various ways.

Free medical aid

The Whitefield hospital which began in a single room, has now grown into a big complex. The doctors have to meet the growing demands on their services, The numbers of patients coming to the hospital are growing all the time. All services are totally free. Not a paisa is collected from the patients. Such free medical treatment is not given anywhere in the world. This applies to the Super Speciality Hospital in Prasanthigram. Elsewhere hospitals have become big business. In fact, in every sphere commercialization is rampant. Education is a business, music is a business, health is a business. The whole world has become a market place. Welfare services should be free for all. There are numerous people who cannot afford the costs of medical treatment. Doctors should render free service to such persons. My words should not be misunderstood. Even in the earning of incomes there should be a limit. Many doctors lack determination. They join a hospital on a good salary. But after a month or so, when another hospital offers a higher salary they go over to the new hospital. How long are you likely to stay in the other hospital? When you go like this, you forfeit the confidence of hospital managements. Even workers behave in this way. They shift from place to place. The right thing is to stick to a job for three or four years. Then your work will secure automatic recognition.

Doctors should inspire confidence in patients

Doctors are obsessed with salaries. They should be more concerned about patients. When they concentrate on their patients, they will develop into excellent doctors. Inspire confidence in the patients. Then any medicine you give will work wonders. The patients will hail such a doctor as a "good doctor." A "good doctor" in due course becomes a "God doctor." "Vaidhyo Narayano harih," it is said. The doctor is Divinity itself. Doctors should render

service in this spirit. Service is God.

Very good work is being done in our hospital as well as elsewhere. Bharath would not be what it is without good people. Without meritorious people can the world experience light? There are good and bad people in the world. All should become good and develop into Godly men. The same Atma is present in everyone. Doctors should look after the patients with the same care they would show to their kith and kin. Then all would experience equal happiness.

17. Significance of worship at the Lord's Feet

Date: 08 July 1995 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Paduka Pooja

GOD is immanent in the entire cosmos like oil in sesame seed and butter in milk. Just as the seeds have to be crushed to get the oil and the milk has to be curdled and churned for getting butter, sadhana has to be done to realise God. Nine forms of devotion have been indicated in the Bhagavatham. If one follows any of these paths, he can experience the Divine. Prior to the commencement of this meeting, the Jyothi (sacred lamp) was lit by Svami. No other thing signifies divinity as this sacred effulgent flame. It always goes upward. It can be kept anywhere. Everywhere it is lit it dispels darkness. Since ancient times the people of Bharath have been observing the sacred custom of lighting a lamp at the commencement of any auspicious ceremony. They have been worshipping the jyothi as it dispels darkness and is a symbol of the effulgence of wisdom. Such a sacred custom, which is immemorial part of Indian culture, is ignored today. People indulge in practices which are contrary to such traditions. If you understand the significance of this custom and the spirit behind the lighting of the lamp, you can understand Divinity.

In order to light the jyothi you need four things - a container, oil, wick and a match-stick (fire) to light it. For dispelling the darkness outside, you need these four. Similarly for dispelling the darkness within you, you need the Jyothi of Wisdom. Ravana was a highly learned person, who had mastered all the Vedas and Vedangas (ancient sacred texts). In spite of such erudition his heart was in pitch darkness (plunged in lust). This brought about his downfall. His son, Indhrajit, was also very powerful and was noted for his valour and his capacity to wield missiles charged with the power of Manthras. But these were of no avail against the power of the Divine. Likewise, Hiranyakashipu, who had mastery over the elements, was a victim of his ego.

Inner purity is the greatest wealth

Only by the light of the Divine lamp inside can you blossom as a worthwhile person. Inner purity is the greatest wealth that one can acquire. The inner

purity is the wick in the container of the heart. Devotion is the oil and Divine Grace is the fire with which the lamp of wisdom can be lit. The prime requisite for achieving Divine Grace is to have harmony in thought, word and deed. The Lord has inscrutable ways when He wishes to protect His devotees. An incident in the Mahabharatha can be described to prove this, in which Krishna made Dhraupadi fall at the feet of Bheeshma and secure his blessings for saving the Pandavas from the pledge Bheeshma had taken to kill the Pandavas or die in battle the next day. Bheeshma lost the fight stricken by Arjuna's arrows.

One cannot apprehend the ways of Divinity. It is only by unsullied devotion and adherence to Truth that one can realise God, who is embodiment of Love and Truth. If you follow truth you can sanctify your life.

To earn the grace of the Divine, the easy way is surrendering at the Feet of the Lord. The feet, which were washed by Brahma, the creator, the feet which were worshipped by Bharatha through Rama's sandals, which ruled the kingdom of Ayodhya for 14 years, should be your object of worship.

Real significance of the feet

There is so much power in the feet of the Lord which you cannot understand. The feet form the basis for not only the physical frame of the body; but also for spiritual and ethical purposes. The significance of each limb of the body is explained in Vedantha. The five senses of the body represent the five elements (sound is ether, touch is air, vision is fire, taste is water and smell is earth). In the Purusha Suktha the body of the Divine is described in detail. The four varnas in society are represented by four parts of the Cosmic Person Brahmanas, Kshathriyas, Vaishyas and Shudhras (the working class). It is the feet that support the entire body, comprising the other three classes. So the feet are an important part of the body. The real significance of the feet is not properly understood by all. The Vedas proclaim the unity of all classes of people by describing them as limb of one body. The Vedas declare that "Ekatma Sarvabhutha antharatma" (same Atma is present in all beings). The Vedas proclaim the importance of the feet. Even in ordinary life we advise a

person who has harmed another to fall at the latter's feet and beg his pardon to escape legal action. There is a close link between the different parts of the body. When one walks on the road if the eye sees a thorn, the legs avoid trading on it. When the foot is injured, the eye sheds tears. There is such close co-ordination in the physical body. Similarly in the body of the Divine, the Brahmanas, Kshathriyas, Vaishyas and Shuudhras form an integral part. If a Shuudhra is in trouble, the Brahmana should be concerned. When such feelings develop in the world, there will be peace and harmony in society. Everyone should realise this and foster unity.

Do all sadhanas with purity of heart

Embodiments of love! The Prema thathva (Love Principle) is within you. What you are practising now as love is not real love. It is only affection out of Anuraga (attachment to the body). Real love is unchanging. The feeling of love to the Divine is real devotion 'emanating from the heart.

You are doing a lot of sadhana. You should do this with purity of heart. The greatest sadhana will be chanting the Name of the Lord and doing service to one's fellow beings, who are the embodiments of the same Atma that is in you. Whatever you do, do it as an offering to the Divine. What is the use of sending thousands of rupees and carrying the Padhukas (divine sandals) if you do not understand their inner significance and have purity of heart? The external objects serve as symbols for beginners, just as a child learns words with the help of pictures. After understanding the significance, you must concentrate on Divinity without external aids such as these Padhukas. Worship the Padhukas thinking all the while of the Lord's Form. Develop Love of God and share it with all.

We are flowers of the same creepers. Our minds are the flowers that grow on the creeper of the heart. The flowers may be different but the creeper is the same. We are the children of the same race! We all belong to the race of humanity but not to the race of birds and beasts. Since we belong to the

illustrious race of humanity, we must conduct ourselves in a sublime manner; we are waves, born in the ocean of Sathchithanandha. Since we are born of the same race, we should radiate the oneness of humanity without harbouring hatred against any one.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

18. Manifest Divine Qualities

Date: 09 July 1995 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Why should one be born at all on earth If he will not lift his hands in prayer to Siva, Chant the name of Hari with his tongue, And is not filled with compassion and love for Truth? He is a curse for the mother who bore him. This is a poem by Pothana. It was blossoming from the flowers of his heart. It is the essence of the three yogas (Karma, Jnana and Bhakthi). It signifies the Karma-thraya (the three-fold action) in thought, word and deed. It shows the royal path to Liberation. "Chethularanga Shivuni Puujinchadeni" (If one will not worship Shiva with his hands) refers to the Karma-marga, the path of action. This is the first among the three yogas expounded in the Upanishaths. This is the first chapter in the Bhagavath Geetha. "Noru novvanga hari Keerthi nuduvadani" (If one will not chant the glories of Hari with his tongue) refers to the second step. This is the Bhakthi yoga preached in the Vedas and the Upanishaths. This is the Bhakthi yoga extolled in the Geetha. "Dayayu Sathyamu tha thanuvedani" (If he does not cherish compassion and Truth) refers to the primary duty of man to cherish in thought, word and deed, truth and compassion. Only he is a true man who has all three qualities. The Upanishaths define man as one who has full faith. Today, people instead of adhering to this sacred path, are ruining their precious human life by taking to wrong ways.

True ornaments of man

"Truth is the ornament for the neck." "Charity is the ornament for the hand." "Listening to sacred scriptures is the ornament for the ears." What other ornaments does a man need if he had these three? So says a Sanskrith saying. The ornaments which people wear today are a source of fear. But if the ornaments of truth, charity, and listening to sacred discourses are worn, there is no cause for fear. This is called Abhaya (fearlessness). The most important element in man's existence is sankalpa (firm thought). As are the 'thoughts, so is the speech. As is the speech so are the actions. The harmony of these three will lead to the experience of Divinity. Words come out of the

heart. They should be filled with compassion. The heart is the abode of compassion. It is the source of love. Hence whatever emanates from the heart should be filled with love. That love should express itself in speech. The flow of love in speech should find concrete expression in action. The heart is the seat of the Paramatma (Supreme Self). The Ganga that flows from it is the river of Truth. Actions are the harvest that is reaped from the field watered by Truth. Hence, it is said that the high-souled beings are marked by harmony in thought, word and deed. Unfortunately, today people think in one way, speak in another way and act differently. As a result, humanness has been degraded today. To raise it to its proper level, the triune unity of thought, word and deed is essential. This is the penance for our times. This is the means to realise peace. This is the truth. This is everything.

Manifest Divine qualities

The cosmos was born out of Truth and merges in Truth. This is the Truth that is a manifestation. God is Truth. The human form is an expression of the Divine. Having emanated from the Divine, man should manifest his Divine origin by manifesting his inherent divine qualities. But, man is behaving in a demonic manner.

Man has to rise above the animal nature. He has to express his divine potencies. For this, man has to acquire Athmik knowledge (Knowledge of the Divine Self). Atma is the all-pervading Universal Consciousness. It is immanent in everyone. Only as long as this consciousness is present in the human body it is called Shivam. Once the consciousness leaves the body it becomes Shavam (a corpse). To experience the Divine within you all you have to do is to dedicate all your actions to the Divine. No other spiritual exercise is necessary. This does not mean you should give up other forms of worship like japa. The basic equipment is that whatever spiritual exercise is done it should be performed whole-heartedly, with full concentration. For instance, we have Likhitha Japa. (Bundles of notebooks in which devotees had written the name of the Lord thousands of times had earlier been placed at the Lotus Feet of Bhagavan). Today people write the names without thinking aloud the name of the Lord in their minds and uttering the names with their mouths. As you start

writing the Name, you must first reflect on the Name in the mind and utter the Name by the mouth, and then write the name with your hand, This is Likhitha japa, the penance of writing the Lord's name. Some people, to complete the writing of the name a crore of times, resort to devices like using carbon paper to multiply the number of names written or cyclostyling what they have written once. This cannot be described as Likhitha Japa. The name should get inscribed in the heart. It then becomes a kind of negative from which any number of prints can be taken.

Dedicate all deeds to God

Whatever you do, deem it as God's work. This can be applied to every ordinary act in daily life, whether it is sweeping the floor, or preparing chappathis or cutting vegetables. Everyone of these acts can be turned into a spiritual exercise by the spirit in which you do it. To perform every act as an offering to the Divine is true devotion. India and the world are today suffering from disorder and violence because people have lost Atma-Vishvasa (faith in the Self). They are fostering attachment to the body and ignoring the Spirit. Man should not follow the senses which are wayward, the body which is perishable, or the mind which is fickle. He must follow the conscience, which tells him what is right or wrong. From ancient times, Bharatheeyas have adhered to the four goals of human life: Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha (Righteousness, wealth, desire and Liberation). But all the goals were linked to Dharma (Righteousness). Wealth should be acquired by righteous means. Desires should be related to what is righteousness. When wealth and desires are associated with Dharma, Moksha (Liberation) is easily attained.

"Go back to your source"

Many devotees come to Svami and pray to Svami to show them the way. What is it that is to be shown to them? I tell them, "You crazy ones! There is no need for any new path for you. You go back by the way you came. You came from the Atma. You go back to the Atma." Here you have come from your respective places. You may spend a few hours or a few days here You will then return to your homes. You go on pilgrimages. But whatever places

you may visit ultimately you return to your Svasthanam (native place). The true Svasthanam is the Abode of the Spirit - Sva + Sthanam. People who are not aware of the spiritual basis of life take to wrong courses.

Embodiments of love! Undergoing many hardships, you have come here out of your devotion and faith to experience the bliss of staying here in spite of many inconveniences. You 'must carry with you the same blissful feelings when you go back to your homes. Today each of you is experiencing separately. But when you go back, by recalling this experience you feel the presence of all the others in your hearts. Install the Divine in your hearts and carry on your duties with devotion and dedication. Remember the ultimate message of Vyasa that the whole purpose of life is to render help to others and avoid the sin of doing harm to others.

Righteousness dwells in your heart

Shri Narayana Rao (who had spoken earlier) urged that Righteousness should grow in the world. Where is this Righteousness? It is in your conduct, your thoughts, words and deeds. Righteousness dwells in your heart. When the impulses arising from the heart are expressed in words, that is Sathya. To put into action your words is Dharma. For all these Love is primary. Love in action is Righteousness. Love in speech is Truth. Love in thought is Peace. Love in understanding is Non-violence. When you realise that God is in everyone, you will practise non-violence. God is one, though He may be worshipped in different forms and under different names. You may call him Rama or Krishna, Allah or Jesus, Hari or Sayee. Any Name can be uttered by any one. Embodiments of love! If you want to transform the world, to promote all-round prosperity in the country, to make the prayer that "all people should be happy" become a reality, develop faith in the Self. Never forget God. Without God there is no universe. Let the non-believers have their way. But they have no right to question the beliefs of others. To ask for physical proofs of the existence of experience like bliss or love or for subtle things like the fragrance of a flower is impracticable. To deny the reality of love on the ground that it has no recognizable form is meaningless. Love may have no form. But the mother who exhibits love has a form. All beings are manifestations of the

Cosmic Divine. The forms are different but the spirit that animates them all is One, like the current that illumines bulbs of different colours and wattage. Cultivate this feeling of oneness and do not be critical of any faith or religion. Dedicate your lives to the service of your fellow-beings. Thereby you will be redeeming your lives.

Take up the Name of God, any of the innumerable ones, any that appeals to you most and the form appropriate to that Name and start repeating it. From now on, that is the Royal road to ensure joy and peace, that will train you in the feeling of brotherhood and remove enmity towards fellowmen.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

19. Acquire friendship of God

Date: 11 July 1995 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Destroying pride man becomes endearing; Destroying anger man gets rid of sorrow; Destroying desire man acquires peace; Destroying greed man achieves happiness. EMBODIMENTS of Love! As long as man is filled with arrogance, he cannot win any kind of respect from others. Egoism brings about a man's ruin. Only when a man gets rid of pride the people respect and love him. The first requisite for securing the esteem and love of the people is to root out Ahamkara (self-conceit). The second is Krodham (anger). A man consumed by anger can never be free from misery. Anger carries with it a blazing fire Anger is also described as Krodhagni, (the fire of anger). As long as one is consumed by the fire, he cannot have happiness. To get freedom from misery, man has to get rid of anger. Anger is also the cause of depravity in man. It ruins him in various ways. It alienates him from his kith and kin. For the decline in human qualities today, pride and anger are primarily responsible. The third enemy of man pervades his entire being. It is insatiable desire. Man's entire life is filled with desires which are endless and ever mounting. Man can achieve peace of mind only by the conquest of Kama (desire). The fourth enemy is greed or miserliness. When man overcomes greed, he can secure happiness. A greedy man cannot enjoy bodily; mental or spiritual happiness. The miser is like the dog in the manger. He neither enjoys his wealth, nor does he allow others to enjoy it. The world despises a miser.

Only when man gets rid of these four undesirable qualities can he experience peace and happiness. These four vices have no place in a true human being.

Human heart should be filled with compassion

Man is the very embodiment of the Divine. This Divine Will is termed Prakrithi (the cosmos). In every human being the Divine Will is present. Man has taken birth to give expression to the Will of the Divine. The human heart should be an ocean of milk filled with compassion. The heart, in the core of which there should be this milk of compassion, is today filled with the four evil qualities.

The ancient sages had a vision of the Supreme Lord Vishnu reclining on the Ksheerasagara (Ocean of Milk) and adored Him in that form. And this was how Saint Thyagaraja described the Lord in his famous song beginning with the words: "Ksheera-sagara shayana!" (Oh Lord reclining on the Ocean of Milk). (Svami sang some lines from the song). What is this Ocean of Milk? Is it anywhere on earth? On this mundane world with its material concerns, you cannot perceive this Ocean of Milk. Nevertheless, it exists. Where? In every human heart. In this heart Lord Sriman Narayana is resting. This is the reason why the Lord is described as Hridhayavasi (the Dweller in the Heart). Every human heart is a shrine of God, In the Ocean of Milk in such a heart, no room should be given for crocodiles and whales in the form of evil qualities to dwell. Unfortunately, because of the influence of the Kali Age, the Ocean of Milk in the human heart has been turned into a Ksharasagaram (Ocean of brine)-in which attachment and hatred dwell as crocodiles and whales. The salt in this Ocean is of man's making. Today cities like Madras and Bombay are close to the sea. But can they make use of its water? No. Because it is saline.

Deities and demons in daily life

The ancient sages used to pray: "Oh gods, we welcome you. Oh Rakshasas (demons), depart from us." Who are these gods? These deities are' good thoughts, good feelings, good behaviour. The sages prayed that such celestial beings should enter their minds. The demons whom they wanted to get rid of are evil thoughts, bad feelings and bad actions. This is an example for every one to follow in daily life.

In daily life, we consume good things and eschew bad things. We consume good food and defecate what is not wholesome. This is a basic principle. You must give up the bad to provide room for the intake of what is good. This is the lesson from everyone's daily experience. Unfortunately today men give up what is wholesome and take what is harmful. That is, they are taking in the bad and giving up the good. It is this which accounts for the prevalence of disorder and misery in the world today. Hence, the first need is to cultivate good qualities. Bad thoughts and bad habits have to be cast away. Not recognizing this truth, man makes himself a prey to misery and discontent.

Can you say that this misery and worry were caused by Providence? Not at all. You own bad thoughts and actions are the cause of your misery. As you sow, so shall you reap. The seed determines the fruit. When man cherishes bad thoughts, 'bad results haunt him. When he has good thoughts, the results are also good.

Do not blame God for your grief

'Those who do not recognise this fact, go about blaming God. They lament: "Oh God! Why are you inflicting these miseries on me? Why are you denying, me peace of mind?" God is the Eternal Witness. He is the dispenser of the fruits of actions. He gives you according to your deserts. He is in no way responsible for your grief' or happiness. (Svami sang a ballad which pointed out that a man sows a poisonous seed, while desiring sweet fruits. Unable to eat the poisonous fruit he blames God). This is the product of ignorance. It is opposed to the sacredness of human life.

Man's first duty is to practise good conduct. Such good conduct can ensue only from the contemplation of God. People must nourish sacred thoughts about the Divine in their hearts. This is not something which can be got from someone or somewhere outside you. It is within you. The Divine is present within you. Those who experience this Presence within them can experience a joy that is indescribable, wherever they may be. It is not enough if you are here. You must realise the sweetness of your presence here. A frog that is close to a lotus is totally unaware of its nectarine honey. But a bee comes from afar and drinks the honey. People should realise that time is fleeting and one's life span is melting away every moment like a block of ice. Man is nearing his end even before he realises his primary duty. What is that duty? It is to discover the purpose of life. Man seeks wealth, comforts, position and happiness. How are these to be got? Moving away from God's grace, man seeks all these kinds of worldly happiness. Of what avail are these transient physical pleasures? Thyagaraja sought to know wherein lay real happiness. Is it in wealth or is it in the service of Lord Rama? If one is blessed with God's grace, what more does he need?

Practise sacred impulses to experience the bliss within

Hence, seek God's grace at the outset. Does real happiness lie in enjoying creature comforts? No. True happiness consists in manifesting all the potentialities in man. When you put into practice all the sacred thoughts that emanate from your mind you will realise true happiness. Most people do not practise the sacred impulses that arise in them with the result that they do not experience the bliss within them.

Embodiments of Love! The most important thing you have to recognise is that your heart is a Ksheerasagaram (Ocean of Milk). But because of the invasion of bad thoughts and feelings, your humanness is vitiated. Humanness consists in harmony of thought, word and deed.

Your freedom is subject to the norms of society

Today devotees have come here from all parts of the world. Whatever your dress, your education, your habits, each of you has to realise one supreme fact. You are a member of society and as such you have to respect the social norms. You cannot behave as you please. All your actions have to be in accordance with the obligations to society. Your freedom is subject to the norms of society.

Society does not mean a large group of persons. Relationship with any other person is governed by social obligations which limit your freedom. Your right to wield the stick in your hand in a public place is limited by the right of others to use the public places. Your freedom is subject to your duty towards other fellow-beings. Moreover, Svathanthram (freedom) has to be construed in the correct way. Svathanthram consists of the two terms: Sva and thanthram. Sva means the Spirit. Svathanthram means acting according to the dictates of the Spirit. The Spirit will never cause harm to others. It is the Eternal Witness present in everyone and desires the welfare of one and all. Hence Svathanthra or real freedom is related to the Divine Will. Duty is related to one's obligations to society. Freedom is related to expressing the Will of the Divine. The Prakrithi (phenomenal world) is a projection of the

Divine. Hence, it should be regarded as holy. Duty means recognizing the sacredness of one's obligations to Prakrithi. Each one must recognise that he (or she) is an image of the Divine and conduct himself on that basis. He alone is a real man who lives his life in this way. Deeming the physical body alone as real, man goes after worldly objects and ultimately ends up in misery. Man must take to the spiritual path. This means that one should recognise the entire cosmos as an image, of the Divine. Once one has this conviction, evil can never approach him. He experiences bliss at all times and everywhere. He desires that all should be happy. Unfortunately, most people today do not cultivate such a broad feeling. They are immersed in concerns about themselves and their family, They should transcend these narrow feelings and have regard for society as a whole. They should deem service to society as service to God.

The illness and the remedy

The overseas devotees who have come here are affluent people. Why have they come here? They are like patients who go to a hospital for their ailments. All of them suffer from some kind of illness or other, mental or physical. All are victims of some kind of mental illness. They have all come for the medicine of peace, joy, and happiness. Wherefrom is this peace to be got? It cannot be got from outside. It is within oneself. The disease has arisen within because of bad qualities. Every person's physical, mental and spiritual health is mined by bad qualities, bad thoughts and bad feelings. Hence, cultivate good thoughts, good feelings and good attitudes. Expel every bad thought as it arises in the mind. You cannot relish food that is not tasty. Should you not impart sweet taste to your life which spans several decades? How to impart that taste? By constant contemplation on God. Life is made tasty by good thoughts and good actions. All those who wish to pursue the spiritual path must begin with getting rid of bad thoughts and bad practices and start transforming their lives. People ask: "How are we to cultivate a broad attitude?" The answer is: "Get rid of the artificial barriers you have raised between yourself and others." These barriers create narrow and limited loyalties and prevent you from enjoying an all-embracing bliss. Enlarge your horizon. Expand' your vision. This is the true, spiritual exercise for you.

Devotion of overseas artists

During the past three days, devotees from many countries have presented a blissful programme of the kind which cannot be seen anywhere else in the world. They would not have come on the invitation of any government. Even if they had come, you would not have experienced the kind of bliss you have enjoyed here. This is an example of the relationship between an object and its image. It is because of the bliss within the artists, they could generate that bliss in the audience. They have come from their respective countries filled with devotion and in their singing and dance they completely forgot themselves. This kind of performance would not be possible by artists who expect rewards. The devotees did not come merely with art, but they came with their hearts. Their "art" is filled with "heart." Some of them were oblivious to their bodies in the performances. They were forgetful of their native countries - whether Russia, or America, or Germany, or Africa. This is real Samadhi (the state of spiritual ecstasy). Samadhi is not falling into a trance or some state of unconsciousness. These may be caused by hysteria or antic of the imagination. Samadhi means equal-mindedness, forgetting the body consciousness and being immersed in Anandha (bliss). These devotees demonstrated this Samadhi and shared their bliss with thousands of others. Not only did they experience this bliss themselves, but they shared it with all. Can there be a greater thapas (penance) than this? What greater Sadhana do you need? "Udahareth Atmana-Atmanam," says the Upanishath - Raise yourself and share that experience with others.

Adherence to tradition by overseas artists

Those artists have been strictly adhering to the artistic traditions of their respective countries. In the Japanese dance yesterday, the priest (an old man) appeared to be shivering. He has all the strength, but when approaching the shrine and nearing the Emperor he displays extreme humility and reverence. They practise such supreme humility. Economically and technologically Japan is a highly advanced country. But see what humility and discipline they display! Look at the Russians. Among Russians, there is a tendency to "rush."

But what complete selfforgetfulness was displayed by the lady while she sang and danced? What ecstasy in her heart made her experience such joy? She was completely lost in her song and dance. No one can tell what kind of experience one can have in a certain place at a certain time and in a certain situation. Altogether, what transformation has taken place in all those who came for the Global Festival! They came for the first time. But the transformation that has taken place in them cannot be seen in many who have been coming here for years and years. Many of you have listened to countless discourses and have read a lot of books. But, what is the change in you? None at all. You have remained where you are. If we examine further, many seem to have gone back rather than going forward. Hence, devotees should strive to put into practice at least a fraction of what they have seen and heard. The lives of these overseas devotees appear exemplary. Though they have learnt little, the joy they derive from it is great. This is what is great about them. There are many here who know a great deal, but who practise very little of it.

Every devotee must aspire for friendship towards God

Of what use is all the reading of scriptures and epics? Very little of it is put into practice. The overseas devotees know only a few things. An American artist declared' "Baba is my great friend." This means that he had developed this friendly attitude even before coming here. How did he accomplish? Friendship towards the Lord is one of the nine forms of devotion. Starting with listening to the glory of the Lord, friendship forms the penultimate stage before Atmanivedanam (utter self-surrender to the Lord). Every devotee must aspire to reach the stage of sneham (friendship). What kind of friendship is it? It is not something new. It is an old friendship. Only such friendship can bring about familiarity and intimacy with the Lord. You maintain formal relations with a friend, But, because God is an ancient friend, the devotee can experience an unrestrained intimacy. When you recognise this truth, you can behave with natural ease and freedom towards God. You are free to confess your lapses to such a friend. You have to receive His counsel. You can then get your heart purified. Offering your sullied heart to the Lord is like presenting a soiled currency note to the Reserve Bank for getting a new one.

A note which is not acceptable to others will be accepted by the Reserve Bank. Only God can accept it and replace it with a new one. Therefore, offer all your bad qualities to God and receive from Him all good qualities. Don't pass on your bad qualities to others.

You have to offer yourself to God

What is that you have to offer to God? Not a leaf, a flower, a fruit or holy water. You have to offer yourself to God. Then you become one with the Divine. That is what God desires from you. Instead of realising this sublime truth people seek to offer their hair to Sri Venkateshvara to secure petty favours. What is it that Lord Venkateshvara lacks? Does the Lord need your overgrown hair? What is it the Lord needs? On the top of the head you have dark hair. That represents the Thamo-guna - the quality of lethargy and ignorance. Those who go to Thirupathi should offer to God their Thamoguna and acquire the Sathva-guna. Realise that there is nothing of ours that you can offer to God. All you enjoy is from Him. Develop this conviction. Treat whatever good or bad that happens to you as coming from God. What you deem as bad may be like a bitter medicine prescribed by a doctor for your good. Consider all that happens, good or ill, pleasure or pain, is for our good. Only then you will be able to nourish your good qualities. Embodiments of love! Wherever you may be, in whatever condition, consider your hearts as an Ocean of Milk, the abode of God. God is omnipresent. When you lead your life with this faith, there is nothing greater than this. The overseas devotees who were here during the past three days have converted their hearts into the Ocean of Milk and invited the Lord to recline on it. The other devotees should learn from them.

The world will come to Sai

Do not consider Sai Baba as a mere figure five feet three inches tall. His Presence will be felt all over the world. Wait and see. In a few days the entire world will come here. Therefore, at least from now on make the best use of the opportunity that has come to you and strive to redeem your lives. Because of proximity, you have tended to take me for granted. Yashodha was

similarly misled about the true nature of Krishna and could not understand why He preferred the butter kept by the Gopikas to the butter offered by her. Krishna could be bound only by the rope of devotion. Yashodha had material affection but not the intense devotion of the Gopikas. The sense of dualism should go and there should be total identification with the Divine. On this holy occasion devotees from many countries have delighted every one here by their presentation of the artistic culture of their respective countries. Wherever you may go do not give up your traditional culture. Devotees from outside who come here adhere to their culture. But Bharatheeyas going abroad forget their ancient culture. What is worse, they even forget their mother tongue. After years spent in Bharath, within a short spell of stay in the United States they get addicted to the American language. When I ask in Telugu young people who return after a short-stay in the U.S. what they are doing there, they say: "I don't know Telugu," What is it that you have learnt? If you have forgotten your mother tongue, are you likely to remember your mother?

Nations are many but the earth is one

Rama declared: "The mother and the Motherland are greater than Heaven itself." Therefore, wherever you may go, do not forget your ancient traditions. This is relevant to people of all countries. At the same time, unity should be cultivated. "Nations are many, the earth is one. Beings are many, but breath is one." This truth has to be recognized. All the resources of Nature like air are available to all irrespective of nationality or creed or race. This is the unity in diversity that has to be realised, Out of unity comes purity. All should seek to live as brothers and sisters. No one should criticise any nation, faith or culture. When you cultivate this broad outlook, your culture will be respected by others. It is this spirit of unity that the world needs today.

If Bharatheeyas forget their culture they will be guilty of spiritual betrayal. See how the Chinese (from Malaysia) performed their unique dances. The young lads had such intense dedication to their culture. Indians going abroad tend to decry their traditional culture as superstition. Once Prof. Max Mueller, attempting to get the meaning of Vedhik passage from an Indian I.C.S. trainee

who gave his name as Chaturvedhi, found that he was totally ignorant of the Vedas and had no respect for them. Prof. Max Mueller was sad that one born in India, with the name Chaturvedhi, should have so little regard for the Vedas. Bharatheeyas should realise what great respect is being shown by foreigners to our culture and spiritual heritage. The nation is going down morally and spiritually. The first need is to cultivate self-respect. Everyone should uphold the name and fame of Bharath. For this, they should have respect for the Vedas and try to acquire the same knowledge of the Vedas. To say the least, they should at least regard God as the indweller of the heart. Embodiments of love! Cherish the heart as the temple of God and try to keep it pure and unsullied. Chant the name of the Lord to drive away all evil thoughts and impulses.

The greatest instrument by which success can be ensured for all your efforts is Bhakthi. That will give health, wealth and prosperity too, for it will eliminate hatred and faction and give more power to your elbow when you plough the land.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

20. The Divine dispeller of darkness

Date: 12 July 1995 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Guru Purnima

The human body, constituted by the five elements is the combined product of the five elements.

These five elements are derived from the Divine.

But man to-day is not aware of the truth about these elements.

Man can accomplish many things in this world: he can be a great scholar, a great warrior,

A ruler of rulers, a great astronomer or an astronaut on the moon,

But can he control his senses and make his mind tranquil and steady?

Neither charity, nor yajna, nor thapas, nor wisdom,

Nor the practice of ancient Dharma,

nor adherence to truth or any discipline

Will be of any avail without self-control.

EMBODIMENTS of the Divine Atma! Water is getting scarcer every day. What is the reason? Because of the decline of morality among men water is getting scarce in the world. For human life morality is the life breath. Morality makes humanness blossom. Because morals have been lost, water is getting scarce. Today people are propagating Vedantha (philosophy) in various ways. This propaganda is exciting the minds of the people. It is perturbing the hearts of people. Life is filled with doubts. Man today does not require a siddhantham (ideology). He needs sense-control. Without control of the senses, a man cannot become spiritual. This was proclaimed by saint Thyagaraja in his song wherein he said that without peace of the Spirit there can be no happiness for any one, whether he is a Vedanthik scholar or an aspirant. Only through self-control can a man experience peace. But man is engaged in a futile search for something he does not know. The world is full of such aimless seekers. They are forgetting the Eternal reality in the concern for transient worldly objects.

Lead lives inspired by sheelam and thyaga

Man today is dominated by selfishness. Insatiable desire fills his whole being. The numbers of such persons are growing without limit. How can they achieve anything great in life? Their daily round of activities consists of reading newspapers, watching video programmes and listening to the radio. Every moment their attachment to castes, creed and parochial interests is growing. Men today must learn to lead lives inspired by sheelam and thyaga (morality and sacrifice). Human relationships today are governed by friendship or enmity. The cause for either feeling is the mind. Hatred is bred by each one's thoughts. This may be seen from the hatred of Ravana towards Rama, of Shishupala and Dhanthavakra towards Krishna and of Kauravas towards Dharmaja, who was an "Ajathashathru" incapable of hating anybody. There is no need to worry about the enmity of others towards you. You develop your friendly attitude towards all. Ignore the abuses of others, because they serve only to diminish your sins and transfer them to the reviler. When a man praises another, the merits of the latter accrue to the former. Deem the critic as your friend, not the one who flatters you.

Accountability for actions

One's actions determine one's future. **Actions are of three kinds, Thoughts are one kind. Giving expression to them is another. Acting according to one's words is the third.** The mind is responsible for thoughts, the tongue for speech and the hands for actions. The combination of thought, word and deed represents the human state. These three account for man's pleasures and pain. Recognizing this, one should understand that he is accountable for his actions. No one can escape from the consequences of his deeds. But anything can be achieved through God's grace. Hence man should strive to win God's grace. The results of one's actions are realised over different periods of time. In some cases, the results are immediate, as, for instance, when one slips and sustains a fall. In some cases, the results occur after a few minutes or hours. For example, the food you take in the morning is digested after two hours. When you sow a seed in the ground, it takes some

months or years to grow into a tree and yield fruits. Some fools imagine that they can get away with bad deeds because the consequences are not immediate. But the consequences are bound to occur some time or other.

Three types of Karmas

There are three types of actions: *Sukarma*, *Vikarma* and *Akarma*. *Sukarma* relates to good actions which produce good results. *Vikarma* relates to bad actions which have bad consequences. *Akarma* relates to the fruits of actions in previous lives. The suffering of good people like Seetha, Harishchandhra and Nala and Dhamayanthi have no basis in their actions during their lives, but are the results of previous karma. People who may have done no actions of any kind in their present lives may still suffer from the consequences of their actions in previous lives. The effects of past deeds can be mitigated by earning God's grace. The means of securing Divine grace is to cultivate qualities like truth, righteousness, love, compassion and forbearance. With these qualities life becomes a beautiful garden and a joy forever. For the man filled with bad thoughts and actions, life is like the dark and filthy Vaitharini river (called Styx in Greek mythology).

Each one has to judge for himself the nature of his life. Each one is a witness unto himself. A bad man may pass off for a good man from his external appearances but he knows within himself his real nature. God is beyond all praise or criticism. He is Sath-Chith-Anandha (Being-Awareness-Bliss). He blesses even the one who derides Him. When Kamsa, who ceaselessly hated Krishna, died at the Lord's hands, his blood flowed towards the feet of Krishna. Likewise, Shishupala, who used the vilest abusive epithets against Krishna, was slain by Krishna, but his spirit merged in the Lord because he remembered the Lord always out of his hatred. (Svami recited poems from the Bhagavatham to illustrate the language in which Shishupala reviled Krishna). Fools who indulge in flippant remarks about Sri Krishna know nothing about the inscrutable ways of the Lord. Everyone has to face the consequences of his actions, though he may not know how, when or where these consequences may occur. Man can reverse the consequences of bad actions by performing good deeds and invoking God's help.

The guru is in the heart

Today is Gurupurnima. The real significance of Gurupurnima does not consist in worshipping the guru (preceptor) with some offerings, but getting rid of the darkness of ignorance. Purnima refers to the full moon, but the full moon symbolises the mind filled with delight. There is close association between the mind and the moon. Gurupurnima signifies the elimination of all darkness and evil from the mind. The true Guru is in our heart. Purify the heart to let the Divine dwell in it.

Do not forget God. What you should forget is the mundane world. God is omnipresent in all forms, everywhere, as declared in the Purusha Suktha. It is foolish to search for God, who is within you and outside you. When Ramakrishna Paramahansa was asked whether he had seen God and could show Him to them, he replied - "I have seen God. But how can you see God if you don't pine for him in the same manner in which you pine for your wife and children and wealth? Pray to Him, yearn for Him and be prepared to sacrifice everything for Him. Then you will experience the vision of God." God cannot be perceived by the spiritually blind, just as a blind man cannot understand what is meant by the whiteness of milk. God is infinite bliss. He is formless, but He can assume any form He wills. How can anyone attempt to describe the nature of God? Contemplate on God with a pure heart. There is no greater spiritual exercise. But, as long as men are attached to worldly objects they can make no progress in the spiritual field. Once Radha and other Gopikas wanted to go down in a boat from Mathura to Brindavan. They rowed the boat all through the night, but found to their astonishment that the boat had remained where it had been. They then discovered that they had not untied the rope which kept the boat bound to a post on the bank.

Develop detachment and spirit of sacrifice

The first need is to develop the spirit of sacrifice and get rid of attachment and possessiveness. Then, the yearning for God grows. All are entitled to receive God's grace according to their merits. It is like drawing upon a bank

according to what you have deposited with it. There are three ways of getting money from a bank. One is drawing on your deposit. In spiritual terms, this means realising the fruits of your past actions. The second means is raising a loan on the security of your assets. This corresponds to the grace you get by your current good deeds. The third means to get money from a bank is to have a good surety to the loan you wish to raise from the bank. Spiritually, this corresponds to securing God's grace through the medium of a guru (preceptor). Who is the guru? He is the Divine dispeller of the darkness within you. The Divine Trinity (Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshvara) have been described as gurus. This implies that the Divine should be regarded as the supreme preceptor, who can destroy the darkness of ignorance.

Install God in your heart

Forgetting this basic truth, people run after men wearing the ochre robe who profess to impart a manthra and stretch their palm for money. This is not what is meant by Guru. Install God in your heart. The vibrations that emanate from the heart will elevate you spiritually and confer divine wisdom. This wisdom has been defined as Prajnana (Constant Integrated Awareness). To acquire such wisdom you have to keep your mind pure as a mirror, using shraddha (earnestness) as a cloth, dipping it in the water of Prema (Love) and wiping the dust on the mirror (in the form of bad qualities). This wisdom cannot be acquired from books. It has to be got through selfexamination and self-correction.

Gurupuurnima is an occasion for cleansing the mind to make it absolutely pure. It is not enough to praise God. You have to love Him. You have to become love itself so that you can love the entire Universe. I address all of you as "Embodiments of love." When you become embodiments of love, you can love all.

21. Dedicate all actions to God

Date: 18 August 1995 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Krishna Jayanthi

There is no greater penance than contentment for securing happiness. There is no worse disease than insatiable desire. There is no greater virtue than compassion.

Peace is the highest spiritual discipline. EMBODIMENTS of love! There is no greater penance than shantham (tranquillity or peace). Peace is the foremost prize for man. Peace confers beauty on sages. Peace is the fascinating charm of the Divine. "Without such peace there can be no happiness," declared Thyagaraja (the composer-saint of south India). There is no greater santhosham (happiness) than being contented. Man seeks happiness in various forms. But there is no happiness equal to shanthi (peace). Thyagaraja sang in the same strain, declaring that without peace there can be no happiness. There is no greater happiness than that derived from santhrupthi (contentment). What greater heaven is there than contentment?

"There is no worse disease than desire." Contemporary man is afflicted by endless desires. These desires are the cause of innumerable diseases, There must be a limit to desires. Today desires grow limitlessly. Consequently, diseases also increase limitlessly. Owing to endless desires, man is affected mentally and this gives rise to many bodily ailments. Hence everyone should try as far as possible to keep a check on desires.

Compassion-filled heart is the temple of the Divine

"Na dharmo dhaya samah" (There is no virtue equal to compassion). What is dharma? Compassion is the highest dharma. A heart filled with compassion is the temple of the Divine. Every man should have a compassion-filled heart. There is a lesson every man should learn. There is the potency of a mantra (a sacred declaration) in every word. Every plant has medicinal properties. Every human 'being is precious. A true individual is one who knows and lives upto this truth. People today do not recognise the value of being human and

the preciousness of time. You spend the whole day in hectic activity. Do you call this living? You eat three times a day. Does this constitute living? Do you think that living consists in sleeping comfortably? Do you regard indulgence in Gossip as the aim of life? Did God give you life for these purposes? Knowing what is merit and what is sin, You are indifferent to them. Is this the way you spend your life-time? At least from now on,

Learn to lead a truly human life.

The Divine energy

The cosmos is a creation of the Divine. It is surcharged with energy. This energy is not localised at a particular point in space or in time. Though this energy is all-pervading, man is not able to recognise its divine nature. As he cannot recognise it, he presumes that it does not exist. Electrical energy is present all the time (in the electrical installations). But its presence is recognized only when a bulb is switched on. Likewise, though God is omnipresent. His divine effulgence will shine only in those who adore Him with a pure heart. Man today is unable to understand what is life, what is its goal, what is one's duty and what should be one's aim. Time is moving fast like a whirlwind. Man's allotted span of life is melting every moment like a block of ice. Man's life ends even before he is aware of his duty. What is his duty? Every individual has some aspirations, some ideals to be realised and some sacred paths to be trodden. He makes no effort to pursue these aims. What is the goal and purpose of one's life, what is its secret? Man hardly puts these questions to himself. He is content to devote himself to sensuous pleasures. This is not what he should do; it is not the aim of life. Every individual should manifest a divine ideal in his life. This ideal should absorb his entire life and activities. Alas! man today does not follow this sacred path. Everything is based on man's thoughts, which find expression in external forms - a reflection of his inner being. This can be illustrated by a simple example. When one wants to build a house, he plans in advance how the different rooms should be located. These ideals are later incorporated in blue prints. The thoughts come first and then they are given concrete forms. Similarly when you want to write a letter, you first think of what you should

write and then commence to write.

Thoughts lead to action. There can be no action without sankalpas (firm thoughts). Hence, it is essential to entertain sacred thoughts. Everyone should realise that all the sorrows and miseries of modern man are due to his bad thoughts. Every man thinks that someone else is responsible for his troubles. This is not so. You alone are responsible for the good and evil that befalls you. You blame others because of your weakness.

Valmeeki's transformation

The Kenopanishath has proclaimed this truth beautifully. "Brahmavith Brahmaiva Bhavathi" (The knower of the Divine becomes Divine himself). Whatever you aspire for, whatever your yearning, that you become yourself. When Valmeeki wished to write the Ramayana, he first meditated on all the qualities of Rama and then alone he could commence his epic. Because of the constant repetition of the name of Rama and continuous meditation on the Rama Principle, he shone with the effulgence of Rama. It is one of the miracles of Rama that the highwayman Rathnakara could become the author of a great epic. When you meditate on the effulgence of anyone, a part of that effulgence enters into you. Such was the case with Prahladha. By constant chanting of the name of the lord, devoting all his thoughts to Narayana, he was filled with the power of the Divine and experienced ineffable bliss. He could face with utter equanimity all the ordeals which he was subjected to by the minions of his father. (Svami sang a poem from the Bhagavatham in which Pothana describes how Prahladha chanted only the names of the Lord while the rakshasas were tormenting him). Prahladha had no sense of fear. The effulgence of Vishnu shone in his face.

Man is a spark of the Divine

Man today should reflect on his true nature. The Lord declares in the Geetha- "The individual on earth is a fragment of my Eternal Self." The import of this declaration is ' "Oh foolish man! Don't think you are only a composite of the five elements. You are an Amsa (fragment) of Myself." A branch is a part of a

tree. A child is a part of the mother. The branch cannot survive without the tree. The child cannot survive without the mother. Man is fragment of Madhava (the Supreme Self). Hence man cannot exist without Madhava. But, it may be asked, "Is not man surviving today? How is he doing that?" But what kind of life is he leading? Is he living as a human being? No. He is living as an animal. If he were aware that he is a spark of the Divine, why is he a prey to suffering? Does God have any worries or troubles? None at all. "He is in eternal bliss, the bestower of all happiness, the embodiment of all wisdom," says a Sanskrith sloka. If you are a fragment of that Divine, why should you be a prey to all this suffering? When you enquire in this manner you will realise that you are not behaving like a spark of the Divine. You must take a pledge from today to lead a godly life. Consider also how this has been treated in other religions. In the Bible, God is described as omnipotent and all encompassing. Moses was always meditating on God and dedicated his entire life to God. Because of this, Moses acquired the effulgence of the Divine. Jesus Christ declared repeatedly: "I and You are one." A very great scientist, Charles Darwin, was so much devoted to his teacher, Henslow, that he became the very image of his preceptor. Such feelings should arise in the hearts of every one. Today, people's feelings vary from moment to moment. The result is men lead mindless lives. Having taken birth as a human being, having realised that one is a spark of the Divine, one should lead a godly life.

Quest for perfection

There was a great (Italian) violin manufacturer by name Anthony (Stradivarius). He used to take a whole year to produce a single violin, perfect in every aspect. Once a friend asked him "Anthony, if you take one year to make a single violin, how can you make a living?" Anthony replied "Brother! God is the embodiment of perfection. In harmony with His perfection I must make a perfect violin. If I do not make a perfect violin, I shall be a traitor to God. God 'is fullness, total perfection. If you want to please God, your thoughts, words and actions must be entirely pure." That is perfect, and this must also be perfect. It is in this spirit that some of the great figures in the western world worshipped and served God. God is all perfection. Hence, in worshipping Him, the feeling should be total. God should not be worshipped in

halves and fractions. The devotee should achieve total involvement with the Divine. Quantitatively there would be a difference between God, who is the ocean of love, and the devotee whose love is a drop in that ocean. But the quality of love is the same.

The gopikas' devotion

Whatever you do to please God must be in harmony with the perfection of the Divine. Your words should be absolute truth Your actions should be totally God-Oriented. All thoughts should be divinised. It should be realised that God is the Indweller in all beings. Because man has failed to realise this truth he leads a double life and is a prey to troubles and worries. Only by leading a godly life can man redeem himself. The Gopikas (cowherd women) are perfect examples of total and pure devotion. They were totally absorbed in Krishna. They ignored the message brought to them by Uddhava. They told Uddhava that they were so totally immersed in the adoration of Krishna that they had no time or inclination to do anything else. They had totally identified themselves with Krishna. Krishna was a six-year-old boy when he was sporting with the Gopikas. Even Bharatheeyas have wrong notions about Krishna's sports with the cowherdresses. His sports were those of a young child with his brothers and sisters. By his sports Krishna moved the hearts of the Gopikas. The Gopikas saw the image of Krishna in every creeper, every flower and ever plant. When Krishna was away from Gokulam, the Gopikas went to Brindavan and appealed to every creeper and flower to let them know where Krishna, who had stolen their hearts, was hiding himself. (Svami sang the song of the Gopikas describing Krishna and appealing to the creepers to let them know that He was not hiding amongst them). The Gopikas had only one image before them, that of Krishna. They had only one vision, that of Krishna. The nature of true love between the devotee and God cannot be understood by the unbelievers, the atheists. Only the loving devotee can experience the effulgence of the Divine. The man without love is lost in dialectical controversies, with the result that bitterness develops over arguments.

The human life is precious

The incarnation of Krishna proclaimed the doctrine of divine love, as manifested by the Gopikas. Man today is like an earthen pot filled with nectar. His body may be made of clay, but his spirit is eternal. The Divine has to be experienced through the body. Hence, human birth should not be treated as something trivial. Human life is worth living, it should be cherished as something precious.

But such a precious gift is being treated as dirt today. It is essential to realise the value of human existence. What is the goal of human life? It is to go back to the source from which we came. Our duty is to return to our primordial, original home. All of you who are here have come from different parts of India and the world. After your stay here, you have to go back to your native places. Likewise human beings have come to the planet earth as pilgrims. They have to return to their original home. You have come from the Atma. You have to go back to the Atma. You have come from the Brahman (Supreme Self). You have to merge in the Brahman. You have incarnated as a spark of Brahman. You have to become the Brahman. In between there may be many impediments. You should ignore them. Have unshakable faith. That is true devotion.

Love is God's gift

Devotion does not consist merely in different forms of worship. It is dedicated offering of yourself to the Lord with unsullied love. You have come from the Divine with love. You have to base your life on that love. That love is a gift of the Divine. You must treat it as Divine property and not as your personal possession. As long as you entertain the sense of personal property, you can never understand the Athmik principle. The feeling of 'I' and 'mine' is the root cause of all man's troubles. Attachment and possessiveness cannot be totally eschewed. But there should be limits for them. Insatiable desires are the cause of the growth of peacelessness. The Gopikas and Gopalas lived a life of contentment. They had only one desire: the yearning for God. People are often affected by the deluding power of Maya. Even the Gopikas once doubted whether a little boy like Krishna would be able to lift the Govardhana

mountain to give shelter to the denizens of Repalle from a heavy downpour. Devotees should not give way to doubts. Faith in God should be firm till 'your last breath.

The triple purity

Embodiments of love! You celebrate what are regarded as the birthdays of God coming as an avathar. What is the secret of these birthday celebrations? Every Avathar comes to uphold or testify to a certain ideal or purpose. Avathars come for establishing Dharma in the world (as declared in the Geetha). What is Dharma? There are various Dharmas (Codes of conduct) relating to celibates, house holders, renunciants and others. These Dharmas are related to one's stage in life. True Dharma is that which sustains one - "Dharayathi Ithi Dharmah " Man is sustained by three factors: the body, the mind, and the tongue. The hands represent the body, thoughts represent the mind and speech represents the tongue. The acting in unison of the body, the mind and the tongue is Dharma. Thoughts, words and actions should be in harmony. That is the mark of a true human being. This basic truth is valid without regard to place, nationality, language or religion. It is applicable to people everywhere, at all times. Those who observe this triple purity are the redeemed. They are the salt of the earth. They are the upholders of righteousness. To such adherents of Dharma, God is a constant companion, keeping close to them at all times and places. Today, people have to cherish and uphold this Dharma. Instead, they are deluded by attachment to the body to sacrifice purity in thought, word and deed. To illustrate how attachment to bodily relations affects one's judgment, I would relate the episodes in the Mahabharatha which preceded the Kurukshetra battle and the conduct of Arjuna on the battle field. Arjuna had vigorously opposed Krishna's attempts to hold peace parleys with the Kauravas as a futile exercise. But when he saw his preceptors, cousins, and other kinsmen ranged against him on the battlefield, he was despondent and did not wish to fight. It was then that Krishna taught him that the Spirit is immortal and bodies are perishable and one should not give way to bodily attachments in the performance of one's duty. The body has to be taken care of, but not excessively. It should be dedicated to the service of God.

The delusion of separateness

One may claim to surrender all his wealth, kith and kin and power and position to God. But this is not real surrender. One must realise: "I am in You, You are in me." God is one. The sense of separation between God and the individual should go. Even Yashodha, though she had experienced numerous examples of Krishna's divinity, could not realise the oneness of Godhead, because of attachment to the body (owing to the delusion caused by Maya). She complained about the worry caused to her by Krishna, who refused to eat the butter given by the mother, but went out stealing butter from the Gopikas' houses. She tied Krishna to a tree to prevent him from going round houses. Episodes such as these are intended to teach lessons to devotees about the ways of God. The Divine is in every individual, but one's realisation depends on one's own efforts. The Divine shines according to the degree of one's spiritual awareness. To manifest the full effulgence of the Divine, one has to adhere to the path of Love. Only through Love can the Supreme Divine be attained - God cannot be got by hatred, anger or jealousy. It is because these three evil qualities are present in people that you see in their faces the marks of misery. On the contrary look at the faces of Dhruva, Prahladha and Naradha. You see extreme brilliance on their faces because they are filled with the love of God. There should be no mark of sadness on the face of one who has faith in God. This was the case with Valmeeki. His face was full of radiance - a radiance derived from Rama, who is the embodiment of Love.

All of you should strive to promote your effulgence and bliss by seeking oneness with the Divine. This is the primary duty of man. (Bhagavan sang two songs in which He bemoaned the plight of human beings who were more concerned about their food than about God and who mastered all the texts but did not sincerely worship God). This was the message which Adhi Shankaracharya wished to convey in his famous hymn, Bhaja. Govindham. Every one should realise the transitoriness of life and turn his thoughts towards God early enough in life. The challenges of life should be faced with fortitude and firm faith in God. That is the Supreme quality of humanness. Its grandeur and power should not be belittled. Faith in God should never be

given up, whatever one's scholarship, position or power. That is the summum-bonum of life.

Universal message of the Geetha

Today people have forgotten the eternal verities and are immersed in selfishness. The true meaning of Svārtha is dedication to the Self and not petty selfishness. This is the Supreme message of the Bhagavath Geetha. It is not a message intended for one individual or one nation. It is meant for all mankind. It is the word of God the Eternal Wisdom, the Cosmic Director, Playwright and Actor, all rolled into one. The unbreakable bond between the One and the Many should be properly understood.

Divinise every act

Whatever you do, remember the omnipresence of the Divine. Do every act to please God, out of love and not out of compulsion. Divinise every act. The Lord declares in the Geetha: "Having been born in this transient and unhappy world, worship Me." Krishna called upon Arjuna to stand up and face the battle, reminding him of what was in store for the evil-minded Kauravas. He adjured Arjuna to have full faith in Him and do his duty. Then Arjuna declared 'Karishye vachanam thava' (I shall do as you bid me). Then Krishna declared 'You have now become my true devotee.' And He exhorted Arjuna to rise and fight the battle which would end in the complete destruction of the Kauravas and the wicked quartet, Dhuryodhana, Dhusshasana, Karna and Shakuni. The great teaching of the Geetha is: "Put your trust in God, carry on your duties, be helpful to everyone and sanctify your lives." Dedicate all actions to God. That is the way to experience oneness with God. God is in you. You are in God. This oneness is the basic truth. Chant the name of the Lord and render social service in a spirit of selflessness and devotion to God.

22. Unique potency of Gayathri

Date: 23 August 1995 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

EMBODIMENTS of love!

Man today spends his life fully preoccupied with worldly concerns. Owing to attachment to the body; he forgets his true nature, is immersed in the affairs of the body as permanent and. makes bodily comforts his goal in life. These are the things which every individual experiences in daily life. If anybody accosts a person and asks him, "Who are you?", out of his identification with the body he gives his name in reply. In answer to further questions he introduces himself as a doctor, a farmer, or student, or the like. When the enquiry goes further, he identifies himself with his nationality as an American, an Indian, a Pakistani or so on.

When you examine these answers deeply, you will find that none of them gives the truth. He got his name from his parents. It did not belong to him at birth. His identification with one or other of his professions is not true because he is not the profession. What, then, is the truth about him?

"I am the Atma. That is my true Self." That is the truth.

But people identify themselves with their names, professions and nationality and do not base their lives on the Atma. No driver of a car identifies with the car. Likewise the body is a car and the Atma is the driver. Forgetting one's true role as a driver, one is identifying one's self with the body, which is only a vehicle. This truth is emphatically brought out by the Gayathri manthra.

"Dheha budhyath Dhasoham"

(From the standpoint of the body, I am your instrument, your servant).

"Jeevabudhyath Thvadhamshah"

(In the context of the Jeeva, the individual soul, I am a spark of the Divine Thou).

"Atmabudhyath Thvameva-aham"

(In terms of the Atma I am yourself).

When one views one's self from the Athmik standpoint, one is identical with the Divine. "I am you and you are me."

Our life is a three-storeyed mansion

Every man has thus three aspects. Our life itself is a three-storeyed mansion. The *Brahmacharya* (celibate) stage is the foundation of this mansion. After that, the stage of *Grihastha* (householder) is the first floor. Then you have the *Vanaprastha* (retirement from the life of a householder) stage as the second floor. Finally, there is the stage of the *Sanyasa* (renunciant), consisting-the third floor.

Thus, Brahmacharya is the foundation for the other three stages of life. The safety and security of the other three floors depend on the strength of the foundation, vis, Brahmacharya. Hence, Brahmacharya is the basic foundation. But, unfortunately this vital fact has been forgotten by people. They feel happy on seeing the super-structure. But the whole edifice may collapse at any time if the foundation is weak. When you feel happy at the sight of a tree and its flowers and fruits, you must be concerned about its roots. The unseen foundation is the basis for the visible mansion. The invisible roots are the basis for the visible tree. Likewise, the invisible *Prana* (Life-Breath or Force) is the basis for the visible body. Prana has no form, while the body has a form. There is, however, the *Athmik* principle which confers all the potencies for the

Prana (Life Force). It is because of the power imparted by the Atma that the Life Force is able to activate the body. The body inherently is inert. It is made up of different kinds of material substances.

Three potencies in man

In the Gayathri Manthra the first line is: "Om Bhur bhuvah suvah." This manthra is assumed to refer to three worlds, the earth, the middle world and Heaven - Svarga, the land of the gods.

Bhu refers to the body. It is made up of *Pancha Bhuthas* (five great, elements). These five elements constitute *Prakrithi* (Nature). There is an intimate relationship between the body and Nature. The same five elements that are in the nature are also in the body.

Bhuvah is the Prana Shakthi (Life Force) that animates the body. Even if the Life Force exists, without *Jnana* (Awareness) the body will be of no use. It is on this account that the Vedas declared:

"Prajnanam Brahma"
(Constant Integrated Awareness is Brahman).

It is by the presence of Prajnana that the Life Force is able to animate the body. The body represents inert matter. The Life Force operates in the body as a vibration. This Vibration derives its power from Prajnana, which finds expression in radiation.

Therefore, the body, the Life Force and the Prajnana are all within man. The entire cosmos is present in miniature within man. It is because of these three constituents that we are able to see the cosmos and experience many other things. Every potency is within us. The external is a reflection of the inner being. It follows from this that true *manavathvam* (humanness) is

Dhaivathvam (Divinity) itself.

Hence, the Vedas declared that the divine appears in human form. Every human being is inherently Divine, but owing to his attachment to the body he considers himself a mere man. How did this human body get animated by the Life Force? Whence has this Life Force come? It is from the Atma-Shakthi (the power of the Self). Making use of this power of the Self, the Life Force carries out all activities.

Triple aspects of Gayathri

Who is Gayathri? Gayathri is not a goddess.

"Gayathri Chandhasam matha"
(Gayathri is the mother of the Vedas)

"Gayantham thrayathe ithi Gayathri"
(Gayathri is that which redeems the chanter of the manthra).

Gayathri is present wherever the manthra is chanted. Gayathri, however, has three names, Gayathri, Savithri, Sarasvathi. These three are present in everyone.

Gayathri represents the senses. It is the master of the senses.

Savithri is the master of Prana (Life Force).

Many Bharatheeyas are familiar with the story of Savithri who brought back to life her dead husband, Sathyavan. Savithri signifies truth.

Sarasvathi is the presiding deity of Vak (Speech).

The three represent Thrikarana Shuddhi (purity in thought, word and deed). Although Gayathri has three names, all the three are in each of us as the senses (Gayathri), the power of speech (Sarasvathi) and the Life Force (Savithri).

Gayathri is said to have five faces and hence is called *Panchamukhi*.

Is there anybody in the world with five faces? No. In the Ramayana, Ravana is said to have ten heads. If really he had ten heads how would he be able to lie in his bed or move about? This is not the inner meaning of this description. He is said to be ten-headed because he was the master of the four Vedas and the six Shasthras.

Likewise, Gayathri is described as five-faced. The five faces are as follows.

Om (the Pranava) is the first face. The Pranava Principle represents the Ashta-Aishvarya (eight different forms of wealth).

The second face is: "Bhur Bhuvas Suvah."

The third is: "Thath-Savithur-varenyam."

The fourth is: "Bhargo Dhevasya dheemahi."

The fifth face is: "Dheyo yo hah prachodayath."

When the Gayathri manthra is understood in this way, it will be realised that all the five aspects of Gayathri are within each of us.

Power of Gayathri Manthra

The Gayathri manthra has all the three elements which figure in the adoration of God description, meditation and prayer. The first nine words of the

manthra - "Om-Bhur-Bhuvas- Suvah-Thath-Savithur- Varenyam-Bhargo-Devasya" - represent the attributes of the Divine. Dheemahi pertains to dhyana (meditation). "Dheyo yo hah Prachodayath" is the prayer to the Lord. The manthra is thus a prayer to God to confer all powers and talents.

"Sarva roga nivarini Gayathri"
(Gayathri is the reliever of all diseases).

"Sarva dhukha parivarini Gayathri"
(Gayathri wards off all misery).

"Sarva vancha phalasiddhi Gayathri"
(Gayathri is the fulfiller of all desires).

Gayathri is the bestower of all that is beneficial. If the manthra is chanted, various kinds of powers will emerge in one. Hence the Gayathri manthra should not be treated casually. In our respiration process the sound of Gayathri is embedded. That sound is a reminder of our true form. In the breathing process, there is inhalation and exhalation. In the Yoga-Shasthra, inhalation is termed *Puurakam* and the exhalation is called *Rechakam*. Holding the breath is called *Kumbhakam*.

When air is inhaled, the sound that is produced' is 'So-o-o.' When it is exhaled, the sound is 'Ham-m-m.' 'So-ham, Soham.' (Bhagavan demonstrated how this happens while breathing in and out). 'So' is "that." 'Ham' is "I". "I am that," "I am Divine." Every breath proclaims this. The Vedas declared the same thing in the pronouncements:

"Thath thvam Asi"
(That thou art),

"Aham Brahmasmi"
(I am Brahman),

"Ayam Atma Brahma"
(This Self is Brahman).

Gayathri is the indweller in the heart

Don't imagine God is somewhere remote from you. He is within you. You are God. People want to see God.

"Sathyam Jnanam Anantham Brahma," say the scriptures.
Truth is God. Wisdom is God. Both these are present everywhere.

They transcend the categories of time and place. Truth is that which is valid at all times - past, present and future. That truth is Gayathri. Gayathri is thus the indweller in the *Hridhaya* (heart).

Hri-dhaya contains the word Dhaya meaning compassion. There is compassion in every heart.

But to what extent is it shown in real life? Very little. All the while only anger, jealousy, pride and hatred are displayed. These evil qualities are not natural to man. They are opposed to human nature. It has been declared that one who bases himself entirely on the mind is a demon. One who bases himself on the body is an animal. One who follows the Atma (the Self) is divinely endowed. One who relies on the body, the mind and the Atma is a human being. Humanness is the combination of the body; mind and Atma. Man should strive to ascend to the divine and not descend to the demonic or animal nature.

How to remove insecurity and secure security

From today onwards parents should teach their children stories with morals. You all know in what a chaotic condition the world is today. Disorder and violence are rampant everywhere. Peace and security are not to be found anywhere. Where is peace to be found? It is within us. Security is also within us. How is insecurity to be removed and security secured? It is by giving up desires. In the language of the ancient *Bharatheeyas* this was termed *Vairagya* (giving up attachment). This does not mean giving up home and family and retiring into the forest. It is reduction of wants. As a householder limit your desires to the needs of the family. As a student, stick to your studies. As a professional, adhere to the duties of your profession. Do not indulge in excesses of any kind.

In the practice of the Gayathri manthra, one should realise that everything is within one and thereby develop confidence in the Self. Man today is racked by numerous troubles because he has no confidence in the Self. The aspirant on the spiritual path is bound to face the troubles caused by the six enemies, lust, anger, greed, infatuation, pride and envy. He has to overcome them.

Students!

On an auspicious occasion like this, you should consider how you can lead an ideal life. Through faith in God, you have to sanctify the body. Without the

body, you cannot experience the mind and the intellect. To achieve your ideals, the body is the instrument. It should be kept in proper condition. While the body is an instrument, the user of the instrument is the Self. All senses function because of the Atma. The Atma is the Witness to everything. It is also known as Conscious Self. It derives its sanction from the Divine. It is a fragment of the Divine.

Every human being is a spark of the Divine, as declared in the Geetha. The human being is essentially Divine, but tends to forget his Divine origin. The Gayathri mantra is enough to protect the person who chants it, because Gayathri embodies all the Divine potencies. It is an essential requisite for the young because it ensures a bright and auspicious future for them. The young students are the citizens and leaders of tomorrow. Hence, they should develop pure and noble thoughts. The parents also should foster such a development.

The meaning of Upanayanam

The Upanayanam ceremony is just over. The Gayathri mantra has been imparted to you. You are wearing the sacred thread with three strands tied in one knot. The three strands represent Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshvara. They also represent the past, the present and future. Upanayanam means being near to God. Nearness to God will enable you to get rid of your bad qualities and acquire virtues.

Students!

The Vedas have emphasized three duties. Esteem the mother as God, the father as God and the preceptor as God. Bear this injunction in mind.

Gratitude to your parents is your foremost duty. This is the lesson taught by Shri Rama. Love your parents and remember God. When you please your parents and make them happy, your entire life will be filled with happiness.

Chant the Gayathri as often as possible. If you chant it while you take a bath,

your bath gets sanctified. Likewise chant it before taking your food. The food becomes an offering to the Divine. Develop heartfelt devotion to God.

A man with Bhakthi will do every act as worship of God and so the act will be done better and more efficiently, without maligning or insincerity. It will also win the grace of the Lord, and so, a Bhaktha will be able to raise more crops and enjoy greater health and mental happiness.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

23. The Significance of Vinaayaka Worship

Date: 29 August 1995 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Ganesh Chaturthi

With your elephant's trunk And single tusk, and benign looks,
With the tingling of your anklets, And your prodigious belly,
Looking like a dwarf, But capable of bestowing all knowledge,
Oh Son of Parvathi! Hail! Lord of the Ganas.

BHARATHEEYAS' festivals are pregnant with spiritual significance. Unfortunately Bharatheeyas today give importance only to external rituals and observance, ignoring their inner meaning and eternal values.

"Parvathi thanaya Ganadhiva!" (Oh son of Parvathi! Lord of the ganas).

In these terms the Vedas extolled Ganapathi. Who is this Parvathi? Who is her son? What is the relationship between mother and son? Few Bharatheeyas care to enquire into these questions. The Vedas proclaimed, "Oh Ganadhiva!" Who are these ganas? Are they celestial hosts or *Asuras* (demonic beings)? They are celestial beings. Where are they? Are they wandering in the external world or are they present subtly in human beings? He (Vighneshvara) is called Ganadhivathi because he is the Supreme Lord of the ganas. The ganas are the embodiments of the *Jnanedhriyas* (organs of perception) and of *Karmendhriyas* (organs of action). The mind is the master of these ten senses. The presiding deity of the mind is called Indra as he is the Lord of the *Indhriyas* (the senses). The master over the mind is the *Buddhi* (intellect).

The meaning of "Ganapathi"

What does the name 'Ganapathi' signify? 'Ga' means *Buddhi* (or intellect), 'Na'

means *Vijnana* (wisdom). As Vighneshvara is the Lord of the intellect and Wisdom, He is called Ganapathi. It follows from this that what are called ganas are parts of the human body. The *vyakthi* (individual) is a part of *shrishti* (creation). Hence, Divinity, of which the cosmos is a projection, is immanent in the human being.

"Vigatho nayakah Vinayakah" (Vinayaka has no master over him).

This means that Vinayaka is a totally autonomous and independent deity. He has no lord above him. In the world, any individual or authority has someone superior above him. But Vinayaka has no overlord.

The worship of Vinayaka has been in existence from times immemorial in Bharath. The Rig Veda, the Narayanopanishath and the Thaitheeriya Upanishath have passages referring to Vinayaka. It is embedded also in a Gayathri mantra.

Thathpurushaya Vidmahe Vakrathundaya dheemahi Thanno Danthi
Prachodayath

This mantra indicates that Vinayaka's divinity is glorified in this Gayathri mantra. Hence, Ganapathi signifies an all-pervading divine potency. In everyday parlance, Ganapathi is described as the son of Parvathi. Parvathi represents *Prakrithi* (Nature). Man is a child of Nature. Hence every human being is a Vinayaka. He is a spark of the Divine Shiva-Shakthi, the union of the Lord and Nature. Everything in the world has emanated from Prakrithi (Nature). All things are aspects of Nature. It is to reveal this sacred truth that holy festivals are observed.

Elephant head and Muushika

How does it happen that Vinayaka has the head of an elephant and has a mouse as his vehicle? The mouse is called Muushika in Sanskrit. It is a sign of night, which signifies darkness. The mouse is a symbol of darkness. Because Vinayaka has control over darkness, He is described as the rider on a Muushika. He is the one who dispels darkness and sheds light on the world. The Muushika (mouse) is also a symbol of the sense of smell. The mouse moves about following the direction of the *vasana* (smell). Vinayaka is the one who has mastery over vasanas, that is, desires and ignorance (represented by Muushika).

What is meant by describing the Muushika (mouse) as the vehicle of Vinayaka? It means that Vinayaka rides on the Muushika, representing vasanas (desires) and ignorance (darkness). Vinayaka is one who drives away all sorrows, difficulties and miseries. He is the enemy of all obstacles. He will not allow any obstacles to come in the way. He is the destroyer of obstacles. He confers happiness and peace (on his devotees). He is the master of all these powers - Buddhi and Siddhi. What is this *Siddhi* (fulfillment)? When there is purity of mind you achieve peace which is Siddhi. Vinayaka is thus the Lord of Buddhi and Siddhi (the Intellect and Self-Realisation). Hence, every human being should acquire control over the mind.

Nature of food offered to Vinayaka

Every festival is celebrated by various culinary preparations. For Vinayaka Chaturthi, these preparations are of a special kind. The edible offerings to Vinayaka are totally free from oily substances. Vinayaka is offered only items cooked through steam. What is the reason? According to the science of Ayurveda (the ancient Indian system of medicine), food cooked through steam is easily digested. Moreover, the Vinayaka festival, which is celebrated in the month of Bhadrapada, falls in a month when sesame and jaggery come to the market after the harvest. The sesame seeds are powdered and mixed with rice flour and jaggery and cooked in balls which are offered as Naivedhyam to Vinayaka. Jaggery is a cure for several ailments relating to phlegm and bile. The sesame seeds have the power to cleanse the lungs and

improve the vision. These balls of sesame and jaggery are thus noted for their medicinal properties for curing both external and internal ailments.

The ancient Bharatheeyas never indulged in meaningless practices. Every festival has an inner spiritual significance. Every word they spoke, every step they moved, every food they consumed had spiritual significance.

The Lord of learning

Vinayaka is the Lord of all *Vidya* (learning). Does learning mean bookish scholarship? No. Everything pertaining to the cosmos is included in the term Vidya (learning). Walking, talking, laughing, sitting, eating, strolling, thinking every kind of activity is related to learning. Vinayaka is the master of every kind of learning. Today learning is identified with acquisition of information. But apart from knowledge of the physical world, we have many other kinds of knowledge relating to chemistry; the fine arts and other skills.

Vinayaka is the master of every kind of knowledge. Learning is related to Buddhi (intellect). It is not mere scholarship. Familiarity with books is not knowledge. One's entire life is a continuous process, of learning. Any process of enquiry is related to learning. But basically our enquiry should be concerned with finding out what is transient and what is permanent. This is true knowledge.

Hence, today students worship Vinayaka with zeal. Vinayaka is not the one who merely comes to the aid of those who read their books. He helps everyone at every step in life's journey. He is readily accessible. He is pleased with an offering of flowers of no value ("Jilledy" flowers). It is said that any one who eats these flowers will become insane. Such flowers are offered to Vinayaka. Vinayaka is also worshipped with an offering of green grass. What is the inner meaning of these kinds of offerings? It means that earlier Vinayaka used to be worshipped even by animals. His face is that of an elephant. His vehicle is a mouse. These are symbols from the animal kingdom. They indicate that Vinayaka is worshipped even by birds and beasts. Vinayaka is thus worshipped by all beings and is Lord over all beings.

He does not belong to one country or one nation or one period of time. He is related to all places and all times.

Puranik stories to testify Vinayaka's greatness

There are scriptural texts which testify to all this. But some of them are quite fanciful. For instance, in one puranik story, it is stated that once Shiva and His consort Parvathi were playing a game of dice. For any game there has to be an umpire, who has to declare who is the winner. Shiva and Parvathi agreed to have Nandhi (the divine bull) as the umpire. Nandhi is a favourite of Shiva, as he is Shiva's vehicle. Although Shiva lost the game, Nandhi declared Him the winner. It is stated that Parvathi was indignant over Nandhi's partiality for Shiva and cursed him that he should die from an incurable disease. Thereupon Nandhi fell at the feet of Parvathi and pleaded for forgiveness. "Mother! forgive me. Should I not show at least this amount of gratitude to one who is my master? Is it not humiliating for me to declare that my master has lost the game? To uphold his honour I no doubt uttered a lie. But am I to be punished with such severity for so small an offence?" Nandhi prayed for forgiveness in this manner. Parvathi forgave Nandhi and taught him the means to atone for his lapse. She told him, "The Chathurdhasi day in the month of Bhadhra-padha is the day when my son's birthday is celebrated. On that day you have to offer to my son what pleases you most (green grass)." This means that one atones for one's sins when One offers to the Lord what is most pleasing and enjoyable to him. For Nandhi the most enjoyable and relishing food is green grass. As directed by Parvathi Nandhi worshipped Ganapathi by offering green grass. Nandhi was then relieved of his dreaded disease. His health improved and by the grace of Parvathi he was redeemed. This incident is the basis for the practice recommended for pilgrims to Gaya, Benares and other places that they should give up something they love most as an offering to the Divine. This means that they should give up something which they like most and not something which they do not like. Whether it be a fruit or a vegetable, what you should choose to give up as an offering to God is what you like most. This means that you give up consuming thereafter that vegetable or fruit. This practice has been prevailing from ancient times among pilgrims to Benares, Prayag or other sacred places for a holy bath in

the Ganga or Yamuna.

Offer to God what you like most

Today many people go to Prayag (Allahabad). What is the real meaning of Prayag or Kashi? The scripture declares: "The Indweller is the Eternal Self." The body is the temple in the center of which the Ganga of *Jnana* (Wisdom) is flowing. In this Ganga of wisdom the two rivers of *Bhakthi* and *Sraddha* (Devotion and Earnestness), represented by Yamuna and Sarasvathi - merge and the point of conjunction of the three is known as Prayag. Hence, the Divine should be offered what is most pleasing to one. Unfortunately today this ancient traditional practice has been reduced to a fashionable formality. Pilgrims going to Prayag are asked by the pandas (priests) to give up what is most pleasing to them. Some of the pilgrims ponder over what they can easily give up and mention the names of these vegetables and fruits. They give up the bitter gourd or something else which they don't like. This is not proper. People should offer to give up what they relish most as the best offering to the Lord. But when they offer something which they don't like, the Lord seated in the heart declares: "Be it so!" As you have not offered what is most dear to you but what you dislike most, the Lord also offers to you what you dislike most. The reward for such dubious offerings to God is that instead of health you get disease. If you offered what is good, will not God give you what is good for you?

As is your offering so is your reward

This is illustrated by the example of Harishchandhra. He made an offering of what was most dear to him, namely, *Sathyam* (Truth). He was prepared to give up his kingdom, his wife and son and sell himself in bondage to uphold Truth. Truth is God. God is Truth. Where there is Truth there is God. Therefore adore Truth. Make all your offerings truthfully. Thereby you will reach the abode of Truth. As is your offering so is your reward. This is the truth demonstrated by Vinayaka.

There are other examples of Vinayaka's greatness. Vinayaka will not inflict

trouble on anyone. However, apprehending that if Vinayaka accompanies anyone, he will cause trouble, he is given a food offering and kept in the corner of the house. But Vinayaka is not a lover of sleep like Kumbhakarna (Ravana's younger brother). Seeing his big belly people imagine that he is slothful.

Gajasura and Shiva

There was once a demon by name Gajasura. He was a demon King. He performed severe penance. Eeshvara appeared before him. Eeshvara is easily propitiated, and He gives readily whatever one prays for, without examining whether it is right or wrong to confer such a boon. He gives whatever the devotees pray for. This was what happened in the case of the demon, Bhasmasura. He prayed to Shiva to grant a boon that whomsoever He touches by his hand should be reduced to ashes. Shiva granted the boon. Immediately Bhasmasura wanted to test the power he had received by trying to place his hand on Shiva Himself! Ultimately Shiva had to be saved from Bhamasura by a stratagem of Vishnu who made the demon place his hand on his own head. He was then reduced to ashes.

Likewise, Gajasura also performed penance and prayed to the Lord. Eeshvara appeared before him and asked him what he wanted. Gajasura said, "Lord! you must merge in my stomach." Shiva granted the boon and lodged himself in the demon's stomach. Parvathi, not finding Eeshvara, went out in search of her Lord and could find him nowhere. She went to her brother, Vishnu, and appealed to him to trace her missing Lord. Vishnu knew that Shiva was in the habit of granting boons indiscriminately and getting into difficulties. He told her: "Parvathi! I know what has happened. Be calm. You go to your abode. I shall bring Eeshvara there."

Vishnu took Shiva's Nandhi and decorated it to appear like a performing bull. Assuming the role of a bull-performer, Vishnu led the bull to the city of Gajasura, playing on a pipe all the way while the bull danced to the tune. The bull was dancing to the music of the Divine embodiment of all mysteries. Gajasura was intensely watching the performance of the bull and its master.

Pleased with their performance, Gajasura asked the bull trainer, "What do you want?" The latter said: "You should not go back on you word. Will you grant me what I want? You are Gajasura, a great king." "Yes," he said. Give me Eeshvara who is in your stomach," said Vishnu.

Only Vishnu knew this fact, none else. Gajasura immediately fell at the feet of Vishnu and said, "Svami! This secret is not known to anybody except yourself. I will keep my word even at the cost of my life. But there is one condition. My head should be worshipped by all and Eeshvara should wear my skin." Vishnu agreed to it. That is the reason why Eeshvara wears an elephant's skin. The head of Gajasura is worshipped as Vinayaka's head.

Significance of Puranik stories

These are some of the puranik stories relating to Vinayaka. They are only stories. But such stories have been related to turn people's minds God-ward. If a deep enquiry is made, it will be realised that there is only one God. God is present in all. Vinayaka is not separate from us. The indwelling principle in our hearts is the Divine Athmik Principle.

What is it that you should offer to God? Is it unripe or a ripe fruit? You should offer only a good ripe fruit. Likewise, you should offer your good thoughts to the Divine. That is the supreme significance of the Vinayaka Chaturthi festival. Without realising this, people install a mud idol, decorate it with meaningless flowers, make offerings of useless things and seek the most valuable things from Him. What kind of bargain is this? You should offer to the Lord what is most sacred. Look at the example of a cow. It is offered all kinds of grass and other fodder. But it offers in return the most nourishing milk. Even the cow offers to man something pure and holy. But what does man offer to God? He keeps the pure things for himself and offers the impure to God. This is not right. You should offer to God what will please Him. You pray to God to give you all kinds of things. How are you entitled to ask for them? Only if you offer to God what will please Him. If you do not perform acts which will please God, how do you expect God to do things that will please you?

Inner truth about Vinayaka

Therefore, at the outset you have to do things which will please God. Then God will offer what will please you. This is one of the truths to be learnt from the Vinayaka festival. Vinayaka is the Lord of life. Men should learn to shed selfishness and cultivate love of the Supreme Self. This is the inner truth about Vinayaka. Vinayaka should not be considered as merely an elephant-headed deity riding on a mouse. Similar mistakes are made about other deities. For instance, Sarasvathi is represented as a Goddess riding on a swan. Sarasvathi is the Goddess of Speech. Speech is based on the inhaling and exhaling of breath. In this process of respiration, the sound So-Ham is produced and when it is repeated regularly, you have the sound Ham-So, which is identified with a swan. The inhaling and exhaling process is the chariot on which the Goddess of Speech moves. The inner meanings of the terms and symbols used in Vedanthik parlance have to be properly understood.

Everything is for your good

The best way to please God is to act according to His injunctions. For instance, I advise students not to indulge in excessive talk. Carry out your duties. Contemplate on God. Is all this advice being given for God's sake? No. Whatever Svami tells you is for your own good. Recognise that everything is for your good.

I would relate a story in this context. There was a minister to a king who was in the habit of declaring that whatever happened was for one's good. Once the king cut his finger while slicing a piece of sugarcane. Seeing the bleeding finger of the king, the minister remarked that the cut was for the king's good. The king got so angry that he committed the minister immediately to prison. Even then the minister remarked that the prison sentence was for his own good. A few days later the king went alone for hunting in a forest and was resting under a tree. The servants of the tribal chief of the forest seized the king to be offered as human sacrifice for the tribal goddess. When the king was about to be beheaded, it was noticed that the king's finger was mutilated

and such a mutilated person could not be offered as sacrifice. The king was freed. He remembered the minister's words and realised that the injury to his finger had saved him from death. He went to the prison straight and asked his minister how he could declare that the prison sentence was good for him. The minister replied that but for his being confined in prison, he would have accompanied the king and the tribal would have chosen him in the place of the king for their sacrifice.

The lesson of this story is that one should learn to welcome everything that happens as for one's own good. Recognition of this truth is the means to acquire God's grace. Develop the firm conviction that whatever God says or does is for your own good. This is what all the Bharatheeya festivals seek to teach. Underlying every festival is a profound spiritual message. Unfortunately present-day students, caught up in modernity, are unable to comprehend this truth. They are obsessed with trifles and do not realise that education is for the purpose of leading the good life and not for earning a living. Yearn to lead an ideal life. Consider Vinayaka as the Indweller in your heart. He is constantly warning you against what is bad. You ignore the warning and get into trouble. How much will you benefit if you "follow the Master" within you. Your conscience is the Master. Above all, heed the dictates of the Divine. That will be your best safeguard. Vinayaka is one who has all the five elements under his control. Arjuna did penance for acquiring the Pashupatha Asthra from Shiva and overcame the powers of the five elements by the power of his penance. Vinayaka is the embodiment of all potencies. He has no superior above Him.

In our bhajans, the first prayer is addressed to Vinayaka. The bhajan starts with Om, the Pranava. It is the combination of Pranava with Vinayaka which serves to redeem our lives.

24. Offer everything to God

Date: 05 September 1995 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Onam

As in the sesame seed oil exists,
As in milk ghee is present,
As fragrance resides in a flower,
As the juice exists in a fruit,
As fire is latent in a faggot,
So is the Divine immanent in subtle form.

EMBODIMENTS of Divine Love!

Oil is present throughout the sesame seed. Ghee is present in every drop of milk. Fragrance is present in an invisible form in a flower. A fruit is filled with sweet juice. In every piece of wood fire is latent. In the same manner the Divine is immanent in the entire cosmos in a subtle form. God is present not in some country or some body. Like vision in the eye and hearing in the ear, God is present in the mind as Chaithanya (Consciousness). The cosmos is the visible manifestation of the invisible Supreme Self. While the Divine is in such close proximity to him man in his ignorance goes seeking God everywhere. The Divine is effulgent in every man as Sath -Chith -Anandha (Being-Awareness-Bliss), the Cosmic Consciousness. Reflections of the sun shining in the sky can be seen in the oceans, rivers, the lakes and in wells. Though the reflections are varied, the sun is one alone. The Divine is present in man like the unseen thread which holds a garland of gems together. The entire cosmos is permeated by the Divine and is the visible manifestation of the Divine.

Man's essential humanness is common to one and all

Nothing in the world, no object, no human being, no creature can be found wherein God is not present. Though man appears in the world in different

forms, speaking different languages, his essential humanness is common to one and all.

There is only one race, that is the human race. God is only one. He is Sath-Chith-Anandha.

Just as a seed sprouts and grows into a plant wherein a flower blossoms, so does the Divine seed grow in the heart of man and blossoms as a flower, Sath-Chith-Anandha. Just as it is natural for a seed to become a fragrant flower, so is it natural for man to experience the bliss of the Divine - Sath-Chith-Anandha.

There are many evidences to demonstrate the Divinity that is inherent in man. But few men are ready to make the sacrifice that is required to experience this Divinity. The ancient sages regarded human life as full of fragrance to be enjoyed. They considered life as full of nectarine sweetness. When man is oblivious of this sweetness, he ceases to be human. Thyaga (sacrifice) is the sweetness in Manavathva (humanness).

The scriptures declare, "Only through sacrifice can man realise the eternal Divine."

But, immersed in selfishness, man fails to recognise this truth.

Thyaga and Bali

A synonym for the word Thyaga (sacrifice) is Bali . The term Bali has several meanings such as offering, dedication, sacrifice and a tax levy. What is meant by tax? Bali means that which has to be given as an offering in human life. But the ancients regarded Bali as offering a living object as a sacrifice. This is

not the proper meaning of Bali. Bali is the recognition of the Divinity in man. People pay a water tax to the authorities who make available water at their dwelling from a distant source. Likewise people have to pay dues for the electricity supply which they receive.

What is the tax you pay to the Divine for implanting divinity in you when you consider yourself to be remote from God because of your involvement in worldly affairs? You pay for small amounts of water supply and electrical energy. But what do you pay for the heavy downpour of rain which you get from Providence? God fills the tanks and rivers with water. He provides man with the life-giving oxygen in the air he breathes. The sun illumines the whole world by his light. What is the tax we pay for all these services? The arpatham (offerings we make to God) is the tax. That has been called Bali. One should not be frightened by the term Bali. It means only offering one's self to the Divine.

Greatness of Emperor Bali

In making such an offering, Emperor Bali was supreme. He was the grandson of Prahladha. Emperor Bali was dedicating his entire life to God. He was a great devotee. Moreover he excelled in acts of charity. He made his subjects rejoice. He never went back on his plighted word. He was full of such great virtues. Emperor Bali took good care of his people, promoting their welfare and endearing himself to them. Bali's father, Virochana, was also a godly ruler. Thus from Prahladha to Bali the whole line of rulers were filled with love of God. They were influenced by the Divine power. Originally Prahladha's father, Hiranyakashipu, was Lord Vishnu's gate-keeper. Whatever their differences in behaviour and attitudes, all three (Prahladha, Virochana and Bali) were equally inspired by devotion to God.

In spite of the strong opposition from his preceptor Shukracharya to Bali for giving an offering of land to Vamana as promised by him, Bali was firm in surrendering to Vishnu all that he had.

He told the Preceptor: "Guruji, what is the use of my possessing anything

which is not of use to God? The seeker is God Himself. God has really no desires. But to redeem us from the consequences of our past deeds He creates situations which call for offerings, When the infinite Divine appears in the role of the seeker of favours, what greater blessing can there be than making the offering to the Divine? I do not seek any greater blessing than this. I am ready to offer my mind, my body and my life itself to God. There is no greater fortune than this."

This is the meaning of surrender. God does not ask for any offering of wealth or position. God is said to be pleased if a sincere devotee offers a leaf, a flower, a fruit or even water. What is this leaf? It is the body. The heart is the flower, the mind is fruit. The water that is to be offered is that from the tears of joy shed by the devotee. This is what God expects from you.

The Lord tells you, "My dear man! The body does not belong to you. Who gave it to you? It is precious gift from God. It is inert like a leaf." Eradi referred to the Gayathri manthra: "Om! Bhur-Bhuvas-Suvaha". In this manthra, 'Bhu' refers to the body, which is made up of material substances. It may be compared to a leaf, (which is also a material object). 'Bhuvah' refers to that which activates the inert body. That Prana (Life Force) operates as vibration. 'Suvah' What is the basis for the life Force? It is Prajnana. The Upanishath declares: "Prajnanam Brahma." The Prajna operates through radiation. 'Suvah' refers to this power of radiation. Humanness is made up of these three constituents, Radiation, Vibration and material inertness.

Make God your life-breath

The flower to be offered-to God is a pure heart free from all taints and evil tendencies like lust, anger, and pride. The fruit to be offered is a mind free from all bad thoughts and feelings. It should be filled with the sweet juice of goodness. The water that should be offered to God is the water that flows from the eyes out of joy in experiencing God. Tears are of two kinds: tears born of grief resulting from attachments; tears spontaneously arising from Anandha (blissful experience of the Divine). Make God your life-breath, the sweetness of your existence. It was with such sacred feelings that Emperor

Bali offered himself to the Lord appearing as Vamana. People make all kinds of offerings to God. But the greatest of them all is to offer oneself. That is what Bali did. He declared - "Oh Lord! I am offering to you the heart which you gave me. What else can I offer you? Please accept my offering at your feet." Bali is such an example of supreme sacrifice. Thus he pleased God.

God has no desires because He contains within Himself everything. Whatever He does is only for the good of the devotees. The supreme quality of Emperor Bali is his spirit of sacrifice. He taught the people of Kerala the lesson of sacrifice. He also demonstrated that when it comes to upholding one's plighted word, one can disregard even the advice of one's preceptor. Nothing should be allowed to come between a devotee and the Lord. Bharata, Prahladha and Bali are examples of devotees of the Lord who set aside the Vedic injunction regarding reverence for the mother, the father and the preceptor in their allegiance to the Divine. Bali recognized that not a blade of grass moves without the power of the Divine in it. "No one knows the supreme power of God's will. He permeates everything in the cosmos from an ant to Brahman. Men are ignorant of this truth," declared Bali (Svami recited a verse from the Bhagavatham).

Significance of Onam

Emperor Bali surrendered himself totally to the divine. Under his reign, all the subjects were happy and led godly lives. Saddened by the thought of having to go away from his people, he told them, "Dear people! I cannot be without you and you cannot be without me. Every year I shall appear before you and give you joy." Onam is the day on which Bali fulfills his promise. Waking up early in the morning taking a bath, wearing new dresses and worshipping God mark the celebration of Onam. What is the significance of wearing new Vasthra (clothes)? Vasthra is one of the names for the heart. Wearing new Vasthra (clothes) means purifying the heart. When the heart is pure the Divine elects to dwell in it. There is no meaning in wearing new garments if the heart remains impure. Hence, the heart has to be kept pure. The ruler must be worthy of the subjects and the subjects must be worthy of the ruler. Harmony between the two is vital. It is not easy to understand the ways of the

Lord. Even the ancient sages felt that god's ways are inscrutable and that His attributes are beyond reckoning and praise. The Gopikas declared: "Oh Krishna! How can we know your true nature? You are subtlest among the subtle and vaster than the vastest. You are omnipresent. How can we know you?"

All belongs to God

The sages, probing the mystery of the Divine, came to the conclusion that God is everything and no one can claim anything as one's own. By this attitude they were able to realise the Divine. However, because of the influence of Kali Age, today everyone claims everything as "Mine." Indeed, nothing belongs to anyone. Men are immersed in the false and foolish concept of ownership. Possessiveness is rampant in every thought and action. And this leads to the inflation of the ego. Egoism has to be utterly eradicated. Possessiveness should be banished. Divinity should be installed in the heart. Be aware that all things belong to God. "You came with empty hands and you depart with empty hands." All that was got or spent in between are mere passing clouds. Emperor Bali taught this profound truth that nothing belongs to anyone. All are gifts from God.

Bali was a great devotee. Devotion has five qualities and nine paths to adore the Divine. These nine paths begin with shravanam (listening to the glories of God) and end with Atmanivedanam (complete Self-surrender). Bali taught his subjects the profound truths about devotion.

From then to our own times, the people of Kerala have been celebrating Onam as a festival dear as life itself. They greet the festival with ineffable joy. Not for the delicious dishes prepared on the occasion. It is the holiest of the holy days for them. They should come together to chant the Lord's name. (Bhagavan sang a poem which glorifies how a holy festival day should be celebrated. By chanting the Lord's name, by listening to the stories of the Lord and by playing the host for godly men). Only that day is a sacred day when you chant the name of God, yearn for proximity with God and experience the bliss of His grace within you. All other days are days of

mourning. The Divine is within each one. When one seeks this inner vision, there is no greater experience.

The Keralites have retained their faith in God despite conditions not conducive to theistic beliefs. Their devotion is deep and firm. As worshippers of Padmahabha, their devotion stems from the depths of their being.

Embodiments of Divine Love! Realise that you are not separate from God, who is the very embodiment of Love. God can be attained only through Love and not by any other means.

25. Earn the esteem of society by service

Date: 01 October 1995 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

EMBODIMENTS of Love! Human life is immensely precious. But this sacred life is haunted by troubles of various kinds of daily living. Life is like an ocean carrying waves of pleasures and pain. In his ordinary life man is driven by innumerable desires to seek worldly pleasures of various kinds. This precious life is rendered meaningless and worthless by the pursuit of these mundane desires.

The body is essential for living. Without it man cannot accomplish anything. Human life is a composite of body, mind, and spirit. But man today ignores the mind and spirit and wastes his life by preoccupation with the body alone. The mind is the most important organ in the body. It is vital for doing anything. Man's life is based on the mind. The universe is filled with mental consciousness. The cosmos is rooted in the mind. The mind is a bundle of thoughts. Hence man has to purify the mind by sacred thoughts. Only when he has noble thoughts he can lead an ideal life. Out of thoughts are born the desires. Desires activate the mind. Hence it is necessary to keep desires under control.

Dharma can be achieved through the body alone

Society tends to look askance at persons with physical disabilities. But limbs are not so very important. What is more essential is a pure mind. If all one's limbs are perfect, but if one's mind is impure, of what use are the limbs? However, man can achieve what he desires, only if all the limbs in the body are in good shape. Man should make good use of all his organs to lead an ideal life. Every living being has come into existence for a purpose. Hence everyone should strive to use his body for the purpose for which he has been endowed with it. Through the body alone can Dharma be achieved, declares the scripture. The body is given to man to carry out his duties in life. Men today tend to use the body for eating and sleeping, without recognizing the duties they have to perform. Should men live like beasts and birds, with no

higher aims than eating, mating and sleeping? There is in man an immortal spirit, whose presence should be realised.

People pursue various studies, engage themselves in various activities, but make no attempt to understand what is humanness. Of what use is knowledge, wealth and position if man ignores his essential eternal spiritual reality? Every man's life should be dedicated to the service of others. Na thapamsi na theerthani Na thanthrani, japanapi Samsara sagarothare

Sajjana sevanam vina.

("Neither penance, nor baths in sacred waters, neither rituals nor chanting of the divine name will help one to cross the ocean of worldly life without service to good persons.") Whatever pilgrimages one may perform, whatever yagas and japas one may do, without using the body in the service of others, no one can achieve liberation. Every one should be prepared to serve and be served. This body has been given so that one may do seva (serve others) and not for Nayakathvam (lord it over them). Service is the supreme aim in life. Everyone should seek to redeem his life by service to his fellow-human beings. Render service to the extent of your capacity. How can anyone be called human, if being born a human being and growing in a human society, he does not recognise human values? You must see that you don't harm any living being. "He alone is a redeemed being who causes no pain to others and avoids pain to himself," says a Telugu poem.

Advice to the handicapped

Those who are handicapped need not lament over their plight. They should develop good qualities. People today worry about their possessions, positions and associates, but not about their virtues. What is the value of riches, acquaintances and positions? There is need for a certain amount of material possessions. But excessive wealth is harmful. Of what use are fair-weather friends who surround you when you have money and position, but desert you when you lose them? God alone is an unfailing friend, who is with you at all times and protects you. When you cultivate such an attitude you can face any

situation in life. At birth all are pure and innocent. But as they grow, they develop arrogance, pride and ostentation. But this is not proper. People should cultivate humility and discipline, which are the hall-mark of humanness. Humanness means harmony in thought, word and deed. The absence of this harmony is degrading. Men should learn to respect one another. The divine is present in everyone. Strive to make others happy as far as possible. Everyone should manifest his divine essence as a spark of the Divine. It is a fruit of many lives to be born as a human being. Man must lead an exemplary life. Education and wealth are good in themselves, but when they are misused they become harmful. The fault lies in the conduct of the persons concerned. Humanness-consists in leading a life free from egoism and acquisitiveness. Every man should recognise what it is to be human. He should realise that his tongue, eyes, ears and other organs are given to him to glorify God, not to disparage or cause hurt to others. Jayadheva exhorted his tongue to revel in singing the greatness of the Lord. This is the task before every one. He should keep his tongue under control, serve society with dedication and lead a worthy life. Life is essentially transient. Hence while life lasts, one must earn the esteem and regard of one's fellowmen. One should not waste one's life. It must be filled with bliss. This is the true path for everyone.

26. Hanumaan : the ideal for mankind

Date: 14 October 1995 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

EMBODIMENTS of Love! Everything in the world has a value, but the value of the spoken word cannot be easily measured. By his words man can acquire every kind of wealth. By their words Rulers lose their kingdoms. By one's speech one can acquire friends and relations. By words one may make enemies, engender hatred and make himself miserable. Good words are a man's best kinsfolk. Nor is that all. It is one's speech which contributes to his progress in many ways. One's words are the root cause of one's prosperity, courage, bliss or even death. One's speech determines almost everything in one's life. Hence one's speech should be sweet, wholesome and pleasing to others. "Anudhvegakaram vakyam sathyam hitham preethikaram" (One's speech should not cause excitement. It should be truthful, pleasing, and well-meaning). Even truth should not be uttered in harsh language. It should be soft, sweet, pleasing conducive to peacefulness. Hanuman was the supreme exemplar of such speech.

Hanuman was a dauntless hero who by his sweet and persuasive words promoted friendship between Shri Rama and Sugreeva. He was tranquil, valorous, and virtuous. He was a great scholar in Sanskrit and proficient in many languages. He was a master even of the Paisachi language (the language of evil spirits). Sanskrit is the mother of all languages. It was esteemed as the language of the Gods in ancient times.

God and the cosmos

There have been different conceptions regarding the phenomenal world, some considering it as mithya (illusory) and some considering it as real. The Vedhik seers viewed the world as a projection of the Divine. From very early times many sages devoted their lives to the discovery of the Divine. Only a few persisted in the quest throughout their lives. Their ecstatic experience of the Divine is expressed in the Purusha Shuktha, which declares' "Vedham Etham, purusham mahantham." This means: "We have seen God. He is

shining with the effulgence of a billion Suns. He is beyond the bounds of Thamo guna. His effulgence defies description." "Adhithyavarnam Thamasah Parasthath" (He is effulgent like the Sun and is beyond the darkness of ignorance).

The world is made up of the five basic elements (ether, air, fire, water and earth). The sages demonstrated that the Cosmos is the embodiment of God. The Vedas, the Upanishaths, the Ithihasas and Puranas also proclaimed the same truth. "Sarvam khalu idham Brahma" (All this is verily Brahman). "Eeshvaras sarva bhoothanam," "Eesavasyam idham Jagath" (The entire cosmos is the abode of God). For experiencing this Divinity, Vairagya (detachment) is essential. Detachment does not mean renouncing health and home and retiring to a forest. True detachment means giving up worldly feelings, developing godly thoughts. The Reality is One only. "Ekoham Bahushyam" (The One willed to become the Many). The scholars declared ' "Ekam sath' Viprah Bahudha vadhanthi" (There is One only; the wise call It by many names).

Reason for advent of avatars and sages

To propagate this great truth to the world, from time to time many sages and saints and Avatars made their advent in Bharath. They had total knowledge of the Supreme Self - Paripurna Brahma Jnanis. Why did such realized souls take birth in the phenomenal world? In the modern world it is essential for people to comprehend the truth underlying this. Although these realized beings have no need to take human birth, they elected to do so for the purpose of redeeming the people on earth by their teachings and actions. Unless they are total Brahma- Jnanis, they cannot make others perceive the truth. Hence they come down in human form to dispel the ignorance of people in the world and reveal to them the Prajnana (highest wisdom). Krishna was a Paripurna-Jnani (One who possessed the Supreme Wisdom). Why did he take on a human body? "Parithranaya Sadhunam" (to protect the good). Krishna incarnated in human form to teach the highest truth to the pious and the godly persons who were filled with good thoughts and performed good deeds. The sage Vyasa, who codified the Vedas, was a

Paripuurna Jnani. Vyasa is Narayana Himself. What need was there for such a Realized Divine Being to make his advent on the earth? Vyasa incarnated as a man to elevate the ignorant and show them the path to a higher life. Shuka (the son of Vyasa) was also a Paripuurna Jnani. He, as well as the others, chose to be born on earth for the sake of promoting the welfare of the world and not because of any karma-bonds.

Two types of spiritual aspirants

The knowledge of the Supreme Self is associated with total freedom from Ahamkara (egoism). Those who have no taint of ego in them are totally free from the consequences of actions, regardless of what actions they do. Today there are in the world two types of sadhakas (Spiritual aspirants). One type of aspirants regard the cosmos as a manifestation of God. The other type consider the cosmos itself as God. The difference between the two can be illustrated by an example. Many kinds of jewels are made from gold. Some may consider the jewels as different from gold. Others may consider gold as the basic substance from which the jewels have been made. The Paripuurna Jnanis belong to the category of those who realise that without gold there can be no jewels. Those who consider the jewels as more important than the gold, out of which they have been made,.-belong to the category of those with half-knowledge. The truth is that without gold there can be no ornaments. Ornaments can be of various kinds and may have various forms and labels. But gold has no specific name or form like the jewels. God is without attributes, is eternal, infinite and immutable. Everyone born in the world has a form and name. But the divinity within him has no name or form. The individual with name and form is filled with egoism and possessiveness. This egoism and possessiveness are the cause of one's pleasure and pain, happiness and sorrow. Hence everyone must strive to curb these two tendencies.

Guru and the disciple

Once a disciple went to a preceptor and requested him to impart to him the Supreme Knowledge of Omni-Self - Brahma-thathvam. The guru gave him a

manthra and asked him to recite it continually without any selfish desire. The guru told him that after he has done this wholeheartedly for a year he could come and receive the Brahma-Jnana (knowledge of the Self). The disciple came back after a year duly carrying out with devotion the instructions of the preceptor. Filled with the hope that the preceptor would impart the Supreme Knowledge, the disciple had a sacred bath and was on his way to the preceptor. Unaware of the presence of the disciple, a maid was sweeping the ashram (hermitage) premises and the dust from the ground fell on the young man. Immediately, he lost his temper, as he felt that his purity after a sacred bath had been sullied by the dust that fell on him. He was angry with the maid for allowing the dust to fall on him. He looked at her with anger. The maid was filled with fear.

The disciple went in and offered his salutations to the guru and said' "Guruji! I have been waiting for a year to secure your grace. The time is now ripe for realising it. I am eager to receive the Supreme Knowledge from you." The preceptor said' "You are not yet competent to receive that knowledge. You have the qualities of a snake. You got angry with a girl who unwittingly caused some dust to fall on you. How can Brahma-Jnana be imparted to one who has not even this amount of forbearance? Go back and practise the sadhana for one more year. At the end of the second year, when the disciple was about to come to the ashram, the preceptor instructed the maid to see that as she swept, all the dust fall on the disciple. The maid told the guru that on the previous occasion the disciple had been angry with her, and this time if she repeated the offence, he might beat her. The guru told her to do as directed by him. In accordance with the directive of the guru, she let the dust fall on the disciple in full measure. Enraged at her conduct, the disciple went to beat her but refrained from doing so. He then went into the ashram and paid his respects to guru. The guru told him' "You have not yet acquired the competence to receive the knowledge. You are exhibiting the qualities of a dog. Come back after ridding yourself of these animal qualities." At the end of the third year, the disciple was coming to the ashram after a sacred bath. Carrying out the instructions of the guru, the maid of the ashram poured some dirty water on the disciple. The latter calmly offered his pranams (obeisance) to the maid and said' "Mother! My salutations to you. You have

helped to strengthen my forbearance so that I can be worthy of the preceptor's grace." Without getting angry with her, he told her that he would be always grateful to her for what she had done to him. When he went in, the guru welcomed him and said: "Son! To-day you have become eligible to receive the Supreme Spiritual Knowledge." The lesson of this story is that every spiritual seeker has to get rid of attachment to the body. But, that is not enough. The egoistic feeling should be totally eliminated. The sense of possessiveness should be expelled. Only then can one realise Divinity. The preceptor drew the disciple close to him and imparted to him the Brahma-Jnana (Supreme Spiritual Wisdom) and filled him with bliss.

Hanuman's humility

There are in the world today millions of people who recite the Lord's name. But while reciting the name, they do not realise the greatness and glory of the Divine name. When Hanuman entered Lanka, the land of Rakshasas, the first friendly person he encountered was Vibheeshana. All the Rakshasas in Lanka, who had not seen a monkey, were curious to know all about the simian visitor. They asked him' "Who are you? Wherefrom have you come and at whose behest? How did you enter Lanka?" 'Hanuman was unruffled. He told them, "I am the servant of the Lord Kosala, Shri Rama", though he was very powerful. This means also that in any situation one should remain calm and unperturbed. How is this tranquility to be secured? When the heart is pure, peace is assured. Without purity of the heart peace is unattainable. Even if one appears to be at peace, it is only a pretence. When one has both purity of heart and peace of mind, one can achieve anything. There are three P's. The first 'P' stands for purity. The second 'P' for patience. The third 'P' stands for perseverance. When these are present, one can acquire the grace of Shri Rama. This was amply demonstrated by Hanuman.

But Vibheeshana was full of anguish. He told Hanuman: "Oh Hanuman! How lucky you are, how meritorious to earn the company of Ramachandra! I have not had that good fortune. I have been meditating on Rama's name for many years. But so far I have not got the Dharshan of Rama. You have not only enjoyed the company of the Lord, but you are privileged to carry out the

commands of Rama. Please tell me how I can secure such a blessing." Hanuman replied' "Vibheeshana! It is not enough if you merely recite the name of Rama. You have to carry out the injunctions of Rama and engage yourself in the service of Rama. Only then you will experience the power of Rama within you." From that moment, Vibheeshana resolved to participate in the service of Rama.

Nama japa without service is no use

Today in the Kali Yuga, there are any number of persons chanting Rama's name. Nama-Japa (chanting the name) is not enough. Whatever name you recite, you must also be active in the service of the form associated with the name. What is implied by the term, Ramakarya (service to Rama)? Rama is immanent in the entire cosmos. Rama is present everywhere. Hence, you have to take part in social service. By rendering service to one's fellow beings, rendering help to the helpless and performing sacred acts of dedicated service, one becomes eligible for Shri Rama's grace. Although Hanuman was highly intelligent, in matters relating to the Divine, he made no distinction between good and bad. He carried out implicitly whatever he was ordered to do. He did not care to enquire whether it was right or wrong. Why? Because he regarded whatever Rama said as Veda Vakya (Gospel truth). God's word is beyond question. Hanuman felt that. he was not competent to sit in judgement on the 'Lord's words. "My duty is to carry out whatever Rama says." "Karthavyam yogam uchyathe" (Duty is Yoga), says the Geetha. What is this yoga ? "Yogah karmasu Kaushalam" says Geetha. Yoga is excellence in the performance of duty. Hence you should embark on all actions in accordance with the Divine injunctions. Then alone you experience all kinds of knowledge.

Do not give room for doubt and disbelief

Today everyone is racked by doubts' "To do or not to do." To meditate on God why should there be this doubt? No one filled with such doubt will be worthy of God's grace. You should not give any room for disbelief. Even if a person abuses you, you must seek to recognise the divinity in him. Every individual

may have his own name and form, but the Divine is in everyone equally. This broad-minded view should be developed. There is no one in the world without the Divine in 'him. Hence service should be rendered to one and all with this conviction. Many hanker after Self-Realisation. But how can they have Realisation when they have no selfconfidence? What does Self-Realisation mean? It is not discovering one's lineage and mundane identity. These relate to the body. But you do not belong to any family or clan. You are yourself. Even to declare, "I am God", implies dualism. It is difficult to comprehend the Divine Principle. The nearest approach to comprehending the Divine is to consider Divinity as all pervasive.

Leave no taint of self interest in your actions

Embodiments of Love! All devotional exercises today appear to be a kind of business. This is not the way to relate to 'the Divine. Whatever you do, regard it as an offering to the Divine. "Who am I? I am yours" - this should be the attitude towards God. There should be no taint of self interest in your actions. (Svami related how Rama taught to Kaikeyi the Vedanthik message of egolessness as the means of Self-Realisation). Men are dominated by the feeling of possessiveness. But what is it that really belongs to them? They are only Trustees for their properties. Nothing really belongs to them. You imagine that the body belongs to you. But how much control have you over it? Can you live as you please? No. The body is not yours. Everything belongs to God. One can become a true devotee only when he has this feeling. "Nothing is mine. All belongs to you (God)." This should be the feeling of the devotee.

The difference in attitudes between the gopikas and the denizens of Dhvaraka consisted precisely in this' The gopikas declared' "Krishna, we are yours!" The people of Dhvaraka developed pride and egoism over their kinship with Krishna. That egoism brought ruin on the Yadhava clan. The Yadhavas boasted about their kinship with Krishna in various ways. The gopikas had no such conceit. They were content to declare: "We are yours, Krishna!" The difference in attitudes indicates the distinction between dualism and non-dualism. The nondualist has no problem. "Adhvaitha dharshanam jnanam"

(Perception of the one without a second is the Supreme Knowledge). What everyone has to realise today is the omnipresence of, the Divine. "Sarvam khalu idham Brahma" (Verily all this is Divine). The unity of the body, mind and spirit should be understood. No actions can be performed without the body. Without actions the eternal verities cannot be recognized. There can be no Self-Realisation without recognizing the verities.

Hanuman's devotion

Hanuman was always engaged in the contemplation of Rama. Every hair on his body chanted the name of Rama. Hanuman is adored by devotees as an example of total devotion to the Lord. When some had doubts whether Hanuman could leap the ocean to search for Seetha in Lanka, Hanuman told them that Rama had given him the task and He would also give him the strength to accomplish it. This absolute faith was the cause of his success. When people entertain doubts as to their capacity to carry out the tasks assigned to them by the Divine, they will be weak and powerless. Hence, to accomplish anything, firm faith is essential. Doubts have to be expelled. Everything that happens should be accepted as for one's own good. That is the means to qualify for God's grace. To go on speculating over Svami's words is an insane exercise. Hanuman exemplified complete freedom from doubts. He had only two desires. To be dear and near to Rama. Hanuman intensely yearned to be always near to Rama. He had no use for any object, however valuable, which did not proclaim the name of Rama. He threw away the pearl necklace presented to him by Seetha because the pearls did not recite Rama's name. (Svami sang a ballad, in which Rama praised Hanuman as the greatest of devotees and embraced him). Rama declared "Hanuman! No material object is fit enough to be given to you as a present. You live in the world of the Spirit. You have no attachment to the things of the world. Let you be present wherever my glory is sung." Hanuman was intoxicated by his devotion to Rama and was always in a state of ecstasy in chanting Rama's name. He was all humility in the presence of Rama. He was utterly fearless before Ravana. Before the Divine he was a suppliant. Before a Rakshasa he was a hero. Hanuman knew how to conduct himself in any situation. He was supremely, intelligent. He stands out as ideal for mankind.

Human action and Divine aim should go together

People today lead meaningless mechanical lives with no ideals to inspire them. The purpose of life is to experience the Divine that is subtle and invisible like the roots that sustain a tree. Men today want fruits without considering the roots. The ancient sages searched for the roots to realise the fruits. Bharatheeya culture was based on this concern for what is fundamental and primal. Today people forget the basic truths and pursue the ephemeral. Worldly life is inescapable. But it should be lived with the ultimate goal in view. Human action and Divine aim should go together. To forget the Divine is to descend to the level of the animal. A hero becomes a zero if he forgets God.

All over the world men are perpetually haunted by fears of every kind because they have not secured the freedom from fear which God alone can give. (Bhagavan sang a ballad describing the fears experienced by man). God's grace alone can free men from fear. All should strive to secure Divine grace by developing firm faith in God. You may worship any form, chant any name, but have firm faith in God. Call the Divine by any name, Rama, Krishna, Allah, Jesus or Buddha - all names are the same. The one Lord is adored by different names. Devotion should not be converted into a form of business. You should not say you will offer something to God if you get a certain thing which you desire. God needs nothing from you. Everything belongs to God. You brought nothing with you at birth and leave the world with nothing. Only the Divine is with you. Hence, cherish faith in God. • People ask, "How is one to believe in something that is not perceivable?" This is an absurd question. The qualities of a man are not perceived while the physical body can be seen. But the qualities are more significant than the physical features. Likewise, faith in the Divine is more important than faith in the phenomenal world. God can be realised only through Love.

A wave of service, if it sweeps over the land, catching everyone in its

enthusiasm, will be able to wipe off the mounds of hatred, malice and greed that infest the world.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

27. The bliss of Self-Realisation

Date: 22 October 1995 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

At nightfall the moon is the illuminator;
At dawn it is the Sun who illumines;
Righteousness illumines the three worlds;
A virtuous son is the light of the family.

EMBODIMENTS of Love!

At night the moon is the source of light for us. During the day the sun sheds light and serves mankind. The three worlds are illumined by *Dharma* (Righteousness). A virtuous son is a beacon for the family. From ancient times, Bharatheeya culture has been illumined, fostered and inspired by didactic sayings of this kind. It is purity of mind that helps to sublimate mankind, directs it towards God and enables it to manifest the inherent divinity in man.

"What is perceived is liable to perish" (says an aphorism). That which is seen, that which appears to be real, is bound to pass away in the stream of time. All that is apparent in the phenomenal world is bound to disappear sometime or other. We should make every effort to know that which is invisible but imperishable. All external objects seen with the eye are bound to disappear.

Acquire the eyes of wisdom

It is not right that man, who is endowed with immense potencies, should be content with what is seen by the physical eyes. Such eyes are possessed equally by beasts and birds, as well as insects and germs. What, then is the uniqueness of the sight given to man? It must be realised that it is difficult to secure human birth. Having acquired this privilege, human beings should not

be content with what is seen by the physical eyes. Man should acquire *Jnana nethra* (the eyes of wisdom).

It may be argued that even the physical eyes help to acquire knowledge. The eyes see everything but cannot see themselves. Eyes which cannot see themselves, how can they see the mind or see *Madhava* (the Divine Lord)? To have a vision of the Lord, the physical eyes are not competent. One must acquire the eyes of wisdom for this purpose. The eyes are there, but when they develop a disease the eyes are not aware of it. When the ears lose the power of hearing, they are not aware of the loss. The senses which cannot know their own state, how can they know God? The physical eyes can only serve to see external objects in Nature and examine their properties and explain them, but cannot recognize the Divine.

The external world is made up of the *Panchabhuthas* (five great elements) ether, air, fire, water and earth. The five senses are transient, momentary and prone to disease. Senses which are liable to become victims of the disease of attachment, how can they serve to recognise the Divine? Those senses which cannot recognise their own condition are enveloped in ignorance.

What is meant by the phrase "knowing one's self"? Does self knowledge mean knowing one's lineage or profession? Knowledge of the Self transcends knowledge of the body, the senses, the mind and the *Antahkarana* (the Will).

Get the vision of God

Today people worship God in various ways. They pray to God' "Oh Lord! Let me have a vision of you! Free me from all my troubles." When one listens to these prayers, one is tempted to feel that they arise only from ignorance. People who offer such prayers seem to have no idea of the nature of God.

Who is God? The scriptures, the Vedas and the Upanishads, give the answer to this question that God is: Sath-Chith-Ananda. What you should seek from God, who is Sath-Chith-Ananda , is Sath-Chit-Ananda, and not trivial things relating to the world. All things are included in that *Ananda* (Supreme Bliss).

What is happening today is that people invoke the name of God but are really worshipping the devil. All mundane desires are associated with the devil and not with the Divine. The more desires are controlled, the more blissful one will be.

What, then, is the meaning of the call "know thyself"? You have to get a vision of God. You have to experience the Divine. You have to converse with God. Man must realize God; see God; feel God; talk to God. This is religion. Without understanding this true meaning of religion, people regard various forms of worship and prayers as religion. "Realise is Religion." This means that to realize the eternal reality is true religion.

Man is the embodiment of the eternal Truth. He is the embodiment of *Sath-Chith-Ananda* (Being-Awareness-Bliss). But he is unable to recognize his true identity because egoism and possessiveness, pomp and pride envelop man's true form of "Being-Awareness-Bliss." The man who is able to get rid of attachment and hatred, egoism and acquisitiveness, will recognize his Sath-Chith-Ananda (divine nature). The Divine within is covered by these tendencies like ashes over a burning charcoal. When the ashes are blown away, the fire will reveal itself. Sath-Chith-Ananda is the true wealth of a human being.

Everyone should try to secure this treasure by overcoming the dragon of self-conceit which is barring the access to it. Everyone has to think for himself how he is viewing this treasure. Men appear to worship God, but in reality they are pursuing worldly objects. How can they expect to realise God? There should be harmony in thought, word and deed. The Divine whom you seek is within you. Your yearning for the Divine must be total and all-absorbing.

The body is a trust and not your private property

People speak about *Moksha* (liberation). What is it from which they have to be liberated? Is it from family, wealth or position? No. Liberation from these is an easy affair. Liberation is from the sense of identification with the body. The body is only an instrument and not your true self. The body is a gift from God.

It does not belong to you, but you have to protect it as an instrument given to you. Everything belongs to God. You have to treat it as a trust and not as your private property. It is therefore, your duty to make right use of the body and senses given to you.

God's ways are astonishing, inscrutable, and mysterious. God has made ample provision for all man's needs. He has also given to man much more in the form of luxuries. In addition, He has conferred on man the power to control all these things. God has told man, "You are free to use as you like all the things given to you, subject to one condition. You will have to face the consequences of your actions." This means that you cannot abuse the freedom given to you to misuse the things that are provided for you. When you misuse anything, you have to bear the resulting misery. When you make good use of anything, you will enjoy the benefits therefrom. You have to take note of the purpose for which you use your senses or the objects given to you. Any 'misuse of them will bring misery in its wake.

Understand your true Self first

You came with nothing into the world and leave it with nothing. What happens to your wealth or to yourself? Of what use is all other wealth unless a man realises the bliss of oneness with the Divine (Sath-Chith-Ananda)?

(Swami sang a song, in which he lamented the plight of man who ceaselessly worked for feeding his stomach, forgetting God).

All these, pursuits are utterly worthless. Scientists who are exploiting the moon are not trying to understand their own minds. Without understanding one's own true self, all other knowledge is meaningless. The moon dispels the darkness of night. The moon shines through the reflected light of the sun. Moonlight is cool while sunlight is warm. The mind is like the moon. When the rays of the Atma fall on the mind, it acquires coolness. When the same rays fall on *Buddhi* (intellect), it gets hot. Today there is more concentration on development of the intellect than on broadening the mind. Man, who has come from the Divine, should aim at the perfection of the Divine. The famous

Italian violin manufacturer Anthony Stradivarius, took one year to make one perfect violin because he regarded the making of the violin as an offering to God, who is perfect.

Consider the body as the flute of God

All actions should be done wholeheartedly. This was exemplified by the total devotion of the Gopikas to Krishna. They were lost in ecstasy over the melodious music of Krishna's flute. They found in that music the essence of all the Vedas and the scriptures.

(Bhagavan sang a song in which the Gopikas pray to Krishna to fill their hearts with the nectarine melody of his flute).

What is the significance of the flute? It symbolises the human body. The flute has nine holes. The human body has nine openings. The body should be considered as the flute of God. It should be rendered completely hollow, so that the Divine may blow through it.

Today the body is anything but hollow. It is filled with all kinds of desires. Only when the desires are removed, the body will be a fit instrument for the Divine to fill it with nectarine music. This is the process of surrender to the Divine. Then one gets intoxicated with the music of the Divine. Pomp and pride have to be given up to experience the Divine.

People talk about meditation. But how much of it is concentrated on God? Nor is formal meditation necessary when you realise that the Divine is within you. The purpose of meditation is to recognise one's unity with God. This realisation can come only when one removes the three-layered cloak that covers the Atma in the form of the three Gunas - Thamas, Rajas and Sathva. Trust everything as God's work, whatever your vocation or profession. By dedicating all actions to God, you sanctify every act in daily life. That is the message of the Vedas.

Offer love to God

People are used to making edible offerings to idols or pictures, but consume them after the ritual. These are not what should be offered to God. You should offer your Love to God as the food that God loves. Regard even this love as a gift from God. You offer to God what God has given to you. This was what Jayadeva said in a famous song. "Oh Lord! That heart which you gave to me, I am offering to you." It is only when one is filled with this feeling that one can become a complete devotee.

There should be no sense of separateness. This was finely expressed by Pothana when he declared that his entire poem was inspired and composed by the Divine. Thereby his Bhagavatham achieved unique sacredness. The way Pothana described the Goddess Lakshmi's dilemma when she saw her consort, Vishnu, rushing in haste to the rescue of Gajendra (the lord of elephants), how she was anxious to know where the Lord was going, but felt that it would be inauspicious to ask him, is one of the memorable passages in the Bhagavatham.

(Bhagavan recited the poem with such verve that the entire audience burst into applause).

Even Goddess Lakshmi may be swayed by fear on occasions, but the true devotee is always without fear. Ramdas expressed this fearlessness in one of his songs. That fearlessness stems from total surrender to the Divine. But today we witness only part-time devotion. The reward is also partial.

No danger from Solar Eclipse

The day after tomorrow, there will be a Solar Eclipse and people are filled with apprehensions about the effects of the eclipse on the world. There is no need for fears of any kind, because such events occur from time to time. The earth came out of the sun. The moon came from the earth. The moon sometimes comes between the Sun and the Earth. At those times the sun cannot be seen. This is the eclipse of the sun. When the sun, the moon and the earth are in one line, it is wrong to think that any disaster will happen to the earth. No

dangers are in prospect. Such natural phenomena are part of the mysteries of creation.

Scientists are keen to study the eclipse as an experiment. If they are preoccupied with experiments, when will they acquire experience?

"When people are immersed in family life, what will they get from it? They will continue to suffer till the end of their lives."

says a Telugu Poem. If all your life is spent on experiments, when will you begin to experience life? When will you start putting into practice the knowledge you acquire? There is joy only in practising what you know, not in the acquisition of knowledge. The delight of the pudding is in the eating.

Practise at least a fragment of what you have learnt. Cultivate love for God. Love is God; Live in Love.

28. Fight the forces of evil

Date: 23 October 1995 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Diwali

Life in the world is impermanent; Impermanent are youth and wealth; Wife and children are not permanent; Only Righteousness and renown are enduring. EMBODIMENTS of Love! In this phenomenal world, life is like a water bubble. No one can tell when, where and how this bubble will burst. One's youth and wealth are transient stages in one's life, coming and going. No one can predict when they will come and when they will pass away. Is there any reason for feeling proud about one's youth, which is purely transitory? It is not the unchanging reality. Wife and children are not permanent. They are like passing clouds. They are like lightning flashes, bright one moment and disappearing the next. None of these is of a lasting nature. "Dharma keerthi dhvayam sthiram." The righteous acts performed by one and the reputation earned by one, these two alone endure for ever, as long as the sun and moon last. Embodiments of Love! The primary goal of a human being is to realise his inherent divinity and redeem his life by that realisation. Man's heart, which should be an ocean of milk, has been polluted so much by evil today that it has become an ocean of brine. Ksheerasagara (the ocean of milk) is regarded as the bed on which the Lord reclines. It is pure and white like milk. But by polluting his heart man is a prey to all kinds of worries. The ocean of milk has no room for whales and crocodiles. But the main evils of attachment and hatred, infesting the heart like whales and crocodiles, have turned it into an ocean of salt.

Festivals are designed to promote lofty feelings

The tainted life of man has to be purified by expelling the pollutants within man. What is pure and sacred has to be taken in. This duty has been forgotten. If you want to fill the stomach with wholesome and delicious food, you have to empty it of what is impure. One cannot relish good food when the stomach is full of bad stuff. This is borne out by every one's daily experience. Hence every one should get rid of all the bad thoughts, evil intentions and bad feelings in him and fill the mind with good thoughts and noble feelings.

All Bharatheeya festivals have been designed to promote such lofty feelings and not for indulging in feasting and revelry. From ancient times Bharath has upheld high spiritual ideals and proclaimed the principle of universal well-being. "Lokas-Samasthas sukhino bhavanthu" (May the people of all the worlds be happy). The ancient sages led lives based on these sacred ideals. These ideals have almost disappeared today. Immersed in endless worldly desires people have become strangers to the Divine.

People today are keen to secure shortcuts for achieving anything. This is not so easy. "Anithyam asukham lokam idham prapya bhajasva mam" (Having come down into this ephemeral and hapless world, worship Me), says Krishna in the Geetha. This world is impermanent and "a vale of tears" - Asukham. Having taken birth in such a world, men desire true lasting happiness. When they do not get what they desire, they blame God. World is governed by the rules: As you sow, so shall you reap. Only when you sow good seeds can you reap a good harvest. How can you hope to get sweet fruits by sowing poisonous seeds? If you want to enjoy good results you have to perform good deeds.

Man today is dominated by selfishness and self-interest. Every action is based on selfish interest. Man has become a plaything in the hands of Selfishness. Consequently he has forfeited peace of mind.

The real meaning of Punya

In life, everything has to be governed by restraints. These restraints should be for the purpose of directing life in the ideal path. Men desire the fruits of good deeds without doing good deeds and want to avoid the consequences of bad actions while indulging in them. What, indeed, are Punya karmas (meritorious actions)? Vyasa defined them as actions to help others. Causing harm to others is sinful. These are secular interpretations of the terms Punya and Papa. Real Punya is the endeavour to recognise one's true self. Although man is the embodiment of Sath-Chith-Anandha (Being-Awareness-Bliss) he is searching for them elsewhere. When man realises that the Bliss he seeks is within himself, that is Punya (meritorious). This Anandha is within him and not

in the external world. Whatever joy he may find in the external world is impermanent. "Papaya parapeedanam" (To cause harm to others is sinful). To realise that "the same Atma that is in all others is within me and is in all living beings" is Punya. This Ekatma bhava (spiritual oneness) is meritorious. To regard all beings as diverse in spirit is a sin. The sense of separateness is sinful. "That is full and this is full." This oneness of Spirit has to be experienced. Causing harm to others is only a sign of animality. The real sin is to regard what is spiritually one as manifold and diverse. Man is the embodiment of the Divine. All human bodies are animated by the same Spirit, like the current that makes all bulbs shed light. The Divine subsumes everything though invisible.

Make efforts to realise the Divine

The Divine is omnipresent. The entire cosmos is permeated and sustained by this Divine energy. Everyone should endeavour to experience the Divine. Man must make the effort and he is bound to realise the experience. The necessary sacrifice must be made. All the bad qualities have to be renounced the moment they invade the mind. True devotion means elimination of all the animal tendencies in man. Man should seek to realise the eternal Divine within him. That is the primary purpose of human life. All other accomplishments are valueless. Man should raise himself from the animal to the Divine. There is nothing great in earning a fortune. What one should seek is purity of the Self - that is the essence of humanness. Today is described as Naraka Chathurdhasi. What is Naraka ? Whatever is associated with suffering is called Naraka. "Ka" stands for 'bad qualities'. Naraka means human life with bad qualities. That is a hellish life. How did Krishna deal with Naraka? Krishna is the Divine, one who attracts by His magnetic vibrations. These vibrations represent the Life Force. The Consciousness that animates the Life Force is known as Prajnanam, the source of radiation. When radiation and vibration are active in the body, you have the whole human being.

The bad qualities in man, in the form of Narakasura, have to be destroyed. Krishna came to destroy these bad qualities. He enlisted the aid of Sathyabhama, who represents the bearer of Truth. This means that with the

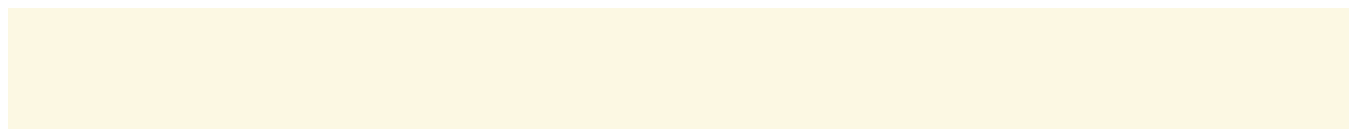
help of truth, Krishna destroyed the bad qualities. Thyagaraja sang ecstatically about the glorious achievements of the Lord. On Deepavali day, people should pledge themselves to get rid of their bad qualities. "There is no greater virtue than Truth." Truth is not limited to one nation or one people. It belongs to all mankind. Truth sustains the cosmos. Therefore Truth is God. Follow the path of Truth. Speak the Truth. That is the foremost spiritual exercise.

Fight evil forces

Embodiments of love! Your duty today is to destroy the demonic qualities in you. Evil thoughts and evil actions are rampant everywhere. You cannot remain a mere witness to these happenings. Placing your faith in God, you have to fight evil forces as a human being. You have to demonstrate your human estate. You have to earn a name as a good man. That alone counts. All other acquisitions are worthless. Only a good man endures. Every moment of one's life should be devoted to practising Dharma (righteousness) and earning a Keerthi (good name). Fill every cell in your body; with the spirit of Truth. Naraka Chaturdhasi is the day on which you resolve to get rid of your bad qualities and follow the path of righteousness. Deepavali is celebrated today as a festival of lights, with the firing of crackers and display of fireworks. In olden days the ancients rejoiced over the destruction of the demon Narakasura and let off fireworks. There is another meaning in the burning of crackers on Deepavali day. This is the rainy season. All kinds of germs fill the atmosphere. The smoke from the crackers destroys these germs. The joy derived from the burning of crackers should really come from the elimination of bad qualities within one. For this, it is essential to meditate on God. Listen to Divine discourses. Participate in Bhajans.

Work done for the welfare of the world is thapas (true penance), while work done for selfish purpose is thamas (useless).

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba



29. Render unto the people what is theirs

Date: 17 November 1995 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

EMBODIMENTS of Love! "Sarve Bhavanthu Sukhinah" (Let all people be happy!). This is the primal call of Bharatheeya Culture All people in the world should live happily and comfortably. Bharatheeya culture has handed down this call from ancient times that no one should experience suffering or sorrow.

This sacred land of Bharath has shown, from ancient times, to the rest of the world, not only the path of Spirituality but also the ideals to be pursued in the fields of Social, Ethical and Moral values. Forgetting these eternal verities, Bharatheeyas have become victims of disorder and discord because of total preoccupation with worldly pursuits. Because of the advances in science and technology, people seem to be content with physical comforts, oblivious to their Divine heritage. A Nation's well-being or troubles are dependent on the actions of the people. Actions are related to men's thoughts. If the country's condition is not what it should be, what is the reason? Men's thoughts and actions are not what they should be. Human values should predominate in men's thoughts. Human life has no meaning without these values. To be a true human being, one has to practise these values in daily life.

The two organs of unique importance

There are two organs in man which are of unique importance: the Head and the Heart. All that emanates from the Head is related to the physical world. In Vedanthik parlance, this is called Pravritthi Lakshanam (externalism). These external activities include studies, moving about, earning and spending and ultimately passing on. All these relate to the mundane and are not enduring reality. Qualities like kindness, sympathy, compassion, truth and forbearance arise from the Heart. These are described as Nivritthi Lakshanas (Internal traits). Of the two tendencies, the external and the internal, it is not good to follow the Pravritthi Lakshanas (external traits). The quest for truth means understanding the difference between the two paths. This quest embraces every kind of action seeing, speaking, doing, etc. For instance, the eyes see

the mother, the son, the daughter, the daughter-in-law and others. The quest for truth means understanding how each of these different persons are to be viewed, though it is the same eye that sees all of them. Similarly, the tongue is prone to speak the truth or utter lies or indulge in delusions. The quest for truth means that the differences in the role of the tongue should be properly understood. For instance, scientists look at the branches, flowers and fruits of a tree and study the different aspects and draw their conclusions. There are others who realise that the branches, flowers and fruits are sustained by the roots which are below the ground. The persons who searched for the roots were esteemed by our ancient Vedhik seers. The Vedanthins thus teach things which are unknown to the scientists. Science teaches things which are not dealt with by the Vedanthins. The real quest for truth consists in combining the explorations of the scientist and the spiritualist. Branches cannot exist without roots. But roots without branches are useless. Both are interdependent. Likewise, everyone should recognise the integral relationship between the external and the internal. Only then can one know the whole truth and base his life on it.

Exploration of energies present in the cosmos

The world is passing through many changes. Whatever power functions in the Cosmos is present in the individual. You find waves of energy in the world. You also notice the rays of light illumining the world. Radio waves also fill the atmosphere. Laser beams are also present. Invisible X-Ray waves are also present. While these are given different names, all these radiations are different manifestations of the same energy. The ancient sages had explored these different forms of radiations and experienced the bliss to be derived therefrom. They were able to accomplish many things on the basis of their knowledge of these powers. For many millennia, the exploration of these energies has been going on. The first scientist to know about them was Hiranyakashipu. He had total control over Panchabhuthas (five great elements). But, his son, Prahladha, taught a few lessons to his father. "Oh father! You have conquered all the worlds in a trice. But you have no control over your mind." Churchill (the British Wartime Prime Minister) pointed out the same truth when he observed' "Man has conquered many things. But he

has made no effort to know himself." Scientists today have explored everything, but have not understood their own reality. Of what use is all other knowledge if you do not know the truth about your own self? That is why Vedantha summons man to embark on Self-Knowledge. Everyone should seek to know his true nature, his motives and his consciousness. Man is endowed with all potencies and all forms of energy. Man has limitless magnetic energy in him. Possessing all these powers, it is a pity that man regards himself as weak. Energy and matter are not different. They are present like the tree that is latent in a seed.

"Nothing is Mine"

People do not comprehend the preciousness of human life and all its potentialities. Men should learn to lead a moral life. When one's thoughts are pure, one's life becomes sacred and blissful. No room should be given for bad thoughts and bad actions. From earliest times, Bharatheeyas had sought to base their lives on noble ideals. Today, Bharatheeyas are asking. "Where is God?" The truth is ' "You are God." With regard to the Drinking Water Project, people have been praising Svami in laudatory terms. Svami is not happy with these eulogies. Nothing is mine. All these are gifts from devotees. They have taken the form of water. To demonstrate the exemplary character of this devotion, I launched the water project. I am only a trustee. I am a postal runner. Whether the messages delivered by the postman are pleasant or unpleasant, only the recipients can know. Hence, it is not right to attribute to Svami responsibility for anything. God seeks nothing. What you have to offer to God is only your love.

True sacrifice is to provide amenities for the poor

There are in the world many great men and wealthy men. There are any number of ashrams and temples. Wherefrom are these ashrams and temples getting funds? They come from the earnings of the public. Hence, such funds, received from devotees, should be utilized for the benefit of the devotees. Whether it be an ashram or a temple or a wealthy person, their income comes from the labours of poor persons. If the poor did not do the work, how could

the rich become rich? It is their labour which has enabled the rich man to acquire wealth. Hence, what has been acquired from the labours of the poor should be used for their good. Therefore, the authorities of ashrams or temples in any area should use their resources for providing education or medical relief or other amenities in their areas and make them happy. This is true sacrifice. Many devotees offer all kinds of ornaments for the idols in temples. For God the only ornament is Love. No other ornament can fittingly adorn God. Hence, instead of offering ornaments, it is better to use the money for the benefit of Narayana in the form of needy human beings. It is not good to look to the Government for everything. People should come together and try as far as possible to get their requirements met by their own co-operative efforts. Only then they will become one human family. All, indeed, are brothers and sisters and should work together in this spirit. How do you expect Government to provide all amenities? They have to get the money from public. It is better to let the people use their money for their own benefit along proper lines. This kind of mutual co-operation in all endeavours has been commended by the Vedas from ancient times. The Vedas have declared that sacrifice is the only means to achieve immortality. It is necessary to devise means to ensure that the resources of ashrams and temples are used solely for the public good.

Unity among the rural folk is essential

There is the problem of maintenance of the facilities created by the Water Project. If, for instance, a pipe put up in a place fails to work, there is no meaning in waiting for the official machinery to set it right. The villagers themselves should arrange to get it repaired. Why should not there be such unity and co-operation among the rural folk? Most of our troubles are due to lack of unity and co-operation among the people. Only unity can ensure the prosperity of the people.

Let unity prevail. Let the affluent sections realise that their wealth comes from the labours of the masses. There is no need to glorify what I have done. I have given back to the people what has been given by them. I have given to you what is essential for you. Nothing is mine. If anything can be called mine,

it is you. You are my greatest property. If you are happy, I am happy. If you pursue the right path, that is my food. When you are united, I feel happy. Therefore, do not speak about what Svami has done. Svami served to you what you offered to Him. I have nothing in my hands. People will call them empty hands. But this nothing is everything.

Real 'art' should emanate from the 'heart'

During the past few days, the people have been enjoying the music concerts and dance programmes. In the past these fine arts were patronized by rulers. Today the word 'art' has lost its meaning. Real art should emanate from the heart. Artistic expression-should reflect what is in the heart. All arts like music, painting, dance, etc. should, be developed as sacred activities. You experienced joy when you witnessed the concerts. That joy came from the heart. By promoting such arts the people can experience perpetual joy. Hence people should encourage such sacred arts, which are part of Bharath's great cultural heritage. The Vedas have held forth the message of people living in amity striving together for common ends and sharing the fruits of their co-operative efforts. Equally, they have proclaimed the omnipresence of the Divine. The cosmic form of the Divine encompasses every being in the universe. Forgetting this fact "Sarvam Vishnumayam Jagath" (The Divine is immanent in the Cosmos), people search for the Divine. Every human being is a spark of the Divine. Hence, there should be no ill-will towards anyone. People wish Happy Birthday. For whom is this birthday? It is only for the body, which cannot experience happiness. Do not follow the body, which is perishable, or the mind, which is like a mad monkey. Follow your conscience. Human life is based on the body (actions), the mind (thoughts) and the Atma (Consciousness). The body has to be kept in a sound condition. It has to be used for the service of others. Put into practice Vyasa's motto: "Help ever; Hurt never." This is my advice to everybody.

Secret of Svami's strength

This body (of Svami) will enter on its seventieth year on the 23r~. As far as I can remember, I have not done all these years any harm to anyone in any

form. Even the idea of causing harm to anyone has never entered my mind. Because of this, inspite of my seventy years, I appear like a small boy. As I don't find the time or the opportunity, I don't ran, but I can do so. Wherefrom has this strength come? There are three factors responsible' three P's. First P, Purity. Second P, Patience. Third P, Perseverance. If you develop these three qualities, you can also acquire the same strength.

Today, most people lack purity. Whether you believe it or not, I must tell you that there is no trace of self-interest in me. I am keen to do something or other for this or that person, but I have no concern about myself. Develop this attitude and you will experience your Divinity. So far, I have not stretched my hand to seek anything from anyone. I ask for only one thing: pure love. That is God. Only the love of God is true love. All others are merely different forms of attachment. There is no greater achievement or ideal than love of God. Dedicate every action to God. Work will be transformed into worship. Whether people believe it or not, it is a fact that I have never known what it is to worry. Persons working in the Super Speciality Hospital have asked me: "Svami! The Hospital is costing two crores of rupees a month.

The Institute of Higher Learning is being run without getting anything *from the Govt. or the students. How are these being done? Svami appears to be totally free from worries. Why should there be any worry? If you are engaged in good work for the public, there is no room for worry. It is purely an aberration of the mind. I have no such worry: I am engaged in good work. Where, then, is cause for worry? If you are not doing good work, you have to worry. Therefore, embark on good work with faith. You will have no worries. Develop love! Fill your hearts with love and share it with all beings, thereby experience bliss. Regard the entire world as one family. That is the message of Bharatheeya culture. Countries are building up arms for defence. But Bharath has believed in Dharma as the real safeguard for nations or individuals. Hence you should protect and cherish Dharma. Atomic weapons should be given up. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao has been pleading for the abolition of atomic 'weapons. I agree with him. Bharath's most powerful weapon is Dharmasthra. Let us adhere to Dharma. That will protect us. Embodiments of love! It is a blessing to be born in Bharath. There are

doubtless troubles and difficulties. These have to be faced and overcome. There is only one thing which you have to offer as a birthday gift. Develop love and live fraternally. Banish hatred and jealousy. Set an example to the world.

30. Fill the world with love

Date: 18 November 1995 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: 6th World Conference of Sai Organization

There is no worse disease than greed;
No enemy worse than anger;
Nor is there any misery worse than poverty;
There is no greater happiness than wisdom.

AMONG the numerous diseases prevalent in the world, the disease of *lobha* (greed) has grown beyond bounds. There is no disease worse than this. This greed undermines humanness and turns man into a monster.

The second disease is *krodha* (anger): There is no enemy worse than anger. It is possible to overcome external foes, but it is very difficult to subdue this internal enemy. Anger can destroy all human qualities and make a man forget his real nature. It is man's worst enemy. There is no misery equal to poverty. Poverty does not merely mean lack of wealth. You have poverty of the mind, poverty in wisdom. This poverty also causes misery to man.

Man is ravaged by these three: Greed (or miserliness), anger and lack of wisdom. There is no greater source of happiness than *Jnana* (wisdom or the Higher Knowledge). Jnana is not confined to worldly knowledge. There are other kinds of knowledge - bookish, superficial, etc. - of which the most valuable is practical knowledge.

Understand the purpose of life

Everyone should strive to acquire that knowledge by which he can get rid of greed, anger and material and spiritual poverty. It is to achieve this purpose that you are participating in this conference.

At the outset you have to consider what is the purpose of life.

"Is it for involvement in endless work or for eating and sleeping or indulging in gossip that the Divine has conferred this human birth?"
(Swami sang a Telugu poem).

The gift of intelligence is being used for many trivial purposes but not to understand the goal of life. Society today is riddled with discord and disorder. The progress of civilization has undermined morality and decency in all walks of life. Obsessed with worldly values, men have lost all concern for moral values. Selfishness reigns supreme everywhere. Even in the spiritual field, people seem to be more interested in themselves than in the welfare of society and the promotion of public good-.

The delegates assembled in this conference appear to be concerned about the functioning of their centres. **Why were these centres started? The primary objective of the Sai Organization is to raise the human consciousness to the Divine by eliminating all animal tendencies.** People do not seem to be aware of their true nature. Only those who understand their true selves can help to elevate others. The Upanishads have given the clarion call to mankind to wake up from their ignorance and go forward towards their supreme divine destiny of self-realisation.

The three paths of Sai

You have to engage yourselves in *Seva* (Service). Service does not mean mere rendering help to others of one kind or another. True service means participation in social activities after ridding yourself of egoism and possessiveness and manifesting your qualities of compassion and kindness. The aim is the refinement of your own good nature rather than giving succour to others.

There is a Sanskrit saying which declares that greater than penance or pilgrimage, meditation or worship, is service to good people. In rendering service, there should be unity of heart, head and hands (three H's). Only then service becomes sanctified.

The significance of the three letters in Sai should be understood. "S" stands for Service. "A" stands for Adoration. "I" stands for Illumination. These three represent *Karma*, *Bhakthi*, and *Jnana* respectively. Sai teaches these three. All the three concepts are equally important. Sai is a combination of the three spiritual paths of Action, Devotion, and Wisdom. Just as the Pranava sound is made up of the three letters "A", "U", "M" (OM), Sai stands for the triple forms of spiritual sadhana. In the Sai organization, this threefold exercise has to be properly understood.

Sai sevaks have to develop the love in them, share it with others and fill the whole world with love. True love should be distinguished from attachments of various kinds. That love is a synonym for God.

Love is God. Live in love.

The love of God comes from the depths of the heart. Sai sevaks should understand this love and render service in the right spirit to all mankind.

Fill the world with love

People ask how they can experience God. The answer was given by Ramakrishna Paramahansa, when he told a questioner that if he loved God with the same intensity with which he loved his wife and children he would be able to experience God. Perform all actions as an offering to God. Do not make any distinction between your official work and your work in the Sai organization. Spirituality cannot be divided into compartments. The Sathya

Sai organization was set up solely to enable members to manifest their love in all their activities. You should manifest the divinity within you. That is Self realisation, realisation of your oneness with the Divine. The setting up of Sai Centres is not an exercise in numbers. The emphasis should be on quality and not quantity. The International President and the National President of our organization have mentioned how the *Samasthalu* (centres) have grown. But has *Samathvam* (fellow-feeling) grown to the same extent? Fellow-feeling should grow. On the contrary, divisiveness is growing. I want quality, not quantity.

Promote harmony among members. You cannot avoid making such distinctions as President, Coordinator, Member and the like. But these distinctions are functional and have no place at the spiritual level. God is present equally in all, from the president to the ordinary member. You should recognise this oneness. Positions, names and forms may vary but the Supreme Truth is one. This spirit of Samathvam (oneness) should be fostered. Then there will be no jealousy or discord. Where there is oneness there will be no trouble.

Foster the spirit of Samathvam

Society today is racked by jealousy and hatred. Jealousy is a disease, which gives rise to hatred. Develop forbearance and goodwill. That is the cure for jealousy.

I have often declared: "My life is My message."

Often many have extolled Me or derided Me. I do not get elated by praise or depressed by criticism. I treat everything alike.

"Samathvam yogam uchyathe."

That equal-mindedness is yoga.

What do I lose when someone criticizes me? That is his opinion. It does not affect me. Those who criticize Baba are suffering from a disease, like those who reject a sweet because they suffer from diabetes. The fault lies not in the sweet but in the person who is unable to relish it. They know that Baba is engaged in beneficial activities and they want him. But because some of their selfish interests are not served, they turn against Swami. That is a malady. When you see the facts in this light, you will realise the truth.

Today you have to cultivate a serene equanimity that rises above these trifles. The development of equanimity is more important than the growth of centre. You should recognise the Divinity in one and all.

"The one Supreme Spirit dwells in all beings."

Bulbs are many but the current that illumines them is one.

Develop this spirit of oneness. Unity will lead to Divinity.

Many who are working in the Organization do not recognise the need for unity. Lack of unity breeds enmity and groupism.

The organization exists not for my sake but yours. When Swami administers what may appear as bitter medicine, it is for your own good. God is the physician for the ills of human existence. You may not relish the taste of His medicine. But whatever Swami does, says or gives, is all for your good.

Above all, unity is-the foremost need of the hour.

"Nations are many, but the earth is one."

All are denizens of the earth. All are children of Mother Earth. Recognise this truth. In the realm of the Spirit, it is foolish to ask for proofs of direct external perception. The spiritual is subtle. It has to be experienced within. The Divine is present within us incognito like the Pandavas during the last year of their exile. Does the external form of a person reveal anything about his internal qualities? He himself may not be aware of all of them. He may be full of love or hatred. Can anyone perceive it? Without knowing his qualities, is it proper to judge him by his physical features?

You see this magnificent hall, but you do not see its foundations. Likewise, God is the basis, Nature is the superstructure. The spirit is the basis, the body is the superstructure. The body is like a rose in which the spirit is present as invisible fragrance.

"I am always blissful"

This conference should consider how the Sai Organizations can improve their service activities. I have nothing to gain from the organization. I am always blissful. There is no need to wish me "Happy Birthday". I am always happy.

Embodiments of Love!

Develop love, so that you may deserve this appellation.

The Tamil Nadu President, T.G.Krishnamurthy said, that when Swami reincarnates as Prema Sai he should be given the privilege of serving Swami. Ayya! Take good care of what you already have. Why hanker after something in the womb of the future? The present is very important. Past is past. Don't worry about the future. Take care of the present which will determine the future. Do your duty now. Duty is God. Work is worship. This is the way to run the organization on ideal lines. What is being inaugurated today is the search for the supreme truth about the Divinity within.

Youth is not related to age

People have referred to the Seventieth Birthday. The body is constituted of the five elements, the five sheaths, the five life-breaths and the five senses. Upto one's fiftieth year, one may be described as experiencing *Yauvanam* (youth). Youthhood should be dedicated to purposeful activities. Youth is not related to age. Bheeshma, who was 112 years old, was the commander-in-chief of the Kaurava forces. It is will power that determines one's age.

When one reaches sixty, it is a Bharatheeya custom to perform Shanthi puuja for the purpose of subduing the six internal enemies (lust, pride, etc).

On reaching seventy, a person attains the state of the Seven Sages, the Seven Oceans, the Seven musical notes, the Seven colours. The seven colours come from the sun's rays. The sun's rays are eternal. The Seventieth year symbolises the attainment of the saintliness of the Saptharishis (Seven sages who constitute the constellation of Ursa Major, the Great Bear).

On attaining the eightieth year, you must become one of the *Ashtagrahas* (eight planets).

On reaching the ninetieth year, you have to acquire the strength of one of the *Navagrahas* (nine planets).

On reaching the hundredth year one should merge in the ten *ind riyas* (organs of sense and action) and get rid of the body consciousness.

The acquisition of the love of God should be the primary aim of members of the Sai organizations. The spiritual path is the easiest to follow. The giving up of worldly desires is easier than clinging to them. Hold fast to God.

Bhakthi does not consist in wearing ochre robes, the organization of uthsavas (religious festivals), the performance of yajnas, the shaving or matting of hair, carrying of kamandala (bowl) or danda (stick), etc. A pure

heart, uninterrupted contemplation of God, feeling that everything is the Lord's creation and therefore One, unattachment to sense objects, embracing all in equal love, dedication to true speech - these are, indeed, the characteristics of Bhakthi.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

31. Supreme need for national unity

Date: 18 November 1995 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

EMBODIMENTS of Love! In this vast world, in which countless, human beings are leading miserable lives, pursuing endless desires and unattainable aspirations, the spirit of sacrifice is most essential. Trees bring forth fruits for the benefit of others. Rivers carry water for the use of others. Cows yield milk to benefit others. Likewise, man should share in harmony with others his qualities of goodness, compassion, forbearance and charity. The earth follows its Dharma (natural duty) to make use of its five elements to produce sustenance for all living beings. Born on the earth, men are not following the example of the earth. It is not the creeds that men profess - whether Christianity or Islam or other religion - which lend value to their lives. The highest value is the fact of their humanness. All faiths combine to invest man with a unique effulgence. The various talents with which man is endowed should be used-for good purposes on the basis that individual good is linked to social well-being. Man today has to go through transformation at three levels: First and foremost is spiritual transformation. Second comes transformation in the attitude towards society. The third change is at the individual level. When spiritual transformation takes place, there is an automatic change in the attitude towards society. When society becomes harmonious and prosperous, the individual also changes.

Three-fold transformation

This three-fold transformation is implicit in the term Sai. "S" stands for Spiritual change. "A" stands for Association change. This is change in one's relationships with others in society. "I" stands for Individual change. Sai - this signifies changes at all three levels - Spiritual and Individual. This triple transformation is what Sai desires. When this transformation takes place, the whole world will be prosperous and happy. The question today is' "How can spiritual transformation take place without changes at the individual and social level?" The basis for all the threefold transformations is the love principle. This love has to be experienced by one and all. How is individual

transformation to be achieved? There are some bad habits among individuals such as smoking, drinking liquor, meat eating and gambling. These bad habits not only degrade the individuals but also inflict hardships on their families. These bad habits have to be given up for the individual to manifest his inherent goodness. One's personality can blossom only when he leads a moral life.

How should one's attitude to society be changed? One should give up talking ill of others, reviling them or ridiculing them, feeling envious of good people. Evil traits like these lead to loss of peace in society. People should develop friendly and loving attitude towards their fellowbeings in society. To develop a sense of helpfulness, there should be the spirit of sacrifice. People should also cultivate the feeling of sympathy and understanding. For spiritual transformation, the qualities that are needed are Dhaya, kindness, love, forbearance and compassion. Bharath throughout the ages has fostered these qualities among the people. People today have forgotten these sublime qualities because they have lost the fear of sin, ceased to love God and do not observe social ethics. What greater misfortune can there be for the nation?

Love of God and fear of sin

Love of God should be a natural feeling in everyone. It is our immemorial heritage. When there is love of God, fear of sin follows naturally. Today fear of sin has gone and everywhere the most heinous crimes are being committed. In such a situation, how can there be morality in society? How are we to transform this state of things? The Prime Minister, Sri. E V. Narasimha Rao, in his speech referred to the grave problems facing the country. Who is responsible for all the troubles, disorder and violence? Maname (We alone) are responsible. The truth has to be recognized. People are blaming others for their own faults. If there is unity among the people, there will be no problems. Unity is strength. Today righteousness has declined among the people. As the level of righteousness goes down, the water level also goes down! If good qualities arise in men, the water level will also rise. What is the reason for the failure of timely rains and the shortage of food crops? It is the decline of

morals among the people which is the cause of natural calamities. The people must cherish sacred thoughts. Then the people's aspirations will be fulfilled. I have to utter a warning in the presence of the Prime Minister. Bharath achieved its freedom through the sacrifice of innumerable patriots, who gave up their lives. Freedom has been achieved, but not unity. Without unity the nation is weak like the hand of a man who cannot use all his fingers. We must achieve unity in every field.

Need for national approach to sharing-river waters

All natural resources of the country should be enjoyed equally by all the people, regardless of caste or community. There are many rivers in our country which flow across State boundaries. Bharath is not lacking in water or other resources. We have many perennial rivers and vast areas of fertile land. But these resources are not being fully used. The nation's perennial rivers like Kaveri, Ganga and Krishna should be treated as national property. Then there will be no room for inter-State disputes. All river waters should be used for the benefit of all the people. It is because of lack of unity and the assertion of separatist claims that a good deal of river waters is going to waste. If the Prime Minister endeavours to promote a national approach to the harnessing of river waters, the nation will prosper. The States also are prone to put their claims against the claims of others. They should adopt a co-operative and fraternal attitude towards each other and behave as good neighbours. If this is done, there will be no shortage of food or water in this country. The people also should develop this co-operative attitude. It is well known that quite often, sections of the public adopt an adversary attitude towards measures taken by the Government. The people should recognise that these measures are taken in their interest. Moreover, the public should not remain idle, leaving everything to the Government. They have to do their duty. They have to live up to certain ideals. The body should be used for rendering help to others. The spirit of helpfulness must be fostered. There is an old Sanskrit saying which declares 'Charity is the ornament for the hand; Truth is the ornament for the throat; Listening to sacred lore is the ornament for the ears.' These are the ornaments which should be valued.

Education, health and water should be free for all

Svami had resolved from the beginning on the provision of three vital things for the people: For health, the heart is important. For education, the head is important. For the body, water is vital. I feel that these three should be provided to the people free. Today a heavy price has to be paid for medical care and for education. Even water has to be bought. A heavy capitation fee has to be paid for getting admission even in a primary school. Illness is incidental to human life. Doctors should be prepared to make any sacrifice to relieve the sick. Money should not be the primary consideration. There are many educated students present here. They should take a pledge to serve society after finishing their studies. Instead of going after high salaried jobs in the cities they should go to the villages to serve the poor living there and earn their love and gratitude. Only then their education would be worth while. Students should be quite content with modest emoluments in the villages, with which they can be more comfortable than with larger earnings in the cities. They can lead more healthy and happy lives in the villages.

The water project

With regard to the water project, it should be noted that much was accomplished in a short period. In the execution of the project changes had to be made in response to the appeals of people in different villages. Because of this, the entire project has not yet been completed. Some villages are yet to get water. This should not cause any disappointment. Whatever may happen, all villages will get water and the project will be fully carried out. The inauguration of the project by the Prime Minister does not mean that further work will be held up. We are prepared for any sacrifice to honour the plighted word. Work will be resumed from tomorrow and we shall see that by January the entire district is supplied with water. We will give no room for anyone to complain that he has not got water. Embodiments of Love! It is a matter for gratification that today the Prime Minister, who belongs to Andhra Pradesh, has inaugurated the water supply scheme for Ananthapur District. All of you should live in amity, without differences of any kind and offer your cooperation to the Government. Not only will the nation benefit from your

unity, but you will also be setting an example to the world. Give up hatred and jealousy, participate with love in measures taken by the government for the well-being, of the people. Love can achieve anything.

Bhakthi, to be effective, must be regularised through selfdiscipline; it should not be allowed to grow wild and untended.

You rush forward to touch My feet or to prostrate before Me, ignoring the children, the aged and the sick, upon whom you fall when you press forward towards Me. Do not forget the Sai in those people, when you rush forward towards this Sai. The merit of all the hardship you underwent to see and hear this Sai is as good as cancelled when you inflict pain on the Sai who resides in them. That plus and this minus add up to zero. In your frenzy to offer homage, you should not forget others who have been waiting long for the chance; you must provide facilities for their dharshan.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

32. When women are honoured

Date: 19 November 1995 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Ladies Day

Asthiram Jeevanam loke (Life in this phenomenal world is impermanent) Yaddhrishyam tannashyam (Whatever is perceived is bound to pass away some time or other) Asthiram yauvanam dhanam (Youth and wealth are transient) Asthiram dhara puthradih (Wife and children will pass away) Sathyam Keerthi dhvayam sthiram (Only Truth and Fame endure). EMBODIMENTS of Love! In this infinite universe, among the myriads of living beings humanity is eminent. Among human beings, it is a privilege to be born as a woman. There are many examples to demonstrate the preeminence of women. Was not Rama born as a Divine incarnation in Kausalya's womb? Did not Lava and Kusha (the twins) become great because they were born to Seetha? Was it not Jeejeebai's loving care which made Shivaji great? Was it not Putlibai's piety which made Gandhi a Mahatma? All the greater sages, and saints, heroes and warriors were born to women "who made them great". Woman is the Goddess of Nature. Gayathri, which enshrines the essence of the Vedas, is a goddess, venerated as Veda Matha (the mother of the Vedas). It is obvious that feminine birth is estimable, adorable and sublime. The Veda also adores the feminine principle in various ways. Vedhik rituals and practices accord a high place to women.

Feminine aspect of Divinity

The woman is adored under different names as Sathyavathi, Anyavathi, Angavathi and Nidhanavathi. Sathyavathi proclaims the truth that the Divine pervades the cosmos, God is not separate from Prakrithi (Nature). Nature is a form of the Divine. The Veda testifies to the omnipresence of the Divine like the presence of butter in every drop of milk, Next is Anyavathi. The five elements are present everywhere in the universe: earth, water, fire, air and ether. These elements vary in subtlety in a progressive order. The Veda declares that even the five elements, are manifestations of the Divine. This aspect of Nature is called Angavathi.

The Anyavathi principle points, out which deity is responsible for what function and describes the deity's special characteristics. Eeshvara is described as Thrishuula-dhari (the bearer of the Trident) and Thrinethra dhari (the deity with three eyes) Vishnu is described as the bearer of the conch, the discus and the mace. Krishna is described as one having the peacock's feather (on his head). Rama is described as the wielder of the bow. The Angavathi ritual worships the different deities with their distinctive features. The Nidhanavathi ritual-lays down nine. different ways in which the Divine can be worshipped, such ,as listening, chanting the name, etc. All forms of worship, are presided over by these four feminine deities. Though the names, are different, the goal is one.

Women should be revered

From ancient times the feminine aspect of the Divine has been worshipped in various ways. The Veda declares that where women are honoured and esteemed, there divinity is present with all its potency. Unfortunately today men consider it demeaning to honour women. This is utterly wrong and is a sign of ignorance. Sthree (Woman) is Grihalakshmi (the Goddess of Prosperity for the home). She is hailed as Dharmapathni (the virtuous spouse). She is called - Illalu (the mistress of the house) and Ardhangi (the better half). People gloat over petty titles conferred on them. But women have been conferred the highest titles which are valid for all time. A home 'without a woman is a jungle.

Men should realise the high status of women and honour and respect them accordingly. They should not make women weep and shed tears. A home where the woman sheds tears will be ruined. Men should give an honourable place for women and lead a respectable life. The archetypal woman is described as Adhishakthi (the primal source of all energy) having a whole array of powers. She is hailed as the mother of the Amrithasyaputhrah (children of immortality).

The thrigunas in the word "Sthree"

The word Sthree is made up of three, consonants, "Sa", "Tha" and "Ra". "Sa" signifies the Sathvik nature of women. It represents also the triple aspects of experiencing divinity Salokyam (vision of the Divine), Sameepyam (proximity) and Sayujyam (mergence). "Tha" signifies the Thamasik quality. But this Thamasik quality is not indolence and slothfulness. It includes qualities like humility, kindness and modesty. This means that women begin with qualities like meekness and-modesty so that they may serve the family and society in the right spirit. There is a saying in Andhra Pradesh: "Judge a house by its mistress." "Ra" represents the Rajoguna. This does not mean pugnacity and querulousness. This quality signifies the preparedness of women, where necessary, even to sacrifice their lives for the sake of their honour and the honour of their family. Bharath's history is full of examples of women who fought valiantly and gave up their lives to protect their husbands and their honour. Sthree thus represents the combination of the three gunas. Woman, who should be highly honoured for these qualities, is being treated as a Abala (weaker vessel) and assigned an inferior status.

It will not be out of place to mention here that women who have wielded power in Bharath or other countries have proved themselves to be exceptionally able and successful. There have been many kings in Britain - but no one ruled the country so well as Queen Victoria, Her rule was marked by righteousness, prosperity and efficiency. There was no discontent during her reign. In more recent times, Indira Gandhi ran the Government with courage and consummate skill. She was prepared for any sacrifice in the interests of the country. Among Prime Ministers, she headed the Government for over twelve years. Many others had only brief tenures! There are several organizations which are being run by women with great dedication and zeal for the benefit of the people. Valmeeki extolled the sweetness of womanhood. What is the cause of, this sweetness? The spirit of sacrifice is the cause, according to Valmeeki.

Spirit of sacrifice is found-only in women

A mother is ready to sacrifice everything even her life, for the sake of her child. Such a spirit is to be found only among women. If a child is grievously

ill, the father may say that the child may as well die. But the mother will try to save the child at any cost. It is for this reason, that woman is described as Thyagamuurthi , the embodiment of sacrifice. Men do not have the same spirit of sacrifice as women. Men may present a heroic pose, but do not have the determination and perseverance to carry on the struggle to the end. Valmeeki described woman as the Bhakti svaruupini (embodiment of devotion). Man was described as Jnanasvaruupa. The Jnani has limited access to the Divine mansion. But the woman devotee has access to innermost apartments. The preeminent status accorded to women will be evident from all the ancient scriptures.

In this context the role of women as mothers should be understood. The great hero, Shivaji, was moulded entirely by the teachings of his mother. Rama was taught by his mother Kausalya to follow the sacred path of Dharma. The lives of the great show to what extent they were the products of their mothers.

Gandhiji became a staunch adherent of truth after a lesson he learnt from his mother, who could not bear her son telling a lie even to make her break her fast. It is the mothers who make their children take to the right path, not so much the fathers. Today we find the father's teaching the children to utter lies. For instance, when the telephone rings in the house, the father who is in the house tells his son to inform the caller that the father is not at home.

The practice of fathers allowing the sons to go astray has a long ancestry. It started in the Dhvapara Yuga with Dhritharashtra, father of Dhuryodhana. Whatever evil deeds his son did, Dhritharashtra used to say he was a good man. Fathers who allow their sons to go astray are not real fathers at all. Prahladha observed: "Only he is father who advises the son to seek God. Only he is a true guru who instructs the pupil about God."

The mother is the first preceptor for the child

Mothers in ancient days used to teach, the children about right conduct, morality and devotion. The first preceptor for a child is the mother. For this reason, Bharatheeya culture gave the first place to the mother among the

four persons to be revered as divine: mother, father, guru and guest. The mother gets the first place because she bears the child in the womb for nine months and nourishes him with her own blood. Even in mentioning the names of deities, the first place is given to the goddess, as in Seetha- Rama, Parvathi-Parameshvara and Lakshmi-Narayana and the reason for the feminine, name getting priority is she is Prakrithi svaruupini - the embodiment of Prakrithi (nature). The implication in this usage, is that you should realise God through the-propitiation of Prakrithi.

Earn the blessings of the mother

In this world, all things are transient. Only righteousness and good name endure. How is one to acquire a good name? By revering the mother. Never go against the wishes of the mother. The son who causes pain to the mother' can never' be happy. Hence, earn the blessing of the mother. In this context, it should be noted that Russians observe December 8th as Ladies Day. On that day the women have free time. The men have to do the cooking. The women go out to do service in hospitals and other places. Men and women have to understand each other so that they can live in harmony, in the family. Today people want to live happily but not to lead ideal lives. Parents, for instance, do not set a good example to the children. In the modern age, the father does not instruct the children properly and the children do not pay heed to the words of the mother. The vast majority of fathers today behave like Dhritharashtra. Where there are some good children, leading a pious life, the fathers rebuke them, saying, "Have you gone crazy? Don't take part in Bhajans or social service." Parents who behave in this manner are like Hiranyakashipu, who could not tolerate his son worshipping Hari. Today we have many parents like Dhritharashtra and Hiranyakashipu, but few who encourage, their children to adhere to righteousness. Children today do not relish edifying works like the Ramayana, the Mahabharatha and the Bhagavatham. They waste their time on reading trash. Parents should see that children do not read bad books.

Now, for a few words of advice to women. It is found that women are given to excessive talking. From today you have to take a pledge not to indulge in

talking. Women are found talking not only, in the auditorium but even in the bhajan mandhir. Men are fond of strolling around as they please, They observe no restraints as to where they should not go and what places they should avoid.

If women observe restraint in speech and men control their movements, it will be good for both.

Ladies day should be observed every year

If the nation has to prosper, improvement must start with the parents. Without peace and harmony at home, there can be no peace in the nation. This message should be propagated throughout the country on every November 19th, by observing it as Ladies' Day. You should teach people how to run their homes well and how to bring up children on right lines. You must deal calmly and tactfully with the men, if they are not cooperating. Though Ravana was evilminded, his noble wife, Mandodhari, tried to correct him as much as possible. She advised him strongly not to keep Seetha in Lanka, but to restore her to Rama. From today learn to see the good in others and examine your own defects. Thereby you will benefit both ways. Those who go about finding faults in others are like dogs which go after cast off shoes.

Call to women

Embodiments of Love! Mistakes may sometimes be committed in the organization. See that they do not recur. Buddha learnt the proper lesson through a single experience of seeing an old man, a sick man and a dead corpse. He understood the entire nature of human existence from this. People today have similar experiences over and over again. But their minds remain unchanged. Every experience should bring out a change. For years you listen to Svami's discourses. How many have changed? How many have developed good qualities? Very few indeed. Develop pure thoughts wherever you may be. Only then your visit to Prasanthi Nilayam at great expense would have served a purpose. As today is a sacred day dedicated to women, they should change themselves and help to change the men and the children. They

should develop the qualities of sympathy, compassion; love and sacrifice. Study the lives of our great women, who were models of patience, fortitude, compassion and sacrifice. I desire that you should take up the reins of leadership and bring peace and prosperity to the nation by leading ideal lives.

33. From the individual to the Divine

Date: 20 November 1995 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Divine EMBODIMENTS of love! All, over the world, mankind is racked today by various difficult problems. When one problem is solved, another-series crop up. The reason for this situation is the absence of right relationship between the individual and the society. At the very outset, we have to take note of four entities: The first is the power that can solve .any problem in a moment. This is Parameshti (the Supreme Self). The second entity is Shrishti (the created universe). The third is Samashti (the collective entity - society or community). The fourth is Vyakthi (the individual). These four are not separate entities. A body consists of different organs performing different functions but they are integral parts of one body. For instance, the hand has a palm, which has fingers. All are integrally related. Similarly, the primary role of Parameshti has to be recognized. It is only when Parameshti is understood that the secret of creation can be grasped. When this secret is understood, the significance of society will be evident. Then the individual's role can be understood. How to recognise Parameshti? By-developing sacred qualities and adoring the Parameshti (Supreme Self), the individual understands the secret of Shrishti (creation) and the importance of society. Today if you want to understand Prakrithi (Nature or the phenomenal Universe), you have to understand Samashti (Society). The term Samashti encompasses all social organizations. A Samashti (community) is made up of individuals coming together. This union of individuals is essential for realisation of the Divine.

Three rules for promoting collective action

Take, for instance, the present conference, Here people from different countries, professing different faiths and belonging to different cultures, have come together. But what is their common unifying factor? It is the belief in the Sai Principle that has, brought you together. All of them are trying to find unity in diversity. To promote unity, the concept of Samashti (collective action) has to be understood. There are three rules to be observed in promoting collective action, Sathyam bruuyath (Speak the truth). Priyam

bruuyath (Speak what is pleasant). Na bruugath Sathyam apriyam (Never speak what is true but not pleasing). Truth is of the highest importance whether we consider morality, worldly life or spiritual progress. From the ethical point of view you have to speak the truth. In the context of worldly life, you have to speak what is pleasing. From the spiritual point of view you have to avoid what is not pleasing even if it is true. The Geetha also teaches that one should not utter words that cause excitement, but speak the truth, which is both pleasing and wholesome.

Three faces of reality

There are similarly three concepts in Vedantha relating to what constitutes truth: Paramarthika, Vyavaharika and Prathibhasika. Paramarthika relates to the Supreme, Vyavaharika to worldly existence and Prathibhasika to the superimposition of the physical on the spiritual. These three are not at variance from each other. They are the same thing in three different forms like the ocean, the waves and the foam. The same coolness and taste that exist in the ocean are to be found in the wave and the foam. When you are considering matters relating to the world, you use the term vyavaharika. When you are considering experiences relating to the mind, you call them Paramarthika (concerning the Divine). When you consider matters relating to thoughts, you describe them as Prathibhasika. While the epithets are different, the underlying truth is one and the same. To know the nature of the Divine, the first step is to understand the social process. Starting with Parameshti (the Divine), you understand Srishti (creation) and become aware of Samashti (the society or community) and realise the role of Vyakthi (the individual). The process of understanding is an integral one related to each other. Without the individual there can be no society. Without society, creation has no meaning. Although different terms have been used in Vedantik parlance to describe the different levels of awareness, the entire understanding of this unifying process is that the individual proceeds from the social to the cosmic and then to the Divine.

The relationship between the individual and God should be properly understood. God is the Samashti (all-embracing whole). The individual has to

experience his oneness with the universal. This universal has been called the Vishva-Virata-Svaruupam (Cosmic form of the Divine). All the beings you see here are manifestations of the cosmic form. This means that all are inherently Divine. By obsession with the separateness of the individual, one fails to see his cosmic essence. Forget the ego in you and recognise your spiritual essence. It is attachment to the body that is the cause of man's loss of peace.

Man has explored everything in the external world but has failed to know his own true nature. As a result he has created Bhinnathvam (divisiveness). Once he knows his true self, he will have no feeling of divisiveness. He will recognise the oneness of all life.

Role of Sai sevaks

Why is this conference being held? In this context three things are highly significant. First, what should be the characteristics of persons in the Sai Organization? Their hearts should be cool like the moon. Their minds should be pure like butter. Their speech should be sweet like honey. It is only when you have a heart cool as the moon, a mind pure as butter and speech sweet as honey, will you be a worthy member of the organization. When these three qualities are present, there will be Divinity.

In the Geetha, Krishna advises Arjuna to give up all Dharmas and take refuge in Him. The Dharmas that are to be given up are related to the body and are the cause of innumerable worries. Sai love is the sure solvent for all these worries. (Bhagavan sang a Telugu poem describing all the different worries from birth to death to which men are subject). As long as you do not understand the workings of Nature, everything will be worry. But once you understand them, you will be always happy. That understanding will lead you to the awareness of Parameshti (Divine). Once the nature of the Divine is understood, all experiences will be blissful like the sweetness, of sugar which is present in different kinds of sweets.

Vedantha and science proclaim the same truth

Recognise that the Divinity that is present in everyone is the same. This was the truth proclaimed by Vedantha. Scientists are now coming to the same view through a different approach. The ancient sages proclaimed the omnipresence of God, many millennia ago. 'Ramadhas and Pothana also gave expression to this truth in their poems. Scientists are now declaring that the entire Cosmos is composed of energy. Some years ago, at a meeting in the Institute of Science, Bangalore, one scientist referred to" the 'age of the sun, giving a figure running into billions of years. The ancients referred to the sun as anadhi, meaning that its origin is indeterminate. By merely assigning a definite number running into billions, has science-made the fact more meaningful than what the sages said? Anadhi. (Beginningless) is a truer description of the age of the sun, than the scientists reckoning in billions of years.

The ancients understood the secrets of creation by seeking to understand the Parameshti (Supreme creator). Through understanding creation, they realised the truth about society and the individual.

Self-enquiry is the means to Self-Realisation. Self-enquiry reveals that you are not the body, the senses or the mind. You are their master. You are the Atma (Spirit). The knowledge based on the body is Bhouthika Jnanam (worldly knowledge). The knowledge based on the mind is sujnanam (rational knowledge). The knowledge based on the heart is' Atma Jnanam (Spiritual Knowledge).

We are one family

The most important concern of this conference should be how to enable members to realise the Parameshti (Divine). The first requisite for this purpose is good company. Good company is conducive to good thoughts. Anil Kumar referred to the "Latest God" in his speech preceding Bhagavan's discourse. This is a misconception. There is only one God and He .is eternal. Dr. Safaya expressed thanks for the gift of blankets by devotees from Korea. In spite of proximity to Svami over many years many have not understood Svami's teachings even on minor matters. When do you express thanks? You

thank a third person. But you don't thank your own people. When you go out for a dinner you express thanks to the host, but does anyone thank the mother for serving food? There are no "others" in 'the Sai Organization. We are one family. The 'Word "thanks" should not be used in the Sai Organization. It is purely a conventional expression, in the ordinary world. The member of a family who works for the family is different from a worker who labours for wages. Members of the Sai Organization should render service without expectation of any reward or recognition. Members of the Sai Organization should endeavour to improve themselves to some extent at least as a result of their participation in this conference. Don't bother about the past. Concentrate on the present. From now on, all of you should tread a sublime path. Don't give room for mutual jealousy, hatred or ill-feeling. Follow the role' "Help ever, Hurt never." Discourse to the Sixth World Conference of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organizations in the Sai

The fulfilment, of man's life on earth consists in filling himself with the love of God and channelising, that love into acts of service, service of all who are embodiments of God. There is really no 'other' no 'neighbour'. Everyone is oneself, for all belong to an indivisible whole. Service uplifts us, delights us, satiates our hunger, expands our horizons. Service to man is worship of God, in the one who gives and the one who gets, in the helper and the helped.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

34. Spiritual significance of loving service

Date: 21 November 1995 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: 6th World Conference of Sathya Sai Seva Organizations

EMBODIMENTS of Love!

A pure, unwavering, compassionate heart, truthful speech, and use of the body for dedicated service to others, are sublime qualities in a human being, says a Sanskrit poem.

Mankind has been engaged in the quest for Truth from the earliest times. Bharath is the birthplace of many sages who explored the realms of the spirit, discovered the highest truths and proclaimed them to the world. In more recent times others have been engaged in pursuing scientific investigations to discover a different set of truths. Whatever the truths discovered by science or spirituality, the ultimate reality is the energy of the atom. All that is perceived or experienced in the manifested Cosmos is the combination of atoms. The five basic elements are made up of atoms. The food you eat, the water you drink, the air you breathe, the sounds you hear are all expressions of atoms. The Cosmos is made up of atoms. It has taken science a thousand years (of investigation) to discover this truth. But many millennia ago, a young child Prahladha, proclaimed this truth. He told his father,

Do not have any doubts as to whether Hari (the Supreme Lord) is at one place and not at another.
Wherever you search for Him, you will find Him.

(Svami recited a poem from the Bhagavatham). Prahladha taught that the

Divine permeates the entire universe in the form of atoms. This omnipresence of the Divine was also proclaimed in the Geetha.

See the Divine in all

What pervades the entire universe is a manifestation on of the Divine Energy. To experience this omnipresent energy, certain spiritual processes have been indicated. One of them is to see the Divine in whatever you do, whatever you perceive and whatever you experience.

"Love and Service represent the same truth" (Telugu saying).

For man, love and service are like - two wings with the help of which man should strive to realise the Spirit. The quest for Truth really means discovering one's own inner reality.

This eternal Divine Principle is in one and all. To experience this Divine, one has to develop certain sacred qualities. Morality is a mark of a human being.

Truth is the rule.

Righteousness is the path.

Sacrifice is the glory.

These three are the hall-marks of humanity.

Mankind is distinguished by these three qualities. Man today has lost the spirit of sacrifice. Morality has been undermined. There is no concern for truth. He is lost totally in mundane pursuits, forgetting his divinity. **The Sai Organizations were set up to make people realise their true divine nature. What is the primary purpose of the Sai Organizations?** It is to make the people realise that they are sparks of the Divine and not embodiments of the physical products of Nature. The inherent divinity of

man has been clearly proclaimed in the Geetha. This truth is not the opinion of any person, subject to changes.

Spiritual value of service

Some of the speakers at the Conference have stated that Svami is bringing about transformation in individuals.

When does transformation take place? After a person has received information. Therefore, the first requisite is to get the information about the presence of the Divine Principle in all. The Sai Organizations have been engaged in propagating this "information." Seva (Service) is the ideal means by which this message can be conveyed.

You should all realise that the human body has been given to you solely to render selfless service. Such service broadens the heart, destroys the ego and generates bliss. Service also helps to promote consciousness of the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God. Your task does not end there. You have at the same time to propagate the idea of Ekatma-Bhavam (spiritual oneness of all mankind). Mankind has to be led from dualism to non-dualism. Arguments over the existence or non-existence of God are entirely futile and foolish, as Buddha pointed out. According to the minds of different persons, views and beliefs are bound to differ. **But irrespective of these controversies, the Truth is one. That Truth is God. Dharma is God. Ahimsa is God. Adhere to these three: Truth, Righteousness and Non-violence. Follow the path of Truth. There is no greater virtue than truth.** The truth you speak must emanate from the heart and should be filled with love. Where there is love there is truth. Stick to truth in whatever you do. This may not be easy. But through persistence truth will become a natural habit. Act according to the dictates of your conscience and not the promptings of your senses.

Love is the basis for all actions

Make love the basic impulse for all your actions. Share your love with others.

Be unselfish.

Self lives by getting and forgetting. Love lives by giving and forgiving.

Develop confidence in your self. Through self-confidence you can achieve self-realisation. The Sai Organizations have been enjoined to carry out a programme of ceiling on desires. Everyone should try to control desires as much as possible. The promotion of human values is another item in the programme. These human values are inherent-in every person. All that is needed is, for everyone to manifest them in his daily life. Truth, Righteousness and Peace are all in you. You are the embodiment of Truth, Peace, Love and God. Recognise this fact. Members of Sai Organizations should cultivate certain desirable practices. For instance, they should regulate their diet, because one's food influences ones thoughts. Smoking and intoxicating drinks have to be given up. They are ruinous for the health. Meat eating should also be given up because eating animal food promotes animal tendencies. The fourth evil that has to be got rid of is gambling. Those who take to the Spiritual path should avoid as much as possible these four bad practices. It is sinful to slaughter poor animals for one's food. Sai members should follow the motto,

Help ever; Hurt never.

There is no meaning in professing to respect human values without observing the rule that you should cause no harm to others in any form whatsoever. God loves those who serve others because He is in all of them. Whomever you may serve, consider it as service to God. Divinise all your actions. Treat every action you perform as God's work.

Love to love; heart to heart

Sai Organizations have not been set up for propaganda purpose. We do not need any publicity. Who invited all of you here? You came out of your love. It is an outpouring of your love for Svami. What is the nature of your relationship? Love to love; heart to heart. It is your love for me and my love for you, which has brought about this enormous gathering here today. You have to bear in mind yet another fact about our Organization. The services rendered by the Seva Dal to maintain cleanliness and security in the Nilayam Campus are beyond praise. They are true sevaks. In our seva organizations there are hundreds of thousands of workers who are rendering service of various kinds. The office-bearers should not feel that they are apart from the workers. All are workers. No one can consider himself a master. Service can assume any form. What a mother does for her child is service. A husband and wife render mutual service. In this sense all are servants. God is the only Master. All others who call themselves "masters" like post-master, station-master, etc. are not masters at all. In rendering service, see that you do it for the satisfaction of your conscience and not to impress others.

Treating service as an offering to the Divine, do it perfectly. Remember that God is watching everyone of your actions. Be your own watchman to scrutinize what you do. When you do everything to satisfy your conscience, you are well on the way to Self-Realisation.

Sadhana of overseas devotees

I am-well aware that our Sai members are doing excellent work. Without boasting about it, we can claim that there are no organizations in the world like the Sathya Sai Seva Organization. The way the sevaks have been serving food and water to lakhs of people is inconceivable elsewhere. Moreover, you have to appreciate the patience shown by overseas devotees. They are used to living in spacious houses with all amenities. Here they have been living in sheds adjusting themselves to the lack of many amenities. That adjustment is

an index of their devotion. The adjustment is itself a form of spiritual sadhana. Adjustment is possible when there is understanding. It is because they cherish the feeling, "Here is our Svami, our God," they are able to adjust themselves. This understanding is also a form of sadhana. Acquire this understanding and then act on that basis. Then you will experience bliss. There is no use merely going on reading books. Practising what you have learnt is more important than filling the mind with book knowledge. In our organization all are well-read persons who are keen to practise what they have learnt. You are all treading the path of Truth. The whole world is one. Respect all faiths alike. The world is like a veena with many strings. When the strings are in harmony, the world will be happy. All should behave fraternally towards each other. There should be no differences on grounds of religion. All worship the same God. No religion preaches hatred. Truth and righteousness are common to all religions. Adhere to them, Observe morality and integrity, in daily life.

Love for Svami is cause for transformation

Today everyone in Prasanthi Nilayam is living as a member of one family. Whatever your language, religion, nationality or custom, you feel as one here. This is great spiritual sadhana. No one brought about this transformation. It was an-individual transformation, each by himself or herself. How did they effect this transformation? Out of their love for Svami. That love accounts for this prodigious transformation. In the Sai Organization, because it functions in the work-day world, some regulations have been laid down. Rules and regulations are essential. First of all, whatever resolutions have been passed at this conference, they should be carried out whole-heartedly. All sorts of conferences are held all over the world. Resolutions are passed. But they are ignored after the conference is over. In the Sai Organizations, this should not happen. Having passed resolution, you must "pass" in it! You would have scored a "pass" only when you implement the resolution.

Therefore, you must carry out the decisions you have taken. That is the

meaning of discipline. Discipline grows out of devotion. Devotion stems from duty. Observe the three D's: Discipline, Devotion, Duty. This is true spirituality. In the performance of every duty there should be devotion. There should be devotion and not diversion!

Devotion signifies love. Love for the Divine is the only true love. All other expressions of love are merely attachments of one sort or another.

Love is God. Live in love.

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

This love should be considered Divine by people of every faith. Manifest your love regardless of how others behave.

Share your bliss with others

Cultivate this love. I am not concerned about the numerical growth of centres or devotees. I want only quality. Increase in quantity should be accompanied by improvement in quality. This is the service you have to render. The bliss which you experience should be shared with others. Do not violate the rules of the organizations. Thereby your love will grow. It is that love, which is responsible for your putting up with all inconveniences and discomforts. Develop the spirit of sacrifice.

Realise that true happiness consists in union with God. You need not wish me

Happy Birthday. I am always happy. I am a tank of happiness. Draw from it as much as you wish. Drink that water and sanctify your life. It was the thirst for Divine bliss that drew you here. Drink deep and experience that bliss. Live in peace in Prasanthi Nilayam, ignoring the attractions of the outer world. When you return to your respective countries, share your experience with your countrymen.

Enjoy the love I confer on you. It is totally free from self-interest. Receiving selfless love, make your love unselfish.

35. Cherish Bhaaratheeya culture

Date: 22 November 1995 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Convocation - 14

EMBODIMENTS of Love! Education lends beauty to man. Education is man's secret wealth. Education is the source of fame and happiness. It is the teacher of teachers. Education is the true kinsman for one going abroad. It is the third eye for man. Rulers honour the scholar more than the man of wealth. One without education is an animal. This is the message of Bharatheeya culture.

Life goes on whether a man acquires culture or not or pursues studies or not. But the life-span melts like ice from day to day. Even before he realises his duties, his life comes to an end. In the sphere of education, every thinking man is confronted with baffling problems. Educational institutions have forgotten their obligation to make education a source of strength and happiness in daily life. Educational ideals have lost their appeal. Education has ceased to be creative. It has become a destructive force. Respect and reverence are down in the dumps. Education has been commercialized. Students are more keen to make money by any means rather than to acquire knowledge. Educational institutions which ought to be citadels of morality, integrity, sacrifice and character, have cease to foster morality. Students don't make any attempt to develop good qualities, while cultivating friendships and participating in common activities. All associations without good qualities are valueless. Character is most important for a student. It is the essence of Bharatheeya culture. Without cultural refinement, can anyone hope to earn honour? Without morals, can you acquire the esteem of others? If you preach righteousness without practising it yourself, will anyone respect you? Without fear of sin, with sinful thoughts, you commit sinful acts. At least from now on, recognise the truth and live upto the name of sons of Bharath. It is not a good index of pure education, if having been born in Bharath, you do not live up to the ideals of Bharath and lead a mundane existence.

Bharatha Matha's lament

Students! Awake! This is not the time for slumber. Don't you see the tears Mother Bharath is shedding? Why is she shedding tears? Because her sons have forsaken the sacred path and are leading sub-human existence. Morality and integrity have been given up. To wipe the tears of Mother Bharath, every Bharatheeya should cherish the culture of Bharath. Every student should observe the three principles of equality, unity and co-operation. The nation is going to pieces because of the lack of mutual respect and unity. Education is not confined to reading, writing and listening. Degrees do not constitute true marks of learning. Without wisdom and spiritual knowledge, can there be real education? Education is not for earning a living but for leading the good life. All education which imparts worldly knowledge and develops intellectual activities without promoting character is utterly worthless.

Morality imparts value to human life

True education should promote morality, character and spirituality. Science and Technology are undoubtedly necessary for comfortable living. But there is an unseen power which underlies the physical world. Today students should acquire both physical knowledge for living and spiritual knowledge for understanding that which sustains life. The two together help to make humanness blossom. It is morality that imparts value to human life. Morality and Integrity are today confined to books. The heart is utterly polluted. Hands are engaged in selfish pursuits. This is the progress of modern education. (Thelugu Poem). Man has progressed in science and technology. But morality and integrity are going down from day to day. The immediate task is to promote moral values. There are ninety crores of Bharatheeyas, but few who will assuage the agony of Mother Bharath. Of what use are these myriad sons?

There was a time when Bharath stood out as the example for the world in holiness and purity. The ancient sages enthroned righteousness and gave the highest place of honour for the spirit of sacrifice. They adored justice and revered truth. In this way, they bequeathed to the nation its greatest cultural heritage.

Lessons of history of Bharath

Students! Recall for a moment the past history of Bharath. There is no record at anytime of Bharatheeyas having invaded other countries. Bharatheeyas always adhered to justice. They protected Righteousness. They esteemed truth as their life-breath. They took to arms only when foreign hordes invaded the country. Otherwise they never committed aggression on any country. Many foreign nations plundered the wealth of Bharath, but Bharath never coveted the wealth of any country, Not only did they loot Bharath's wealth, but they desecrated the sacred culture of Bharath. They created divisions between persons. They set at naught the sanctity of the plighted word. They undermined human relationships. It is because of these outrages that Bharath is in a deplorable plight today. Reflect for a moment on the glorious record of Bharath's past history. Bharath has always cherished noble virtues. Unable to recognise the purity, sacredness and spiritual heritage of Bharath, students treat it with levity. They consider it as uncivilized. This is totally wrong. Bharath has been the home of prosperity, morality, sacrifice and fraternity. But modern education has polluted all these qualities. Evils like corruption, dishonesty, injustice and falsehood were unknown to Bharatheeyas in ancient India. Today the people have become victims of exotic modes of living and have no respect for the transitional culture. Bharath has upheld the collectivist ideal as against the concept of individualism. Community singing of Bhajans was preferred, not individual singing. Collective action was promoted. The Vedas also glorified the collective spirit. It was Guru Nanak who initiated the practice of congregational bhajans. Students today should take a pledge to go to the villages and serve the rural populations. Most students soon after they get their degrees, either wish to go abroad or desire well paid jobs. Students should realise the importance of our villages and try to improve them. Money is not important. It is character that counts. The ancients attached value to the four goals of life: Dharma (Righteousness), Artha (Wealth), Kama (Desires) and Moksha (Liberation). They followed righteous means to acquire wealth and transformed their desires into yearning for liberation. Thus they gave primary importance to Dharma and Moksha. Today people have given up Dharma and Moksha and are pursuing only Artha and Kama.

Consider Dharma as the basis for everything

Students! Examine your hearts. Rectify your thoughts and earn money by moral means. Our ancients considered Dharma as the basis for the world. Today Dhana (wealth) is esteemed as the basis for everything.

The achievements of our ancients and the greatness of their qualities are beyond praise. Emperor Sibi was prepared to offer his own flesh to save the life of a pigeon. Many sacrificed their lives to protect the lives of others. Harishchandra gave up his kingdom and even his wife and son to honour his word. Students today do not cherish the lives of these heroes. The educational system should not be subject to changes according to changes in Education Ministers. Education, like Justice, should be free from governmental interference. Students should realise that what matters is not the religion they profess, but how far they are truly human in their life. They should realise the sacredness of their Motherland, Bharath. It is a name which is anterior to either Bharatha, Shri Rama's brother, or Shakunthala's son, Bharatha.

Five qualities represented by H-i-n-d-u

Foreigners should understand the precise meaning of the word "Hindu," the name which they associate with India. The five letters in the name of "Hindu" represent five qualities - Humanity, Individuality, Nationality, Divinity and Unity. Unity is essential not only for Bharatheeyas, but for the entire world.

Today students tend to migrate from villages to cities after their education is completed. Students who come from villages should stay on. in their villages and improve the quality of life of the villagers. Students should learn three essential things: Cultivate the company of the good. Avoid evil associates. Do ceaselessly meritorious deeds. Students should dedicate themselves to social service, striving always for public welfare. Social service leads to the ripening of wisdom. Wisdom is the source of good qualities. Develop good qualities and good conduct. Realise that service is the means to overcome the ego,

broaden the vision and promote love. Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached! Mother Bharath is shedding tears. Find out the cause, as Lava and Kusa did when they found their mother Seetha was in tears. They asked their mother: "Oh Mother"! Why are you weeping? Here we are, more valiant than Shri Rama. We can bring for you a Golden Mountain if you desire it." (Bhagavan sang a Thelugu song which was both sweet and deeply moving). The boys held her feet and declared that they would not leave until she revealed the cause of her grief. See what the children of Seetha, the daughter of the Earth Goddess, did to assuage the grief of their mother. Which son of Bharath today is trying to wipe the tears of Bharath Matha? This is deepening her grief. She laments: "'I have ninety crores of children. But of what use are they? They are not relieving a mother's sorrow.'" Mother Bharath's grief affects the whole world.

What Sai expects

The Motherland should be revered as divine. Only then there will be worldly peace. Make your studies useful to the country. Values are necessary for acquiring education. Education is for life. Life is for love. Love is for service to the nation and the world. Then there will be peace. Starting with values you end up with peace. There can be no peace without values (cheers). When students acquire education in this manner, they will promote the well-being of the country and the world. Students should take a resolve to develop their native places and make their lives meaningful. This is what Sai expects from you. This is what you should offer to me. Be good and make the country better. Be ideal students. Ensure security and prosperity in the country. Experience bliss by taking to the spiritual path. Discourse to the Fourteenth Convocation of Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning at the

36. Love and sacrifice will save mankind

Date: 23 November 1995 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Birthday - 70

The Embodiment of all forms ever tranquil, Bearing all names, ever auspicious, Shivam Sath-Chith-Anandha Ruupam, Adhvaitham Sathyam, Shivam, Sundaram More effulgent than the sun, Purer and whiter than snow, Subtler than the firmament, Immanent in all beings, There is no particle without the Self. The cosmic consciousness Is within you and you are the Brahman. What more can I tell you; The good people gathered here? EMBODIMENTS of Love! Sathyam (Truth) has manifested itself in the cosmos. Without Truth there can be no universe. Everything has emanated from Truth. "The lord created everything out of truth. There is no place anywhere without truth. That is the pure absolute self," says a Thelugu poem.

All wealth, all pleasures come from Truth. The Vedas, the Upanishaths and all scriptures have their origin in Truth. Truth is the proper abode of God. Truth and God are inseparable.

God is present in subtle form everywhere

Truth is God. The Upanishaths declare: "Raso vai Sah" (God is all sweetness). This means that God 'is' present in subtle form everywhere, like sugar in sugarcane and butter in milk. Although it is difficult to have a direct perception of God, His presence can be experienced in many ways. The sweetness in sugar, the sourness in lime fruit, the bitterness of the margosa leaf, all testify to the presence of the Divine. When you see a mountain or waterfall or a forest you feel happy. All these proclaim the presence of the Divine. Light shines, the stars twinkle, the sun blazes, the planets revolve in their orbits. All these-phenomena are manifestations of the Divine. By understanding the nature of a flame you can understand the nature of fire. By examining a drop of water you know the nature of the Ganges. Likewise by understanding Manavathvam (the true nature of humanness), you can understand Dhaivathvam (Divinity). Despite all the activities in which man is engaged from dawn to dusk, he has no understanding-of his true nature. He

identifies himself with the body,, the senses and the mind, forgetting that his true self is beyond all these. They are only instruments. Vedantha calls man to know himself. The insignia by Which a man is identified in ordinary life are not the indicators of one's true self. There are two entities in a man Dheha or Kshethra (the body) and the Dhehi or Kshethrajna (indwelling Spirit). To know the Kshethrajna is to know one's true Self.

The Trinity and the three gunas

In this human body, constituted by the five elements, God dwells in the form of the three gunas. Bharatheeyas adore the Trinity - Brahma, Vishnu, Maheshvara. The Trinity are not embodied beings. No one has ever seen them. Nor is it possible to experience them in any way. The trinity dwell in the human body as the three gunas: Sathva, Rajas, and Thamas. The three qualities are forms of the Divine. Brahma is responsible for creation. The process of creation is subtle and cannot be perceived by any of the senses. This transcendental process is taught by the mother. All are creations of the mother. Hence, the Upanishath declares: "Revere mother as God." The mother is to be adored as Brahma, the Creator. Revere the mother, serve the mother and trust the mother. This symbolises worship of God. Next comes the father. He protects the child, takes care of his upbringing and leads him to God. This protective function is attributed to Vishnu. The father symbolises Vishnu as the protector. Hence the injunction: "Revere the father as God." Thus the mother and the father are images of Brahma and Vishnu.

Then there is Eeshvara. He is called Bholashankara. He gives whatever one prays for. He never says no to any suppliant. Such an embodiment of truth cannot be hidden. To experience this embodiment of auspiciousness (Shiva), Thamas is the mean. The Thamasik quality is usually associated with slothfulness and indolence. But this is not the proper meaning of Thamas (as an attribute of Shiva). Shiva's role is to lead man on the right path to realise his divinity. The Trinity, in the form of the three gunas, are present in every human being, This is borne out by the scriptural aphorisms: "Eeshvaras-sarvabhuathanam" (the Divine dwells in all beings), "Eeshavasyam idham jagath" (the Lord is the indweller in the cosmos). When the significance of the

three gunas is understood, the nature of the trinity can be understood.

Body, mind and conscience

God is not somewhere outside. He is the indweller in the body. Sin is the result of one's own actions. Hence it is folly to seek God elsewhere. Man wants to know all about the world and ventures to explore outer space. But he is unable to know his own true nature. How is he to know his self? The self is called conscience. The spiritual quest means making use of the vibrations from the conscience to understand the truth. Today man follows only the body and the mind and becomes a prey to all kinds of troubles. Man has to discover his divinity. The answer was given by Rama in the Ramayana. Without troubling to find out where God is, it is enough if one worships the mother and the father who are the living embodiments of God. By pleasing and acting according to their wishes one can get their blessings. To ignore the deities who are directly visible, in the form of one's parents, it is delusion to search for an invisible God. Rama exemplified this truth when he told king Janaka that without the consent of his parents he would not consent to wed Seetha, although he had won her hand by lifting Shiva's bow. Similarly; when Bharatha and Vashishtha came to the forest to appeal to Rama to return to Ayodhya to rule over the kingdom, Rama firmly declared that he had to fulfill the pledge given by his father to Kaikeyi and complete his term of exile in the forest. Honouring the words of the parents is the highest virtue. This has to be observed by one and all. Brahma and Vishnu are therefore to be worshipped in the physical forms of one's parents. The two deities have no forms. The forms seen in the paintings of Ravi Varma are the products of his imagination. They have no basis in reality. The formless divine has to be experienced in the respiratory process which proclaims the oneness of the individual and the cosmic Self in the sound So-Ham. In breathing in with the sound 'So' and breathing out with 'Ham,' the life-breath is declaring: "I am God," "I am God."

Disastrous consequences of lust, greed and anger

For Bharatheeyas, the Ramayana, the Mahabharatha and the Bhagavatham are the most sacred texts. The Ramayana points out the disastrous

consequences of Kama (lust). The Mahabharatha teaches that Lobha (greed) brings utter disaster. The Bhagavatham shows the consequences of Krodha (hatred) towards God (Hiranyakashipu's example). The world reveres Rama but despises Ravana. Why? Rama is the repository of all virtues. He is described as "Sarva bhoothahithe rathah" - one who rejoices in the well-being of all living creatures. He was the fountain of all wisdom. He exemplified the quality of equanimity in all situations. Ravana was the embodiment of arrogance. His lust and pride destroyed him. Lust, greed and anger are demonic qualities. When Sathva, Rajas and Thamas are cultivated in the right way, they can help man to realise his higher nature.

Let your love embrace the whole world

Embodiments of love! You have supreme duty to revere the mother, and the Motherland. Wherever you may go or work, never forget the Motherland. Students today should follow the good teachings of our ancient sages and seers and lead ethical lives. "Let us live together, strive together, bear no ill-will towards each other." This was the message of the Vedas. Let your love embrace the whole world. Treat all man-kind as one family. All nations should be happy and prosperous.

You must realise that life is like a two winged bird. The two wings are Love and Sacrifice. With these two you must aspire to reach the supreme goal. What is that men should do to promote the welfare of society? People claim to render social service, but their motives are self-centred. On the contrary, they should be conscious of all that they owe to society and render service in a spirit of selflessness. They should recognise their identity with society. You should recognise your true spiritual reality and engage yourselves in helpful activities. Make service the badge of your life. In this conference, people from many countries have taken part. What is the foremost message of this conference? Rendering service whenever it is needed, you must be prepared to dedicate your life for service. You can become a leader only when you are filled with the spirit of service. Today you pray to a river: "Oh river! overflow with water." Don't pray to the river. Address your prayers to rain. When the rain responds, the rivers will get filled automatically. Likewise, when you

serve society as the Divine, automatically your desires will be fulfilled.

Svami belongs to you

Devotees expect all kinds of things as a result of their devotion to God. Today, on the seventieth birthday of this body, you 'have to take note of one thing. Svami needs nothing. Do not offer even a small robe. Svami belongs to you. He is not separate from you, nor are you separate from Svami. This is an inextricable relationship. Promote the well being of the backward and poor villages.

You must have listened to the list of offerings of gold ornaments by some devotees. What is the ornament for Bhagavan? Only bliss. Why cover Him with a shower of jewellery? A sculptor carves a beautiful idol. Why submerge that beauty under clothes, jewels and garlands? All these are artificial. Natural beauty alone gives real joy. Don't take the trouble to bring such ornaments. You should not entertain such thoughts at all. Let not the devotees feel otherwise. Bhagavan has told the central Trust to put up for auction on this stage itself all the ornaments given by devotees. The money raised thereby should be used by the Trust. These jewels should not be taken even to Prasanthi Nilayam. I have not sought anything from anybody. But I will be happy with any kind of service you render. Spend your money to help the needy. Assist in the provision of water. Meet the educational needs of the people and provide medical relief. Do everything for the good of society and not for the sake of an individual. Have the nation's welfare in your mind. In addition to jewels, offerings of money have also been made. All these funds will be used for the completion of the drinking water project. The water problem of Rayalaseema will have to be completely solved. This is a dry area. There is not enough water to drink. How can trees be grown in such an area? But without trees, the people cannot have a sufficient supply of oxygen. Water, therefore, is essential for life. I had been considering this problem for a long time. For health, the heart is important. For knowledge the head is important. For the body, water is essential. All these three should be provided free. They should not be commercialized. All these come from God.

Like oil for a lamp, Love is essential for life. Without oil or love, darkness will prevail. Render loving service to all. Recognise that the Divine is within you and you have all the potency for great deeds.

Serve Dharidhra Narayana

From today, our organization should grow from day to day and encompass the whole world. Set aside private interests. Let welfare of society be your primary concern. Wherever you may be, in whatever country or place, take part in the service activities there. Today devotees from 137 countries have gathered here. How much work is being done in these countries? That is the test. In all countries there are people who are hapless. They are embodiments of Dharidhra Narayana (God in the form of the poor). What need is there to serve Shriman Narayana? He has a host of persons to serve Him. You must serve the poor Narayanas, who have nobody to serve them.

"Your welfare is your gift to Me"

Sow the seeds of such noble thoughts, let them grow into giant trees and let people take shelter under them. This is the only birthday gift I seek from you. Your welfare is your gift to Me. Become exemplary persons. When you return to your countries from this conference, you must develop your centres without hindrance, from day to day. Make good use of the Divine Trinity in you. Recognise the Divine in your mother, father and preceptor and revere them. Develop the conviction that the Divine you adore, who is your favourite deity, is within you. That Divine is Sathyam, Shivam, Sundaram (Truth, Goodness and Beauty). Plato (the Greek philosopher) declared that Truth, Goodness and Beauty are God. Irrespective of the country, these three are the eternal verities. With these truths in your hearts, embark on service and bring a good name to Bharath.

Rayalaseema should be ensured water supply all through the year. Today it is a "Rallaseema" (a stony region). This region must be transformed into a "Rathnalaseema" (a region glittering with gems). This is the collective responsibility of the people concerned. Make yourselves into a garland and I

shall be the thread holding all the flowers together. Consider yourselves the children of one mother, belonging to the human family. Do not give room for differences of race, creed and nationality. All belong to the caste of humanity, the religion of love and the language of the heart. The same object, water, is called by different names in different languages. Likewise God is one, whatever the name that is used - whether Allah, Jesus, Buddha or Rama - have that faith. Don't criticize any religion. By developing this universalism, bring joy to Bhagavan. Many overseas devotees greeted me in the morning with "Happy Birthday." I am always happy. It is enough if you are happy True happiness consists in union with God. From today you have to take to a new path. You must spend your lives in harmony, co-operation and mutual esteem. See the Divine in all things. That is the source of true and lasting bliss. It can be got only through Love.

What is the happiest day in your life? All are happy days to a person of true knowledge. Happiness is an internal conscious experience which comes as an effect of the extinction of mental or physical desire. The less the desire, the greater is the happiness, so that perfect happiness consists in the destruction or satisfaction of all desires in the Absolute being.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

37. Treat patients with love

Date: 18 December 1995 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

The first message conveyed by Bharatheeya culture to the whole of mankind is this "Let all people live happily, in good health and cheer." It desired that no one should experience suffering or misery in this world.

Health is the English term for Arogyam in Sanskrit. The word health is derived from the Latin word "Healy." Arogyam has several meanings. One is sacredness. Another is Paripuurnam (Wholeness). The term thus indicates that all the organs of the body should be perfect and holy. If any organ is afflicted, the body cannot be said to be Whole. Hence men should aim at achieving perfect health and help others to do so. "Karmath Jayathe Narah Karmanyeva Prabodhathi." (Every man takes birth as result of past actions. Karma is the cause of death). Thus Karma is the cause of birth and death. Every action has an effect. In any action done by man, its consequence is present in a subtle form. Action thus is related to its fruits. Moreover, time is also related to action. Action and time are inextricably inter-related.

Time is measure of duration between two actions

Every action has its own Marga (course). One object is separated by space from another. Likewise, time is the measure of the duration between one action and another. Here is a tumbler. Beneath it is a plate. The space between the glass tumbler and the plate is termed Dharma. There can be no separateness between one object and another without this Dharma. Dharma defines the inter-relationships between two objects. Now regarding time: A doctor fixes 8 A.M as the time for performing an operation. By 11 A.M, the operation is completed with the stitching of sutures. The three-hour interval between the commencement of the operation and its completion indicates the time taken for the surgery. In reckoning time, action is also involved. Action is the interval between two points of time. Thus time and action go together. Hence everyone should recognise the intimate relationship between action and time.

Every action, whether good or bad, has its consequence. There is no action in the world which is devoid of consequences. This is law of nature. For instance, a finger is cut by a knife. Immediately the finger starts bleeding. The result of the cut is instantaneous. When man slips on a step while walking, he sustains a fall and a limb is fractured. Here again, the result of the fall is instantaneous. Take another example. You had your breakfast this morning. It takes two hours to digest the food you have consumed. In the two earlier examples the results of the actions were instantaneous. But in the case of digestion of food you have consumed, it has taken two hours. Another example: You sow a seed. It becomes a sapling after some days. To bear fruit it takes some years. Thus every action has a consequence, but the time interval between action and result varies from case to case. Bharatheeya culture recognized the truth about action and consequence. Others have also got to realise this truth. One who is aware of this truth is unlikely to commit any wrong action, because he knows that good actions produce good results and bad deeds have bad consequences. Recognition of the law of Karma will make men lead proper lives. Man today takes to wrong paths because they have not realised this truth.

Way to maintain heart in a good condition

Health is essential for the body. A healthy mind can exist only in a healthy body. Only a man with a healthy mind will take part in joyous activities. This conference is concerned mainly with the heart. Many consider the heart as the most important organ. There is a way to maintain the heart in good condition. Most of the organs in the body are in an immobile state. But the heart is continually active. It is difficult to perform an operation on an organ which is ceaselessly at work. If the heart has to be stopped beating for performing an operation, this cannot be done for more than two or three minutes. No operation can be done in such a short time. Hence heart specialists investigated the methods by which the heart could be kept inactive for a few hours so that cardiac operations could be performed. The heart-lung machine was designed to enable heart operation to be done. The heart is the primary organ for keeping the body well. Only when the heart is sound there can be proper blood supply to the whole body. Who invented the

heart-lung machine? It is a product of human, intelligence. This shows that intelligence is even superior to the heart. It is this intelligence that has been responsible for the discovery of numerous devices.

Recognise the relationship between time and action

It is by the use of intelligence for a practical purpose that doctors have found the technique of carrying out heart operations. The intelligence is as important as the heart. It is the combination of the intelligence and the heart that helps to keep a person healthy. A doctor may be extremely intelligent in performing operations. But if during an operation his mind wanders, the operation will not be successful. The combination of qualities required for success should be properly understood.

The relationship between time and action should be recognized. Modern man tends to ignore the consequences of his actions. Purely for the sake of worldly pleasures, he considers wealth as the most important thing. The Chinese were accustomed to a certain traditional practice. Every morning on waking up they used to remember the saying: "Difficulties are our friends; let us welcome them." Today people regard difficulties as enemies. Without difficulties you cannot obtain a comfort.

People consider, wealth as, essential for physical comforts and thereby become slaves, of wealth. As long as they remain slaves of wealth, they will have no respite from troubles. "Serve Bhavanthu Sukhinah. Sarve Santhu Niramayah" (All should be happy. All should be free from sufferings). If you are to pray in this manner, you must have these feelings in you. Dr. Bhatia urged that Svami should indicate to the doctors the right path and give them strength to pursue it. You are not lacking in strength. God has endowed you with strength, but you are not using it on right lines. Every human being is endowed with a divine energy, which has to be used for proper purposes. It has to be used righteously according to the dictates of one's conscience. When the conscience is satisfied the energy gets sanctified. Man today misuses the Divine energy for selfish purposes.

Duty of doctors today

Men should realise the sacredness of action and time. The presiding deity of Karma is allpowerful. Hence a prayer is addressed to the deity requesting him to see that one's actions are good.

The human race is called Mankind, because sacred feelings, thoughts and intentions are there in man. It means "humanness" is synonymous with kindness. The sage Vyasa wrote eighteen Puranas (sacred epics). Who has the time to read so many Puranas? Therefore, ruminating on this point, sage Vyasa declared the quintessence of these Puranas just in these words: "Help ever; Hurt never." This is the duty of doctors today. They have acquired valuable knowledge. This should be used for public good. The more it is used this way, the more it will grow. Always be prepared to serve a patient when he comes to you. It is a sign of weakness to turn away a patient on a plea of inability. You have the God-given power. Be conscious of your power. Doctors should recognise the importance of the five human values: Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Love and Non-violence. Love is the basis for all the other values. Doctors can infuse courage in patients by the love they show towards the patients. If doctors carry out their duties with love they will be crowned with success.

"Old is Gold"

In the discussion at the conference, several conflicting views were expressed by the participants. One of the issues was whether the latest technique should be preferred as against earlier techniques. Svami was of the view that the older techniques had much to be said in their favour. The older technique, though they may not produce quick results, are slow and sure. The latest techniques appear successful momentarily but their long term results are not always good. While the latest technique should be employed where necessary, the earlier techniques should not be rejected out of hand. "Old is Gold" The old techniques have the merit of proven value. A caveat should be said about heart transplant. The operation may be easy, but how easy is it to get a heart for transplanting? A transplanted heart may serve for a time, but

cannot serve as long and as well as the God-given heart. A word of caution has to be uttered with regard to heart transplant or transplanting the cornea for the eye. The character of the person from whom the transplanted heart or cornea has been got should also be taken into account. The practitioners of medicine in ancient times considered these factors in treating patients. The antecedents of families were fully examined in the past, before marital alliances were concluded. But today these factors are ignored. People are indifferent to family backgrounds, while they are concerned about the pedigrees of dogs in dog show! This indifference to lineage accounts for the breakup of many marriages after a short time. This should not happen. Marriage should be a life-long partnership.

Good thoughts are more efficacious than drugs

It is better to remedy the original heart of a patient than to try to replace it with another heart of a person whose antecedents may not be good. The heart is the most vital organ in the body. To keep it in a healthy condition, one's thoughts should be healthy. Good thoughts are more efficacious than drugs.

The doctors who have gathered here are estimable persons. They are broad-minded, gentle and kind hearted persons. You may receive fees from the rich patients. But you should treat the poor free. Dedicate one day in a week to render free medical service to people, irrespective of creed or nationality. Such service will give you spontaneous joy and enable you to experience the Divine. Make love the capsule you offer to your patients. When a weak patient comes to you do not be content with offering him glucose or some other thing. Give him the injection of love. That will give him instant strength. Speak to him with love, offer medicines with love and keep him in good humour. That is the way to make him happy. Happiness is union with God. Anything you do with love will be rewarding. The participants have stood for great ideals. Their experiences are beyond praise. As they related their varied experiences, it was thrilling to hear them. They are all experts in their field. Your presence at this conference and the encouragement you have given to our doctors are deeply appreciated. Symposia and conferences are held all

over the world. But at this conference everyone was deeply involved. Everybody experienced Divine vibrations wherever they met. I bless you all that you may return to your countries enriched by your experiences here and serve your respective countries well. Wish you all peace and happiness, which you should share with your people.

Valedictory address to the International Conference on Cardio-Vascular Diseases at the

Life is an experience meant to train the individual for a higher, deeper and more expanded state of existence through the experience of the results of action. The aim of everybody's life is the attainment of complete perfection in the spiritual Absolute.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

38. Realise God through Pure Love

Date: 25 December 1995 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Christmas

All the objects in this visible universe are Extremely beautiful, attractive and pleasing. The Divine is immanent in the entire cosmos. The cosmos is filled with love. The Supreme Self is the embodiment of love; Hence if love encounters love they merge; Hence if you develop your love You become eligible to achieve Oneness with the Divine. LOVE exists for love and nothing else. It is spontaneous and imparts delight. Everything is permeated by love. Love sees with the heart and not the eyes. It listens not through the ears but by the tranquillity of the heart. It speaks not with the tongue but out of compassion. Compassion, kindness and love are separate words which mean the same thing. Love has many synonyms. Love can emanate only from the heart and not any other source. Love is immortal, nectarine, blissful and infinite. A heart filled with love is boundless Just as rivers with different names and forms merge in the ocean and become one with it, love in many forms enters the ocean of the heart and gets identified with it.

True love has no beginning or end

Love can conquer anything. Selfless, pure, unalloyed love leads man to God. Selfish and constricted love binds one to the world. Unable to comprehend the pure and sacred love, man today is a prey to endless worries because of his attachment to worldly objects. Man's primary duty is to understand the truth about the Love principle. Once he understands the nature of love, he will not go astray. The various contexts in which the word love is used today have no relation to the true meaning of love. The affection, between a mother and child or between a husband and wife is incidental to a certain temporary relationship and is not real love at all. True love has neither a beginning nor an end. It exists in all the three categories of time - past, present and future. That alone is true love which can fill man with enduring bliss. One's thoughts, one's words and looks should be filled with love. This is divine love. One who is saturated with this love can never be subject to suffering. Men today are affected by praise or blame. But one who is filled with divine love transcends

praise or censure. He is unaffected by criticism or flattery. He treats alike joy and sorrow, profit and loss, victory and defeat. It is not easy to experience such love. It is easy to blame God but difficult to realise God. Men today prefer the easy path to the rough, one. They should realise that there can be no pleasure without pain.

The mission of Jesus

It was to teach mankind the greatness of divine love that Jesus came. His father passed away when Jesus was ten years old. Thereafter, with the permission of his mother, he embarked on his ministry of service to the people. He resolved on three tasks: one, to be filled with Divine love and to share it with others was the main purpose of his life; two, he should not succumb to praise or censure in carrying out his mission; three, to inspire in others the conviction that the Divinity within is omnipresent. Jesus considered spreading the gospel of love as his foremost task. He encountered many ordeals in carrying out his mission, but he regarded them all as challenges to be overcome. He was determined to treat pleasure and pain, sickness and failure with equanimity. He could not bear to see any one suffer. He was opposed to the traffic in birds going on in the temple in Jerusalem. The affected persons turned against him. But Jesus carried on, regardless of their hostility. In the end he sacrificed his life for the sake of others and out of his love for all.

Every human being is potentially a messenger of God. But, today, men have become messengers of the Lord of Death. They are traitors to their true human state. Humanness demands that everyone should manifest the Divinity within him. Everyone should be a real messenger of God and strive to promote peace and security in the world. There is no other path to be followed. God's message is sacred and totally free from self-interest. When Christ was born, three kings came to see the infant. One of them declared that the child would be a lover of God. The second one said that he would be the beloved of God. The third one declared that he was God. A lover of God is a messenger of God. The one whom God loves is a "Son of God." When one experiences both of these, he becomes one with God. "Father and Son are

one." Therefore, at the outset you must prepare yourselves to be messengers of God. This means that you should live up to the message of God. The message calls for service to all. Compassion, morality and integrity are essential elements in the message. In propagating this message faith in God should be promoted. Love should be the watchword. The absence of love gives rise to hatred. Today there is no unity among the people. Without unity how can there be bliss? Without bliss how can anyone experience God? Men should lead selfless lives. This may seem difficult. But, in reality there is nothing easier. It is selfishness that creates all kinds of difficulties for mankind. Selfless love will give no room for any evil. Unselfish love may meet with opposition from one's kith and kin and from worldly persons. But one should not be deterred by such opposition. Love should be cherished as one's life breath.

The elements and the Divine

It is essential to have faith in God. The five elements are manifestations of God. They are the earth, water, fire, air and ether (or space). In the earth God exists in the form of Prajna (Awareness). In fire, God is in the form of Jagratha-Swaruupa (wakefulness). The Vedhik warning is, "Be awake". In air, God exists as the Prana (vital breath). In ether (or space) God pervades it as the primal sound, Omkara. Every element thus proclaims the manifestation of one aspect of God.

All beings experience the presence of the Divine through the five elements, the five senses, and the five life breaths. Some may ask, "When the Divine is omnipresent and is in all beings, why is He not visible to us?" If investigation is made on right lines, God can be perceived. Some human effort is essential to get this perception. Just as the reflection of the sun can be seen in all its purity only in clear and still water, though reflections may be noticed in ponds, wells and oceans, God can be perceived only when the heart is pure and unselfish. How can God be expected to appear before a person whose mind is wavering and whose outlook is self-centred? The wavering mind will experience only a hazy figure. In a steady mind, God will present a clear image.

Mind is the cause of man's bondage

The mind, according to the scriptures, is the cause of man's bondage or liberation. The mind has three qualities: Thamas, Rajas and Sathva. The Thamasik quality makes the mind ignore the truth, pursue the false and impels man to indulge in what is unholy and improper. It is necessary to correct this tendency of the Thamo-guna. The Rajo-guna is responsible for a person living in a kind of dream-state and treating it as real. The Sathvik quality makes a person see good even in a bad person or object. The Sathvik person sees God in the whole cosmos and fosters the godly approach to creation.

Today people all over the world are racked by fears of various sorts. There is no peace anywhere. But people should not give way to despair. They should face the situation with courage, without bothering about the results.

Make love the basis for all your actions. The Gopikas prayed to Krishna to play on the flute and fill their barren hearts with love so that love may grow and ripen in their hearts. The love of God should be free from any desire for favours. God judges the devotee's love by the intensity of the feeling and not by the number of ways in which worship is offered. Love of God does not mean giving up your normal duties. In the performance of these duties, every action should be done as an offering to God - Bhagavath preethyartham (for the sake of pleasing God). Look upon the body as a moving temple, wherein God' resides. Recognise that God is always with you and around you.

Messengers of Sathya Sai

The Messengers of Sathya Sai are doing excellent work. They are helping to build dwellings for the poor in the villages. They also arrange for the marriage of poor villagers, raising the money from among themselves. Many old students of the Women's College (at Ananthapur) are living in overseas countries like Germany, U.S.A, Australia and Japan. It is an index of their devotion to Svami that they have come from these distant places for this

annual meeting of "the Messengers" at great expense. I asked the President of the Association why the members are wasting money in this way. Why should they not use it for helping some poor people in their places? Every trip costs about a lakh of rupees per person. Her reply was: "Svami! We are not concerned about the expense. We come to Svami to get our spiritual batteries recharged so that we may render, better service. Money comes in one way or another: But we have to develop our spirit of sacrifice. It is for this reason that we are coming here. Even the money we earn is not really ours. We are merely agents. We are a kind of trustees for our incomes." This attitude has to be appreciated. People should regard all wealth as coming from God to be used for sacred purposes. No one brings anything with him at birth and carries anything with him at death. All relationships in between are transient. Treat all alike. Even bad people will be transformed if you treat them with love.

Show love to those who dislike you also

St. Paul was an example of one who originally hated Christ but later became his foremost apostle. When you show love towards all, even to those who dislike you, God will love you. Then you become a "Son of God." You earn the right to inherit the Kingdom of God. You can become one with God.

Among the Messengers of Sathya Sai, consisting of men and women, it is the women who are carrying on more service activities. This is all the more commendable because of the handicaps they labour under as housewives with in-laws and others who dominate over them. Nevertheless they are persuading their husbands to come to Svami. This is true seva because they are converting sceptics to believe in God. The male old students have more freedom but are not equally zealous in rendering service. They should realise the true meaning of freedom, namely, carrying out the dictates of the Spirit. As a nation we have achieved freedom, but we have not achieved unity. Unity can be achieved only through love. This was the message of Jesus.

Make yourselves worthy of calling 'Sai Devotees'

Students! When you are observing today the birthday of a divine personality you have also to follow his teachings. You have to remember what constitutes the greatness of the person whose birthday you celebrate. We celebrate Shri Rama's birthday, but how many respect the words of the father as Rama did? How far are you prepared to sacrifice position and power as Rama did? People insist on rights to which they have no claim. How can they call themselves devotees of Rama? You should follow the ideals of Rama. What is meant by calling yourselves devotees of Sai? You have to foster love and develop unity. You must consider yourselves as members of one family, the children of one God. Only then you are entitled to call yourselves Sai devotees. Whatever others may say, do not bear any ill-will towards them. Welcome everything as for your good. The more you serve God, the more the bliss you will experience. Hence, fill your life with love, grow in love and end your life in love.