



Index Of Discourses

1. Pride and the fall	3
2. Revolutions, resolutions	8
3. Raam and kaam	12
4. The very breath	16
5. School for hypocrisy	19
6. A flower at His feet	24
7. My Reality Is truth, Goodness, Beauty (Alternative Translation)	29
7. The dead satellite	34
8. Stone as God, not, God as stone	38
9. The most profitable job	45
10. Beside, behind, before	52
11. The positive and the negative	62
12. The Inner Witness	65
13. The ripe fruit	69
14. Objective, not object	75
15. Guru God	82
16. Labels are libels	84
17. A prize to the prize-giver	88
18. The Arjuna attitude	94
19. Yaaga is Thyaaga	97
20. Whom to serve?	103
21. The Ganga and the sea	106
22. Light, love, joy	109
23. The crucial years	112
24. Lost and found	121
25. Recognise your Self	127
26. The seven-day sacrifice	131
27. Maaya and mayaa	133
28. The sword and the scabbard	137
29. My three	142
30. The commentary on the message	148
31. The ray of God	155
32. Re-conditioning man	158
33. Faults and failures	164
34. Questions answered	172
35. Truth of Truth	184
36. Feast of Grace	195



Sri Sathya Sai Speaks, Vol 10 (1970)

Divine Discourses of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

37. Amazing appendix	201
38. Rushing to the rescue	205
39. Bring me the pain	208

1. Pride and the fall

Date: 13 January 1970 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Conference of Mysore State Units

THE District Presidents read their reports of the developments in their districts and of the activities of the various Units in their jurisdiction; but, most of the reports were hurriedly prepared, without first-hand knowledge and many of them were padded in the last minute for purposes of presentation. Real sincere work is going on only in a few places in the State. You must have noticed Me, standing at the back of the shamiana (large decorated tent) in the midst of the delegates, and moving from one observation spot to another while the reports were being read.

There is a chair on the dais for Me, but I occupied it only for a short while; for My place is among you, with you and wherever work lies. That is why I moved among you and stood at your back. This is just to show you that, even in your own places, when you do bhajan or some other type of adoration, like serving children or the sick or the poor, I do not sit on a special seat, apart and distant. Do not believe I am on the pedestal that you offer Me; I am part of you, a partner and partaker in all your efforts, inspiring and instructing, when you ask or need inspiration and instruction. So, I know that most of the activities you reported now are shallow and nominal, not charged with genuine enthusiasm and faith!

Sadhakas must have no tremors of doubt

There is only one royal road for the spiritual journey - Love, love for all being, as manifestation of the same Divinity that is the very core of oneself. This faith alone can ensure the constant presence of God with you, and endow you with all the joy and courage you need to fulfil the pilgrimage to God. More than one report mentioned that Nagarasankeerthan (singing of spiritual music in the streets) has been inaugurated in various places. But, in a big city like Bangalore, this important sadhana (spiritual discipline) is practised only on occasions, that are far between! Some people are afraid of cynical criticism

by unbelievers, and therefore, are reluctant to move out in groups along the streets in the early morning hours, singing the glory of God! When you have the very Embodiment of Fearlessness installed in your heart, why should the slightest tremor of fear affect you? If others do not join, for fear of derision or ridicule, move out alone, singing the Name.

You came into this world alone, with no companion, isn't it? During the years of life, you collected all this kith and kin, you gathered wife and children, friends, and acquaintances who attached themselves to you. When you return to the realm from which you came, you enter the portals alone, with no one to keep company. So too, let it be with the journey called Nagarasankeerthan. Come into the street alone; collect kith and kin, if they come unto you; move with them, unconcerned and unaffected; revel in your own sweet solitariness; finally enter your home, in the satisfaction that your job is well done. Fellows may laugh at you as insane; but, this insanity is infectious and very soon, even the irreverent will be initiated into the fold. No organisation should have as its' office-bearers people who do not join the Nagarasankeerthan party. They must have no qualms, no hesitation, no tremors of doubt.

Sadhakas should become examples to others

Some persons suggested that the Presidents of these Organisations may be given a short refresher course of instruction, so that they may carry out their duties (of encouraging units to undertake sadhana and service) more efficiently. This is very much like the move to train whole-time archakas (priests) for performing worship in the temples! Imagine someone being trained for adoring God! It is not a mechanical process, amenable to the curricula and time-table of the classroom; it is a spontaneous urge from within, born out of sincere faith and yearning. If pujaris (temple priests) are to be trained to pray and adore, the suggestion may crop up tomorrow that God too should be given training so that He may respond and reciprocate in correct proportion!

Presidents and others are now in those positions because they are acknowledged by their people as virtuous, devoted and capable of doing

sustained service to their brothers and sisters. What can a course of instruction add to their spiritual height? This and similar suggestions raise their heads, because most of you have not grasped the very raison d'etre of this organisational set-up. The goal is not the proliferation of activities and centres, the multiplications of units, dotting the map with Bhajana Mandalis (Chanting groups) or Seva Sanghs (Service units), but encouraging sadhaks (spiritual aspirants) to become examples and inspiration to others. What is planned is 'inner individual reform and reconstruction' and not 'outer reform and rebuilding.' This is no game of word-building, where out of one big word a number of small three-letter words are derived and paraded! This is world-building where out of a large number of straight and sincere individuals the new human community is ushered in. The selection of office-bearers of these units should not be done for 'political' reasons - on the basis of the financial, business, social or official position which persons hold; that method will breed squabbles, jealousies and factions, such as those from which many units are suffering today.

Love must be unselfish and universal

Choose men and women who have unshaken faith in this present Avathar, with this Name and this Form. That will save the units from many complications later on, arising from loyalties which may dissipate or divert the energies of the office-bearers. The leaders of these units lead because they have the vision and the yearning, not because they have the votes or the purse. The ananda they derive is the only reward they are after. When men who have no understanding and no vision encroach into positions of authority, unrest and confusion usurp the saddle. Detachment, simple living, steady sadhana - these are the qualities that entitle a person to membership of these units. Give up; do not gather - that is the road to Grace. Abu Ben Adam found that the Angel had recorded his name in the list of those whom God loved, though his name was nowhere to be found in the register of those who loved God; for, he loved, not God, but men. That is enough to win Grace.

Love all as so many Forms of God

Fill the reservoir with water; then, when you turn the taps, the buckets will be full. Cultivate love and devotion; then your activities will be saturated with compassion. and charity; they will yield the golden harvest of joy and peace. The water must be pure; the Love must be unselfish and universal. You can yourself judge whether your Love is narrow or broad, whether your Devotion is shallow or deep. Are you content with your achievement? Examine it yourself - pronounce the verdict on yourself, by your own discrimination. Purity of motive is the best guarantee that you will have peace. An uneasy conscience is a tormenting companion. Righteous action will leave no bad effects, to disturb your sleep or health.

If there is righteousness in the heart, There will be beauty in character;
If there is beauty in character, There will be harmony in the home;
When there is harmony in the home, There will be order in the nation;
When there is order in the nation, There will be peace in the world.

So, be righteous; avoid all prejudices against others on the basis of caste, creed, colour, mode of worship, status, or degree of affluence. Do not look down on any one; look upon all as Divine as you really are.

The great evil that undermines the units of this organisation is pride and the jealousy that it engenders. When one person exudes the pride that he alone can sing Bhajans well among the group, naturally others develop anger, jealousy, hate, malice and such other deleterious traits. Love alone can root out the weed of pride from the heart. Love all, as so many forms of God, appearing in these various roles. A heart without Love is as dreary as a town without a temple. **Spiritual pride is the most poisonous of all varieties of pride;** it blinds and leads the person suffering from it into ruin. Beware of pride; be always aware that you are but instruments in My Divine Mission of Dharmasthapanam - Revival of Righteousness. Try to be more and more efficient as such instruments. The Hand that wields the Instrument knows how and when it has to be applied.

Men are born with a helpless lamenting cry; they should die with the smile of happy joy. That is the purpose of the years between. But those years are wasted now. God, who is the anchor that will save man from stress and storm, is neglected and ignored. Man is tossed about from one want to another, one grief to another, until he is blinded by despair and exhausted by foiled pursuits. Most illnesses are due to this despair and this exhaustion.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

2. Revolutions, resolutions

Date: 14 January 1970 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Sankranthi

CALENDAR makers calculate the years and declare that this Day is New Year Day, and that it is 5078 years after the Kali Era began! But, the lapse of time is to be calculated in proportion to the work accomplished, rather than the revolution of our earth around the sun. For each individual, there is a New Year Day, a day which marks the completion of his revolution round the Sun, that is to say, the awakened effulgent Intelligence, capable of conferring on him discrimination and detachment. Ardent seekers have sought the key to all knowledge, the One thing that, if known, all else is known, namely the Divine, that is latent in every atom of the Universe; they have described It as something that is beyond words, beyond the ken of human imagination and understanding. It is best, they have themselves admitted, that the Divine is pictured in the human form, so that man can easily comprehend It and approach It and derive Bliss out of that contemplation. Man can conceive only human qualities and human attainments, though he can multiply them to the maximum and allow the resultant quantum to fill and overflow his heart.

Indian culture will be alive and active

In other countries and other human communities, we have only one faith, one path, one object of adoration, one form of worship, that has sent down roots and borne fruits. This faith may be indigenous or imported, but, the people have learnt to assimilate it and are allergic to others. In India, on the other hand, there are, since ages, many faiths and many paths, reflecting all the urges of man which lead him inward and upward. Hence, there are manifold alternatives from which man can choose the one that suits his stage of spiritual growth and with his feet firm on that step, he can raise himself up to greater heights. Indian Culture is as the ocean, which has in it the waters of all the rivers, from all the lands, from clouds that roam across all the continents. The ocean that is the source and goal of all the rivers is the bed on which Vishnu rests! That is why Vishnu is the God that symbolises the universal aspect of the Divine Principle in the Universe as well as beyond It.

Rtham, rhythm or righteousness is the very breath of Vishnu, for, it sustains the stars, it stabilises society, it ensures advance. Vishnu is that aspect of the Trinity that is concerned with sustaining, fostering, stabilising, strengthening. So, Vishnu has to incarnate often in order to save and salvage the world. He has to re-establish rtham (right or righteousness, morality), so that the world may sail on an even keel and reach the harbour of Liberation, so that the world may be transformed into a Prasanthi Nilayam. India has the Himalayas, as her shield, as her armour as her crown. The range is the sign of majesty, of calm, of cool exhilaration, the call to the heights which man must climb. From the Himalayas have flowed over the land the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswathi, the trinity of (1) spiritual search (Ganga), (2) mental purification (Yamuna), and (3) intellectual clarity (Saraswathi). The Ganga never runs dry; it is pure, full, capable of destroying all the bacteria that bring disease. Indian culture will be alive and active, so long as the Ganga flows over the land; it can never run dry. It will slake the thirst of generations; it will confer the boon of immortality on those who crave for it.

Krishna is the humanisation of the Universal

Indian culture has laid down many limitations on conduct, many channels through which passion has to be directed, emotions to be diverted, impulses to be held in check. These serve to intensify the personality and free it from the slough of the senses. They regulate food, sleep, recreation, dress, conversation and the company one should seek. They ramify into every aspect of life, every stage of life, and every group of human society. The purpose is to broaden, enlarge and deepen sympathy until one's love reaches the outermost bounds of Creation. It is only when the principle of cohesion and community reigns and resides in the Universe that it can be termed Human. Krishna is the Humanisation of this Universal Eternal. When we picture Him in the midst of the cowherd comrades, sharing and eating His breakfast with them, laughing and joking, playing pranks and spreading joy all around, we feel the pang of kinship, which ultimately lifts us into the beyond. Where this comradeship is evident, there we have a spark of Divine Love. Wherever such thrill is evident, there one has taken a step over the frontiers of our individuality: One step at a time, correct and consolidated - that is the

way this pilgrimage should progress.

Arjuna prayed that Krishna should appear to him as a friend and comrade rather than as the Immanent Director, the Transcendent Sovereign, the Innate Substance of all that is, was and will be! He longed for the joy of kinship rather than the Bliss of Mergence. To conceive of the Divine as the inner core and the outer shell of every atom and planet, every speck of dust and every system of nebulae, as well as of oneself is an exercise that overwhelms individuality and so, Ramakrishna Paramahansa and others have prayed for the role of the adorer, rather than the abolition of roles!

Cleanse your hearts through pure habits

You sit before the idol and offer praise, the incense of worship, but you do not now try to grasp the significance of the Divine that you see in the idol. Inquire into the Will of God, discover the Commands of God, guess what will please Him most, and regulate your life accordingly. Let this be your New Year Resolution. Do not get caught in the sticky tangles of outer Nature. Do not harden your heart through greed and hate. Soften it with Love. Cleanse it through pure habits of living and thinking. Use it as the shrine, wherein you instal your God. Be happy that you have within you the source of power, wisdom and joy. Announce that you are unconquerable and free, that you cannot be tempted or frightened into wrong. So long as a trace of 'I-am-the-body' consciousness persists in you, you have yourself to search for God; you have to approach the mirror, the mirror will not proceed towards you, to show you, as you really are. Open the twin doors of lust and anger, remove the bolt of greed, then, you can enter the sacred precincts of Moksha (Liberation)! Greed is the monstrous evil that drags man down. When Ravana lay dying, Rama directed His brother, Lakshmana, to go to him and learn from him the secrets of successful statecraft! Ravana taught him that the king eager to win glory must suppress greed as soon as it lifts its head, and welcome the smallest chance to do good to others, without the slightest procrastination! He had learnt the lesson through bitter experience! Greed arises from attachment to the senses and catering to them. Put them in their proper place; they are windows for knowledge, not channels of contamination.

The Law of Karma holds out hope for you, as the karma, so the consequence. Do not bind yourself further by seeking the fruit of karma, offer the karma at the Feet of God; let it glorify Him; let it further His splendour. Be unconcerned with the success or failure of the endeavour. Then, death can have no noose to bind you with. Death will come as a liberator, not a jailor.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

3. Raam and kaam

Date: **01 February 1970** / Location: **Bengaluru** / Occasion: **Inauguration of Central Committee, Mahila Sathsang**

AT this critical hour in the history of the world, when the demonic forces of fear and anxiety, injustice and inequity are raging in wild fury, it is the duty of every human being to be equipped with spiritual strength, so that he may not be overwhelmed by the storm. This is an urgent and essential task, and I must say that the women of India have a contribution to make, a service to render, a role to play. They must bring God into the hearts of the child and help it to keep Him there. For, faith in God is the tonic that man needs to get back health and happiness. You may ask me, "Well. Who is God?" Before you ask this question, I would like you to ask, and receive the answer to another question: "Who am I?" This chance you have of a 'lifetime of mental and physical activity' is a letter encased in an envelope, which you have to drop into the red box, called Nature (the Universe, Creation); but, you have to write thereon two lines, about which you do not know a bit now! You have to write on the envelope, who you are! - your real address! And, more than this, where it has to go, which destiny this life has to attain, the address to which the envelope is to be delivered!

Sathsangs should practise what they preach

About life, the two fundamental questions are: From? To? And, for both, you have not discovered the answer, though you have grown to be pretty quick in asking a thousand other irrelevant questions! I am sure this Sathsang (good company) will gradually shed light for you on these two problems. Now, a word about this Sathsang. Let the Sathsang start with your homes. Let the home be harmonious, happy, smooth running, with no friction or faction. Let the various individuals comprising the home, the different generations and levels of intelligence, growth and attainments living together, let all learn to live together, with understanding and sympathy, fortitude and forbearance, in mutual co-operation and loving kindness. Let peace reign in your homes, between the mother and her children, the brothers and sisters, the kith and

kin.

On the secure foundational Sathsang of your family, you can build the superstructure of Sathsang in the Community, the State, the Nation and the World. When that foundation is absent, you will only draw down ridicule when you initiate publicity for the Sathsang idea. There are already many organisations, which preach what they do not practise; there must be one such in every street! This Sathsang should not degenerate into one more such hypocrisy! Religion has as its aim the removal of hatred and enmity between the children of God; but, we find religions engaged in conflict! Language is the medium to cement friendships, to promote cordiality and bring people nearer each other by loving conversation and sympathetic talk; but, it has become a morbid weapon! Temples are not the abodes of peace: they are institutions for which people engage in combat! Brother fights against brother. Every home is a battlefield! The dawn of peace can be brought about only by learning, practising and teaching the art of living together in peace and amity in the homes. Then, peace in the world can be established, without delay and travail.

Women should develop forbearance

Your Sathsang has to grow, through mutual adjustment of temperaments. It is possible to have an organisation with hundreds of gents as members or workers. They know how to work together as a team. But, women are proverbially too individualistic! There is a popular belief, born out of folk-experience, that three women cannot live in unison! There is a Thelugu limerick, which says, "The world shivers before one woman. The Ocean will dry up, if there are two! And, if they are three, O, the stars will drop down at noon!" Why is woman so characterised? Woman is extremely deficient in Sahana by Sahana, I mean, ability to bear defeat, fortitude, forbearance, patience, quiet suffering with no thought of retaliation. That is why woman is said to be of the weaker sex. This is a pointer to the need for women developing their forbearance. You must try to put up with difference of opinion and variety of temperaments, develop understanding and sympathy. That will strengthen Sahana. Among the members of this Sathsang, there are

some who have long experience in running organisations and institutions with efficiency. But this is the basic institution! You should never forget the fundamental of Bharatheeya (divine devotional) culture. Let children imbibe these, while on your laps. Do not hand them over to Ayahs (nurse maids), who do not know the culture or even care for it. Let them learn the lessons of the Ramayana, through nursery rhymes; let them not cram lines like Ba! Ba! Black Sheep!, and become black sheep, themselves!

Keep Ram in the heart with task in the hand

Cultivate the spirit of service and engage in some programmes of service in the slum areas of this City, and in the jails and hospitals. Have compassion towards the prisoners; that is the best method of rehabilitating them. Let them grow in faith, faith in the goodness of mankind. Then they will not engage themselves in anti-social activities. The child is not disgusted with dirt, its own urine and faeces. But, while growing up, the disgust is developed and stays. So too, the criminal will outgrow his callousness and learn to be disgusted with his own behaviour. The patients in hospitals who have no one to speak a kind, reassuring word to them, will be tearful with gratitude if you carry the light of compassion to their bedsides. Write letters for them, if they desire to communicate with those near and dear to them; tell them stories; give them good books to read; give them fruits and flowers. Brighten their surroundings a bit, shower smiles over them. That will itself be a valuable drug which will hasten recovery. Social service should not become show-cial work(!) carried out for publicity or with the camera in view. Nor should it become slow-cial(!) work. Why go slow, when you are doing good to the deserving? Do as much as you can, as quickly as you can. If you cannot do any good, at least desist from doing harm; or from finding fault with those who serve you. Know that seva is a better form of sadhana (spiritual effort) than even dhyana; how can God appreciate the dhyana (meditation) you do, when adjacent to you, you have some one in agony, whom you do not treat kindly, for whom you do not make all efforts to help? Do not keep yourself apart, intent on your own salvation, through japa or dhyana. Move among your sisters, looking for opportunities to help; but, have the Name of God on the tongue and the Form of God before the eye of the mind. That is the

highest sadhana. 'Dhil me Ram! Hath me Kam!'- - Ram in the heart! Task in hand! Proceed in that spirit. God's Grace will be showered on you, in full measure.

From the standpoint of wisdom, maya is unreal; in the vision of the enlightened saint; maya is absent. It is a peculiar, anirvachaniya (indescribable) phenomenon. To the jnani, who has crossed the shores of change and difference, it is non-existent; to those relying on reason, it is inexplicable; to the ordinary man, it is a fact.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

4. The very breath

Date: 19 February 1970 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

THE nine steps in the pilgrimage of man towards God along the path of dedication and surrender are: (1) Developing a desire to listen to the glory and grandeur of the handiwork of God and of the various awe-inspiring manifestations of Divinity. This is the starting point. It is by hearing about the Lord again and again, that we can transform ourselves into divinity. (2) Singing to oneself about the Lord, in praise of His magnificence and manifold exploits. (3) Dwelling on the Lord in the mind, revelling in the contemplation of His Beauty Majesty and Compassion. (4) Entering upon the worship of the Lord, by concentrating on honouring the feet or foot-prints. (5) This develops into a total propitiation of the Lord, and systematic ritualistic worship, in which the aspirant gets inner satisfaction and inspiration. (6) The aspirant begins to see the favourite Form of God, which he likes to worship, in all beings and all objects, wherever he turns, and so, he develops an attitude of Vandhana (reverence) towards nature and all life. (7) Established in this bent of mind, he becomes the devoted servant of all, with no sense of superiority or inferiority. This is a vital step, which presages great spiritual success. (8) This takes the seeker so near the Lord that he feels himself to be the confidant and comrade, the companion and friend, the sharer of God's power and mercy of God's triumphs and achievement, His sakha, in fact, as Arjuna had become. (9) As can be inferred, this is the prelude to the final step of total surrender, or Atmanivedanam, yielding fully to the Will of the Lord which the seeker knows through his own purified intuition.

Look upon all as limbs of your own body

You will note that the seventh step is dhasyam (the servant stage). That is the stage of service, which every person calling himself a social worker, or volunteer, or sevak has to reach. It is more fruitful than reciting the Name or counting beads, or spending hours in meditation, though one's service will be richer and more satisfying if done on the basis of spiritual discipline. You must look upon all as limbs of your own body, and just as you try to heal any bruise

or wound on any limb as quickly and as efficiently as possible, you must heal the woes and pains of others to the best of your ability and as far as your means allow. The Lord is now worshipped by offering Him all things that you crave for, by treating Him with all the honour you like to be done to yourself. The idol is bathed and washed, bedecked with jewels, fed and fanned, surrounded with fragrance, etc., since these are things you desire. But, the Lord is pleased only when you do things the Lord desires! How else can you win His Grace? How else than by nursing and nourishing, succouring and saving His children? How else than by helping them to realise Him, as their Lord and Guardian, and cultivating faith in Him, through your own straight and sincere living? Seek both outer and inner cleanliness. One of the first principles of straight living is: Practise silence. For the Voice of God can be heard in the region of your heart only when the tongue is stilled and the storm is stilled, and the waves are calm. There will be no temptation for others to shout when you talk to them in whispers. Set the level of the tone yourself: as low as possible, as high as necessary to reach to outermost boundary of the circle you are addressing. Conserve sound, since it is the treasure of the element Akasha (space), an emanation from God Himself. Reason can prevail only when arguments are advanced without the whipping up of sound. Silence is the speech of the spiritual seeker. Soft sweet speech is the expression of genuine Love. Hate screeches; fear squeals; conceit trumpets. But, love sings lullabies, it soothes, it applies balm. Practise the vocabulary of Love; unlearn the language of hate and contempt.

The second sign is cleanliness: not outer cleanliness alone, but, even more, inner. You cannot be fresh and feeling fine, wearing a washed vest under an unwashed shirt; or, an unwashed vest under a washed shirt. Both have to be clean to provide the sense of tingling joy. So too, outer and inner cleanliness have both to be sought and won. In reality, the outer cleanliness is but the reflection of the inner achievement. There is a strange glow on the face of a guileless person. Inner cleanliness has its own soap and water - the soap of strong faith and the water of constant practice.

The third sign is that the true aspirant will have a reverent attitude to the duty he is bound with. He will carry out every task assigned to him as if it is

an act of worship by which the Lord will be pleased, through which he can approach the Pedestal of God. Duty is God; Work is worship - that is the motto. Worship is not a uniform to be put on and off, at stated hours of the day. Render every thought into a flower, worthy to be held in His Fingers; render every deed into a fruit, full of the sweet juice of love, fit to be placed in His Hand; render every tear holy and pure fit to wash His Lotus Feet. The Symbol on the Flag at Prasanthi Nilayam is a reminder of this ideal, which you have to put into practice. It is the symbol of Victory, achieved by steady endeavour over the diabolic foes of lust and greed, of envy and hate, of malice and conceit. It is the symbol of the silent state of supreme Bliss, won through self-control and self-realisation. Do not judge others, to decide whether they deserve your service. Find out only whether they are distressed; that is enough credential. Do not examine how they behave towards others; they can be certainly transformed by Love. Seva (Service) is for you as sacred as a vow, a sadhana, a spiritual path. It is the very breath; it can end only when breath takes leave of you.

Butter is in every drop of milk; chicken is in every part of the egg. So too, God is in every, part of the Universe. He is the strength; He is the substance; He is the sustenance.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

5. School for hypocrisy

Date: **02 March 1970** / Location: **Venkatagiri** / Occasion: **Bangarpet High School**

WHAT is a school for? To make man human. Man has in him certain specific attributes which have to be developed and fostered, so that he can rise up to his full stature. If these are ignored or allowed to lie fallow, he exists on the animal level only. Discipline alone can make him grow into his heritage. The animal can be transformed by training to behave like a man. The teacher is the most important asset of the school. Brick and mortar do not make a school efficient and useful. Nor are books in the library or appliances in the laboratory, so essential. The teacher makes the school or mars it. He is all the books you need; he is the most desirable appliance. He shapes the manners, behaviour, attitudes and even prejudices of the pupils under his care. So he has a big responsibility. The teacher dedicates himself to a great sadhana, when he enters upon this profession. He has himself to be what he advises his pupils to be. The tender minds in the classroom are easily moulded by his example. If the teacher speaks against smoking, he has to give up smoking; if he insists on punctuality, he has to come to the classroom on time. He is under rigorous scrutiny, all the time. Any misdemeanour of his, becomes the talk of the town; it is discussed during dinner in a hundred homes the same day. He has to be circumspect all the hours of the day.

Obedience to discipline should come automatically

Patient effort and steady persistence are indispensable for teachers. Their work is of basic importance to the nation. Children's minds are innocent, tender and pure. The snake gourd is apt to grow crooked, if left alone. So, gardeners tie a stone to its end and the weight pulls it straight, as it grows longer and longer. The minds of children and of youth too are apt to grow crooked, under the influence of the sensuous films, the hollow hypocritical atmosphere created by the elders, the lure of glitter and glamour and of a false sense of adventure and fame. So, schools have to attach the stone of discipline and make them grow straight and true. The stone should not be too heavy, lest it snap the gourd in two! Avoid extremes, at all times, in all cases.

Disciplinary rules have to be well thought out and adapted to the age-group they wish to correct. The atmosphere must be so charged that obedience to discipline comes automatically, with full heart. Such discipline will shape good leaders for the nation. Unlike the present generation of leaders, these can inspire and guide the people along fight lines. They have also to be good followers; fine soldiers make fine generals. Young apprentices of peace become pillars of peace, champions of peace. Regulate the food habits of the children; food determines to a large extent health and intelligence, emotion and impulse. Set limits to the quality and quantity of food, as well as to the number of times it is consumed and the timings. Recreation too has to be moral and elevating, in the company of the righteous and God-fearing. The real purpose of schooling is ignored now by parents and teachers. Parents wish that their sons and daughters must secure a University Degree, by hook or crook, because it is a status symbol. Teachers wish that a high percentage of their pupils must pass the examination, without giving them any bother while teaching, or while not teaching! Each student is precious trust, so far as the teacher is concerned. He should be quite honest, in the execution of his duties, for, his example has such influence on the class.

Students should be asked to practise silence

Let me mention now one point, which though it might look small, has profound repercussion on your attitude and on the boys. When the teacher goes through the roll-call, with the attendance register before him, he does not call out the name of each boy! He uses numbers. And they respond, with 'yes.' Call out the names, for numbers hide and neglect their specific individualities; they mould them into dead uniformity. They are not prisoners or policemen who have to suppress their individuality and get known only by numbers. Prayer is a good item to be included in the time-table. Silence is invaluable and pupils can be asked to practise it. See that they do not get too agitated or depressed. The pendulum will start to swing only when the clock is keyed up. Let them keep their desire under control; do not key them up. Elders, politicians, leaders, and teachers should not inflame their passions, and enslave them to anger and passion, as they are doing now, for every provocation and at every turn. I love students; I pour out Love and Grace on

them. They should not run out of the class rooms behind politicians, who entice them to enter the active field of agitation. When you clamour for rights you must lend your shoulders to carry the obligations too. Finish your studies; develop the skill to distinguish between what is good and what is not, and then, plan out ways and means to secure the good and avoid the evil. Instead, if you plunge into the streets behind the leaders who use you for their ends, you are harming your careers and harming politics too. And, imagine the agony of your parents who build castles of hope and live precariously, so that their children may learn and earn.

Both teachers and students deceive the public

Teachers are concerned now only with the percentage of passes; so, they teach only answers to questions, which according to their guesses will appear at the examination. It is all a gamble. Subjects in the curriculum are not taught, fully and well. The pupils forget what they have crammed for the occasion; they are none the better, even if they are declared 'passed.' Their brains become empty once they have poured out the contents on the answer papers. Subjects of study are prescribed with adequate syllabuses, because they are useful equipment; they train processes of thought, they help in learning further. That is why they are included in the curriculum and when the degree is conferred, everyone believes that the student is the master of those subjects. So, teachers deceive the public, if they do not teach the entire subject, and students deceive the public if they do not get the subject imprinted on their minds, ever available for use.

Encourage the students to write to their parents about the school and their progress; the parents must be kept in touch with the teachers and the teaching process, and the condition of the school. This will help correct defects in time and to the full. Another suggestion' Do not keep the young idle and unoccupied. Every second is a precious gift. Time well used is like food well digested. It sustains and strengthens.

Avoid the sad feature of mass convocations

Parents must observe rules strictly, themselves. Take the case of an engineer belonging to the Scheduled Caste, whose sons are in college. The son is entitled to a scholarship only if the father has an income of less than 3,000 rupees a year. The father tries all kinds of hicks and finally gets an M.L.A. to tell the college that the rules do not apply to this case! The son may get the scholarship but what a lesson in morals! Students have to be taught the equality of all faiths. I am arranging the staging of a play at the Sathya Sai Arts and Science College for Men at Kadugodi, a play based on the Mahabharatha incident, where Aswatthama slaughters the infant children of the Pandavas. In that play, the role of Krishna is played by a Muslim; Bheema and Arjuna are Christians. Each one of us is playing a role in this Grand Drama, some as Hindu, some as Muslim, some as Christian. Whatever the role, the individual has to appear in the appropriate costume, repeat the lines, gesticulate, and make entrances and exits as directed. If a school has poor discipline, if its students are led away by self-seekers, into the wilderness, the fault lies on the parents, the elders and the Committee of Management. The Committee, often is only a 'Come-for-tea' affair! I suggest that convocations be held in each college to distribute the Diplomas to the candidates who pass out of that College; this will avoid confusion at the mass convocations, a feature that saddens every one. Friends and parents can attend these mini-convocations and cheer them.

Quality and not quantity should be the goal

You know that you can draw cheques upon a bank, whenever you need money, provided you have enough current deposit therein. If the bank goes bankrupt, it will be a disaster. The educational system is the bank, on which the nation draws a cheque whenever it wants strong reliable skilled workers. If it goes bankrupt, as it has very nearly gone today, it is a national disaster. If the system is overhauled and lubricated, the next generation is assured of good leaders and, what is equally essential, good followers. I shall tell you one incident that happened at the Sathya Sai College, so that you can picture the kind of change I welcome. At the Public Examinations held at the College, which is one of the Centres, the moment the candidates got the question papers, all the examinees stood up together. The invigilators were surprised

and some of them were struck with fear, that perhaps, they were trying to create a scene and protest against the paper and the setter! But, they stood up, only for a minute of silent prayer, a very ennobling and purifying habit! Colleges should not compete with each other in the number of students on the rolls. Quality and not quantity should be the goal. A small number ensures greater individual attention, more intense discipline, better teaching and deeper learning.

6. A flower at His feet

Date: 04 March 1970 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

I HAVE told you about the ideals and technique of seva (selfless service), often times before and I am calling upon you once again to experience the joy thereof. I need not dilate again on the special nature of the opportunity that is now offered to you here. Render your hearts cool with delight; share the delight with others; adore God in this delectable form. When you go into the qualifications needed for seva, you will know that a pure heart - uncontaminated by conceit, greed, envy, hatred or competition is essential; also, faith in God, as the spring of vitality, virtue, and justice. Seva is the worship you offer to the God in the heart of everyone. Do not ask another which State you belong to, or which caste or creed you profess. See your favourite Form of God in that other person; as a matter of fact, he is not 'other' at all. It is His image, as much as you are. You are not helping some 'one individual'; you are adoring Me, in him. I am before you in that Form; so, what room is there for the ego in you to raise its hood? Duty is God; Work is worship. Even the tiniest work is a flower placed at the Feet of God. Approach the pilgrims who come here for the Festival with a heart filled with treasure of Love.

Every kind of service is an act of worship

Do not put the badge in your pocket when your work here is over and the festival is finished, and when you leave for home to resume your old avocations and your discarded habits. This is not a three-day thamasha (show). This is a life-time's pilgrim march. The badge must get inscribed on the heart, indelibly, for life. Wherever you see a sick person, a dispirited, disconsolate, diseased person, there is your field of service. Every blood cell, every nerve, must tingle with Love, with eagerness to share that Love with the forlorn. When Love has filled the heart, it has really been transformed into Divinity, for, God is Love and Love is God. It is this Love, and the compassion that flowed from it that made the great saints of India and of other countries, like Kabir, Tukaram, St. Francis, Ramakrishna, immortal. There are people,

at the Nilayam, who have been here for 20, 15, 10 years and such long periods, but, only their bodies have grown older; their seva yearning has not grown. Life at the Prasanthi Nilayam must deepen faith in the seva path to salvation. It is the attitude that is essential. The particular item of service might be small. You may not get a chance to partake in some gigantic scheme of service through which millions may be benefitted; you can lift a lame lamb over a stile, or, lead a blind child across a busy road. That too is an act of worship. A copy of the Geetha may be available for twenty-five paise; a puerile novel may cost ten rupees. Which is more worthwhile? Which can transmute base metal into gold? Seva is more fruitful than japa, dhyana, yajna and yaga, usually recommended for spiritual aspirants. For, it serves two purposes: the extinction of the ego, and the attainment of anandha (bliss). When someone sitting near you is sunk in sorrow; can you be happy? No. It may be that a baby weeps within hearing, most pathetically. You will get tears in your eyes in sympathy. Why? There is an unseen bond between the two. Man alone has this quality of sympathy; he alone can be happy when others are happy, and miserable when others are miserable. That is why he is the paragon of creation, the acme of animal advance. Man alone is capable of seva; that is his special glory, unique skill.

You can serve God, only by serving man

Before the festivals of Dasara, birthday and Shivarathri, every year, I am exhorting you to take up the vow of seva as a spiritual sadhana. I must say that I am not satisfied with your performance yet. But, I have not given up instructing you and commissioning you for I am hoping that you will catch up with the ideal some day or other. This is an example of the quality of mercy that is natural to Me. That quality makes Me appreciate even the little attempts you make to practise the ideal of seva. Why have you come such long distances, braving all the expenses and troubles of the journey? To be in My presence and to win My Grace, isn't it? Why then do you seek other contacts, others' favour, once you have reached this place? Why fall into grooves that deny you My-presence and grace? Forget all else, and stick to the orders that I give; I want only to initiate you into the spiritual path of seva and love. Do not be ashamed that you have been asked to watch a heap of

sandals, or carry water to the thirsty, or stand at the gate. The privilege and pleasure consists in the use to which you put your skill and time for helping others. You long for serving Me. Let Me tell you, serving those who serve Me gives Me as much satisfaction as serving Me. Serving anyone is serving Me, for, I am in all. The relief and joy that you give to the sick and the sad, reach Me, for I am in their hearts, and I am the One they call out for. God has no need of your service; does he suffer from pain in the legs, or ache in the stomach? Try to serve the godly; be dhasanudhasas - servant of the servants of the Lord. The service of man is the only means by which you can serve God.

Serve the people with humility and efficiency

Everyone of you has, I know, the yearning to do Fadhasava (fondly massaging My feet). And, if I give the chance to all who are anxious to get it, what will happen to My feet? And, what a rush there will be around Me! In the very nature of things, all those who yearn cannot be satisfied. But, know My feet are everywhere. Sarvathah pani padham - "In all places, His Hands, His Feet" says Geetha. The Purusha Suuktah of the Vedas says: Sahasra Seersha, Purushah, Sahasrakshah, Sahasrapadh - "The Supreme Sovereign Person has a thousand heads, a thousand eyes and a thousand feet." The heads, eyes and feet of the thousands who gather here, are My Heads, My Eyes and My Feet. Nurse them, respect them, attend to their needs - you have done your japam, dhyanam, and puuja! The manthra says, Sarva dheva namaskarah Keshavam prathi gachchathi - "The homage that you pay to all the Gods flows towards the One only, Keshava." I would elaborate it further and give you this new manthra: Sarva jeeva namaskarah Keshavam prathi gachchathi - "The reverence, the service that you offer to every single being (jeeva) flows automatically to the One, namely, Keshava." What does Keshava mean? It means the Supreme Godhead, whose one hair represents the Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva - the Creative, the Conserving and the Disintegrating potencies of the Divine. Serve the people who will gather here, with love and intelligence, humility and efficiency. Then, when they return to their villages, they will tell their kith and kin, "The people we met at Prasanthi Nilayam treated us much more lovingly than any close relative; they seated

us in the shade; they came to us often to inquire about our health; they brought the doctor to us; they gave medicine when someone was ill; they spoke soft and sweet, whenever we asked for some information."

Respect everyone, no one is small or low

The badge does not endow you with authority to boss over those who are badgeless. It should not be insulted by harshness, pride or persecution. Once you have been blessed by it, you should not indulge in loose talk, or loose living, lewd behaviour, or evil habits like smoking, gambling, drinking and scandalising others. You cannot attain positions of leadership, if that is your ambition, without years of sincere seva to the people. Unless you build your career on that foundation, leadership will be but a five-year fair! Let me tell you some details of the seva you can do here: See that old persons and the sick do not sit in the hot sun; supply drinking water, without fuss, to all who need it; watch out for unsocial elements and pick-pockets who come sooner than even the devotees, in order to realise the debts they have paid in previous births! Arrange for groups who will go on the rounds of the area and the sheds at night, to see that everything is secure and safe. Take all precautions to preserve the cleanliness of the area and also, maintain the quietness of the atmosphere. Don't shout at people who shout, in your attempt to see that silence is maintained. Talk low yourself and advise others to talk low. Explain to those who speak aloud why they have to lower their voice. If the reason is explained, they will sympathise with you and understand the purpose. Respect everyone and talk as if they are worthy of the highest respect you are capable of. No one is small or low. Sai is in all, and if you insult any one, it is an insult directed 'against Sai. Don't drag away children that start wailing loud, soothe them, softly. Engage yourselves in bringing solace to the bodily ill. I shall engage myself in giving solace to the mental and spiritually ill.

The name of the Lord must always be pronounced with joy, thankfulness, exultation, awareness of the uniqueness and the splendour. Say it with love,

say it with sincere yearning.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

7. My Reality Is truth, Goodness, Beauty (Alternative Translation)

Date: 06 March 1970 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Shivarathri

I am neither man nor celestial being. I am neither a brahmin nor a warrior (kshatriya) nor a merchant (vaishya) nor a labourer (sudra). I cannot be described as a celibate, a householder, a recluse, or a monk.

Know Me as the Teacher of Truth. My reality is truth, goodness, beauty (sathyam , sivam , sundaram). (Sanskrit verse) Your reality is also truth, goodness, beauty (sathyam , sivam , sundaram). Without truth, there cannot be goodness; without goodness, what does beauty avail? The effect of truth on the mind is goodness; the joy that flows from goodness is the genuine beauty that artists love. The three are really one and indivisible. Truth is goodness and goodness is beauty. Experience this truth. That will give you the highest bliss.

Let not lesser joys distract you. Don't fritter away your energy, playing the silly game of gaining and losing, gathering and scattering, winning temporary fame, fortune, and felicity. Go straight on the royal road that leads to self-realisation; don't stray into the byelanes of counterfeit bliss. This doesn't mean that you have to give up your kith and kin and foot it all alone. The community in which you find yourself is the arena where you can win the victory, the gymnasium where you develop the skill to win. The spiritual journey lies through compassion, sympathy, mutual help, and service, and these are fostered by society and are to be used for society.

Love is the strongest antidote for greed

Ravana was the mightiest potentate of his day, as Valmiki describes him. His capital city was an impregnable fortress, filled with rare treasures. He was the master of the four Vedas and six spiritual sciences (sastras). Duryodhana, the eldest of the Kauravas, was, as Vyasa describes him, unsurpassed in the number and strength of his army and armaments, and in diplomatic skill. Yet,

these two have been execrated by young and old for centuries. Why? Because they degenerated from the human to the bestial level, instead of rising from the human to the divine level. Both had the same flaw: greed. They did not know the secret of contentment. They were afflicted with incessant desire (kama). Rama and kama cannot coexist. The inner shrine of a person can accommodate only one of them, Rama or kama . If you love another person, you will not covet lordship over them; you will not covet their property; you will have no envy when they prosper, no joy when they suffer. Love is the strongest antidote for greed.

This, therefore, is the fundamental spiritual discipline: give love and receive love.

You might have heard of bhutabali , a word that is interpreted as sacrifice in order to satisfy spirits. Bali means tax as well. Bhutabali , which everyone is enjoined to give, is tax to be paid to the elements (bhutas) for this splendid chance of human birth. For all the good words that come your way, all the good deeds by which you benefit, and all the good thoughts that spread peace in your heart and light the road you tread, you have to pay tax.

Sai devotees should have tolerance and compassion

Love persuades you to consider the distress of others, whenever you are overcome by it. You are drawn to those who are equally afflicted by grief. You become engrossed in the sorrow of others and so forget your own.

Droupadi bewailed her lot before Krishna. She cried, "Krishna! When a mother loses a child who is snatched away from her lap by death, she is drowned in grief. Aswatthama slaughtered my children in cold blood at dead of night while they were sleeping soundly. I have lost all of them. How can I be consoled? How can I get those children back?" Krishna said, "Sister! You braved the insults that the wicked Kauravas inflicted on you in open court; bear this blow with equal courage. Look at Gandhari, the mother of the Kauravas. She has imposed on herself the blindness that her husband is suffering from; she has lost all her one hundred sons! Not one is left." Krishna

consoled her, presenting before her the picture of greater fortitude of another mother.

Consider the agony of others and share their grief. Feel for them more than you feel for your own calamity. This is the sign of a genuine Sai devotee (bhaktha). The devotee should have compassion, tolerance, and sympathy; without these, the devotee will be the target of ridicule, and with good reason.

People ask sneeringly, "Where is your God? What does He look like? What does He do?" etc. They sneer because those who have experienced the majesty and glory of God are very few. God is Truth, Goodness, and Beauty, but only those who have had experience of Him can assert so and convince others. You may have a pot full of ambrosia (amrita), but unless you place a drop on your tongue, how can you vouchsafe its fragrance and sweetness?

Through you, Sai devotees, transformation has to be brought about in the minds of people. So, your responsibility is very great.

Love can smother the flames of anger

When the Mahabharata war was imminent, it was said in circles that knew the evils of the age that only a thick shower of arrows could smother the flames of hate. Now, it is the other way round: only a thick shower of love can smother and destroy the flames of anger, fear, and anxiety that envelop the world today.

A group of scholars who had come to Me recently asked Me, "Swami! You talk of flames of anxiety and fear; but, surely, You will appreciate the great step forward that humanity has taken by landing on the moon." I told them that it was wrong to spend billions of dollars and rubles on such enterprises. They argued that though there might not be any immediate profit from all that capital spent, its potentialities for good were very great.

I said, "It is a question of priorities; first things first. When so many nations on

the earth are undernourished, undereducated, under-housed, it is sheer absence of discrimination to spend time, skill, and money on this spectacular competitive adventure. Later, when the earth has been made the home of a happy family of peoples, such enterprises can be planned."

Observe the discipline laid down by sages

The earth is the natural habitat of humanity. Why should one venture out of the range of the elements of which the body is composed and go places where one has to take water, air, and other essential requisites? When people go to the moon, they do not leave anxiety, fear, and falsehood behind.

The moon that one has to voyage into is the mind, not this inert satellite, with no capacity to illumine itself. The Ramayana mentions that Ravana skillfully prepared a wax head similar to that of Rama and arranged that it be presented before Sita as the severed head of her Lord, so that she might give up all thought of living with Him again and surrender to the wiles of her captor, Ravana. The moon is like that lifeless imitation head of Rama. The real Rama is vibrant, active, somewhere else. The real moon for people is their mind. When that moon is mastered, Sivam illumines the night, and it is transmuted into sivarathri (auspicious night). Or else, it is shava-rathri (night of death). As far as people remain unaware of themselves and of their divinity, they are no better than a corpse. The sages of India laid down various rites, ceremonies, disciplines, modes of behaviour and conventions to help a person cleanse their emotions and confirm their faith. They also laid down the discipline one should observe about food one takes.

Take only simple, pure, clean food - called sathwic food by the sages. That is to say, eat only food that will not arouse the impulses and emotions, sharpen the passions, upset the equanimity, and hamper health.

Food offered to God is free from the evil vibrations that harm the individual in subtle ways. Food offered to the hungry and then eaten has also the same beneficial quality. Since food has a subtle impact on the feelings and thoughts, one has to be ever vigilant with regard to the food that that is

eaten.

7. The dead satellite

Date: **06 March 1970** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam** / Occasion: **Shivarathri**

I AM neither man nor God nor an aerial spirit; I am neither a Brahmin, nor a Kshathriya, nor a Vaishya, nor a Suudhra; I cannot be described as Brahmachari or a house-holder, or a recluse or a monk; describe me as a Teacher of Truth, as Sathyam (Truth), Shivam (Goodness) and Sundharam (Beauty). Your reality too is Sathyam, Shivam and Sundharam. Without Truth there cannot be Goodness; without Goodness, what does Beauty avail? The effect of truth on the mind is goodness; the joy that flows from goodness is the genuine Beauty that artists love. The three are really one and indivisible. Experience this Truth; this Truth as Goodness and this Goodness as Beauty. That gives the highest Bliss. Let not lesser ones distract you. Do not fritter away your energies playing the silly game of gaining and losing, gathering and scattering, winning temporary fame, fortune and felicity. Go, straight on the royal road that leads to self-realisation, and don't stray into the bye-lanes of counterfeit bliss. This does not mean that you have to give up kith and kin and foot it all alone. The community in which you find yourself is the arena where you can win the victory, the gymnasium where you develop the skill to win. The spiritual journey lies through compassion, sympathy, mutual help, and service, and these are fostered by society and are to be used for society.

Love is the strongest antidote for greed

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only one Deity, Rama or Kama. If you love another person, you will not covet lordship over him; you will not covet his property; you will have no envy when he prospers, no joy when he suffers. Love is the strongest antidote for greed. This therefore, is the fundamental spiritual discipline: give love and receive Love. You might have heard of bhootha-bali, a word that is interpreted as a sacrifice in order to satisfy spirits. Bali means 'tax' as well. Bhootha-bali which everyone is enjoined to give is tax to be paid, to the Bhoothas (elements), for this splendid chance of human birth. For all the good words that come your way, all the good deeds you benefit by, and all the good thoughts that spread peace in your heart and light on the road you trod, you have to pay tax.

Sai Bhakthas should have tolerance and compassion

Love persuades you to consider the distress of the other, whenever you are overcome by it. You are drawn to those who have equal ground for grief. You become engrossed in the sorrow of others and so forget your own. Dhroupadhi bewailed her lot before Krishna, She cried, "Krishna! When a mother loses a child, snatched away from her lap by death, she is drowned in grief. Now, Aswatthama slaughtered in cold blood at dead of night while they were sleeping soundly, all my children! I have lost all, all of them. How can I be consoled? How can I get those children back?" Krishna said, "Sister! You braved the insults that the wicked Kauravas inflicted on you in open Dhurbar (court); brave this blow with equal courage. Look at Gandhari, the Mother of Kauravas. She has imposed on herself the blindness which her husband is suffering from; she has lost all her one hundred sons! Not one is left." Krishna consoled her, presenting before her the picture for greater fortitude borne by another mother. Consider the agony of others, and the means of sharing the grief they have. Feel for them, more than you feel for your own calamity. This is the sign of a genuine Sai Bhaktha. He should have compassion, tolerance and sympathy; if he does not possess these, he will be the target of ridicule. And with good reason. People ask sneeringly, "Where is your God? How does He look? What does He do?" etc. They sneer because those who have experienced the majesty and glory of God are very few. God is Truth, Goodness and Beauty, but only those who have had experience of Him can assert so and convince. You may have a pot full of amritha, but unless you

place a drop on your tongue, how can you assert about its fragrance and sweetness? Through you, Sai Bhakthas. a transformation has to be brought about in the minds of people; so your responsibility is very great.

Love can smother the flames of anger

When the Mahabharatha War was imminent, it was said in circles that knew the evils of the age, that only a thick shower of arrows could smother the flames of hate. Now, it is the other way: only a thick shower of Love can smother and destroy the flames of anger, fear and anxiety that envelop the world.

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Observe the disciplines laid down by our sages

When that Moon is mastered, Shivam illumines the Night, and it is transmuted into Shivarathri. Or else, it is shava-rathri (the Night of death). When man sleeps unaware of himself and of his divinity, he is as a corpse.

The sages of India laid down various rites, ceremonies, disciplines, modes of behaviour, conventions and festivals to help cleanse the emotions and confirm faith, I shall speak today of the importance of one of these - of the disciplines that they laid down for food. Take in only simple pure clean food - what is called Sathwik food by the sages. That is to say, food which will not arouse the impulses and emotions, sharpen the passions, upset the equanimity, hamper health. Food offered to God is free from the evil vibrations that injure the individual in subtle ways. Food offered to the hungry and then eaten has also the same beneficial quality. Since food has a subtle impact on the feelings and thoughts of man, you have to be vigilant ever.

The mind can act as a bridge leading man from the tangible to the intangible, from the personal to the impersonal.

Cleanse the mind and mould it into an instrument for loving thoughts, for expansive ideas.

Cleanse the tongue and use it for fostering fearlessness and friendship.

Cleanse the hands; let them desist from injury and violence. Let them help and lead, heal and guide.

This is the highest sadhana.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

8. Stone as God, not, God as stone

Date: 12 May 1970 / Location: Mumbai

IN the culture of India, all religions and faiths are integrated harmoniously for, it emphasises Righteous life, Love and Service, beyond which there is no higher sadhana. But people have grown deaf to the call of this Message, and those whose duty it is to attract people's attention to the lapse have been rendered weak and vacillating by the attraction of alien attitudes. Throughout history, India has drawn the loyalty of her children to the four goals of Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha, or rather, to the worldly ideals of Artha and Kama to be worked out within the limits set by Dharma on the one side and Moksha on the other. Artha (wealth) has to be won through Dharma (righteousness); the only Kama (desire, yearning) worth encouragement is the desire for Moksha (Liberation). Love is the impetus and Truth is the gain; they are the two wheels of the chariot of life. Ahmisa paramo dharmah - "Non-violence is the most meritorious activity." These axioms have been the life-breath of this nation since millenia, and they have become the heritage of each man, woman and child. Therefore, it must be said, the present plight when we find violence stalking the land, and brother stands with dagger drawn against brother, is a standing disgrace to all that the land has been proclaiming as precious.

God can be cognised by pure consciousness only

Hin means himsa (violence) and dhu means dhuura (distant), so that Hindhu means a person who is devoid of violence, who loves and sympathises, who helps and serves - not one who hides and hits, harms and draws blood. The same sky is over every one's head; the same earth supports every one's feet; the same air enters every one's lungs! The same God brought all forth, brings up all and brings about the end of this earthly career. Why then this inhuman role of foe and fanatic, of fight and feud?

In the Geetha, the Lord has declared, Beejam mam sarva bhoothanam - "I am the seed for all beings." The tree is a broad spread of leaf and flower, fruit

and green. It is a fanned, out system of trunk, branches, twigs! All have grown out of one single small seed! And, every fruit of that tree has seeds of the same nature inside it! So too, contemplate for a while on the magnificent multitude of life, all its rich variety of strong and weak, prey and hunter, distressed and delighted, creeping, crawling, flying, floating, walking, hanging, burrowing, diving, swimming - -all this uncountable variety of created beings have come out of the beejam (Lord) and each of them has in its core, the beejam, again (the Lord)! Visualise this Immanent Divinity; you become humble, wise, and full of love. The God who is the origin and the goal can be cognised only by the pure consciousness, after chiththa shuddhi (cleansing of the mind) is attained. And, to cleanse the consciousness, one must start early. The race is won by those who start early and drive slowly; then, they reach safely, not otherwise. Put the little feet on the path of God; the joy of the first steps will lead them forward. We in India see God in trees, in plants, in birds and beasts; we worship Him everywhere, in all things. People laugh at you when you worship a picture; and, some weak-minded persons feel ashamed themselves, when they do so. But, we are treating the picture as God, and not treating God as a picture. Worship the stone as God, not treat God as stone!

Sadhana is necessary to get vision of God

Seeing alone is believing, for these critics. Will they deny the Sun in the sky, when the clouds hide it from view? It is the cloud of Maya, the curtain of confusion, that hides God from the consciousness of man. The eye affected by cataract swears that there is no lamp in the room; but, an operation to remove it is needed for him to become aware of the lamp. That operation is the symbol of the spiritual discipline that one has to undergo, in order to get the Vision of God. Man is flying to the Moon, and diving into the sea; but, he does not know how to live on earth with his fellowmen, in love and peace. He moves towards the Moon for fear that others may reach before him; and dives through the sea to strike terror, himself terrified of others! The way to live without fearing or causing fear is laid down in the Geetha, the very first shloka of which is about Dharmakshethra (field of righteousness))The shloka is about a question which Dhritharashtra asks. Who is this Dhritharashtra?

The word means, he who holds fast to the kingdom, who will not give it up, who is attached to it fanatically. Now, what is the rashtra (kingdom) for a person? All that is not he are his possessions; that is to say, his body, his senses, his knowledge, his feeling, emotions, besides his house, car, lands, reputation, etc. Dhritarashtra means, any person who treats things not his, as he himself, a person who identifies himself as his body, for example. He asked, Sanjaya to tell him what was happening in Kurukshetra and Dharmakshetra - The fields of Action and of Virtue.

Develop nearness and kinship with God

Sanjaya means, one who has won the victory, the victory over the senses and other forces that limit and divert the higher faculties which lead man Godward. He was asked about the progress of the battle that was being fought in Kurukshetra, which was also Dharmakshetra; his answer is summed up in the very last, the 700th shloka of the Geetha: "The side that merges in the Yogeshwara, the Lord of those who seek to merge their identities, to lose their separate names and forms, Lord Krishna, that side will gain the victory." The first shloka has the question and the last, the answer! The rest of the text is the elaboration of this theme. People have specialised in the various methods of worshipping God; there is a host of rites, ceremonials, hymns, festivals, fasts, vows, pilgrimages; but, the best form of worship, the one that will bring the Grace of God in ample measure, is to obey the commands of God. Adulation is poor adoration! Placing God at a great distance from you and praising Him as Omniscient, Omnipotent and Omnipresent will not please Him. Develop nearness, proximity, kinship with God. Win Him by obedience, loyalty, humility and purity. Make your lives simple; fill the daily tasks with love and mutual co-operation; be tolerant towards the errors and failings of others; look upon them with sympathy and understanding; be calm and without agitation, under all conditions. Then, you can be happy and the country can be happy. Your sentiments will be unselfish and your emotions, tender. Envy, hatred and vindictiveness can gain no entrance into the stronghold of your mind, where! mercy, benevolence and indulgence stand guard.

Disappointments test your fortitude

God is not involved in either rewards or punishments. He only re-flects, re-sounds and re-acts! He is the Eternal Unaffected Witness! You decide your own fate. Do good, be good, you get good in return; be bad, do bad deeds, you reap bad results. Do not thank or blame God. Thank yourself, blame yourself! He does not even will that creation, protection and destruction shall take place. They follow the same law, the innate law of the maya-ridden universe. This electric current, for example, can be used by us, to turn the fans and give us coolness in this sultry weather; it can be used to give light, to magnify human speech and take the sound nearer to you; it can be made to produce many copies of a printed sheet. In all these cases, it creates. But, if you are so overcome by all the good that it does and your admiration goes a little too far and you grasp the wire that carries it to you, you are killed! The current creates; it protects; it destroys; it depends on how we utilise it. Let the petty wishes for which you now approach God be realised or not; let the plans for promotion and progress which you place before God, be fulfilled or not; they are not so important after all. The primary aim should be to become Masters of yourselves, to hold intimate and constant communion with the Divine that is in you as well as in the Universe of which you are a part. Welcome disappointments, for they toughen you and test your fortitude. The gold that was melting in the fire, before the goldsmith with his blowpipe, told him: "Do not exult when you drop me into the fire and I am molten and the alloy is taken out of me. Remember I am rendered purer and more valuable every moment, whereas all that you get for your pains is smoke in the face and soot in the hand!"

Believe that ills draw you nearer to God

This is the lesson the Mahabharatha teaches! Never give up God, holding Him responsible for your ills; believe rather that the ills draw you nearer God, making you call on Him always when you are in difficulty. You suffer stomach pain and the doctor gives you the pain of operation, in order to reduce that pain and give you relief. Then, you say, you have joy! Joy is but the interval between two moments of pain, and pain the interval between two moments

of joy. Ramakrishna Paramahansa had a boil on his throat and he could not swallow any food or even drink liquids without much pain. At this, Vivekanandha pleaded with his Master, and prayed to him to seek the Mother's Grace so that he might take in at least liquid food. Ramakrishna replied that he did pray to Mother and the Mother answered, "Are you not now taking enough food through all these billions of throats, the throats of all living beings in the world? Unable to take in through one out of the billion, why are you so upset?" The one Atma (Consciousness) is pervading everywhere; that was the lesson taught by the Mother. Everyone is just a wave, a part of the Universal, the Paramatma. That is the Truth, the Sathya. Sathyan nasthi paro dharmah - "There is no higher Dharma than Truth." Be true; that is the acme of righteousness, the essence of all morality. The truth of the One-ness of all involves Love, Service, Peace and so, it is the basis of moral living. All distinctions are temporary walls erected by ambition or hate.

All differences are trivial transitory marks

Now, Hindhu Dharma or Christian Dharma or Muslim Dharma is identified with external conformities like dress, coiffure, facial hair-styles, rosaries and caste marks, and other attitudes like whom one can touch and yet remain ceremonially pure, when one can pray, where one has to eat and what, and such trivial, transitory marks. It is mostly superstition and mumblery, don't touch this, don't touch that!

Dharma must be surging from the heart as the cool energising water of prema and shanthi (love and peace). You can learn what exactly Dharma is from the Ramayana. Rama is the very embodiment of Dharma; every word and every deed is resonant with its message. Lakshmana, the brother of Rama, who followed his footsteps throughout his earthly career, is the symbol of the Mind; walking on the footprints of Dharma, it never lost its way; it triumphed in the lap of Victory. The Ramayana is a text-book for Dharma to be lived out in every home, by the father, the mother, the son, the brother, the members of a joint family - both men and women. Gandhiji dreamed of Ramarajya in Bharath; he wanted that people here must live like the subjects of Rama in Ayodhya. But look at the sad contrast! Then, the brothers Rama

and Lakshmana reached the supreme state of identity as a result of the Love between them. Now brothers reach the Supreme Court, in their attempt to resolve differences and disputes, over some paltry properties, which are not proper ties at all! People climb rostrums and shout 'Brothers! and Sisters!,' but that platitude remains a flatitude! As soon as they descend from that altitude, the sentiment melts into thin air. The brotherhood one has to cultivate is the readiness to give love for love, heart for heart and life for life!

Purify yourselves and purify the atmosphere

Bharatheeya culture condemns violence as bestial and even worse. Though the epics and ancient tales of this land speak of demons, men and gods as diverse, they are names only for traits, which all share to a more or less extent. Humanity has to get rid of the dross of demonism and invest itself with splendour of divinity. Take the story of Krishna in the Bhagavatha. Kamsa has asuric (demonic) character; his sister, Devaki, is human, and she brought forth Krishna, the Divine, that incarnated to rescue the world from perdition! The person who married Devaki, the person who had the honour to be the father of the Incarnation was Vasudheva. His sister's son, Shishupala is an asura (demon)! And, strangely enough, Shishupala nearly married the future Queen of Krishna, Rukmini. Krishna carried her away from the wedding gathering and saved her from being wedded to the demonic personality, Shishupala! So, it is clear, that the inclinations and behaviours of persons decided the category into which they were thrown - demon, human or divine. Be therefore ever vigilant that your activities do not drag you down into the depths of demonhood; let them elevate you into the heights of Divinity. It is really commendable that in this City so many of you are engaged in Bhajans, Nagarsankeerthans and Namasmaram. Let the Name of the Lord proceed from the heart, not from the lips. Be Prahladas, in the land that is sick with too many Hiranyakashipus. The Name of the Lord is the Narasimha that will save and sustain! Purify yourselves and purify the atmosphere, in which and by which you have to live. That is my advice and my blessing.

As the shadow that you cast is reduced bit by bit with every step that you take towards the Sun, until the Sun shines right on the top of your head and the shadow crawls under your feet and disappears, so maya too becomes less and less effective as you march towards jnana.

Then it is well established in your understanding and maya falls at your feet and is powerless to deceive you further; it disappears, so far as you are concerned.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

9. The most profitable job

Date: 13 May 1970 / Location: Mumbai

ON the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the Institution called Pinge's Classes, I am glad I have this opportunity to emphasise the moral and spiritual aspects of education; for, Pinge has dedicated his life to the fostering of these aspects. No praise is too small for such endeavours as these classes; such institutions have to multiply in this land, and all encouragement must be rendered to them, for they supply that extra, which is so urgently needed. You all know and declare that India is Yoga-bhumi, Thyaga-bhumi and Karma-bhumi (land of Divine Communion, Sacrifice and Selfless Action), par excellence. Picture the land in your mind; the first and the most prominent feature that you see is the Himalayan ranges, the silver peaks piercing the blue sky. From these peaks flow the pure pellucid waters of the Ganga - the symbol of Indian Culture.

Indian Culture is the very basis of human progress. It will uplift humanity by promoting brotherhood, upholding righteousness, and saturating every thought, word and act with reverence and humility. This culture will stand unshaken so long as the Ganga flows; no attempt to suppress or destroy it can succeed. It can disappear only when the Ganga goes dry! The history and traditions of Bharath are as pure as the Ganga; as holy and sanctifying, as curative and as precious. The origins of both are cool, comforting, spotless snows!

Habit of prayer will inculcate confidence

This country is suffering from social, political, and economic ills, because those who are responsible for laying down guidelines for educational progress have not endeavoured to instruct the boys and girls of India in the principles of Indian Culture. When man is not trained to live a good and godly life, teaching him various skills and tricks, only makes him a danger to himself and to others. There is unending controversy now about the language which should be the medium of instruction; but, no one seems interested in the

language of the heart, which uses the vocabulary of Love and the idiom of Self-examination and Self-sacrifice. Now, schools and colleges are engaged in stuffing facts and fancies into the heads of the pupils; they do not equip them to face the fortunes of life, to bring the best that is in them and place them at the service of the community. The habit of prayer will inculcate courage and confidence; it will provide the pupil with a vast new source of energy. No effort is made to introduce the pupil to the sweet experiences of meditation and Yoga, or to the joy of inquiry into one's own reality.

When the course of studies is over and the pupil has come out of the drill and grill, he is awarded a Degree, at the Convocation! This Degree is, in effect, only a begging bowl! With that in hand, the Graduate can go to every office, and clamour before every door, "Give me a job! Give me a job!" Present day education converts youth into beggars, seeking food from door to door. They cannot stand on their own legs, and earn food, independently. This is not a sign or characteristic of Bharatheeya culture. No. The mistake lies in the teachers and leaders, the leaders and their advisers.

Don't be ungrateful to parents

They are the sculptors, who are charged with the carving of boulders into lovely figures, that can inspire and elevate the mind. They do not chisel at all; they leave the boulder as it is. In the name of freedom, they promote licentiousness. Freedom involves restraint; restraint alone can heighten energy. Vidhya vinaya sampanna, they say: "Education must foster humility and discipline." Ask any student why he is attending school or college - he seldom gives a clear answer! The answer usually will be 'I want to read,' 'I want to study;' but, if that is all he wants, he can read at home or study at home, under the guidance of some one. Why should they attend schools and colleges, that are far from their home, spending huge amounts of money? They do attend schools and colleges in order to cultivate discipline, control emotions, canalise passions, learning just a small fraction, of what can be gained from schools and colleges. They instil into the pupils the lessons of mutual co-operation, good manners, courtesy, compassion and comradeship, adjustment to limitations, overcoming of obstacles with calm deliberation.

The marks you get in the tests and examinations in each subject are not so important; I attach more importance to the 'remarks' that you earn - whether you are judged good, bad or indifferent, fresh, fair and free or wicked, vile and vicious. Parents put themselves into a lot of privation, in order to provide their children with good education. And in return, if you cause greater privation to them, turning into a never-do-well, a person whose character is so bad that no one dare take you into his care, how ungrateful you are! Give them the peace and joy they deserve, for all the service they have rendered, all the sacrifice they have made.

Seek character more than intellect

Students should not have any dealings with politics. Now, contact with politics is ruining students, in schools and colleges. Politics without principles, education without character, science without humanity, and commerce without morality are not only useless, but positively dangerous. Character is to be sought more than intellect. Now, you may consider bad behaviour to be just an adventure; but, later, when your own sons behave in that manner, you will realise the mistake of dismissing it as such. The attitude today is the root on which the future grows. The consequences of action can never be avoided. If you give joy to your parents now, your children will be a source of joy to you in your declining years. In schools we must learn to cultivate unselfish love, with no fear or suspicion. Teachers must lead lives based on upright conduct, moral grandeur, and spiritual Sadhana. The teachers of tomorrow are the students of today; so, cleansing of the atmosphere of the classroom is very necessary, in the interests of the future. Teachers are reservoirs from which, through the process of education, students draw the water of life; so, every effort has to be made to see that the reservoir is not contaminated by hate or pride. Schools and colleges should not be engaged merely in the processes of teaching and learning. Reading, writing and arithmetic do not exhaust the task of the school. The inculcation of great ideals and the attempt to put them into practice are also equally important tasks.

Learn the art of living together

You have many teachers in a school; of them, the history teacher teaches from the book with maps; the maths teacher works out sums on the blackboard; the science master has his lab; but, the physical instructor has to stand before the students, drawn in lines, and himself swing his arms and legs, bend and rise, turn and twist, just in the same way he wants his pupils to do! You must do well, and be an example to others. This is the only way to ensure a glorious future for this country.

A curious paradox is now gaining force in tiffs land: it is fraught with dire consequences. Though the world has become a very small globe, as a result of fast means of communication and transport, man has not yet learnt the art of living together in close proximity, as brothers, as children of the One God. The closer men are brought, the larger the differences appear! Thus, the little world is now fiddled with problems of conflicting cultures, competing creeds and contesting ambitions. The sorrows of one State spread fast into all its neighbours and infect the whole world. The world has become one vast battlefield. When infectious diseases leap over boundaries, and slay men without distinction, immediate steps are taken to control the havoc and relief is despatched in haste to the scene of disaster. But, the infection of greed and hate cannot be held in check so quickly by any Government. Let us try to answer the question. "What kind of Government is the best? "The answer is: "That Government is best, which helps us to govern ourselves." Make your Conscience the Ruler, do not depend on the external Ruler. Those who diagnose the ills of the world suggest various remedies to mend affairs; but, no analysis reveals the correct reason. The fundamental reason for the state of disease is "want of confidence in the self." There is no faith in the Atma as the source and spring of Bliss. So, man allows his mind to run after worldly pleasures. And, grief is the result.

God seeks the pious seeker

The Bible says: "Pious seekers seek God"; but said Annie Besant: "God seeks the pious seeker!" God is seeking for the pure heart that longs to reach Him. The world is reduced to a theatre by man, for, devotion to God has become a histrionic performance. You find people weeping in their heart of hearts, but,

laughing their lives away. We find people who laugh in their heart of hearts, but, to all observers, weeping profusely over their fate. Worship is more for effect, a play acted with the pit in view; there is no sincerity. You find some one parades all of a sudden some ism, as new and revolutionary, Socialism, for example. Socialism, which means, recognising the equality of every individual with every one else, was in fact practised in India long ago. Rama, undisputed sovereign of a vast empire, gave heed to the flippant scandal uttered by an irresponsible washerman, during a quarrel with his wife, and sent his Queen, the very queen for whom he had waged a war of tremendous carnage, into exile, regardless of the fact that she was pregnant at the time! Every one's voice was given equal weight in the empire ruled over by Rama. "Workers and peasants," that is the slogan nowadays, isn't it? These two classes were given their due share of social importance and honour, in the Krishnavathara. Now, people are honoured even if they grow, not food, but, cash crops! Foreign exchange is what we are after and so, people are encouraged to produce what others can buy, not what we need - milk and a variety of milk products, which are highly nutritious foods. Balarama, the elder brother, an Avathar in his own right, had as his weapon, the plough! He declared the worth of agriculture as a consecrated occupation.

It is not impossible to realise God

God appears in human Form; He promotes pasture of cattle and agriculture, in order that the Food might sustain the Head and render it intelligent and clear enough to realise God. The body has to be nourished for the sake of the head, so that Jnana (spiritual knowledge) can be attained and liberation gained. Food-Head-God - that is the chain of events. You dread that it is very difficult, nay, impossible, to realise God. It is very simple; its very simplicity makes you feel that there must be some hidden trap. You do not appreciate simple things and habits. For example, there is nothing so simple as speaking the truth; yet, how many stick to Truth! If you venture into untruth, you have to invent new stories all along the line and keep in memory all the stories and all the persons to whom you have related them. It is all very complicated and confusing.

Students! You are embodiments of the Divine! There are two aspects of Vidhya (jnana) that you have to master; Vijnana - understanding the world around us, science: and also Prajnana- - the higher learning, the art of controlling the inner feelings and the many layers of Consciousness. Benefactors and beneficiaries you are in the educational field, and so, listen to this: Each student has a watch on his wrist. And, you look at the watch at least a hundred times a day. Well, learn from the watch a great lesson. When you watch the watch, remember the five letters of the word, WATCH; each is giving you a fine lesson for life: "W tells you, "Watch your Words;" A warns you, "Watch your Action;" T indicates, 'Watch your Thoughts;' C advises, 'Watch your Character;' and H declares, 'Watch your Heart.' When you are consulting your watch, imbibe this lesson that the watch is imparting.

Understand the true test of a good life

Dr. Gokak spoke of the four fundamental aims of education since he is the Vice-Chancellor of the Bangalore University. He said they are: Knowledge, Skill, Balance and Insight. Of course, knowledge is being gained by every one, through the senses as well as through inference and other categories. The voltage may be different, but, each bulb illumines to some extent. Gokak said that the knowledge has to be transformed into skill. But usually the S is removed and knowledge is used only to 'kill.' Knowledge is killed in the process of using it to kill. In that process the balance is upset; and, so, instead of insight, the fourth principle (Gokak's fourth principle) is transformed into 'out-sight!' I call upon the students to revere their parents, for, that is the true test of a good life. I bless Pinge that Pinge's Classes may go on into the Golden and the Diamond Jubilees, so that I may come on those occasions also and bless him and this institution. I wish that in these classes, not only the syllabus and the curriculum prescribed for the various examinations for which students are coached are taught; teach also some great scriptural texts, so that they may not miss this precious, treasure. I suggest that you should have prayer as an important item in the time-table of the classes; for, through prayer you can draw down unto yourselves the Grace of God. Have Bhajan and Keerthan also, for the Lord has said, "Wherever My Glory is sung, there I install Myself." Bhajan cleanses the atmosphere and sanctifies the air you

breathe. Shri Bharde spoke about my establishing a college in this city, but, before the college is established, students worthy of entering its portals must be ready. Prepare the students; teach them the spiritual truths and the discipline that promotes their translation into daily life. That will hasten the foundation of the College you long for.

Serve the world as you would serve as master; be humble, be eager, be efficient in that service. If you dare treat the world as your servant, you will be dragged down into disaster.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

10. Beside, behind, before

Date: 21 May 1970 / Location: Mumbai

MAN is subject to sorrow, from birth to death; joy, or what he calls happiness is an interval between two sorrows, that is all. These sorrows arise as a result of three reasons' Adhyathmik (spiritual), Adhidhaiwik (deific) and Adhibhouthik (material). The material objects - that one craves for, endeavours to acquire and laments when lost - are all bhouthik and so, the sorrows that sprout out of them are defined as Adhibhouthik. The senses are the instruments of cognition; one sees an object through the eyes; yes, but, not through the material eye, but, with the eye operated by the deity that presides over it, namely, the Sun. You do not see in the dark! The Sun helps you to see; without Him, you are helpless! Each sense and limb, nerve and cell, joint and gland of the human body has a deity that activates it and is resident therein. If these deities are hostile or displeased, the body suffers and sorrow ensues. This is the second reason for misery; the Adhidhaivik. Then, we have the Self - the witness of both inertia and activity, joy and sorrow, exultation and examination. When you ignore the existence of the Witness, when you divorce your daily life away from the awareness of that seat of peace, you invite sorrow to torment you. That is the Adhyathmik or the spiritual quality, the Cross that each man carries along the trail of Life.

Three paths to gain awareness of Divine

It can be said that these three are the basic reasons for man's appearance and reappearance on earth, to unlearn the delusion and learn the lesson of Wisdom. When any manthra is concluded, the reciter usually repeats, as you must have noticed, Om Shanthi Shanthi Shanthi - three Shanthis! Why three? Why Om? Om is the designation of the Universal Brahman. Constant repetition of Om and intense meditation on its meaning are recommended for aspirants who seek cognition of the Indwelling Divine. Shanthi means Peace and Peace is invoked thrice, in order to allay the three sources of sorrow mentioned already, operating through the individual organism, the deities and the Cosmic Intelligence. There are three paths laid down for the

awareness of the Immanence of the Divine: Karma, Bhakthi and Jnana. These three are not distinct and diverse; they are composite and complementary. For example, you have the knowledge that Sai is everywhere, seeing all things and knowing every activity of yours. You are devoted to Sai and you are eager to be directed and follow the directions to the best of your ability. And, you desire to utilise the skill and efficiency you have earned for the service of others, because you feel that they are kinsmen of the Sai family, whether they know it or not. It is really very satisfying that you are rendering Seva to the people in various parts of this City, encouraging them along the Nine Directions to deepen their faith in God.

Bhajans, study circles, the staging of plays, the singing of keerthans in chorus by groups of devotees along the streets in the early morning hours, these are all commendable activities. Also, the helpful activities of the Seva dal. I find that a great deal of time is devoted to the cultivation of talents along fruitful channels of children in Bala Vihars; this is sure to kindle the flame of spiritual yearning in them and beautify their lives with the charm of joy later on.

Man binds and shackles himself to sorrow

An enormous quantity of precious time is being frittered away now, by man in wasteful, even damaging, task. The effort that is undertaken for these tasks leads nowhere, they only deepen despair or darken the gloom, already filling the heart! People find time to queue up for hours before cinema booking booths or waiting for a bus to take them there! They have no time to spare, for attending a Bhajan session or to join a Nagarasankeerthan group! They have time to play cards and sit at the club table, chatting on trivialities for hours together. This is because people live only on the surface or bottom of things, they are either froth or dregs. They shirk responsibilities. They do not introspect, or think calmly of the end for which they are struggling frantically and flippantly.

Examine this question, for example: Is man enslaved by external objects and the attraction they exercise over him, or, is it some inner impulse that urges him forward to shackle himself to sorrow? I shall give an example: There are

professional monkey-catchers in the villages, who employ a crude device for the purpose. They place in the orchards or gardens infested by the marauders a number of narrow-necked earthen pots, with a handful of pea-nuts inside each. The monkey approaches the pot, knows that it has the delicious nuts inside, puts its long hand in and collects the nuts in its fist. Now, it finds it cannot take its arm out; the neck is too narrow for the nut-full fist!

So, it sits helpless and forlorn and is easily caught and transported! It thinks that there is someone inside who is holding back its arm, when it tries to take it out! If only it had loosened the grip and got rid of the attachment to the nuts, it could have escaped! So too, you are the victims of desire and attachments that the desire entails. You are bound by the shackles you have yourselves fastened around you! Liberation too is in your own hands. Contemplate the unchanging Glory of God; then, the desire for the transient baubles of the earth will fade and you can be free.

Faith in God has to be stable and strong

Ask any one the question - How do you provide for yourself in your old age? The answer will be, "O my son is well placed; I get the interest on my deposits; I have a pension; I have lands from which I can draw what I need," etc. But, no one answers, "I rely on God!" Without faith in God, without Divine help, how can any of these give succour during the stormy voyage through life's declining years? Faith in God is the secure foundation on which hope has to be built. The faith has to be stable and strong. The feeling that God will come to our rescue has to be vivid and vital, motivating and activating all that we do or speak or think. Service rendered to others in this spirit will be a great source of joy to you as well as to the recipient. First, you must engage yourself in Karma-Jijnasa, the discriminating selection of activity; then, you have to enter the region of Dharma-Jijnasa, the search for the eternal laws of the spirit, that mould and shape the waves of consciousness. Last, you penetrate into the problems of liberation through Brahma-Jijnasa, the Sadhana that convinces you of the reality of the One and the unreality of multiplicity, the apparent world based on the real Brahman.

Train yourself to like what you have to do

There is no doubt that volunteers, Seva Dhal members, Bhajan leaders and participants, and every one else who is engaged in the activities of the Sathya Sai Organisation are on this path, at different stages. Most of you are in the first stage, the Karma-Jijnasa stage, able to distinguish the right from the wrong so far as your activity is concerned. Nature, the Individual, and God - of these three entities, Karma-Jijnasa has to consider all three, whereas Dharma-Jijnasa has to do with the last two and Brahma-Jijnasa deals only with the last, viz., Brahman. Remember the last stage, even when you are in the first, for, that is the end of the journey, the Goal. When you have the Goal in view, wherever you are, it will fill you with genuine joy. Do not seek to do things that give you sensual or temporary satisfaction only. Do not crave to do what you like, but train yourself to like what you do, or what you have to do. It is Sadhana (spiritual discipline), when you willingly undertake work that promotes your real welfare. Then only can Nature and the individual self be eliminated and the Brahman alone established in the consciousness. Now, you have to cultivate the attitude of the servant of the Lord. Work is worship. In that spirit, you offer service to others, whom you have to adore as embodiments of God. It is this attitude that gives maximum satisfaction to the pining heart.

Basis of Radha-Krishna relationship

Two Gopees were moving about on the sands of the Yamuna, talking about Krishna and lost in the contemplation of His Sports and His Majesty. Of them, Neeraja had a doubt suddenly arising in her mind) It was a metaphysical conundrum)"When I practise identity with Krishna and feel that I am Krishna, I am afraid that I will lose the thrill of being with Him, conversing with Him and hearing His sweet Voice. I long to be distinct from Him, and to taste the Love and Glory that He is." Then, Sarala, her companion, consoled her and said, "No! Your fears are baseless. For, Krishna too is contemplating you and your purity. By the time you are transformed into Krishna on account of the Sadhana of identity, Krishna would have become 'you', as a result-of His longing for you and so, there need not be any apprehension in your mind or

frustration!" Prakrithi is Dhara (Earth, Creation). Think of it always. Long for it. Pine for Dhara, Dhara, Dhara and you find you are pining for Radha, Radha. So, Radha is the Becoming and Krishna is the Being; the desire of the Being to become, the longing of the Becomed for the being - this is the Radha-Krishna relationship, which has been sung by seers and poets, calumniated and caricatured by ignorant critics, appreciated and apprehended by aspirants, analysed and realised by sincere scholars of spiritual lore. You are the image of the Supreme Atma, the image that is reflected in the body that is part of Prakrithi (Nature). Your body is kith and kin of all the objects that surround you in nature; your body is an object among so many. The original Divine Spirit, the individualised spirit, which is the image, and the objective world of which the body is a part - these are the three entities called Ishwara-Jeeva-Prakrithi. Success in Sadhana is won the moment you are able to either deny the objective world as a Delusion or recognise it as nothing but the Supreme Spirit itself. :

Purify the mind to cognise God in everything

In ordinary day-to-day arithmetic, three minus one is equal to two; but, in the arithmetic of the Atma the three (Ishwara-Jeeva-Prakrithi) minus one (Prakrithi) is equal to not two, but one (Ishwara) for, when the mirror (the Prakrithi) goes, the image (Jeeva) also disappears! When the mirror is eliminated, two entities disappear, the mirror and the reflection it can cast. And you merge in the Divine!

The path of Seva that you have chosen now will lead you gradually to the stage when the mirror can be transmuted beyond existence, by means of Vairagya (renunciation). When you see the Idol as God, you transmute the stone out of which it is calved, of which it is composed, out of existence; the stone has been eliminated, when you see only God in the shrine! Purify and cleanse the mind so that wherever you turn, not only in the shrine, not only in the idol, but, in everything, at all times, you will cognise only God; then, the mind becomes your best friend, your most efficient instrument of liberation. The mind plays infinite pranks, and so, it is labelled as an ape. There is another characterisation also, not so popular. It is referred to as a snake. For,

it does not move straight. It sizzles over the earth, in a zig-zag course. The mind delights in crooked stratagems, and clever contrivances. It avoids the straight path of veracity and sincerity. Again the snake injects poison, and grabs living beings that come in its way. But, the mind-snake can be charmed into innocence. The snake charmer uses the nadhaswara instrument and when he blows music out of it, the snake sways its hood entranced; so too, the mind will sway in unison with the music that emanates from the Nama-swara, the recitation of the Name of God! The mind projects on others its own defects and deficiencies. That is its deadliest effect on our progress. One has to overcome this nefarious tendency.

Inward vision alone can reveal the truth

The sage Paramanandha had ten disciples, each a notorious example of sloth and stupidity! On their travels, they came across a river, which they waded through, to the other bank. The water came up to their necks in some places, and so, when they struggled on to land, they decided to find out whether all had arrived safe together. They feared that some of them must have been swept away by the swift current. Fear and the consequent confusion heightened their native stupidity. At last, they discovered that one of them had been washed away, for, whenever each of the ten counted the others standing in a line before him, he left himself out and found only nine men before him. All ten confirmed the conclusion that one of them had disappeared in the flood! And, the ten wailed for the last man and were so plunged in sorrow that the hullabaloo they raised brought a farmer to their side. He asked them why and got the answer that of the ten who waded across, one was drowned! The farmer saw that there were ten men before him! They challenged his verdict and he demonstrated how they counted and verified that one had really been lost. The farmer told them that each one had omitted to count himself. "The outward vision was wrong; the inward vision alone can reveal the truth," he advised them. We are trying to discover God searching for Him throughout the Universe, but, we omit to investigate His existence within ourselves, as the very core and keystone of our Being. When you discover yourself all wailing ceases' and you attain supreme happiness. This is real selfknowledge. You come to know that you are a spark of the

Divine Flame. Very soon, you realise that others too are sparks from the self-same fire. How then can hate or anger or envy or greed survive in the sunlight of this Vision?

Have in view always the glory of the Goal

You are now having your feet on the very first rung of the ladder, which will take you to the heights of Bliss and Peace. The climb is arduous and full of the dangers of slips. But, you have to bear them in steady perseverance, having in view always the glory of the Goal. How much agony the stone has to suffer in order that it might be turned into an exquisite entrancing Idol! Even this chair was a block of misshapen wood; it was sawed, planed, cut, shaped, fixed and smoothed, and it suffered all that torture so that it could serve us and get the joy of the service. The saints Jayadheva, Thukaram, Kabeer, Gouranga, Ramakrishna, Ramadhas - all had to go through travail and tragedy, so that they could see God and merge in Him. They have won permanent niches in the temple of human memory. Take the instance of Pundareeka. He had such impregnable faith in the Vedhic injunction to revere the mother and the father (Mathru devo bhava; pithru dhevo bhava) that He refused to serve Lord Krishna when He appeared before Him to shower His Grace; for, at that time, he was engaged in massaging the feet of his parents! He would not interrupt that service even for a split second to touch the Feet of the Lord. His Guru Thukaram came in at that moment and admonished him for being so adamant in the observance of the Vedhic rule. "My God is just now here, before me, asking that the feet be massaged! Let this God who has come wait, until these Gods are served. This God has put in His appearance only now, but these have been with me ever since birth. I feel the Divine Presence in them every day of my life, and I recognise them as Divine!" The service he rendered to his parents pleased Krishna so much that He stayed on, and still stays on at Pandharpur!

Experience the Divine in yourselves first

Before you experience the Divine in every being in the Universe and in every cell and storm, you have to experience It in yourselves. Each act, word and

thought must be charged with that awareness. There was a millionaire once who was bothered by two aches, one in his stomach and the other in his head! He was diagnosed and treated. He was examined and treated by a galaxy of medical experts; he consumed heavy loads of drugs, and underwent hundreds of injections. But, the aches persisted, with greater vigour than over before! At last, a Swami (monk) arrived at the scene of his agony. He spoke very kindly to him, and pronounced the fault to be in his eye! Set right the eye, and the head on top and the stomach below would both behave very sweetly! To improve the eye, concentrate on only one colour. Concentrate on green, he suggested. Do not let your eyes fall on red or yellow, or any other colour. The millionaire got together a group of painters and purchased barrels of green colour and directed that every object on which his eye was likely to fall be painted thick green. Just as the ashtagraha calamity (the ominous astrological phenomenon of eight heavenly bodies reaching a straight line in space, which was sought to be avoided by superstitious persons through ceremonials of exorcism) resulted in a rich harvest for priests, the millionaire's malady resulted in a rich harvest for paint craftsmen.

Clarify your eyes to see God in everyone

When the Swami came back to him after about ten days, the craftsmen ran toward him with a bucket of green paint, for he wore a red gown! He wondered why, and got the answer that their master dare not cast his eye on any colour other than green, lest the aches may return! The Swami reprimanded the patient, and said that he had wasted lakhs of rupees as a result of his monumental stupidity. "If only you had purchased a pair of green spectacles, worth perhaps four rupees, you could have saved these walls and trees and pots and fans, and chairs and sofas and also a pretty large share of your fortune! You cannot paint the world green." Change your vision, and the world will appear accordingly. Let the eye be charged with the Divine, it will see all as God. It is foolish to try to shape the world; shape yourself as the embodiment of Peace, Love and Reverence. Then, you will see all as Love and Compassion and Humility. Your work, as Seva Dhal members and as volunteer helpers, must correct your vision; clarify your eyes, enable them to see God in every one; then, that awareness will transmute every word, thought and deed

of yours into a benediction. Cleanse the heart, by listening to spiritual discourses, Seeking the company and comradeship of the righteous, the simple, the sincere, the seekers, and by cultivating goodness of character and sweetness of disposition. Fill your hearts with the sweet fragrant waters of Prema (Love). Then, every act of yours, every word of yours (which are like the water drawn from the tank through the taps - tongue, hand, brain, etc.) will be sweet and fragrant. If the tank is filled with pollution, how can the word be helpful or the thought beneficent or the deed commendable?

Seek chances of helping others

Embodiments of the Divine! All these days, you discharged the duties willingly undertaken, in the right spirit and with real sincerity. I am very pleased with you. You can draw nearer to the Divine if you continue to mould your lives in the pattern, even after this urgency passes off. You are setting a good example to Sai volunteers in other parts of the country. Of course, something turns up now and then even in your work which is not quite up to the mark, some reservation, some twist or turn or speech or action, which had better not been! But, this is quite natural and can be corrected with some cautious watching. I know that you are serving with so much enthusiasm and joy, because it is Swami's work and Swami's service, in which you feel you are engaged. As a matter of fact. Dharmakshethra (the Peace of virtue) is yours, your own home. And, your hearts are my home! Swami will safeguard the purity of your heart which is His home! Now that you are carrying on this part of His Mission so satisfactorily, Swami will bless you with His Presence, around, beside, behind and before you. I shall be here again in the course of this year; for, I appreciate the work that you and all others connected with the Dharmakshethra are carrying on. Meanwhile, remember three things always: Continue Seva (selfless service), wherever you are. Seek chances of helping others. Never lose an opportunity of using your skills and enthusiasm for the alleviation of sorrow, pain or distress. Again, do not omit to neglect or postpone your own particular spiritual Sadhana - study, japam, dhyanam, bhajan, Namaskankeerthan (recaptulation, meditation, group singing of the name and glory of God), and other such disciplines. Above all, have the faith that Swami is with you, at all times and all places.

Obstacles that come in the way are often treated with a certain amount of resentment by the pilgrims on the spiritual path; but these tests are to be treated as ensuring safety.

You drive a nail into the wall to hang a picture thereon; but before hanging the picture, you try to see whether the nail has been well driven by shaking it; when you are certain it does not shake even when all your strength is used, you become bold enough to hang the picture on it.

You must welcome tests because it gives you confidence and it ensures promotion.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

11. The positive and the negative

Date: 01 June 1970 / Location: Kalkunte

I AM glad that the villagers of Kalkunte are so deeply aware of the benefits of education, that they have decided to give themselves a spacious new school building, for the sake of their children. Out of the meager and 'uncertain' earnings of hard toil, they are setting apart a proportion for this good cause. This is a Temple of Saraswathi, the Goddess of Learning and so the Goddess of Liberation. For, liberation comes through intellectual awareness of the unity, that underlies the diversity. Ganga is Karma (altruistic action), Yamuna is bhakthi (divine devotion) and at Prayag, a third river Saraswathi joins them, to flow towards the Sea - the Saraswathi, symbolising jnana (spiritual knowledge). The hearts of children are unsullied by sensual desires. Teachers and parents, comrades and elders, spoil them by their conduct and example. They tarnish their immaculate nature. If only they are allowed to grow in the proper spiritual atmosphere, if they are allowed to approach God, then, they become good, just, humble and pure. That does not mean they will be weak; they will be strong, with all the strength of Truth. Then, they will be invaluable assets to the nation; but, now, when schools are denied the spiritual atmosphere, they grow up into handicaps on the road to progress, problems to themselves as well as to the nation. This is the reason why I have entered the field of education, and established colleges for the new era, for both boys and girls, in different states.

Positive and negative poles of electric current, God

The Minister for Education spoke now of God being the electric current, illuminating all bulbs, of whatever candle power. But, the switch that operates the current is in the heart of each one. You can turn it on or off! You can deny God and flit about blind in the darkness, hitting your head at every obstacle. Or, you can switch on and benefit by the light. Even the heaviest burden becomes light, when His light falls on you. Darkness breeds disease and distress; light reveals, makes aware, and makes the vision clear, the faith strong and stable. When we speak of the electric current, you have to

consider the positive and the negative, which together produce it. The positive pole is 'Grace, Divine Majesty, Might, Compassion, basking in His Glory. The negative pole is: the consciousness 'Not I,' 'Not mine;' the denial of the deluding experiences of the waking, the dream and the deep sleep stages; the destruction of the warp and woof of the mind; the process of weeding and cleaning. Villages in this country are torn by internal factions; they are suffering from the consequences of disunity. No useful work can succeed when one half of the village is against it, for the simple reason that the other half is initiating it! Individual likes and dislikes, prejudices and predilections are exaggerated into poisonous fumes of hatred and envy; so, love, faith, enthusiasm, co-operation, are unable to raise their heads. The task of providing health, education and happiness to the villagers is severely curtailed thereby. The head, hands, stomach and feet are parts of the body; they have no separate existence, apart from the body. They are all comprised under one name: Body. When we speak of Pullayya or Mallayya, we mean the composite of all these - limbs, organs, nerves, breath - all. If any limb is injured, Pullayya suffers. If any limb is set right, the entire Pullayya benefits. Kalkunte too is one body and its limbs are the many households that comprise this village. Each house may have a different name or description; Srinivas, Lakshmi Nivas, or simply, 'the house of Padhmanabha,' but, all are included in the one name, Kalkunte! All households must act like one. One limb should not fight against another.

Make yourselves into moving temples

I am glad this village has an ancient temple and that it is kept very clean, with all the traditional rites of daily worship, scrupulously followed in practice. A temple where God is adored as a living entity is as the heart to an individual. It is said that you should not sleep in a village where there is no temple; for, the people there are sure to be so ungodly that your life is in danger amidst such unbelievers. God is the guardian, the corrector, the admonisher, the saviour; so, people must get into the habit of calling on Him, as a living Presence. The temple helps soften the hearts! It instils the virtues of compassion and charity. Greed and cruelty will spread in an atmosphere that has no devotion and adoration to God. Make yourselves into moving

temples. Become aware of the God that resides in you. It is He who protects you, provides for you, prevents you from falling a prey to pernicious propensities. The One is known by many names; the One is pictured in many Forms. There is only One Truth. People discern one facet at a time; their vision is too limited to see it whole. The shortest moment of peace, the slightest taste of Bliss that any being gets here is but a drop of spray from the wave on the Ocean of Peace and Bliss, which is God. Why then hate, compete in pride of possession, and suffer grief and pain? It is good to cooperate, love, live in harmony, and be aware that you are He and He is you.

The stars appear as dots of light, for they are at a great distance from us. So too God appears insignificant or ineffective to many, because they are keeping themselves too far from Him. If some people say there is no God, it only means they are at too great a distance to be aware of Him.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

12. The Inner Witness

Date: **01 June 1970** / Location: **Bengaluru** / Occasion: **Bhaaratheeya Vidhya Bhavan Campus**

THE Bharatheeya Vidhya Bhavan is endeavouring to spread the knowledge of Indian Culture and to inspire more and more persons to practise the disciplines recommended by that culture. The truths on which this culture is based have to be explained to the people of this country as well as to a growing number of outsiders who are eager to benefit by the wisdom, distilled by the sages of India through years of asceticism and inquiry. What is needed today is a band of sincere sadhaks (spiritual seekers) who long to experience the bliss promised at the end of the spiritual journey; as well as all along the pilgrim road! - a band of aspirants who are eager to test the validity of what they are taught to believe, on the touchstone of experience. This is the time when the thirst is deepest among youth and therefore, the fountain of clear knowledge has to be kept in full flow.

What is Bharatheeya Vidhya - the Wisdom of India? This building or Bhavan is the body; but, the spirit within it, the thing for which it has been built, for which it has to be sustained, is the principle propagated and practised here. So too, India or Bharath is the building; the Atma Vidhya - the Science of Self-control, of realisation of the Reality - of which the world of duality is an appearance, an efflorescence, is the inner spirit. Here, you are. providing the seeker the wisdom of Bharath, as revealed to the sages and as expressed by them in books which enshrine their thoughts and their prescriptions. Here you provide also the congenial atmosphere, the Sathsang, which can nourish and protect the sapling of faith and reverence.

Discover the streak of lightning in the blue sky

Love is the seed, courage is the blossom and peace is the fruit, that the sages grew in the garden of their hearts. They toiled for identifying themselves with the Truth, not for painting falsehood with the authenticity of Truth and parading as if they accomplished the mission on which they had come to

earth. They achieved such success that Bharath was for centuries the Preceptor of Humanity, but now the preceptor has started taking lessons from the least intelligent of the pupils and rearing the head in pride when the pupil congratulates him! It is now the responsibility of the Bharatheeya Vidhya Bhavan and kindred organisations to uphold the validity of Bharatheeya Vidhya or Atma Vidhya (knowledge of all pervading one Reality), in the context of the world crisis and demonstrate, by precept and example, the lasting benefits it can confer on the individual and on society.

Churn the sacred texts and text books on Yoga and Religion and collect the nutritious butter for gifting it to the world. The best prescription for living in undiminished Anandha (bliss) is to develop genuine sincerity, and speak what you think, and act what you speak. For a thousand who speak and praise, perhaps one puts this prescription into daily use. A bunch of horses start from the crease for the race, but only one or two are acclaimed as winners! The individual is Arjuna; the Universal which inspires him is Krishna. Led by the Universal, the individual has to oppose the attractions and delusions of the Manifested, the Maya, the Prakrithi, that is, the Kaurava Hordes. The battle depicted in the epic is the inner battle, between the temporary and the eternal, the particular and the universal, the sensual and the super-sensual, the seen and the seer. The Atma is described as a streak of lightning in the blue cloud; it is a geetha ('streak,' in Thelugu!). Discover that geetha, then the purpose of Geetha study is fulfilled!

Fill every moment with constructive activity

The craving is now for the easy life, the smooth life, the life with less and less of physical hardship; but health, can only come through a keen appetite and strong limbs and deep hunger and strenuous work. Make your thoughts nobler and engage in some hard work. The more idle time you have at your disposal, the greater opportunities you have to stray away from thoughts of seva, of sadhana and of the Inner Truth. Fill every moment with some constructive, beneficial activity, dedicating it to God, the Master who directs the activity, invisibly but inevitably! After reading a few verses of Bhagavad Geetha or a few pages of any sacred book, you must spend some time in

manana - contemplating on it and concentrating on its meanings. Then, you can draw out its full significance and taste it fully, and benefit from it, without any loss. An expression like Sarvabhootha antharatma (the indwelling Self of all beings) will repay long hours of manana. Manana (deep contemplation) will confirm the fact of God being in every being, bird, beast, tree and, when this awareness is established, you will not be tempted to hate or ridicule or envy any other being in creation. For, you are He and He is you, fundamentally. Until you come to this stage, you are only a partial devotee, still a long way to go. Since God is in every heart, the Inner Voice is the signal that Dharma (righteousness) gives while approving or disapproving any line of action. The Dharma that you have to follow is indicated by that Voice. That is the Swadharma for you. It is the Inner Witness that is the real I, which illumines the eye, the ear, the taste and the touch. When Sri. R.R. Diwakar says that he didn't notice a thing or hear a statement made in his presence, it means that though the sight passed before him and the statement was made in his hearing, he was so engrossed in problems concerning his paper that the mind was not 'connected' with the thing or the statement.

Be reverent towards the old and the sacred

The body is the torch, which contains the cells (mind) and when the bulb (eye) is fixed and the switch (intelligence) is on, then the object is illumined and becomes cognised. The cells are activated by the reflection of (the energy of) the Atma. This is the lesson that the Vidhya Bhavan has to propagate and instill in the minds of the youth of the world. I was telling the villagers of Kalkunte this morning that the teacher has a tremendous responsibility, for, what he teaches he has to practise himself; or else, he will only be encouraging hypocrisy. I was inaugurating the building for a High School there and I told them of the story of Ramakrishna, who refused to advice a child not to eat jaggery until he himself had, after some rigorous days of control, stopped eating that stuff with relish!

The ego makes man behave most ridiculously

Each one of the workers of the Bhavan must become a perfect picture of the

advantages of Bharatheeya Vidhya - that is to say, he must be tolerant towards all faiths, patient in the face of odds, reverent towards the old, the sacred and the historic, and humble in spite of the urge to display and declaim one's superiority and excellences. It is indeed ludicrous to find people competing for position and status when God alone is the entity deserving power and position and status. How transient is human status? How flimsy the bases of authority? How tawdry the signs and symbols of power? Truly, the ego plays all sorts of tricks with man and makes him behave most ridiculously and often most dangerously! Munshi has been doing this great service to the Bharatheeya Vidhya, making the people respect it, while recognising it and persuading the youth to value it and follow it. I am sure tomorrow when Ramakrishna tells him about my being here, he will be overcome by joy. I wish all those who honour the Atma Vidhya of Indian sages will give this Bhavan their fullest co-operation and strength.

13. The ripe fruit

Date: 09 June 1970 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

THE peace or distraction, calm or anxiety that one gets is the product of one's thoughts and deeds. It is dependent on one's attitude and behaviour to oneself and others. There are many who take up the process of dhyana or regular meditation on the Name and Form of God, who are able to quieten the agitations of the heart and open the way to inner realisation. But, dhyana should not be vacillating or wavering from one ideal to another. It should not be reduced to a mere mechanical text-book formula, a rigid time-table of breathing through alternate nostrils, a meaningless stare at the tip of the nose. It is a rigorous discipline of the senses, the nervous current, and the wings of imagination. That is why it is said, the dhyana is the valley of peace that lies on the other side of a huge mountain range, with the peaks named the Six Foes. These are lust, anger, greed, attachment, pride and envy. One has to climb over the range and reach the plain beyond. One has to rend the veils, before the light can shine on the path. One has to remove the cataract from the eye, so that the Truth can be seen. Maya is the name of that mist of ignorance, that torments the mind which seeks to plunge in the depths of the Self.

Release the mind from the hold of maya

This mist is the confusing conglomeration of three qualities that disturb the primal equanimity of the Universe - the white, red and black - the Sathwik , the Rajasik and the Thamasik - the unaffected, the active and the dull; the detached, the passionate and the slothful. The curtain of maya made of these three strands has to be either brushed aside, or rent asunder, or raised, so that the reality may be revealed.

Bhakthi marga (the path of devotion) raises it, for God who let it down has the compassion to raise it for you! Karma marga (the path of righteous action) rends it, by means of activity aimed at tearing the strands. Jnana marga (the path of spiritual knowledge) brushes it aside, for it moves about as if it did not

really exist; it brushes it aside as a mere figment of the imagination! And, it disappears, proving their argument valid! Some people deny the existence of God, for they miss His Presence as a result of the myopia they are afflicted with; when a skilful eye surgeon removes the defect, they can well see for themselves the omnipresent evidence of His Grace and Majesty. The amalgam of the three gunas (qualities) mentioned already, when spread as a hindrance to clear vision makes man fumble, feel that one thing is ostensibly another, and hides the truth, giving it all the hues or horror of the false!

The mind is the inner instrument used by maya to defraud and confuse. Under its influence, the mind skips from one fancy to another and is never at rest on whatever it dwells on! It keeps the mind always intent on external objects; it resists the inward journey of the intellect, the process of self-examination and self-discipline. But, once man succeeds, however slightly, in releasing his mind from the hold of maya through dhyana, the road is clear for the final illumination. Dhyana is the discipline by which the mind is trained to inner analysis and synthesis. The goal of dhyana is the One in which all I's are synthesised, in their purest forms. That One is described in the Geetha as having eight attributes. They are: Kavi (aware of the past, present and future), puranam (timeless in its origin), anushasitharam (it lays down the norms), anoraneeya (it is more minute than the minutest), sarvasya dhatha (at the basis of all), achinthyaruupa (of inexplicable form) adhithya varna (effulgence) and thamasah parasthath (beyond darkness). This is a task which can be carried out only by unremitting dhyana.

Conquest of desire is the first lesson of Yoga

Again, dhyana and the control of the senses must go together. The senses block the road to heaven's gate. No sense should be given free rein. There are some propagandists of yoga at the present time who so water down the disciplines that they preach full freedom for the senses along with dhyana. They are afraid they will lose their clientele and income, if they insist on difficult assignments! Yoga is defined as chiththa vritthi nirodha (the mastery over the vagaries of the mind). How can Yoga be practised when the mind is let loose to play all its pranks and tricks? It draws man away into the

wilderness of desires, and plunges him into the pursuit of pleasure, outside himself.

The very first lesson of Yoga is the conquest of kama (desire). The Will has to be fashioned as an instrument for the beneficial deed and the deed has to subserve the need for winning Wisdom, which confers in a flash the awareness of the Reality. The mother cannot move about the house doing the daily chores of washing and cooking, so long as the child is clamouring and wailing in the cradle; she has to put it to sleep as the first chore, so that she can attend to more important work. So too, you have to put the mind out of action before you can travel to the realm beyond duality.

The royal road to spiritual success

Keep the Name of the Lord always radiant on your tongue and mind. That will keep the antics of the mind under control. When the lamp is kept burning, darkness dare not spread its fumes around you. It is said in the Geetha that when the word for Brahman (Supreme Universal Reality), namely Om, is spelt by the dying with the last breath, he attains Brahman. But, you can spell it then, only when you have been dwelling upon Om all through the years of life. Mere ejaculation of Om at the point of departure will not save; the final Om must be the flower blossoming on the creeper of life, that has twined itself on God all one's life. This is referred to as Rajavidhya, in the Geetha; that is to say, the royal road to spiritual success. It is also Rajaguhyam - the royal mystery - a teaching that is to be imparted, after long preparatory exercises and from master to disciple, in a serious and sincere atmosphere. It was not sung as verse; it was given as a lesson, in prose. It was Vyasa who cast it into verse form. The Geetha teaches the process of dhyana in a neat little formula:

mam anusmara yuddhya cha! - "Keep Me in your memory and fight!"

The cue: to fight the battle of life, with God in the consciousness as the

charioteer. It is not merely a direction for Arjuna; it is a prescription for all humanity. "Fix your mind on Me and fight! I shall be the Will behind your will; the eye behind your eye; the brain within your brain; the breath within your breath. The fight is mine, the might is mine, the trials and triumphs are mine; the fruits of victory are mine; the humiliation of defeat is mine; you are I and I am you". That is the consummation of dhyana - identity, the negation of difference.

The Compassionate One knows best what you need

Mam anusmara - with Me in memory ever! Do not distinguish this task as bhajan, this task as bhojan (eating), this other task as puujan (adoration of God); all acts are puujan, for, food is given by Him, eaten by Him, for His sake, to yield strength for His work. Each moment is worth while, for He gives it, He uses it, He fills it, He fashions it, He fulfils it. When He is fused with every breath, you can achieve the sovereign task of merging in Him. You have the might; the Atma cannot be gained by the weak, so long as the source of might is not in you, is not all you, so long you are a weakling unfit for the supremest adventure. Mam anusmara - the smarana, remembrance, can become established only when you are free from the shackles of spite and envy. An-asuya - with no trace of pride or envy, malice or hate, egoism or conceit - that is the way to keep the heart clean for God to install Himself.

Sorrow affects you because you feel you deserved joy and did not acquire it; but, there is one impartial distributor of joy and sorrow, who gives you what you need, rather than what you desire. You may need the tonic of tragedy to set you on the road to recovery. The Compassionate One, the Eternal All-knowing God, He knows best. Welcome the tragedy and fight your way through, with the armour of the Memory Divine. As all rivers hurry towards the sea, let all your imaginings wend their way to God.

The Play is His;
the role is His Gift;

the lines are written by Him;
He decides the dress and decoration,
the gesture and the tone, the entrance and the exit.
You have to act well the part and receive His approbation, when the curtain falls.
Earn by your efficiency and enthusiasm the right to play higher and higher roles -
that is the meaning and purpose of life.

The way to pronounce the Pranava, Om

Do not get too much attached to the world, and too involved in its tangles. Keep your emotions always within hold. The waves agitate only the upper layers of the sea; down below it is calm. So too, when you sink into your depths, you must be free from the agitation of the waves. Know most things are of no lasting value and can therefore be brushed aside; hold fast to the solid substance only. Use your discrimination to discover which things are lumber, and which are treasure.

The Pranava japa (the recitation of Om and the contemplation of that mystic syllable) will help to calm the roaring waves. Om is the sum of all the teachings in the Vedas about Godhead and of all the systems of adoring the Godhead;

Om ithi ekaksharam Brahma - Om, that one syllable is Brahman!

Om is a composite of three sounds A (a) arising from the region of the navel, U (oo) flowing through the throat and tongue and M (mm) ending up at the closed lip. It has to be pronounced rising in a crescendo as slowly as possible, and as slowly coming down, until after them there will be the echo of the silence reverberating in the

cavity of the heart. Do not take it in two stages, arguing that your breath will not hold so long. Persevere, until you are able to be stirred by the upward sweep and the downward curve and the silent sequel. These represent the waking, dreaming and sleeping, and the fourth, beyond the three stages. It represents also the flower of one's individuality growing into a fruit and filling itself with sweet juice out of its own inner essence, and then the final release from the tree.

To develop the taste for liberation, Namasmara, or rolling the sweet Name of the Lord, saturated with sugar of His splendour on the tongue and in the mind, is the best course. This is an exercise that can be practised at all times and places by all, irrespective of creed or caste or sex or age or economic and social status. It will keep you in constant touch with the Infinite and so, it will transmit to you something of the Wisdom and Power of the Infinite.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

14. Objective, not object

Date: 18 July 1970 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Guru Purnima

THERE is need for a Guru, some one who can guide and lead, who has covered the road and knows its ups and downs. You may have the lamp, wick and oil; but, someone must light it. there may be some convolute drawn on the board, but, some one who knows that it is the letter G, the letter O and the letter D must teach the child to identify them as Jee, O and Dee. That is enough, some one must tell him that it has to be read, not as Jeeodee, but as God, and that the sound God represents the concretised Divine principle that is immanent in the Universe, that moves the dew to drop, the lotus to bloom, the butterfly to flit and the sun to rise, that is all the power, all the wisdom, all the love, all the miracle that ever was, is and will be. Those who teach about Nature and its laws, matter and its properties, forces and their pulls, teach to bind, not to liberate; it is a burden, not bliss. It provides a stone boat for you to cross the sea, with waves of grief and crests of joy. It cannot float you along; it is certain to sink. What you need to cross the sea is the bark of bhakthi, of assurance of Grace, of surrender to His Will. Throw off all burdens, become light, and you can trip across, with one step on one crest and another on the next. God will take you through. You have no need to bother at all. For when He does everything, who is concerned about what?

Love alone can alleviate anxiety

The spark of Love in you has to be cherished and fed so that it may reach God; then, every being will be God, every act will be Divine; every reaction you get from the outside world will be charged with Prema and sweetened with that nectar. You love the God in all beings and the God in all beings responds with love. Love God, though tribulation may be your lot, love Him though you are refused and rebuked; for, it is only in the crucible of travail that the metal is purified and cleared of blemish. Adoration of God has to be through one name and one form; but, that should not limit your loyalty to that particular province only. The dominion of God is horizonless; it envelops space and even beyond it. So do not allow the needs of worship or puuja to

put blinkers on your eye. Do not hate other names or other forms of the same Supra-Cosmic Magnificence, the Purushotthama. For, hate breeds fear, hate is the seedbed of anxiety, scandal and falsehood. It drains your mind of peace. You may have light without oil, fire without smoke, breeze without a bearer fanning you, a chillness in the air of your room in the sizzling heat of summer - but, unless you are at peace with yourselves and with those around you, your pulse will be quick and your blood will be racing in rage and rancour. Love alone can alleviate anxiety and allay fear. Nature is the vesture of God; immortality has put on the raiment of death; old age is latent in the new born child; darkness is sleeping in the womb of light and light is latent in the night. Reality is the basis, the unrecognised basis, of all this glamour and glitter of Appearance. The ocean of purity from which the nectar of immortality was churned threw forth the poison of Halahala, which threatened to destroy the three worlds.

Develop a due sense of values

Develop a sense of proportion, a due sense of values. Love the things of the world with the love that is their due, and not more. Suka, the purest of the sages and the wisest, was teaching a number of disciples including the wise emperor, Janaka. One day, Suka started his discourse late, for, Janaka had not yet come. The others resented the extra attachment that Suka bestowed on Janaka; they ascribed it to the fact that he was emperor of the realm; they felt that their Guru was unfortunately moved by these mundane considerations. Suka knew how their imagination was weaving falsehoods and prejudices. So, he derided to exercise this envy from their hearts. After Janaka came and the discourse lasted for some time, Suka so managed with his mystic powers that they could see in the far distance, near the horizon, the City of Mithila, the capital of the empire, caught in flames and crumbling in the conflagration. The disciples were listening to Atmabodha, the lesson that the Atma alone is real and that all else is appearance, imposed on the Atma, by the fog of illusion and ignorance. Every other disciple ran off, leaving the class and the preceptor, each to his own cell, afraid that the oncoming fire will burn his clothes or books. But, Janaka whose capital city was being reduced to ashes sat unmoved for he knew that what was being consumed by fire was only

appearance' and not reality'. Suka himself asked Janaka to go and assess the damage and try to save what can be saved from the fire. But Janaka replied that his treasure was the jnana he was getting from his master and that he was unconcerned about the objective world, approachable by external instruments of knowledge. At this, Suka revealed that the fire was a make-believe created by him to tell others the depth of real scholarship earned by Janaka, in contrast to their superficial learning.

There is nothing more precious than Prema

That was the type of Guru, that was the type of sishya (disciple) which was acclaimed as the standard by ancient India. Now, you know why India had such glory in the past, as the preceptor of hungry mankind. The role is once again being thrust on her and her sons have to get ready to prove by example that the ancient lessons can never become out-dated! The Atma, when it is believed is in the core of every one, will produce sympathetic vibrations in you, so that when the other is happy, you are happy and when he is in misery, you feel it to the same extent. That is Prema, love at its highest and sincerest. This Prema, when you cultivate it, will remove the weeds of anger and of malice. It will blossom into peace and calm. My teaching is prema, my message is prema, my activity is prema, my way of living is prema. There is nothing more precious than love, within human grasp. A word spoken in love is balm to the tired feet. You come to Prasanthi Nilayam, by road, rail or bus; you walk into the garden, exhausted and eager. I ask from the verandah, "O, when did you arrive?" Others may doubt, why is Baba asking this question? Does he not know? Surely, he must be knowing all about him and us. Why then this query? But you, to whom this question is put, you are elated that "Baba spoke to me, as soon as I walked in!" I seek to give you joy and so, though I know, I ask such questions; if I do not ask, but keep quiet, you feel forlorn and frustrated, don't you?

You know that I am asking you, not for the sake of the answer which I am already aware of, but for the sake of the satisfaction my words give you. So also, I may ask, "How are you?" though I know that you are well and that is why you could come or that you are unwell and that is the very reason that

has brought you to me! This is the Mayashakthi, the spirit that charms; if it speaks, if it casts its eye, if it does something, we derive pleasure thereby! It is Yogamaya, which makes you happy when I accost you or talk to you or do something to you.

Try to sense the commands of God

Do not entangle yourselves in inquiries about the caste, creed, custom and convictions of others whom you may meet in the Nilayam or on your way to this place and back. It is not a profitable habit. Look to your aim and your gains. Leave the rest alone. Let each one seek the fulfilment of his desire and leave it to Me to correct their course. Give up this search among others, among the objects of the outer world for peace and joy, satisfaction and wisdom. Develop the inner eye, not the exterior sight. Try to sense the commands of God, which will set your feet on the path of silence and steady sadhana. Grow in faith; that will make you an iron ball that cannot be lifted by any gust of wind. So too, be so firmly fixed in faith that a gust of grief or a puff of pain cannot agitate you and make you lose hold of God. There are some who worship my picture with great gusto, but, if the buffalo which was yielding two seers of milk per day starts giving one, they attribute it to the picture and the puuja, and they turn the picture to the wall and rue the day when they brought it home! Some who have been coming to me since fifteen or ten years have not yet invested deep devotion in their hearts, and so, are liable to fits of disbelief! How can you get Me on the film, if you turn the lens towards the world and click? Focus the heart correctly and click the switch of intelligence; that is the way of getting a clear picture of mine imprinted in your heart.

Mere formal worship cannot please God

The Kannada saint, Basavanna, sang that God is won, neither by Nadha (melody) nor by Veda (knowledge), but by Bhakthi (devotion, dedication). The devotee decides the Form which God takes, in order to install Himself in the heart that is cleansed by devotion. Mere formal worship or mumbling of hymns or mechanical routine performance of rituals cannot induce God to

reside in the heart. Such a heart is encumbered by trivia, by lumber, by cobwebs and impediments. I am not enamoured of the devotion that desires to show off, to impress others of its depth! I do not appreciate Adambara-bhakthi (pompous parading of devotion); I appreciate Anandha-bhakthi (devotion that is too deep for words and too intense to care for publicity). A letter on some scrap scribbled over in illegible style carrying some absurd bit of information will be carried by mail and will be delivered at the address with care and exactitude, provided it has the exact stamp fixed on it: A letter on costly note-paper carrying exquisite calligraphy and florid with a weighty message, worth its weight in gold, will lie neglected and condemned, if it has not affixed on it the stamp, which the postal regulation requires! The stamp of Bhakthi is what makes the prayer reach the destination, God; not the festoons, the fanfare, the heap of flowers or the festive nature of the feast-offerings. The simple sincere heart is the stamp, which makes the prayer travel fast.

Do not cast mud on the reputation of others

Do not bewail and say, "I love God but He does not reciprocate." God resounds, reacts, reflects. He gives you back ten times the love that you offer Him. Yearn, dedicate, surrender. Keep steadily on, do not move forward two steps today and retrace them tomorrow. The ants, poor little weak things, they move one behind the other in an unbroken stream, conscious of the goal and of nothing else, overcoming obstacles that come in the way. Ridicule and contempt must be met with joyous unconcern. Even Avathars have not been free from such feeble tactics from small men. Krishna was scandalised as a thief who killed Sathrajith and stole the Shymanthaka gem, which Sathrajith wore, while out hunting in the forest! He set out to prove the traducers wrong! He found that he had been slain by a lion and that the gem was in the cave of a bear (Jambavan) which had tied it up above the cradle of the tiny child-bear so that it may watch its brilliance and play! Do not yield to the temptation to cast mud on the reputation of others; it is a heinous pastime, fraught with disaster. Keep your tongue sweet, and innocent of slander. I am not also enamoured of scholarship or of boasts that one has read the Geetha a hundred times or the Bhagavatha a score of times. Observing in daily

practice one verse is far more important for progress. The barber can shave off the hair on the head for a few paise and the ochre robe is easy to procure and wear. There are some who revel in what they call Sahasranamarchana or Laksha archana - adoring me, pronouncing 1008 names or even a hundred thousand names! Calling out with sincere yearning once - that is enough to win Grace. I find some people breaking coconuts before the Nilayam, disturbing the silence by the bang! I do not know what benefit they get, except getting the coconut for the chutney they make for lunch!

Foster, feed and fertilise Dharma

I have come for "Dharmasamsthapanarthaya" - for the restoration of Dharma - the Right that sustains the earth, that ensures peace among men and among the nations. Live in Dharma, promote Dharma by your acts, thoughts and words - that is the puuja I appreciate, for that is paying reverence to the task which I have set before Myself. Foster Dharma, feed Dharma, fertilise Dharma, encourage Dharma - it is My Work and I will be pleased. When you meet each other, do not shout Hello! Or Bye-bye, or some silly chatter. Let the moment of meeting be sanctified by the remembrance of God; say, Ram Ram or Ore, or Hari Ore, or Sai Ram. What you call etiquette is only 'a ticket' to barbarism; you pronounce goodbye, as if it was the Thelugu word "guddi-abbai," meaning "a blind boy!" How can mere chatter lead you to the bliss you seek? How can the mirage quench one's thirst? Its waters arise from no mountain range nor do they fall into any sea! Since I have the responsibility to correct you and lead you into the right path, I advise you against 'the evil of the eye;' do not relish ugly, vulgar, demeaning, degrading sights, sights such as the horrid film posters that are paraded at all city squares to draw you away into vice and crime. You must also avoid the 'evil of the ear;' relishing scandal, blasphemy, tidings of hate and greed, talk by the godless and the wicked, who have no love in their hearts and brotherliness in their deeds.

Keep away from all evils to succeed in dhyana

Be guarded against the evil of the tongue, evil of the mind,' and 'evil of the

hand' - that is to say, desist from words that injure another's reputation, harm his interests, and cause another pain; desist from evil emotions and passions; keep away from bad deeds. It is only when these evils are absent that Dhyana on your Ideal can succeed. Any trace of these will tarnish the mind and create turmoil and turbulence. Do all acts as offerings to God; do not classify some as "my work" and some as "His work." All work is His; He inspires, He helps, He executes, He enjoys, He is pleased, He reaps, He sowed. He alone exists, for, all this manifoldness is but He, seen through the mirror of Nature! Everything is for the attainment of the Supreme to be utilised for that high purpose. Nothing is to be used as itself, for itself. For Sai Bhakthas, this is the only proper way of life. No padhartham (no selfish object); all parartham (only selfless objectives). And, the objective is Realising the Reality, that is, the Atma, God!

15. Guru God

Date: 18 July 1970 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

GURU POURNAMI is sacred for many reasons: this day; the seeker who suffers from identification with the false objective world is initiated into the reality of the 'unseen motivator' within him; this day; those who have no urge to tread the spiritual path are inspired to seek the bliss which that path will confer; this day, aspirants are helped to achieve the consciousness of the One, which is known by many Names and through many Forms, in various languages and lands. With the rise of the Sun, the world is bathed in light and heat. So too, with the oncoming of Guru pournami the human heart is bathed in peace and security. Guru pournami is not just one day in the year, marked out in the calendar. It is all days when the Mind of Man (whose presiding deity is the Moon) becomes full of pleasant coolness, fully illumined with the light from the Sun, (intelligence, discrimination). The contemplation of death is the very foundation of spiritual discipline. Without it, man is certain to fall into falsehood, pursuing the objects of sense-pleasure, and trying to accumulate material, worldly riches. Death is no ominous calamity; it is a step into the auspicious brightness beyond. It is inescapable; it cannot be bribed away, adjourned by certificates of good conduct, or testimonials from the great. Once born, death is the inevitable end. But, it is possible to escape birth and thereby, escape death. For, birth is the consequence of karma. Do Karma which breeds no consequence, no after-effects which have to be lived through - and you need not be born again. Engage in activity, as duty; or engage in activity, as 'offering of worship to God' - then, such activity will breed no after-effects. This problem of escaping death, achieving immortality, Amrithathwam, is the very core of inquiry.

Guru scatters darkness through light

When acts are done as offering to God, one will not be elated at success or disheartened by failure, for, He prompts, He helps, He grants joy or grief as He wills, as He cares. The doer will have no attachment to the fruit of the deed; so, he will not be bound to its consequence; it will leave no trace on his

personality which will shape him beyond death. Gu means darkness and ru means light. Guru scatters darkness through light; he imparts wisdom which roots out ignorance. Render unto him as much homage as he deserves, but, not more. You repeat the shloka

Guru Brahma gurur Vishnuh, Gurur dhevo Maheswarah

Gurussakshath Parabrahma Thasmai Shri Gurave namah which is usually interpreted as indicating that the Guru is Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara and that he is the visible Parabrahma. But, it is capable of a nobler interpretation: "Brahma is the Guru, Vishnu is the Guru, Maheshwara is the Guru, really Parabrahma is the Guru." Do not seek human Gurus, however great their reputation. They are not gu (gunatheetha - beyond the Gunas); they are bound by the qualities they have developed. They are not ru (beyond Form); they are still in need of Form, so that they may conceive of Reality. Themselves limited, how can they communicate to you the Unlimited? Pray to the God within you, the Maheshwara, the Vishnu, the Brahma, or Parabrahma Principle to reveal Itself. Accept that as the Guru and you will be illumined.

Subordinate the mind to the pure intelligence

When the Guru is himself struggling in the dark, how can he lead others on? When he is himself a beggar, in search of moneyed men, how can he be free and strict as a teacher? When moha (infatuation) predominates, moksha is a will-o'-the-wisp. You may eat a tiny grain of sugar like an ant and be contented with the gain; but, you must grow into an elephant that will eat with relish a whole bundle of sugar-cane! The Gayathri manthra is a prayer for the progressive upsurge of intelligence so that Truth may be grasped by the seeker. Subordinate the mind to the pure intelligence which is but a reflection of the God within. Then, you have the Guru of Gurus, as Guide.

16. Labels are libels

Date: 19 July 1970 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Guru Purnima

GURU POORNIMA is sacred for many reasons: this day, the seeker who suffers from the delusion that the objective world is as real as himself is guided into the Truth; this day, those who have not felt the urge to explore the Reality are inspired to seek the spring of Bliss inside them; this day, disciples offer gratitude at the feet of the preceptor for the gift of light; this day, pilgrims to the Lotus Feet of God study the guide books and the maps. When the Sun rises, the world is blessed with heat and light. When the Guru blesses, the pupil gets peace and joy. Guru Poornima is not over when it becomes tomorrow. It is not a date marked in the calendar. It is all days when the Mind of Man, whose presiding deity is the Moon, is Poorna (Full), with cool refreshing rays, which it receives, in the first instance, from the Sun (Intelligence). The mind must derive illumination from the intellect, the discriminative faculty, and not from the senses, which are the deluding forces. When sensual desire tarnishes the Mind, it cannot earn peace and joy.

Do not cultivate too much attachment to things of the world, which appeal to carnal desires and sensual thirsts. A moment comes when you have to depart empty handed, leaving all that you have laboriously collected. and proudly called your own. Persons who live in the Prasanthi Nilayam as well as those who come here for short stay have dozens of bags, boxes and bundles, vessels of various sizes in plenty - in fact, a truck load of pots and pans. But, look at the American sadhaks who are here. They have come across the oceans or the continents, thousands of miles, with a bag, a rug and a can. You spend most of your time worrying about the goods you pile around yourself.

The five points of spiritual discipline

I am insisting on five points of discipline for the permanent residents of Prasanthi Nilayam. I shall tell you about them, for your homes and your villages have to be transformed into Prasanthi Nilayams. They are: (1) Silence. This is the first step in sadhana; it makes the other steps easy. It

promotes selfcontrol; it lessens chances of anger, hate, malice, greed, pride. Besides, you can hear His Footsteps, only when silence reigns in the mind. (2) Cleanliness: It is the doorway to Godliness. Inner and outer cleanliness are essential, if you desire to install God in your heart. (3) Service: Service saves you from the agony you get when another suffers; it broadens your vision, widens your awareness, deepens your compassion. All waves are on the same sea, from the same sea, merge in the same sea. Seva teaches you to be firm in this knowledge. (4) Love: Do not calculate or weigh the reaction, result or reward. Love calls; love responds. Love is God, live in Love.

(5) Hatelessness: Adhweshta Sarva Bhoothanam - No being is to be looked down upon as secondary, inferior, unimportant, or expendable. Each has its allotted role in the drama designed by the Almighty. Do not slight, insult or injure any being; for, He is in every being and your slight becomes a sacrilege.

You are deriving exaltation, while worshipping a carved stone idol in the temple. How much more exalted you should be, while worshipping the self-same God, residing in the temple-hearts of the men and women around you! And, not merely in the human frames; in every bird, beast, tree, pebble and speck of dust! Eknath, the Maharashtra Saint, had that Vision.

Riches are hindrances to realise the Truth

The Grace of God cannot be won by mere repetition of His glories; utter the name of God, with its halo of meaning clear in the mind and soaking into your acts and feelings. The Americans who sang bhajans now paid attention to the raga and thala (the tune and the time); they have also learnt the meaning of each song and they sing from the heart. So they respect the bhava also. Thus bha(va), ra(ga), tha(la) - Bharatha - entitles them to be called Bharatheeyas! The culture of Bharatha is built on rathi (attachment) to Bhagavan; they have that too, and so, their claims are stronger.

The Guru reminds the pupil of the inevitability of death and the transitory nature of existence upon the earth. When Yajnavalkya resolved to go into the

forest for a life of asceticism, he called his two wives before him and proposed to divide the riches he had earned between them. Before accepting her share, Maithreyi asked her husband whether the riches will help her to realise the Truth and achieve Immortality. When she was told that they were hindrances and not helps, she refused to be burdened. Nachikethas refused the gift of empire, affluence, and years of healthy life. Prahladha taught the same lesson to his playmates. Buddha sought to solve the mystery of suffering; renunciation of attachment was the first step in the sadhana he undertook.

Showing off your devotion demeans Divinity

They had implicit faith in the existence of God; their lives revolved on the axis of that faith. But, now, people flaunt their faithlessness; they shout that there is no God, for, they have not found Him during their search. Now, the word God gained currency, because of the existence of God. A word emerges from the tongues of people in order to indicate an object or an idea, which they have cognised. A non-existent entity will not have a label to identify it! Words indicating nonexisting things like 'sky-flower,' 'barren mother,' 'hare-horn,' are only compound words. The words sky and flower are separate and the absurdity arises only when they are compounded together so too the words, barren and mother, and the words, hare and horn. Every word expresses an experience; every experience is the consequence of a desire; every desire is the progeny of the impact of an object on the senses; the objective world is the superimposition of diversity on the One; this superimposition is maya; maya is owned and acknowledged as 'mine' - 'mama, maya' - by the Lord. It is a manifestation of Leela (Divine Sport, Artfulness), the expression of the upsurge of ego in the Absolute! The Guru teaches you this and tells you how to rend the veil of maya. Man, who is basically akin to the beasts, can roam in either of two jungles: the non-Vedhic and the Vedhic. In the non-Vedhic, life is nourished by the living; wildness is rampant; the teachers are enmeshed in tawdry tangles; they are keen to put their long hands in your purse, rather than watch your heart or mind; they are interested more in your fortune than in your fate. In the Vedhic jungle, calm and quiet prevail. Leonine majesty in the form of realised souls resides joyously therein. The silence filters into the

heart and all mysteries are clear. Be simple and sincere. It is sheer waste of money to burden the pictures and idols in the shrines and altars of your homes with a weight of garlands, and to parade costly utensils and vessels and offerings, to show off your devotion. This is deception; it demeans Divinity, imputing to it the desire for pomp and publicity. I ask only for purity of heart, to shower Grace. Do not posit distance between you and Me; do not interpose the formalities of the Guru-sishya (Preceptordisciple) relationship, or even the altitudinal distinctions of the God-Devotee relationship, between you and Me. I am neither Guru nor God; I am You; You are I; that is the Truth. There is no distinction. That which appears so is the delusion. You are waves; I am the Ocean. Know this and be free, be Divine.

A strong Will is the best tonic, the will becomes strong when you know that you are a child of immortality or a person who has earned the Grace of the Lord.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

17. A prize to the prize-giver

Date: 23 July 1970 / Location: Brindavan

THE College is celebrating its First Annual Day today. It is now a year-old baby. A baby that has grown one year is more difficult to manage than a newborn child! For, it starts to toddle around and is subject to slips, falls, and straying into danger spots and accidents! The mother, ayahs and nurses have therefore to be more vigilant hereafter. The child may wander on to the road, and get hit by scooters, cycles, cars and trucks. So too, this College may meet all kinds of distractions and diversions, like envy; pride, prejudice, which will ruin its health. The Mother (The Managing Committee), the Ayah (The Principal) and the Nurses (The pupils) have to be extra careful, for, any negligence on their part, any licence, will mar the future of this Institution. They have to serve the College in full co-operation with each other and with a sincere desire to build up fine traditions.

The Himalayas, which form the bastion of Bharath, are symbols of its might and majesty; they remind us of the purity that we should develop in ourselves; they teach us that we should be as firm, as unshaken as the snow-clad peaks, as unaffected by the noise and turmoil of the bazars of mankind. The Ganga that originates from these ranges is the symbol of the rectitude that is the basis of Indian culture. The Yamuna, which also rises in the Himalayas, is the symbol for the sense of justice, that is a valuable element in its make-up; the Saraswathi is the symbol of the sincerity that is the very basis of spiritual discipline, recommended in the scriptures. The Saraswathi is the subterranean river that joins the Ganga and Yamuna at Prayag. Bharatheeya culture will remain strong and sustaining so long as the Ganga flows. Even if the Ganga dries, the culture will remain fresh and fulfilling. For, the world needs it and it is charged with eternal values.

Character is more precious than wealth

Children of Bharath have a great responsibility cast upon them. The wish to develop faith in the culture and encourage its practice arose in Me recently

and I felt that students have to be the pioneers in this renaissance. So, this College was founded and is being run on proper lines. Special emphasis is laid here on the fostering of character, which is more precious than wealth or physical strength or skill or scholarship. You may have millions; but that will not ensure mental peace. You may have strong physique; but, ask the sturdy men in the entourage of the Governor who is here whether they have mental peace. They will reply, no. We are also giving in this College instruction on the fundamental principles of all faiths, from the sacred books, like the Geetha, the Quoran, the Bible, the Dhammapadha. The feast of Anandha that is thus provided to the young minds is being relished with great satisfaction. This evening, the students are putting on stage a play from the Mahabharatha, named, Krishna Rayabara, the "Peace Mission of Krishna," written, taught and directed by Me, instilling in them, as well as those who witness the play, the great lesson that joy is the interval between one stage of grief and another! The grief of exile was followed by the triumph on the battlefield and that was overshadowed by the heart-rending grief of Dhroupadhi, at the slaughter of her five children by the vengeful Aswatthama, son of the Brahmin Preceptor, who taught the Pandavas the art of archery. This is the theme of the play.

Peace springs from the heart within

Endurance, with joyful resignation, of the ups and downs of life is the royal road to peace. Every one craves Sukha and Shanthi (happiness and peace); but there is no one to instruct youth how to win them. The Ramayana and the Mahabharatha are reservoirs of knowledge for the seekers of peace. They are replete with examples and precepts which are inspiring and timely. By taking the teachings to heart purity can be attained. The pure heart directed towards God and reflecting His Image is indeed Heaven, Vaikuntha or Kailasha. It is a national disgrace if the sons and daughters of India (which was for centuries the Light of Asia and the Guru of the West) grope in the dark, blinded by the scintillations of the scientific inventions of the West. But Peace does not drop from outer space! It springs from the heart within.

College education gives you the chance to earn a few rupees and live thereupon. But, unless it destroys certain illusions that are nourished by the

common level of mankind, your lives will not be happy. One illusion which is basically undesirable is: living under the impression that you are the body and that you are destroyed with the death of the body. Another illusion is happiness consists in accumulating money or knowledge or comforts or reputation. Trying to be happy through such accumulation is like getting into the Madras Bus and hoping to reach Bangalore. What is happiness? It is the state of mind, which is unaffected by fortune, good or bad. By systematic education, the mind can attain that state. If activity is done as worship, then, the mind will be steady and free from anxiety.

Mind control is the fundamental need of everyone

The Governor of Mysore was saying just now that students must keep away from the controversies of politics and not get distracted from studies by them. I advise you to concentrate on study; for, politics at present and perhaps always is a sordid game, where passions run high and prejudices are cultivated, as a respectable policy! Rajakeeya is the word in Thelugu for politics; but, it is more correctly described as Raja-kayya, kayya meaning "factional right!" You must all learn to become a new type of leaders, leaders who have passed through the crucible of Seva (selfless service) as Sadhana; leaders who have passed through school and college and mastered the problems of the present and future, in the light of the past; leaders who appreciate the traditions and culture of this country. This is the job for which you have to prepare yourself. The Thelugu word for job is Udhya. Mark the word Udh-yoga; 'ud' means upward, rising, emergent. So, it is the progress in yoga that defines the nature and purpose of the job. And, what is yoga? Yoga is, as Pathanjali says, chiththa vriththi nirodhah - the control of the agitations and anxieties and fears of the mind. The people in charge of administration are devising various controls and conducting propaganda for popularising them. They have Food Control, Gold Control, Birth Control and various other plans, but, the most fundamental thing needed, namely, Mind Control is absent! You may sit in an air-cooled room, but if your mind is agitated by anger, envy, greed or fear, you will find the room pretty hot.

Dress should be decent, not outlandish

Education must also remove hatred between the pilgrims on the various roads to God. There is only one God, one Goal, one Law, one Religion and one Reason. You have come to Kadugodi, from a hundred different villages and towns, but you have all come to have darshan of one Swami (Baba).

This College will pay attention to providing a complete education, namely, Karma marga, Dharma marga and Brahma marga (path of dedicated action, of righteousness and of spirituality), all three. You may continue in this College or join some other College later on or go home after finishing your studies, but, wherever you are, you must shine forth as recipients of this special attention. You are sure to inspire others by your example of integrity, sincerity and spiritual yearning. Dr. Gokak mentioned externals of modern living like foppish shirts and sideburns. Yes; I like simplicity, I like dress that will not discourage people from approaching you for a kind word, a bit of service, a helping hand. It must be clean and decent; not outlandish and queer. It should not be worn to attract attention. Just as you desire to wear clean comfortable clothes for the body, desire also clean consoling exercises for the mind, like japam, dhyanam (repetition of holy word and meditation), etc. Use the eyes to watch wholesome things, the feet to proceed to the House of God, the hands to serve the embodiments of God moving around you as men, the tongue to soothe pain, praise virtue, and glorify God. Do not use the eye to vulgarise your brain, the feet to stand in queue for deleterious films. You saw now Suddhir, the blind boy, carrying away a number of prizes for his pre-eminence in studies and in general performance at College. Blindness has deprived him of one route towards degeneration. Of course, I do not say that one should lose his eyes in order to be perfect. The greater heroism is to have eyes and not use them for one's downfall.

The fault for students vagaries lies with elders

The arrangements for the College Day were all made by the boys themselves; they have been at it for days; and, today, they have not had a moment's rest; though I asked them to take an hour off for lunch, they said, they would much rather finish the decoration on the dais and keep the area clean and

charming. Boys are really good, willing to do their duty and shine well in studies as well as in the field of service. The fault, for their vagaries and waywardness and for their occasional sprees of indiscipline, lies with the elders who set before them poor examples of truth and self-control. Urged on by the atmosphere of false values and fake activities, they become infected. The boys of this College will exercise a healthy influence on their kith and kin, as well as on the villages to which they belong. The towns have become, as a result of the incompetence and intrigues of elders, hotbeds of restlessness; that is why this College has been established in rural surroundings.

Character is the most precious gift of education. I consider gratitude as the chief component; gratitude above all, to the parents, for this gift of life. Revere the parents, who are sacrificing their comforts in order to give you this College education. If any parent bewails, "I sent my son to Sai Baba College and, he has turned against me, he has no respect for my wishes, he is as good as lost to me," it will cause the College great grief. If on the other hand the parent says, "I sent my son to Sai Baba's College and my son is now so obedient, so willing, so eager to respect my least wish; of course, my wish is ever his prosperity. But, yet, previously he used to grumble a lot, and do things under protest and in a half-hearted way," this will be the prize you give to the College.

You got prizes today from the College for proficiency in sports, studies, elocution, essay writing, etc. You must give the College a prize, and do you know what that is? When your parents shed tears of joy when they see you healthy, happy and good, that is the prize the College gets, leading useful honourable lives, they are full of joy. That joy is the prize you give your College!

Medicine and hospitalisation are for those who doubt and hesitate and argue about this doctor being more efficient than the other, this drug being more powerful than the rest. For those who rely on the Supreme Doctor, His Name is enough drug.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

18. The Arjuna attitude

Date: July 1970 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

ETERNITY extends before man; space too is horizonless; but, life is short and very unsure. Therefore, man has to make the best use of the years allotted to him in this world, and try to become one with the Absolute, so that these entrances and exits may be ended. That is his Dharma, the duty he has to do for himself. Know that Dharma and live according to its dictates - that is the meaning and purpose of life. So, the Almighty who has made creatures evolve unto human beings comes down as Man, whenever that creature forgets or ignores this basic duty to itself. The Rishis of India have, through the process of purifying their intuition, discovered this fact and sensed the message that the Incarnations bring, the Avathars carry. Many times in human history, Avathars have come and awakened man. But, the animal past, and the demonic delusion drag him into the mire, where he foolishly revels in sensual, physical and transient trivialities. This is a splendid chance to fulfil your human existence. The Anandha (Bliss) that you hope to derive from kith and kin, from wealth and worldly fame, is but a pale shadow of the Anandha that resides in the spring of your heart, where God dwells. Try to contact that spring; go to the very source; be centred in the Atma or; God within. Few seek real Anandha; the many are led away by the pseudo-anandha of the senses, the intellect and the mind. Real Anandha springs only from Truth. And, Sathya is the Dharma or duty of each to himself. Seek Truth, serve Truth, be Truth.

Pursuit of property cannot uplift the heart

Truth will reveal itself when the heart is saturated in Love. Man's nature is fundamentally Truth; his breath is fundamentally Love; his blood is fundamentally Tolerance. Falsehood, hatred and faction are characteristics of beastly or demonic natures. They are acquired from society, or ignorance or greed. Today, man is shaped by the head, rather than the heart. It is cleverness that is admired, that pays. But, peace and joy emanate from the heart not the head. The heart teaches compassion, awe, reverence, humility, equanimity, sympathy - qualities that bind men in love, and turn them

towards righteousness and the source and sustenance of the Universe, namely, God. The pursuit of property and possessions cannot uplift the heart into the heights of Bliss. You are contemporaries of the Avathar come to guard and guide; you have the capacity to catch the message and canalise it into action and activity. Make the utmost of this chance. The Message can be grasped only by those who yearn to know the Duty, to which they have to be loyal. Or else, it will sound hollow and mechanical, like the prattle of a phonograph record. But, if the heart is ploughed by that yearning and made ready for the seed, the harvest will certainly follow.

Arjuna was the brother-in-law of Krishna; he was a close companion and even a chum of the Lord, for many decades! Krishna, remember, was 84 years old, at the time of the Kurukshethra battle, when He served Arjuna as a non-combatant charioteer! But, yet, it was only on that battlefield that the Message of the Bhagavath Geetha was imparted to him! Why? Arjuna developed the requisite attitude for the reception and retention of the Message only then. First Arjuna was puzzled about his duty and was tremendously anxious to get light thrown upon it. He was torn between two paths, and in spite of all his discrimination and detachment he was at a loss to discover what his Dharma was. Second, he surrendered his judgement to God, and declared, out of the deepest recesses of his heart, in indescribable agony, "I am your disciple; I dedicate my entire being to your Will; tell me what to do and I shall obey."

Every deed must be a step in the pilgrimage to God

Arjuna is also called Partha - a name applicable to all men, for, it is derived from prithivi (earth). It means earthly, earthborn. So, this situation is a reminder to every man on earth. If only you cultivate a deep yearning for guidance about your appropriate Dharma, and if only you surrender your will, your intellect, your emotions, your impulses to God, He will lead you to Himself and endow you with Supreme Bliss. Thirdly, Arjuna was overcome by Love, though it took on the colour of egoism and delusion. He felt that it was wrong and useless to kill his kinsmen, to plunge the land in misery, to slaughter the armies ranged against him. He preferred a life sustained on

aims to ruling over an empire won by the sword. This compassion, though misplaced and based on an unreal sense of values, had its own appeal, to the Lord, who resolved to transmute it into the renunciation of the attachment to the deed, and the fruits of the deed. Every deed must take man nearer the goal; it must be a step in the pilgrimage to God. It must cleanse the emotions, correct the attitude, clarify the path and co-operate in the consummation. This has to be the constant care and vigilance of every seeker and aspirant to Bliss.

Maya creates the universe; it spreads before the mind the vast paraphernalia of the objective world. It is a narthakee (dancer), an enchantress who entices the intelligence and traps the senses. This na-rtha-kee can be subdued by kee-rtha-na (mark the change of syllables). Keerthana is the concentrated contemplation of the glory of God.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

19. Yaaga is Thyaaga

Date: 15 August 1970 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: India Independence Day

ERADI told you just now that Bali Chakravarthi developed enormous conceit and as a consequence, he was punished by God, being trampled by Him into the lower regions. As a consolation, he was allowed to come up during this Festival and derive happiness, watching the prosperity of his old realm. Well, conceit is a poisonous weed in any field of activity. Aham (Ego) is the core around which the personality is built. It is the Form, which is essentially necessary for every embodied being. It is the Aham, which every being has to be within, temporarily, until he is freed. You should not burden yourself with attachment towards property power or authority. You may have them, on trust, as a sacred responsibility, as a temporary keeper, but, don't get attached to them, wailing when they melt or hailing when they grow! Of course, there must be the feeling of Aham, or 'I', until, by constant contemplation of the 'I', being 'He', the two merge and there is only We - He and I - at last. Just consider the word Aham! A, (as in Alpha but shorter) is the first letter of the alphabet, the prime vowel that emanates from the throat, when the mouth is opened; the second sound ham is produced by the mouth closed sharp and tight. All letters lie in between. The vowels and consonants that intervene are called A kshara - the Indestructible, the Eternal, the Ever-present. So, Aham is the A-kshara, the Indestructible Self, that is all this and more. To identify it with lesser things or smaller conceptions is a sacrilege on its glory. It is due to the delusion that has overtaken the reason, the will, and the mind stuff that you imagine yourself to be this feeble body and its appurtenances. Arjuna confessed that he had got rid of that delusion or moha. Nashto mohah, he said. "My moha or delusion has gone; I have recovered the memory of my reality," he said.

God can be concretised anywhere by sincere prayer

Practise swa-vimarshana (self-examination): Who am I? Am I the mind stuff, the will, the discriminating faculty, the intellect, the senses, the body, the limbs? Realise that you are not any of these or all of these. You are the breath

of God; it is through Him that you are alive, active, aware. But, when you are asked where God is, you point your finger towards the sky, and say, "Up above"! "When someone asks you where Swami is, you say, Upstairs and point towards the room on the first floor!" You know that I am by your side also. You remember God when distress assaults you; you forget Him when you are free from it. You do not realise that I am everywhere at all times, that God is not confined to the upper regions of the sky or to one little room where you keep his picture! He can be concretised anywhere by sincere prayer. Pray to Him, one-pointedly, with any Form or Name. He will answer; only, do not change the name and form, as fancy flits; then, concentration will be impossible. All names are His; all Forms are His; but, when you are striving to concretise Him, it is best to select the Name and Form that appeal to you most. Bali was a grandson of Prahladha, the great Rakshasa (demon) devotee of the Lord! Bali was engaged in conquest; commandeering the wealth accumulated by others, exploiting, experiencing the elation of the satisfied ego, and such other demonic exercises. He had to realise that Divinity was his reality, that consciousness of that divinity is the summum bonum of life, and not eating and sleeping, earning and spending, saving and scattering.

The master of five elements can tread on all

Onam is not to be celebrated by feasting and fun. It has a deeper significance which has to be grasped. The Yaga (holy ritual) which Bali celebrated attracted God, in the form of Vamana - "the young wandering student-disciple!" For, Yaga is Thyaga (sacrifice); not the sacrifice of animals but of one's own encumbrances, including wealth and property. The Lord was so pleased that He presented Himself before Bali and asked for gifts and homage! Shukraacharya, the family priest of Bali, came in the way, and like all people who stand in the way of good deeds, he was punished; he lost his one eye! Why should anyone oppose gifts to God! For, how can you name the giving to the owner what belongs to him as "gift?" He who thinks that one can give God what does not belong to Him is 'blind,' has no 'vision;' that is what the experience of Shukra teaches. The Universe is composed of the Five Elements and is cognisable by the five senses of perception. He who is the Master of the five elements can tread on all. That is what Vamana did as

Thrivikrama, when he asked and got from Bali, three feet of ground! With one foot, He measured the entire Earth; with the second, He measured Space. The third He planted on Bali's head and pressed him into nether regions. One gets the Liberating Wisdom of the Reality through Grace or Prayer or Prema (Love). Here, Bali got it through Grace.

A gift must be made without pride or publicity

You cannot achieve the goal, through good works alone. In Good, there is an extra O; a something that is mere zero) That is to say, the desire which prompts you, the fruit which entices you, the reputation that tantalises you - these are all sheer Zero, a big O. Leave it off; then, we have Good with a zero less, with no self-intruding, that is to say, we have GOD. Desire plus Life, is Man! Life minus desire is God. Bali got blessed, through Thyaga (Renunciation, Detachment)! He became monarch of the nether regions and God agreed to be his gate-keeper, guardian and guide! What a blessing! He had the ambition to become Indhra, the God of Gods, the Ruler of Heaven. It is said that anyone who performs a hundred Yagas in a row, with ceremonial rectitude, will automatically become Indhra. The Indhra who is installed thus once is ever reluctant to yield his chair to another 100-yaga person! So he tries his "worst" to disturb and desecrate the last few of the hundred, so that no one can complete a century! Bali too was within 36 minutes of completing the hundredth; the crisis of enthroning a Rakshasa (Demonic Individual) as God of Gods had to be averted. And, Vamana arrived on the scene, asking for alms - just three feet of Ground! O, what a foot He grew, in a trice! Indhra was saved from becoming an ex-Indhra! The 100th Yaga was abandoned, due to the calamity that happened to the Monarch, his displacement and his transmutation into a humble servant of God. Dhana (Gift) is a meritorious act, if it is rendered to the needy, at the time of need, in a manner that fulfils the need; it must be made without pride or publicity; without the superior air of the giver, without rubbing into the mind of the receiver that he is being helped to stand on his own legs, with no contempt contaminating the mind of the giver. Give, as an act of worship to the Divine that you wish to adore in the person to whom you are offering what God has given you for this very purpose! One person in heaven asked an angel how it was that he could get

into Heaven, and sit on the very throne of Indhra! When told that his gifts on earth had entitled him to it, he gifted Heaven itself to that angel; so, he rose up to even higher status, it is said!

Namasmarana will help to grow detachment and love

The qualities of detachment and love will grow in you, when you stick to one discipline: Namasmarana! Have the name on the tongue, and in the thought, all your waking hours. See every one as the person whose Name you adore; hear all tales told by people around you as tales of His Glory, His Leda! Love will remove selfishness and expand your consciousness, through sympathy and compassion.

Today is Onam, the great Kerala Festival. Have special prayer today: Ask God to develop your sense of detachment; ask Him to put you on the road which leads to self-realisation; ask Him to endow you with light and reason to know and experience the Highest Bliss.

Devotion is not a part-time affair

Thyagaraja was invited by the Maharaja of Thanjavur, Sarfoji Maharaj, the descendent of Shivaji, so that he may be loaded with precious gifts (Nidhi)! But, the poet-singer-mystic-saint took it as a trial, trying to entice him into error. He asked the question: Is Nidhi more valuable as giver of joy, or, is Sannidhi (Divine Presence) more useful for the purpose? Of course, the answer was clear. Thyagaraja's brother who was counting on the treasure which the Maharaja will bestow on him grew wild with anger at his refusal to go to the Durbar. He pushed his brother out of doors, and did not allow him to re-enter! He threw the idols, which he was worshiping, through which he had realised Rama as the indweller of everyone, into the flooded river!

Thukaram was honoured by the gift of a gorgeous palanquin and caskets of jewels by Shivaji. But, Thukaram said, "Ram! I will not take my hands from off Your feet, for, I know you are waiting to escape from me, the moment I release the grasp to hold anything other than your Divine Feet." When

Thyagaraja passed away, his wife kept his head on her lap, and when the saint was calling out "Rama!" "Rama!" in ecstatic agony three hot tear-drops fell from her eyes, on the face of the dying Thyagaraja. "O, I am the property of Rama! But, you are still the property of Kama!" Thyagaraja exclaimed. Devotion is complete surrender; not a part-time affair or something taken on credit! Every bit has to be earned and deposited; there are no overdrafts. Grace is won by Sadhana and Sath-sheela (discipline and good character). Sublimate the love you have for the pleasures of the world, for the objects of the world, into Love for God. Do not waste even a single second, in idle scandal or hollow praise. Bend your head before God, welcoming whatever be His Will, then, you too can have the Lord as your guide and guard.

Cleanse the heart
with the water of prema
and the detergents
prayer and contrition,
so that the stains of desire
might be removed.
Then God will pour
His Grace into it.
You should give up
loka bhranthi and
deha bhranthi -
attachment to the external world
and towards the body -
if you yearn for God.
There is no use trying to
have one foot in one boat and
the other foot in another boat.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

20. Whom to serve?

Date: 16 August 1970 / Location: Anantapur / Occasion: Rotary Club

TIME flows fast, the physical frame of man deteriorates every second until it disintegrates in death; the mind that operates in that frame flutters from one desire to another without rest; but, man does not know, nor does he care to know! He revels in untruth, injustice and unrest. Today, wherever we turn our attention, we find only fear, faction and fury. On one side, we find scientists circling in the sky like eagles, and moving under the sea like fish! On the other, we see the pitiful sight of man struggling upon the hard ground under his feet, not knowing how to live in Love thereon! He lives in dire distress, in hate and anxiety, daggers drawn, brother against brother, just for a morsel of food! Unaware of his duty, he pursues ruinous ideals. Institutions devoted to the service of mankind like the Lions Club and the Rotary Club are thriving in various countries. I have myself visited some of these in Kampala, Jamnagar, Bombay and other places and noted the enthusiasm of the members. When you grasp the significance of the word, Service, you will find that it is not so much the service of others, but, service for yourself! Once you feel the distinction that the other person is foreign, then, service becomes patronage; it loses its savour. It fosters the evil of egotism. The person served also feels hurt, is aware that he is inferior. Such service is quite against the Sadhana called Seva.

Sincerity has disappeared from human affairs

This feeling of superiority and inferiority based on possessions and material consideration has resulted in the unrest that has engulfed this land today. Man is today afraid of himself, he feels that the house in which he lives has no deep foundation and so, it may fall on him any moment. The spiritual is the only strong foundation for the house in which man has to spend his life. When man bases his life on the faith that all are endowed with the same Divine Spark, there will not be fear and hatred any more, in human relations. "Brothers and Sisters!" has become just a conventional form of address when a man gets up to speak; it does not come from the heart. Sincerity has

disappeared from human affairs. Mention was made of the poverty and the deficit in food that prevails in this country. There is enough food for all, provided food is conserved by wise consumption by individuals, and by society. More can be produced when people are strengthened by faith in their own resources and capacity. Self-condemnation is the proper tonic for national reconstruction. If only man becomes aware of his potentiality, there is nothing impossible for him. Grace, once gained, can ensure plenty and prosperity. But, it is difficult to arouse a person who is only pretending to sleep; if he is really asleep a touch is enough to awaken him. India is not immersed in sleep; it pretends to sleep!

Religion will always bind and not divide

The prime cause for the increasing hatred between man and man, village and village, region and region, is the avarice that has infected the individual. It has destroyed contentment, created factions, brought about splits and multiplied misery all round. Removing the head is not the remedy for headache. Removing religion from the curriculum of life is not the remedy for rivalry between religious communities. Discover the causes for the rivalry and remove them; that is enough.' Religion will always bind, it will not divide. It unifies, does not disintegrate. The scientist investigates all that is perceptible by the senses. But, the saint travels beyond the realm of the senses, the intellect and even the imagination, into the regions touched by rarefied intuition. The Rotarians must try to understand both realms and appreciate the value of both disciplines.

I would advise you to carry out service programmes in the rural areas in preference to urban. For, they are more in need of sympathy and more capable of appreciating it. Again, I would request you to emphasise self-control and education as more beneficial methods of family planning than the artificial methods now being propagated, for, these methods augur great harm to the moral and physical health of the people. Yoga is defined as chiththa virthhi nirodha (the control of the wavering mind). Propagate the yoga philosophy. That will have more lasting and more farreaching results on the family than these contrivances. Faith in God has to be implanted in the

minds of the children for it is an anchor for the ship of life, when it is tossed about the stormy seas ahead. The epics of India have great examples of faith and fortitude which can attract children and youth. I am glad Balavihars are also part of the programme of work you have envisaged. Treat it as a valuable limb of your activities. The country will get vast benefit for the small outlay that Balavihars require. It is good national service, as well as service for the children.

There are two things
that draw man's mind:
hitha and priya -
the beneficial and the pleasant.
Prefer the beneficial to the pleasant,
for the pleasant might lead you
down the sliding path
into the bottomless pit.
The true doctor is interested
in curing you of all illness
and so, he advises hitha
to restore your health.
The Guru is a such a doctor.
Obey him, even when
his prescription is unpalatable,
for, you can be cured only by him.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

21. The Ganga and the sea

Date: 19 July 1970 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

ALL around is to be seen living beings who drag out their existence in misery, in spite of a long effort to earn Anandha (bliss), through many a life lived in the past. They have not so far succeeded in winning Anandha, because it is only the knowledge of the Atma as their inner core that can confer lasting Bliss. When sensual desire tarnishes the mind, it cannot have untarnished Bliss. Through virtuous and truthful life, the mind has to be purified, so that the knowledge of the immanence of Atma in all, is evident for it. It is only when you see yourself in all and all selves in you that Bliss is possible. The Grace of God cannot be earned by mere recitation of the glories of God. The Name has to be uttered with its halo of meaning clear in the mind's eye. There must be bhava, raga and thala (feeling, melody and correct timing) while singing the Name of God. These Americans who sang bhajans now, paid attention to melody and time, and their keerthan came from the heart. So, they are true Bharatha children, for bha, ra and tha signalise bhava, maga and thala! The culture of Bharatha emphasises the rathi (attachment) towards Bhagavan (God).

God does not inquire whether you lived in caves or ate roots and fruits only; He seeks purity of heart, achieved by service and surrender - service to man and surrender to His Will. You derive exaltation by worshipping the sculptor-carved stone idol in the man-made temple; how much more blissful you should be, worshipping the very God, resident in the temple of the human bodies around you!

God is the seed of this manifested Universe

Adore the God that is resident in all beings, motivating them and prompting their every activity. Ekanatha, the Maharashtra saint, had that vision. He was going on pilgrimage to Rameshwaram, in the extreme south of India, from Varanasi, in the North, carrying the sacred Ganga in a pot, to be poured ceremonially on the Ramalingeshwara idol at that place. His disciples were

with him. On the way, he saw a donkey dying of thirst, in great agony. Ekanatha felt that the Ramalingeshwara in the donkey was calling out for the holy Ganga that he was carrying on his shoulder; in spite of the protests of his followers, he poured the precious Ganga down the throat of the dying animal and saved it. His joy knew no bounds. God is the seed of all this manifested Universe. Beejam Mam Sarvabhoothanam, says Krishna in the Geetha: "I am the seed of all elements and all beings." The root, the trunk, the branch, the leaf, the flower, the bark, the fruit, have each a different texture, taste, smell, colour, use and function; but, they have all arisen out of one single tiny seed! So too all this Universe has but One Primal Cause, God. Man must seek to know the Cause, not the Effect, which is but a facet of the Cause.

Devotees are all play-actors

Then, man will know his reality, too. This can be known only after a long course of discipline which curbs and controls the senses as well as the passions and impulses which operate them. This discipline will establish you in Love, Universal Love, Love that needs no requital. It is said, that aspirants are avidly searching for God; this may or may not be true; but this at least is true: God is avidly searching for a sincere aspirant - and He has not yet found one! Devotees are all play-actors; their devotion breaks down at the first touch of disappointment or distress. Or, they are only part-time devotees! A few minutes or hours for God and the rest for themselves and the free play of their sensual likes and dislikes! Speak what you feel, act what you speak - then, thought word and deed will confirm and complement each other and contribute to your spiritual success.

People answer the question, "Where is God to be found?" in different ways. They say, in Thirupathi, Badhri Kedhar, Amarnath, Bhadrachalam, Puttaparthi. But, that is not the answer you should accept or give. Tell them that God dwells where His devotees gather and sing His Glory. That is the reason why I am advising you so insistently to do Namasmaran and Nagarasankeerthan (public chanting and singing Lord's glory). The very moment you step on to the Sadhana path, Grace will be upon you. The Ganga rises in the Himalayam ranges, and reaches the sea after a long journey of

more than a thousand miles. True, but, do not imagine, that it is only at the point where the waters merge into the sea that the sea is in touch with it! When there is contact in one place, there is contact all along the flow, all along the line, throughout the thousand miles, from the sea to the summit. The tingle and the thrill will be felt from the pool where it originates to the estuary where it meets the sea.

The service of man is more valuable than what you call "service to God." God has no need of your service. Please man; you please God.

The Purusha Suuktha sings of God as having a thousand heads, a thousand eyes and a thousand feet. That is to say, all beings are He, all who have heads, hands and eyes. They are not separate. Note that it is not mentioned that He has a thousand hearts. There is only one heart. The same blood circulates through all hands and heads.

Each being is a limb. When you tend the limb, you tend the individual. When you serve man, you serve God.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

22. Light, love, joy

Date: 03 October 1970 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara

THE yaga (spiritual worship) inaugurated today is prescribed by the Karma Kanda (ritual action path) of the Vedas, in order to sanctify Time and fulfill the goal of man, come embodied into the world. The practice of renunciation and dedication through the rite of the yaga promotes worldly happiness as well as spiritual progress. It fosters charity and social cohesion. The yajna (ritual sacrifice) pleases the Gods presiding over the forces of Nature and so brings 'down rain, which helps growing crops, and increases food for man and beast. Activity that is divorced from spiritual goals, divorced from reverence and humility; leads to conceit and authoritarianism. It makes man arrogant and cruel; but, the sages of India laid down that all activity has to be done as a yajna, as offerings for the glory of God, in an atmosphere of thankfulness and awe, of humility and holiness. The goal of all activity was idealised as the happiness and peace of all mankind, indeed, of all living beings. Individual aggrandizement was thus ruled out and condemned.

It is this emphasis on saintliness and service that raised Bharath in the estimation of the world for centuries; "Immortality is achieved," the Vedas declared, "not by adventurous deeds, not by brilliant progeny, not by vast treasures, but, only by the practice of renunciation and sharing." The purpose of collecting here, on this occasion, many who have faith in the Vedas, is to draw your attention to these basic truths and these vital rites. For, as a result of the cynical disregard which people pour on these teachings and practices, Bharatheeya culture is being reduced to a mis-shapen jumble of half-truths.

Dharma is powerless without purity of character

The Mahabharatha is the epic that holds forth the grand ideals of the past, in a clear unmistakable manner. The five Pandava brothers triumphed over impossible odds, as a result of Divine Grace, which they won through the exercise of Dharma (Righteousness), personified by the eldest brother, named appropriately Dharmaraja, supported by the strength of Dedication

(the second brother, Bheema) and the strength of Purity (the third brother Arjuna, meaning Pure). At present, we have Dharma, in plenty, in books and perhaps, even in the words we speak. But, without the strength derived from dedication and faith, and from purity of character and conduct, Dharma is powerless to earn the Grace of God. That is the situation in which we are today. But, there is no reason to lose heart. When the Sun sets, people lament that it has gone; but, the Sun never sets. It is the earth that has rolled by, and that will roll forward again to receive the illumination and the warmth. When the ignorance that has enveloped it is removed, Dharma will again shine forth and sustain the world. The Vedapurusha Jnana Yajna is one of the means to make Dharma shine.

Five types of yajnas prescribed for man

There are five types of Yajnas that have been prescribed for man, to make him approximate to God. For these, there is no need to have intermediary priests, or costly materials, or elaborate ceremonies. Every householder can perform these and achieve the fruits. (1) Dheva Yajna (Yajna for the Gods) : This means the surrender of all one's acts at the feet of God; it means that one dedicates all his thoughts, words and deeds for the glorification of God. (2) Pithru Yajna (Yajna for the manes) : The offering of food or consecrated water in the name of the deceased father, grandfather, great grandfather, and of the mother, grandmother and great grandmother. There are those who laugh, ridiculing this rite, saying that such offerings cannot reach them. But, the manthras uttered during the offerings reveal that these deceased ancestors are addressed as identifiable with Gods (Vasu, Rudhra and Adhithya) and the rite is highly sublimated. What is done is to express gratitude to the persons who brought us into this world and equipped us to play our roles. Offering the tribute of gratitude is the essence of the Pithru Yajna.

(3) Brahma Yajna (Yajna for the sages and spiritual lore): This is to be performed by the study of the scriptures, the Shasthras or other sacred texts, which arouse the craving for liberation. (4) Manushya Yajna (Yajna for mankind): This is done by means of hospitality to guests, the relief of sickness,

pain and poverty. (5) Bhuutha Yajna (Yajna for living beings): This entails kindness to animals, especially domestic animals that yield milk and slave for us in the field as draught animals. It includes pets, cats and dogs, sheep and all things that creep and crawl, including even ants. The heaping of grains over anthills in order to feed them is done as an expiation for the destruction of such ants as might have taken shelter in the fuel that we burn!

Sum and substance of all five types of yajnas

The Vedapursha Jnana Yajna is the sum and substance of all these five types of Yajnas, and elaborate paraphrase of the rite. Along with this yajna every evening, we have explanatory discourses from Vedhic Pandiths concerning the basic tenets of Sanathana Dharma (eternal universal religion), with emphasis on the rites being done here. Eight years ago, Vedhic Pandiths were brought together into an Organisation named All India Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha, with the late Dr. Boorghala Ramakrishna Rao, as President, in order to propagate the Vedhic way of life among the people of this land and outside. The fundamental lesson that the Vedas seek to instill is that there is only One, not two, What appears as two is only One, seen twice, or as two. Even a hundred cannot happen without one happening. One happening a hundred times makes a hundred! The One is the basic thing. The child persists in the boy, the youth, the adult, the middle aged, the old, the senile. The One persists through all the modifications and additions. This day we have the Annual Day of the Sabha that seeks to propagate this Truth among the people, so that they may have Light, Love and Joy.

23. The crucial years

Date: 04 October 1970 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara

THE Vedhic Manthra with which the offering is given to the Gods is: Thryambakam yajamahe, sugandhim pushti vardhanam - "I propitiate the three-eyed One, the flagrant, the promoter of strength and sweetness, of light and happiness." The three eyes signify many things, which constitute the Divine: the Sun, Moon, Fire which symbolise heat and light; the Gross, Subtle and Causal, which symbolise the embodiments of the manifold manifestations of the One; Will, Work and Wisdom, which symbolise the operational channels of the One Sovereign Power; Doer, Deed, Duty symbolising the sense of I which is the shadow of the One in the many. The mind is just a pattern of desires, a composite of the warp and woof of plans and resolutions. It has immense potentiality to create manifold images, and so is also called imagination, Imagination hides the Truth. It fogs the intellect, perverts the vision, deviates the straight path of the aspirant. Desire creates a mirage where there was none before. Desire imposes beauty where there was none before; it clothes things with desirability. To escape from the clutches of desire, which gives birth to the brood of anger, hatred, malice, greed, envy, faction, falsehood, etc., one has to cleanse his consciousness by prayer and sath karma (good activity, selfless, desireless activity). Seva is the best sadhana for eliminating the nefarious pull of the mind towards desires.

Take up the attitude of servant with God as Master

Rama asked Anjaneya (Hanuman) how he was related to Him. Hanuman replied, "When I feel I am this body, I am related to you as a Servant to his Master; when I feel I am the individualised soul, Jeevatma, I am related to you as the reflection in the mirror is to the Original that is before it. When I know that I am the Universal Soul, and that all other appearances are futile fancy, I am related to you, no, I am You, You are I." So long as you are bound to the superstition that you are the Body, with the Name given to it as your name and the Form in which it appears to others as your Form, you must take up the attitude of Servant, with God as Master, with all others as Master, and

wipe out the ego, by constant denial of its demands. That is the reason why I called together the All India Conference of Sathya Sai Seva Dhals, so that they may know from Me the basic principle of Service. When a rich man employs an attendant on Rs. 30 a month, he accepts the attention and the other offers the attention, with the recompense always in view; there can be no Sevak-Sevya (servantserved) bond between them. It is a cash nexus that binds them. But when there is no compulsion on the side and no compensation required on the other, then, it is really Seva. Feel that every one is Thryambakam, with the Paramatman in them, as them, immanent in the three worlds, transcendent above the three Gunas (balanced, active and dull) and offer what service you can with no thought of the reward - that is real Seva. This is the secret of Karmayoga, as defined in the Geetha, which Nakul Sen explained so clearly to you now. Various service activities were mentioned here, as part of Seva Dhal programmes - friendly visits to hospital wards, Bhajans in Jails and Reformatories and Remand Homes, helping the poor among arrivals at Bus Termini and Railway Stations, etc. All these are good acts, no doubt; but whatever is done, however useful or demonstrative, it is the spirit behind the service that matters.

It is your nature to give and forgive

Treat the person served as your own brother or sister, as children of Bharathamatha, who is your own mother. Your sisters and brothers have different bodies, separate from yours, like these others, haven't they? But, yet, you feel a special attachment to them. Why? It is the consequence of Love. Have the same Love to these others, too. You love Me and adore Me, don't you? Well; see Me in all beings, for I am there, in all beings. Like the current that illumines every bulb, however weak or strong, your God is in every living being. Win Grace by worshipping Me who is moving in and through them. You need not be wearing the uniform or parading the badge; he need not wear the uniform of supplication, or parade the badge of pain. Sit by him, as you will sit with your brother. Hold the patient by the hand, look into his eyes with compassion, fill his palms with prasadam, inquire how you can help him and let tears of gratitude flow from his freshened eyes. That is the reward which must sustain you. Even if there is no expression of thanks,

even if you are received with cold silence or shrug of dislike, carry on, for it is your nature to be giving and forgiving. If you have a silver image of Ganapathi and you desire instead an image of Krishna, it is foolish to cover the image with a piece of cloth and pray that it might get transformed into Krishna! You have to break it into pieces, melt the silver and pour it into a new mould, the mould of Krishna. So too, if you seek to transform yourself into Madhava, you have to pour the mind melted in the fire of Jnana (spiritual wisdom); the mind can be melted only after it has been hewn into pieces by means of various acts like seva, sankeerthan, japa, dhyana (service, singing, chanting and meditating), all sharp with the edge of renunciation.

Love is born in the womb of Seva

Human lives are now passing on and on, filth over filth, bent, broken, diseased, distressed, disheartened. To ennoble these lives and to make the human heritage worth while, I have come. I am evincing all this enthusiasm to teach you the proper attitude to Seva, for, Love expresses itself as Seva; Love grows through Seva; Love is born in the womb of Sew. And God is Love. The Avathar (Divine incarnation) is a Child to the children, a Boy to the boys, a Man among men, a Woman among women, so that the Avathar's message might reach each heart and receive enthusiastic response, as Anandha (bliss). It is the compassion of the Avathar that prompts His every activity.

Birds, beasts and trees have not deviated from their Nature; they are still holding it valid. Man alone has disfigured it, in his crude attempt to improve upon it. So, the Avathar has to come as man among men, and move as friend, well-wisher, kinsman, guide, teacher, healer and participant among men. He has come to restore Dharma, and so when man follows Dharma, He is pleased and content. Act so that your career as a man is not degraded, desecrated. With hands on chest, assert, "I am man; I am human; I am saturated with shining humanity, humanness." God does not draw you near or keep you far, you near Him or keep away from Him. God has no likes or dislikes. You live according to the highest demands of your nature and you are near Him.

Make every work as Divine worship

Learn lessons from the Sun, Moon, the clouds, the sea - all are teachers of the prime importance of discharging one's duty, without complaint. Trees distribute their fruits and their shade to every one, even those who lay the axe with intention to destroy them! Mountains suffer heat, rain and storm without demur, and are plunged in meditation for ages. Birds do not hoard for years together the wherewithal for food or shelter; they do not lament for they do not lavish affection on their progeny, more than absolutely necessary for their survival. Nature (Prakrithi) is your school, your laboratory, the gateway to liberation, and the panorama of God's manifold majesty. Seek to know the lessons it is ready to teach; all things in Nature are as Brahman as you are. So, any act is Divine; any work is Divine worship; build the mansion of your life on the strong foundation of the faith that all this is Brahman. Monks, Sanyasins, Heads of Mutts and Monastic Organisations preach in an atmosphere surcharged with pomp, pedantry and publicity, "the Vedas insist on the dissolution of the ego, the Quoran insists on surrender, the Bible emphasises humility and charity;" but, they wallow in the low desires for pelf, power, name and fame. They aspire for transient trinkets, tawdry fame, and cheap tinsel glories. What they have to teach is simply this: When you feel you are a Jeeva (individual being), you are separated from God; when you feel you are Dheva (Divine), you are one with Him. Seeing the rope as a snake makes you shiver; seeing it as the rope you lose fear and start playing with it; it is yours, for the grasping! The snake did not arrive or depart; the rope did not arrive or depart. Light appeared and darkness disappeared. Ignorance fled, knowledge dawned - all in a trice.

Krishna's delay in responding to Dhroupadhi's call

Call on Him who is Light; ignorance and fear, its consequences, disappear! Dhroupadhi had been gambled away by the eldest of her consorts, the renowned Dharmaraja, Master of Righteousness. Taking mean advantage of her serfdom, the villainous cousins, Dhuryodhana and Dhussasana, drew her by the hair into the Dhurbar Hall and dared lay their demonic hands on her sari threatening to render her nude, before the vast gathering of courtiers. Her lords were present there, witness to this atrocious infamy. In her agony,

she did not call upon any of them, though each of them was superior in heroism and valour to the entire gang of vice, arrayed against her! She did not rely for her rescue on the heavenly weapons that Arjuna had won from the Gods; nor, on the mighty mace of Bheema which could shatter the armoured chests of the toughest warriors. She relied on God, not man; she knew that all the five brothers, for all their vaunted heroism, were but men. Voluble as women are, especially when in distress, she called upon Krishna using a string of appellations, like Dhwarakavasa, Gokulavasa, Gopeevallabha, Apadbandhava. When at last Krishna granted her His Vision, He had to say that some delay was caused, since she did not call Him from her own heart where He was all the time! She said He was the Resident of Dhwaraka(!) and so, He had to go thither and come hither, as fast as He could!

Be true to your own Truth

Do not imagine that God is residing in Kashi or Rameshwaram or Puttaparthi. Know that He is in your own heart; evoke Him from there, invoke Him there, and He grants you the Vision, immediately. I am in your heart and so, your tricks cannot mislead the God you are. You are Sathya-swaruupa - the embodiments of Truth. That is why I do not address you as, 'O ye Disciples!' 'O ye Devotees!' That will be crediting you with a status you do not have. I call you as Atmaswaruupulara (O ye Embodiments of the Atma), which is a correct statement of fact. No experiment can prove this untrue. You must also be made aware of this. You are not Yelliah, Malliah or Pulliah; you are the immortal eternal ever-pure Atma! Gandhi, replied, when Karunyanandha asked for his blessings, "My blessings will not help you at all; win the blessings of the Truth that is your very core! That alone will stand by you, in times of need!" You are Sathya Swaruupa (embodiments of Truth); be true to your own Truth. The Prasanthi Vidhwanmahasabha is propagating the tonic teachings of the Vedas and Upanishads; many hear but few nurture and nourish. There are some who come to Me and ask for Upadesha (instruction), some Manthra which they can repeat and through the vibrations the manthra produces, they hope to break the shackles that seemingly bind them! They tell Me they have read the Geetha scores of times, with all its commentaries;

they can repeat the shlokas, all the 700, upside down, and interpret them, in any of the three ways - Dualistic, Qualified, Monistic. I tell them, "If you have not developed faith in the words of God that you have read, recited, learnt by rote and revered for years, how are you confident you will use my Upadshesh with confidence that it will save you! I have neither Swadshesh, Desh or Upadshesh - this or that type of instruction!

The best Guru is the Divine in you

The secret of liberation lies, not in the mystic formula that is whispered in the ear and rotated on the rosary, it lies in the stepping out into action, the walking forward in practice, the pious pilgrim route and the triumphant reaching of the Goal. The best Guru is the Divine in you; yearn for hearing His Voice, His Upadshesh. If you seek worldly Gurus, you will have to run from one to another, like a rat caught inside a drum, which flees to the right when the drummer beats on the left and to the left when he beats the right! Be aware of God and His overpowering Love, whatever you do or say. That is the best advice I can give to the members of the Seva Dhal. The young persons of this ancient land blindly pursue the ideals and fashions of other lands, which have no depth of culture, who are amateurs in the art of successful living. Their dress, talk, behaviour, conduct and attitude appear outlandish, strange and absurd, in the background of the culture of Bharath. They cause grief and pain to those who know the worth of the ways they desert. Love of country or culture springs from the love of parents; it is the love you bear them, their language, their religion, their modes that later blossom into love of the family, the community, the village, the religion, the language, and the soil of the entire country Which sustains all these.

Keep away from bad company and pray to God

The age period, from 16 to 30 years, is a crucial stage, when man achieves best and struggles hardest to achieve. Once frittered, these years of life can never be regained) Take no devious path, but move in the footsteps of God and the godly during this period of your life. The body is but a lump of clay we carry about with us, between birth and death. We were Atma before birth and

we shall be Atma again, after this sojourn on earth. Devote the body while you have it, with all its furnishings of intellect and imagination, skill and knowledge, for the purposes I indicate and win Grace.

When you get, in spite of best efforts, ugly, harmful ideas of hatred or anger, or animalism, you must infer that they are due to faults in food habits, or in the company you keep, either with friends or books or films or other forms of entertainment. Keep away from such and pray to God, your guardian to save you from the fall, towards which you are heading. Ideas of suicide, let me tell you, are born out of the most despicable form of cowardice. Do not allow them to affect you; be bold, so bold that you are determined to brave out any calamity that may assail you. When you have God installed in your heart, who can lead you to destruction? When you are agitated by anger or hatred or agony, drink cold water; lie down quietly; sing a few Bhajan songs. Or, walk some long distance alone, pretty fast, so that pestering thoughts are driven into silence and the solitude; blood circulates faster and movement dulls the sharpness of the thought. You may be worried, because you have promised Me something and later, you are tempted to break your word. Now, do not hesitate. When you promise that you will not smoke, or will not attend films, the promise must be clear, firm and complete. I do not gain by your promise nor do I lose, if you break it. You gain self-confidence, you gain strength, you gain moral fibre, you gain Anandha. Yes; your Anandha is My Food. So, I gain, too!

Wisdom wipes out all differences

The snows on the mountain peaks soften during day, as a result of the Sun; they harden during the night, since the Sun is absent. So too, your hard heart hardens Me; your soft hearts soften Me. Understand this: Each of you knows the Love of a single mother only. But My affection, My Love towards every one of you is that of a thousand Mothers! Do not deny yourself that affection, that Love, by denying Me your Love! The need to surrender was mentioned by some one. Who offers? Who receives? You are yourself God, to whom then are you offering? Yet, you use the word, Arpana, Atmarpitham (Offering of oneself). The problem is epochal; the solution is dismissed by the use of a

word! When you discover that you are God, there is no Arpana, no Atmarpitham. Wisdom wipes out all; God alone remains.

Once there was a long fight between Wealth (Dhana) and Wisdom (Jnana), to decide who was more praiseworthy. Wealth said that it is wanted if you must travel from your place to Puttaparthi, for example; it is essential to spend some money for attending a cinema; for having a meal. The world cannot spin even a second, without the spin of a coin! Wisdom said, no one can distinguish between a tenner or a single rupee note, unless he has intelligence; no one can discriminate between ruinous ways of spending money, or beneficial ways. Like the two cats that chose a monkey to arbitrate, they approached a Guru and laid before him their problem. The Guru said, both are good, equally good, provided each is used for a good purpose. It is the use that decides the good and bad of the two. Being a man, is itself the great wealth you have. Use it to the best advantage. Have wisdom enough to recognise, not only that you are a man, but also that you are no longer an animal, a beast or brute. That makes Wisdom complete; or else, it is only partial.

It is imperative to have strict discipline

A word about the Rules and Restrictions for Seva Dhals. You must implicitly follow the directions of the State President and the District President, who nominate the Convenors. When you are tempted to question them, remind yourself that their words have come through the Grace and Blessings of Bhagavan, who has nominated them. Be polite, humble and sweet in your responses to the commands you receive. It is imperative to have strict discipline; no exception or concession can be tolerated, One word, one road - that should be the motto. In some Sanghs and Samithis (societies and organisations), as a result of the ambition of one individual or the greed of one group, factions have sprouted and the spiritual atmosphere has been fouled. The infection of politics has infiltrated into these Organisations. This is because some people have started the Samithis for their own aggrandizement. These will soon be eliminated, do not worry.

You must carry on your service, regardless of what the elders are doing to earn name or fame. Serve, because you must, because your inner impulse asks you to do it, because you get Anandha out of it. When you find that a patient can be cured by a drug that he is too poor to purchase, if the Doctor says that it is urgent and essential to save his life, do not hesitate to borrow or lend the money. Ask a member of the Samithi, or any one else; for, the life is more precious. Service at the time when it is most needed is most beneficial. Try to get milk powder and supply milk and fruits to the poor who are suffering neglect in hospitals. God likes to be worshipped with the flower of Compassion. Scatter the seeds of Love in dreary desert hearts; then, sprouts of Love will make the wastes green with joy, blossoms of Love will make the air fragrant, rivers of Love will murmur along the valleys and every bird, beast and child will sing the song of Love. Now, we have Seva Dhals only in some villages and towns. We must have them in all villages and all towns, so that the service of man by man can lead to the discovery by man of the God that is his reality.

You have come from God;
you are a spark of His Glory;
you are a wave of that Ocean of bliss;
you will get peace only when you again merge in Him.
Like a child who has lost his way,
you can have joy
only when you rejoin your mother.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

24. Lost and found

Date: 05 October 1970 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara

THE two Pandiths who spoke now elaborated on the Path of Bhakthi, in words that were sweet and inspiring, quoting the experiences of Gargi, Maithreyi, Janaka and Nachikethas, and pouring out the nectar of Upanishadhic thought, on the Beauty of the Divine Form and the delicious charm of the Divine Name. But, all this has now become the possession of a few; scholars and pious personages are themselves by their conduct belying their professions of the validity of what they proclaim as true! Faith in God is declining, more as a result of the hypocrisy of the pious than the apostasy of the impious! We are now face to face with the crisis of the "Failure of Faith." So believers like you have to demonstrate by your courage and conviction that faith in God can be genuine and beneficial. The Prasanthi Vidhwanmahasabha has been assigned this mission of watering the roots of faith and reviving drooping spirits, by example and, to a lesser extent, by precept.

The Bhagavath Geetha describes the delusion that the mind of man contrives to confound him with, and says that it is well nigh invincible. Pandith Somasekhara Shastry confessed that, in spite of all his mastery of abstruse Vedanthic dialectics, he found the task impossible and so, he advised that you should resort to the path of Bhakthi or dedication and devotion. He said that the most effective prescription for controlling the wayward mind was to tie it to the Lotus Feet of the Lord! Then, he said, all its freakishness, panic, license and agitation will stop.

Man is born with inherited twists and turns

What then is the method by which you can bind this wild elephant to the Feet of God? The heavy tomes comprising the scriptures of all faiths and systems proclaim the answer in just two words: KNOW THYSELF. Every school boy today knows about the Sun, the Moon, the stars, about the outermost regions of space but, not even the most encyclopaedic scholar knows the answer to the very elementary query, "Who am I?" I is the most frequently used word; it

recurs many times a second in conversation - I said, I saw, I went, I heard, I have this, I am King, I am a ryot, I am a child, I am a Pandith, I am tall, I am lean; but, who is this I that has these attributes and possessions? The Upanishadhs declare that the I is not the personalised individual; that is a delusion. It is not limited to the body which it inhabits. It is the most universal of categories, it is the eternal absolute, the Param-atma (Supreme Self). It is the Omnipresent, Universal, Consciousness, the Sath-chith-anandha (Being-awareness-bliss). How to know this Truth, as an indelible, authentic experience? That is the key to liberation, to eternal joy, to the conquest of grief. The trouble is man is shaped into a basically incompetent individual by the activities of many lives; he is born with inherited twists and turns, knots and naves. Only faith and steady practice can overcome this handicap. He is burdened with the delusion that the true is the false, that the temporary is eternal. Long identification has trained him so; so he has to be re-educated into the right vision. The truest thing, the fact that persists unchanged, is this I itself. All else is unreal, appearing as real. You may ask, how can this I be true? I grow, I am healthy once, I fall ill, I grow old. But, in and through all the growth and decay, the I persists. "I slept nicely," you say after the sleep experience, when you were not aware of the body, the senses or even the mind, not to speak of the external world.

Three desires which man cannot escape

There are three desires which every 'I' cannot escape from. I must live, is the first. The will to live is overpowering and paramount. This is the urge for immortality. The desire to know is the second. This too is an unquenchable thirst and is an indication of the Omniscience of which the I is the inheritor. The desire for joy is the third, prompting man behind the senses into the outer world, for pleasures. This evidence shows that deep in the core of the I, there is a spring of Anandha which seeks its mate and its fulfilment. When we speak of the yard of cloth, the litre of honey, the foot or yard, these are first fixed and then the measure or length is interpreted in terms of the already determined standard, isn't it? So too, the I is Sath (Immortal Existence), Chith (Universal Knowledge) and Anandha (Absolute Bliss). Individuals are measured and weighed according to the approximation of each to the

standard of the Universal I. Dharma (Righteousness) is the measure of Jnana (Wisdom). Intellectual enlightenment, cosmic consciousness, these must result in, not only elevation, elation and exaltation, but a quickening of the moral sense. The Jnani has the highest moral character, after the illumination he has achieved. By the subjugation of his impulses and propensities to his cleansed Will, and the subjection of his Will to the ideal of Goodness which is God, he becomes the embodiment of Dharma. This is what has made Bharath the land which could lead other nations along the moral path.

Righteousness will save and sustain man

Life has flowed here along the threefold current of BHAA-va (pure emotion), RAA-ga (sweet melody) and TH-ala (even tempo), and so, BHAA-RA-TH got a profound meaning. It is a piece of good fortune to be born in this land and be heir to this grand heritage. Living up to its claims, developing it according to one's capacity, is indeed greater fortune. Vyasa and Valmeeki have both painted on the golden canvas of their poetry the eternal values of Dharma. Vyasa has drawn the picture of the Pandava brothers, hunted, tortured, persecuted, exiled, impoverished, humiliated, but, yet unbroken, because they relied on righteousness, emerging triumphantly at the end, through the Grace of God which is the reward. Valmeeki too has depicted Rama bearing with perfect equanimity the different phases of fortune, carrying the torch of Dharma with its flame unquenched even in the wildest storm. Dharmo rakshathi rakshithah - "Be right, righteousness will save you" - this is the refrain of the Mahabharatha of Vyasa and the Ramayana of Valmeeki. Practise it loyally; it will save you, sustain you, strengthen you.

In the Bhagavath Geetha, you will find Krishna asking Arjuna to 'offer Me,' 'surrender to Me,' 'leave everything to Me.' This Me is no other than the I, that is the God within every one, the I which makes every one declare I shall do this, I own this, etc., the I that prompts the amoeba and the Avathar into activity. I makes the tiger feel "I am hungry, I must seek prey," it makes the eagle soar high so that it may spy its meat down below, it makes the banyan tree spread wide so that it may get more of sunlight on to its leaves, it makes the jasmine creeper cling to the tree so that it may not drag on the ground

and be denied the caressing wind and the warming sun. That 'I' can never grow weak, or fall ill, or falter; it is Sath, Chith or Anandha. It is eternal everywhere.

Man is something beyond time and space

Some desperate persons torn by anguish confess, "I am killing myself; I shall put an end to this misery; I shall be happy, after that, at least!" He is certain that his 'I' will survive death. He knows he is something beyond time and space and causation. This I throbs in every heart, exults in every body and knows through every brain. It is a spark of the Universal I which is God. The Pandiths said that Bhakthi, the path of dedication, is easy and can be adopted by all. Well; it is not as easy as they depict. For, surrender of the little i to the greater I is a hard process. One has to overcome a series of obstacles, with alacrity and pleasure. When you yearn to come to Puttaparthi, you gladly bear all the obstacles; but, when the yearning is absent, you magnify the difficulty of alighting at Guntakal Junction, crossing platforms, boarding another train towards Dharmavaram, transporting yourselves with luggage to the Bus Stand, and travelling by bus to Puttaparthi; perhaps, you give up the idea, as beyond you! First cultivate the yearning, foster it, then everything is easy.

God is the Seed of all Beings

Learn from the experience of elders who have tasted the Bliss of knowing the I as a wave on the breast of the limitless Ocean of Grace. Or, since you are known only to yourself or to the God that is inside you, investigate it unaided, alone. When you ask another the question, "Who am I?" he can answer only when he knows himself as well as yourself. It is easy to explain and expound that All is I (Sarvam Brahma mayam), but, it is hard indeed to realise it. You know that you die, that others die, and so, you find it difficult to believe that the I does not die. The pot may die, but, clay remains; this silver box may die, but, the silver remains. The body may die, but, the I does not die. The jeevi (soul) survives. The elements that composed the body also reach back to their elemental stage.

The Lord declares that He is the Seed of all Beings, "Beejam mam sarva bhoothanam." Watch a tree! The roots, the trunk, the branches, the twigs, the shoots, the leaves, the flowers, the fruits all look different in form, taste, hardness, smell; they have different uses for the tree and for us. But, all this manifold variety is produced, sustained, subsumed, and served by One Single SEED. And, each fruit contains the same SEED! He is the Seed, He is the Tree, He is the Fruit. Love is the Seed, Love is the Tree, Love is the Fruit. The Tree of Creation is hanging down with its roots in Heaven; or else, it will dry for want of sustenance; it is called Ashwattha, the Horse Tree, for Ashwa or Horse is in Indian tradition, the symbol of restlessness, wavering agitatedness. The Banyan Tree which is the Ashwatha shivers in every leaf, with the slightest whisper of wind. You must have heard of the Ashwamedha or Horse Sacrifice, a great rite in the past. The inner meaning of that rite is the destruction of the wayward mind, the Ashwa!

Wildness of the mind can be controlled by practice

Arjuna prayed to Kaishna how the wildness of the mind can be controlled. Krishna prescribed abhyasa (practice). You learn to talk or walk, eat and write, all through trial and error, constant practice, don't you? The mother feeds the baby, using many a song and ventriloquial demonstrations and distractions, but, later, through the force of habit born out of daily exercise, it starts feeding on its own, its hands taking the food to its mouth, even in pitch dark! Take the mind to God and keep it there for a short time every day morning and evening. God is so merciful that He will come ten steps towards you, if you but take one step towards Him. Vibheeshana, the brother of Ravana, inquired from Hanuman whether Rama will accept his homage and take him under His protecting shade. He said, "I am the brother of His worst enemy, whom He has vowed to destroy; I am a member of the demonic race; I am unacquainted with the Vedas or Shasthras or the rituals of the Aryns." Then Hanuman replied, "O you fool! Do you think He cares for ritual correctitude, or family status or scholarship? If so, how could He accept me, a monkey"? That settled the matter. Vibheeshana was assured of Grace.

When Vibheeshana went to Rama later, He asked the elder monkeys around

Him whether He could accept Vibheeshana into the fold. Of course. He did not need any counsel from any one. He was never influenced by others. But, still, just to bring them into the picture, He consulted them and made a pretence of not having made up His mind yet. When Sugreeva said 'no,' Rama reminded him that he too had come to him, first, giving up his elder brother) When Lakshmana said that the only treatment he deserved was to be thrown back into Lanka, Rama said, "Yes! I am resolved to crown him as the emperor of Lanka, after the demise of Ravana."

Rama accepts surrender on the spot

Whoever surrenders, Rama accepts, on the spot, without reservations. When some one suggested that Vibheeshana should not be promised a Throne, for, Ravana may fall at the Feet of the Lord and earn pardon for his iniquity, Rama replied, "In that case, I will hold both hands of Bharatha and beg him to make Vibheeshana Emperor of Ayodhya, our ancestral domain; we both Bharatha and I, will spend our time happily in the forests." You must discover your identity; then only can you have Peace. You are like a man who has forgotten his name, his address, his mission in life. Realise it and try to delve into yourself, so that you may know who you are. Then, you get security and peace. Sharpen your intellect for this purpose, cleanse your consciousness for this purpose, through Sathsang, Japa, Dhyana, Namasmaran, (holy company, chanting, meditation and constant thought of the Lord) etc. That is the advice I give.

25. Recognise your Self

Date: 06 October 1970 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara

THE ascent to manhood has been made possible for you all; but this high status among the animals is to be deserved by merging at last in the Divine, that is the goal which the pilgrimage of evolution has in view, since life began on earth as the amoeba on the waters. Faith in that goal and steady march towards it are the signs of one's being aware of the responsibility of being a man. The Call of the Divine echoes in every heart; it provokes the reaction of awe, reverence, affection, love and sacrifice - all ingredients of bhakthi. It translates itself into acts of worship, of praise, of adoration and of rituals and symbolising the majesty of God. Thus the mind gets saturated with Divine thoughts, it is recast in the Divine Mould, until the flow of Anandha is unabated.

Prayer is the very breath of religion; for, it brings man and God together and with every sigh, nearer and nearer. Dhyana is the process of listening to the Song Celestial, the Flute of Krishna, with the mental ears alert on the melody. Yoga is the merging of the mind in the bliss of selfforgetfulness, when the music fills the consciousness. Words like these do not completely denote that inexpressible ecstasy which one gets while back home, after this long exile.

Veda is said to the Breath of God

Chandromouli Sastry spoke of manthras, the mystic formulae, which are potent with spiritual enlightenment, the sound and the vibrations they generate have a way of affecting the emotions and impulses of the individual, cleansing them, accelerating them, fermenting them, agitating them, dealing with them in subtle ways known only to the adept. You can pronounce the word "come," in a number of distinct ways, producing as many distinct reactions on those to whom it is addressed. Sounds emanate from the throat, the tongue, the cavity of the chest, the navel, the heart, out of the silent experience of aroused yogic force. But, more than the repetition of manthras and the dispersal of vibrations through raga, thala and bhava (tune, beat and

feeling), imbibe the meaning thereof tasting the sweetness. The sweetness of the manthra is beyond the reach of amateurs and beginners; but, the sweetness of sankeerthan (melodious singing of spirituals) captures even at the very first sitting. Modern civilisation is based on technological advance, but, there is a higher technology, the understanding of the consciousness and the transformation of that consciousness into a source of power, through that understanding. This is Sujnana (experiential spiritual knowledge), as different from Vijnana, which science is. There is again Prajnana, which transcends even the consciousness, and takes man into the realm of the One All-Pervasive, All-embracing Principle that is God. This is the Adhwaitha Jnana (Unitive integral knowledge), the culmination of the journey of the spirit.

Veda is said to be the breath of God, for word or voice is breath; the Veda is Akshara, the indestructible, the letter, the symbol for the vibration that spreads and affects the Universe for ever. The Word is valid for all times; it has become the Akshara, the visual symbol. upon the screen of asthi-bhathi-priyam (existence-en-lightenment-bliss), the film of Name-Form is projected, and you ignore the screen and pay attention to the moving gripping film, taking the fleeting as true and the permanent as non-existing. Break the Name-Form complex and fix the mind on the screen, which is Truth.

Moksha is the awareness of your reality

Manthra means that which saves, when meditated upon. The name of God, any one of His countless ones, can serve the purpose. The name is like the goad that can tame the elephant in rut and make him bend his knees and lift the log on to his tusks. Arjuna entered the battlefield, fully equipped and fanatically determined to destroy his enemies. But, when he stood between the serried ranks in his chariot driven by Lord Krishna, he saw 'my teachers,' 'my grandfather,' 'my kinsmen,' 'my cousins' and he was moved so much by this sense of I and mine that he discarded the bow and desired to return, poor and beaten. He said that he would much rather put on the ochre robe and beg for his livelihood than sit on a throne won by bloodshed! The I that has really nothing to do with earthly possessions deludes him and makes him identify himself with things that are not really relevant. This is the moha

(delusion) from which he was saved, by the Bhagavath Geetha. Be unmoved by 'duality;' that is the lesson. Let not defeat or success affect your inner calm, inner joy. See your self as yourself unrelated to others or to the objective world. When you know your self as yourself, you are liberated: that is Moksha. Moksha is not a Five-starred Hotel, or a Deluxe Tourist Home. It is just the awareness of your reality and the rejection of all contrary conceptions. You can recognise yourself quickly and clearly, if you purify your heart by manthra or by the singing of the glory of God. Both will grant you the boon.

Wherever devotees sing there God installs Himself

Song has been the refrain of the Vedas, the skill of Saraswathi, the Goddess of the Scriptures, the Flute of Krishna, the Pranava of the Conch of Vishnu, the Drumbeat of the Dhamaru of Shiva. Naradha, the Sage who is immersed in the bliss of song, had a problem, once. He was in a quandary, where to get audience with God - where am I to go? He wondered. Shall I go to Thirupathi, Bhadrachalam, Kashi, Badhri, Puttaparthi or Pandharpur? O where? Then, Narayana answered, "Do not worry about any particular place! Madh Bhakthah yathra gayanthe thathra thishtami, Naradha! - "Wherever My devotees sing, there I install Myself!" So, sing from the heart, conscious of the layers of meaning that each word has. You can have God installed in your hearts.

Just as every day you engage in exercises, and consume tonics, calculating the intake of calories and vitamins, paying meticulous attention to the nutritional value of the food, pay attention also to the intake of impressions into the mind - whether they debilitate or strengthen, whether they add to the power of resistance of the mind against the viruses - greed, envy, hatred, pride, malice, etc. Have a meal of good acts of service, divine thoughts, and drink the Premarasa (juice of Love), so that they may be washed down, and digested well. Then, you can be shining in mental health, happiness and wholesomeness.

You see a plane zooming in the sky; some one tells you that it is flown by a pilot, but, you refuse to believe, because you do not see him from where you are. Is this correct?

You must go into the plane to see the pilot; you cannot deny his existence, standing on the ground. You have to guess that the plane must have a pilot. So, too, seeing the Universe, you have to guess the existence of God, not deny Him because you are not able to see Him.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

26. The seven-day sacrifice

Date: 07 October 1970 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara

THIS morning, we are celebrating the samapthi of the Sapthaha yajna, the valedictory function of the Seven-day Yaga. Sama also means Brahmam, and Apthi means attainment; so, it signifies not only the conclusion, but, the successful conclusion of the 'sacrifice.' The word yajna and the word yaga are both translated as sacrifice; that is the primary purpose of the yajna. You sacrifice riches, comfort, power (all that promotes the ego) and merge in the Infinite. That is the attainment and the end. Yajnas are useful because they support the ideal of sacrifice, and condemn acquisition. They emphasise discipline, rather than distraction. They insist on the concentration of the mind, the tongue and the hand on Godhead. Cynics count the bags of grain, the kilograms of ghee, and the hundredweights of fuel, and ask for more bags and kilograms and hundredweights of contentment, happiness in return! The effects of yajna on the character and the consciousness cannot be measured or weighing in metres or grams. It is something immeasurable, though actual and experienceable. Moreover, the cynics do not calculate the ghee, grain, and fuel they have themselves consumed, with no compensating joy. The grain and ghee offered in the sacred fire to the accompaniment of Vedhic formulae give returns, thousandfold; they will cleanse and strengthen the atmosphere all over the world. Otherwise, the Avathar will not encourage or revive these Yajnas!

Feel thankful to the Master of the Universe

You say, "Thank you," when someone offers you a cup of coffee; how much more grateful should you be to God, who gave you this wonder-filled world to live in and this elaborately equipped body to know it and use it, for realising the grandeur of the Creator of both. Don't you feel that the master of the house will be pleased when you give him due homage and reverence, obedience and honour? What, then, about the Master of the Universe; the vast unfathomable firmament and the vast inscrutable infinitesimal! Consult your experience these seven days. That will convince you that the Yajna is a

very beneficent ceremony. You sacrificed your comforts, you sat and slept in sun and rain; you yearned for the joy derived from pleasing the Gods and praising them. You bore it all, because you had the armour of Prema, to save you from the rigours. Similarly, bear gain and loss, grief and joy, with equanimity. Prahladha had faith so deeprooted in him, that he never squirmed during all the torture that was inflicted on him. He was so merged in God that he was not aware of anything else than God.

This Yajna was gone through for the sake of Lokakalyana (the welfare of the whole world). You should merge your welfare with the welfare of the world. How can you be happy when your neighbour is in misery? Therefore, I call upon you to give up praying for your own advancement; pray for the peace, prosperity and happiness of all humanity, irrespective of clime or colour.

Strive for the health of the humanity

Pray intensely and with faith. Then, Grace will be showered on you. When the heart is soaked in Love, it cannot be contaminated by egoism and its evil consequences. Just as you crave for physical health, which means health for the limbs of the body, you should strive for the health of humanity, which means peace and joy for all sections, in all nations. If you dwell in that wider outlook, you will start feeling less and less for your own troubles and worrying more and more for troubles of others. That is the initial offering of yourself in the great "yajna" called "living." The Emperor Aja of the Ikshvaku Dynasty fell in love with the angel from heaven, Indhumathi, and when she suddenly left for heaven after short time with him, he broke down and lamented his fate so agonisingly that the Royal preceptor, Vashishtha, had to console him, pointing out the absurdity of attachment, and of fascination for such fleeting joys. He spoke to him of appearance and reality, of the relative and the absolute, of matter and spirit, and brought him to sanity. You must not be a bit of a blotting paper, absorbing all the passions and emotions, all the joys and griefs that the actress Nature demonstrates on the stage of Life. You must be a lotus unfolding its petals when the sun rises in the sky, unaffected by the slush where it is born or even the water, which sustains it!

27. Maaya and mayaa

Date: 08 October 1970 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara

THE Pandiths of the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha have been everyday telling you about the Witness of the three stages: the waking stage, the dream stage and the deep sleep stage. They have been quoting various shlokas from the scriptures to establish that you are the witness, and not the participant and that you have only to wake up from the slumber of ignorance to realise this. During day, you are engrossed in what may be called day-dreams, at night you are either dreaming or lying dormant, with only the 'I' consciousness alive, but, not aware even of that! This fundamental ignorance called Maya plays many tricks with you. It makes you believe the rope to be snake and you shiver and run away. It makes you imagine a lake of water where we have only the hot sands of the desert, and you run towards it with your dry tongue, to allay thirst! And you call it, "maya," "through me," "for me," identifying yourselves with it, as if it is real and beneficial. The moment you realise it is Maya (illusory), it ceases to bother you. The dog will stop barking at its own shadow in the stream, when it knows that it is not another dog, but is only itself. All are shadows, and so, whom are we to hate and whom are we to prefer? What is the attitude of the wise? "Give up attachment, give up entanglements - thyaga.(renunciation), that alone grants freedom," say the Vedas. Renounce the idea of your being separate; see in all beings, yourself; and yourself in all beings. That is the highest renunciation, the renunciation of the sense of ego, which makes you cling to this temporary habitation, this bundle of bone and flesh, this shell with a Name and Form. Spiritual exercise consists of two things' Contemplation of God, and discovery of one's innate nature or reality.

Be the witness of your activities and thoughts

The inherent nature of fire is 'to bum'; of water, 'to wet'; of stone, 'to be heavy.' The nature of man consists in the yearning 'to know.' This attribute has come into man from the moment he put on this body and entered the stage, to play the present role. You are now believing that you are the role.

And, enjoying and suffering as a result of that belief. Just as you get cured of the bite you get from a snake in your dream as soon as you wake up, so too, when you awake from maya, and become yourself, the fear and grief will disappear. When an actor weeps or laughs on the stage, he watches his own weeping or laughing and tries to make it more realistic and effective. So too, be the witness of your activities and thoughts; keep afar and away, without attachment or disgust.

Science asks the questions, "What? and How?" and seeks to get the answers from the objective world of Name and Form, the world one can see, hear, taste, touch and smell, the world one can categorise through reason. But the science of the spirit asks the question, "WHY? For what purpose?" It discovers that maya is the answer for the Why! Sheer delight, at confusing reason, through the illusion of manifoldness! Ice and steam are but water, though they appear so different in every way; diamond is but carbon; jewels are but gold; pots are but clay. Go into the truth and you see the One behind the manifold! Brahman alone is the One; all else is the superimposition of name and form upon its Sath-Chith-Anandha (Being-Awareness-Bliss) essence.

Feel in your heart that God is the doer and enjoyer

Fill the consciousness with the thought of the One, it will get saturated in Anandha; fill it with ideas of the many, it will get befouled by hate and partiality, prejudice and envy. The world is the creation of your mind; go into deep sleep; it is negated! That is why sleep is said to be a form of Samadhi, when the dheer (intellect) becomes sama (balanced), merged in equanimity. Arjuna said, "Lord! YOUR maya is difficult to overcome!" The maya is His leela (sport). So, take refuge in Him, for, He alone can save you from the machination of His creation. You need not run away to a cave in the Himalayas for this sadhana (spiritual discipline); you can be where you are, carrying out whatever duties life has cast on you. Only, feel in the cave of your heart that He is the doer, He is the enjoyer; that you see because He is the power behind the eye. The Atma (the Divine) is the cell, in this torch (body), wherein the eye is the bulb and the intellect, the switch.

When you go to a petty officer armed with tiny authority, you bend your heads low and kow-tow in fear, or approach him in awe and reverence afraid that he will reprimand you for your failings and defects. When you approach God, the source of all authority, whose ukase runs over the entire Universe, how humble, honest and sincere you should be in reverence, awe and purity! Remember, God is your guardian, when you sleep; when you are helpless; even when you have forgotten or neglected or discarded Him. He has no need for the things you offer, or promise to offer. He is ever content, ever blissful, ever full, ever free. Do your duty to yourself - that is enough offering for Him.

Faith and steadiness will make you master the culture

If you do not care to spend your time for promoting love among men, do not wake up at 4-30 a.m.! You can wake up an hour later!, for that will save others an hour of bother! If you are eager to fill time with your works, rise at 4, there is no harm! If you cannot desist from talking scandal of others, sleep a little longer. While going in groups engaged in Nagarasankeerthan, if you must discuss with your friends, or neighbours, the menu for the day, or the illtreatment that your mothers-in-law are meting out, do not join the Sankeerthan round! Keep away, and save others who are more eager and sincere. When the puuja with 108 or 1008 names is progressing, do not be satisfied, when the sound falls on the ear! Try to grasp the meanings too, so that you can ruminate over the glory, which each name denotes. When you hear over the phone that your son got a son, you feel immensely happy; but, if you do not know the meaning of what he says, and if it is just a jumble of sound for you, how can you derive the intended joy? Then, share in the bhajan, too. That will keep you always in the higher regions of Divine Ecstasy, where you will be cool and calm. The higher you go, the cooler is the atmosphere. The lower you come, the hotter it is. So, keep yourself up, by means of dhyana and japam. Learn a lesson from these Americans and other foreigners. They have no background of the culture, of the music or theology, or philosophy, or metaphysics of this country. Their faith and steadiness have made them master the culture, the music and the words and they sing the bhajan songs with the same or even more gusto and enthusiasm than many of you, in style that was strange and weird to them, a few months or weeks

ago.

Constant practice with full faith will transmute nara into Narayana, manava into Madhava (human into Divine); for Narayana is your real nature, Madhava is your real essence. You are but a wave of the sea; know it, and you are free.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

28. The sword and the scabbard

Date: 09 October 1970 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara

IF A POT is leaky and cannot hold water, you find fault with the potter; if a field does not yield good crops, you blame the ryot, who was not intelligent enough to select the seeds, plough the land well, water the plants in the proper proportion and at the appropriate stages of growth, fight the pests, manure in time, neither more nor less than needed, and harvest at the correct time so that the grain is ripe and ready. If the body is afflicted with disease, you point the finger to the man for wrong eating habits, evil habits, evil company, damaging types of recreation, etc. If the mind of man is agitated and heavy, with sadness and anxiety, you have to blame the man, for neglecting the ways that can ensure peace and perpetual calm. The question must be asked, of everyone who is caring for the body; "For what purpose are you caring for this body? What is it that you hope to achieve?" The body is the sheath, the scabbard for the sword, the Jeevi, the I that is within it, but not of it. The purpose of the scabbard is to discover the Unity of the Universe. When you say this is the Auditorium Shed, you see this shed as One, though it is really the cummingling of many pillars, trusses, sheets, bricks, mortar, nuts, bolts, paint! You feel you are One though you are an Organisation of many limbs and instruments of knowledge, hands, feet, head, muscle, nerve, eye, tongue, teeth, etc. So also, the Universe is but One, though you may be able to distinguish stars and planets, rock, tree and bird and birch, ant and antler in it. Whatever there is, Sarvam Brahmamayam - all is Brahman. It is all Sath Chith Anandha, no more, no less. Realisation of this great Truth is the only purpose of man.

Take up the heritage of Infinity

With the sword in this scabbard, you have to march forward to victory in this mission, against the foes of pain-pleasure, joy-misery, blame-fame, profit-loss, success-defeat. The battlefield is the world; it has to be won, however long the struggle, however keen the battle. The Vedas encourage you to expand into the awareness of this Unity. The Veda Mother calls every child to

take up the heritage of Infinity, Bhuuma, as She names it. She says, "Child) You are that Infinity, enclosed temporarily in this Form." Thath thwam asi (That thou art)! But, few children respond to Her call. Why, when the real Narayana Himself comes and declares "Son) You are Brahman, the Infinity, the Absolute, the Eternal," few respond to the call. Your insolence or ignorance cannot, however, diminish the authenticity of the Vedhic announcement. Poet Vemana has a fine way of saying this: "He who eats the dog is the Preceptor, the Guru; he who eats the pig is the exemplary Yogi; he who eats the elephant is the Wisest of the lot, the Jnani." Of course, Vemana means by dog, Anger; by pig, he means the Ego and by elephant he denotes Pride, uncontrolled passion. When these three are consumed, the vision becomes clear enough to see the Infinity.

The word Veda signifies that which 'instructs.' What do they instruct? They instruct Sathyasya Sathyam (the Truth of Truths). The Jagath (the Objective World) is a confabulation of truths and the Truth of that Truth is the Atma. Man is now like the wild elephant roaming in the forest of life, eating, fighting, wandering as the fancy takes him. But, he should be like a lion, the monarch of all the denizens of the forest, roaring his own glory as the fearless unbeatable master.

Ascend higher and higher into the purer air

Walk in the consciousness of Athmic might. There are some who behave like sons-in-law! Until the bride is handed over, they are cats; no sooner than they are entrusted with the daughter of the family, they turn into tigers, nay, man-eaters, trying to exploit the father-in-law! So long as their desires are unfulfilled, they adore God; they pray and attend bhajans and puujas; once that is done, they turn about and start campaigns against faith in the Divine. It is easy to give up sadhana; it is a task to stick to it. But, there is no use climbing just one step; ascend higher and higher, into the purer air. Climb until you see the hills and valleys as one flatness, all the ups and downs as of no concern. You talk as if you have surrendered everything; but, when you lose a pen, you report to the police station and rely on the police to recover it for you! You are a hero, a lion in the forest, only when you neither exult nor

droop, when good fortune or bad assails you.

Vinayaka is called the child of two mothers, Gowri and Ganga. You are the pet children of four mothers, each of you: Sathya, Dharma, Shanthi and Prema. Do not ridicule them by your acts; honour them and be grateful to them. Do not claim Anyaya (injustice), Akrama (ill-discipline), Asathya (falsehood) and Anachara (evil behaviour) as your mothers, instead! Expand your heart, taking in all humanity into the circle of your kin, even the birds, beasts, worms, insects, trees and plants. The Vedhic prayer asks that the aspirant's heart may be expanded, 'brhathe karomi' - I make myself vast! The Vastest is Brahman, which word comes from the same root, brh to enlarge.

Travel light, even in the journey of life

In order to develop and grow in concentration during meditation, you must reduce your wants and discard your wishes. See everything as a disinterested witness; do not plunge and get entangled. When the shackles are loosened, you will feel happy and light. When you shift your house from the old one, people will find you filling carts with old and useless shoes, mats, brooms and all sorts of cumbrous impediments! You dare not throw them out, for long association has rooted them in your affection. Travel light, even in the journey of life. Root them out, completely. When Ravana fell dead, his queen, Mandodhari, came near the corpse and wondered what had given him the fatal blow. How could he, who had mastered the four Vedas and the six Vedanthas, and who was severely strict in the observances of various rites for the propitiation of the Gods could meet with an ignominious end? Being a shrewd and loving woman, she realised soon the cause of her husband's downfall. She lamented "Alas! You only suppressed your desires; you did not uproot them." The low desire of lust sprouted fast, when temptation was strong. When the rains came, what was dry yellow land became green, on account of the seeds and roots of grass below the surface; they had not been pulled out and destroyed!

People come to Me and declare that they desire only the chance to serve Me but, in the very next breath, they pray that they may witness the wedding of

their newly born grand daughter! Uprooting the grass of desire is a long laborious job. Kuchela was sent by his wife to the Lord, to get at least the provisions for a week. He went and saw and was entertained lavishly but, he could not ask for anything, for, he felt that the Lord will provide if he cared or else, if he did not, there must be some good reason for it!

This Incarnation is beyond anyone's comprehension

One more point. Bhagavantham spoke now about his visit to America and his talks to the devotees there and he referred to the questions they asked him about Me. It is impossible for any one to understand or explain the meaning and significance of Swami. There can be no possible means of approach to this manifestation, from the stage which you can attain. This is an Incarnation, an Embodiment, which is beyond any one's comprehension. Trying to explain Me would be as futile as the attempt of a person who does not know the alphabet to read a learned volume, or the attempt to pour the Ocean into a tiny waterway. You can at best only prepare yourself to receive and benefit by the Anandha I confer, the Bliss I grant. You too have the Sai principle in you, but the difference is a matter of voltage. You have bulbs of zero watt power, and bulbs of vast quantities of wattage giving enormous light. The same electric current passes through them no doubt, but, how incomprehensible must be the 'Supreme' for the 'molecule.' You have a tiny spark of fire at the end of the incense stick that you burn in the shrine; you have slightly more fire at the tip of your cigarette; the stove over which you cook is a bigger fire; the forest fire is also flame. But, the incense stick will be scorched even if by accident it touches the wall. The fire will go out. The forest fire can reduce to ashes the greenest of trees, for its heat is beyond calculation. So too the Divine, in the Incarnation, is inexplicable, incredible, impenetrable. It is the Fire of Love plus the Fire of Enlightenment, the Fire of Cosmic Creation as well as the Fire of Cosmic Destruction.

Yearn for nothing less than the Highest

Krishna in the Geetha declared against the worship of low forces. He said those who adore the dhevas attain the dhevas; those who adore the Manes

attain the Manes; those who adore the low forces attain them; but, those who adore Me, attain Me. He said, Manmana Bhava, Madhbhaktho, madhyaji, Mam namaskuru - "Fill your mind with Me, be devoted to Me, renounce for My sake, surrender to Me." Do not have low desires and seek low deities that cater to the fulfilment of these. Yearn for the highest wisdom, the highest Bliss, the highest Power, the Atma. Yearn for nothing less than the Highest; pray to the Sovereign Giver. Believe that Sai Baba is in your heart, as your Atma, unshakable, full of love. Do not encourage the pretensions of low egoistic men, who claim that I am 'possessing' them, or that I need mandhirs (halls) for which they are collecting donations. I need only one Mandhir, your hearts! Whoever may ask, even if they say that I have authorised them - even if you feel I have asked, do not give even a single paisa. This craze for putting up temples and pulling down temples, raising new ones and razing old ones is only a craze for earning some money or reputation. It should not be encouraged. .Preserve the purity of your hearts, so that Sai may reside therein. That will be enough.

To get santhosha and shanthi (happiness and peace) you must develop a pure unsullied mind, unsullied by egoism and its progeny - lust, greed, envy, anger, hatred and the rest. For this, you must seek sath sangh (good company), perform sath karma (good deeds), entertain only sath alochana (good thoughts) and read sath granthas (good books).

You may see a thousand good things or listen to a thousand good words or read a thousand good books - but, unless you put at least one into practice, the blemishes in the mirror of your heart will not be wiped off. The Lord cannot be reflected therein.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

29. My three

Date: 10 October 1970 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara

KAARUNYAANANDHA spoke of Arjuna feeling lost in a sea of doubt and fear. He was desperate, like a ship without rudder in the midst of storms, he said. The Vishadha Yoga (depression of spirit) into which Arjuna entered as soon as he appeared on the field of battle, is a necessary preliminary to the attainment of Liberation. After listening to the Geetha and seeing the Manifestation of the Lord as the entire Universe, Arjuna confessed that he has lost the delusion, "nashto mohah." The disappearance of delusion is the liberation all crave for. Moksha (Liberation) is the kshaya (disappearance) of moha (delusion). The Yaga ends today; but, remember the thyaga (renunciation) which it teaches must continue as the inspiration of your lives for ever more. These seven days, the Ramayana was read here; lessons from the Ramayana too have to be imprinted on your minds - the greatest being that kama brings downfall and Rama ensures success. Dasaratha sent his favourite son into exile, yielding to the wiles of his favourite wife. Rama sent his wife into exile, the very wife for whose recovery from the clutches of Ravana, he had spent years of search and struggle, because he felt Dharma demanded it! Ravana himself learnt the bitter lesson that kama weakens and dharma strengthens. Rama, he learnt, was the embodiment of Dharma and so, nothing could foil his plans. These are the bases on which the culture of this land and its people is raised; but, those who plan for the nation today are planning only for roads, dams, factories and farms; they ignore the paths of the spirit, the fields where love and humility, service and sacrifice can be cultivated. They lay emphasis on such developments as can be measured, seen, and put into impressive statistical tables, not the intangible motives that urge man to live in peace and brotherliness.

The foundation for real peace in amicability

Man is now able to soar into outer space and reach up to the Moon; earth and sky are his playgrounds. But, though he is intelligent enough to sail through space and under the sea and shoot bombs across continents, he is not moral

enough to live at peace with his neighbour! A few handfuls will satisfy his hunger; a short length of cloth will cover his nakedness; a few square feet of shade are enough to shield him against heat and rain. But, for these, he slaughters his brethren and his sisters, he steals, he plots full conspiracies, he revels in lies and breaks the law, and destroys peace in his own heart and in society. Schools, colleges and educational institutes multiply, but the educated are a danger to themselves and to the country. Hospitals and medical research, drugs and ameliorative measures increase, but, the percentage of insanity and illness also increases. Everywhere there is the dark cloud of anxiety, fear, discontent and agony, disturbing the rich as well as the poor nations of the world. The foundation for real peace is, according to the Vedas, the quality of Maithree, which means amicability, friendship, compassion, kindness. It can also be taken to mean, "my three," that is to say, my word, deed and thought shall be in accordance with thy word, thought and deed; that is to say, we shall speak, think and act together, without friction or faction, in the atmosphere of love and understanding; that is what is wanted in the world today, My three.

God will never give you up

The love between father and son, husband and wife, friend and friend is now artificial, not 'heart'ificial! The son sues the father in the courts, the attachment between husband and wife does not last long, friends fight when selfish interests prevail, man cannot trust brother man, fear and suspicion haunt relationships between man and man. Imagine a newly wedded couple strolling in a park! The man sees a thorn on the road, which the lady may put her boot upon; he suddenly rushes towards her and pulling her away, he says, "Thank God! I saw it in time!" Three months later, they stroll along and the man sees a thorn. What happens? He says, "There is a thorn right there. Do not step on it." Three more months pass; the thorn is found across their path. He shouts, "Can't you see that thorn? Why are you barging forward as if the entire road is yours!" That is the history of the love which is idealised so grandly. The love that God bears to you or that you bear to God is not so transient or egoistic. God will never give you up, nor should you ever give up your hold on God.

Mantras can bring Grace to the aspirant

The Yaga that concluded today is a demonstration of the energy and vibrations that mantra can release. There are potent mantras that can transform personality and bring Grace to the aspirant. Om (the Pranava) is one such. Children are trained to walk, by means of a three wheeled stand, which they push forward with their hands, while standing behind it. The Om is such a three-wheeled help, the three syllables A, U and M being the wheels. Learn to walk safe and quick on the path of spiritual progress, with the help of AUM. Or, Rama is another mantra, having the same numerical vibrations: A equalling 0, U equalling 2 and M equalling 5, so that AUM is 7, whereas R is 2, A is 0 and M is 5, so that Rama too is 7, a very seminal number, with the important spiritual tonalities. Each individual is born with the question "Koham" on its lips. "Who am I" is the question which presses on every breast. And the answer is given by every breath - Soham (He am I), the inhalation whispering So and the exhalation, Ham! But, the question is brushed aside by the mind, impatient to dabble in the toyland it pictures the world to be; the answer is denied admission into the understanding, by the ego, which derives temporary pleasure thereby! Realise that your breath is answering the question correctly and live in the consciousness that you are a wave of the He, that is, the Infinite Consciousness, that is God. You may say that you will not believe in God unless you have clear experience personally about Him. Well, you believe that your date of birth is a certain month in a particular year. You have taken it on trust; you take many things on trust; it is impossible to insist on personal experience for everything which we have to believe, if life has to run smooth. Take this also on trust for, many sages, saints, scientists, have accepted it and experienced it.

Gurus whose integrity cannot be doubted

They are Gurus, whose integrity and validity you cannot doubt. They teach and test and transmit true knowledge, gained through genuine Sadhana. The sage Gauthama one day called together his disciples and said, "You know that the drought that has afflicted this region is heightening; it shows no sign of

abatement; it is spreading fast. So that cattle belonging to the hermitage are suffering hunger and thirst; I cannot look upon those dumb animals in distress and calmly carry on my duties of teaching and learning. Some one of you must take them out, to some country, where there is ample pasture and bring them back, when the calamity has rolled over." Many students shuddered at this task, they hung their heads and hid behind others, in order not to attract attention! But, Sathyakama stood forward and offered to take the cattle out, quite happy at the chance. The others gathered around him, with their sympathy but Sathyakama would have none of it! They told him that he would be alone in the wilds, away from the comforts of hermitages, and even from the sources of good food, for an indefinite length of time. He replied that the good wishes of the Guru will provide him enough safety and sustenance; that he was his best companion! He refused the offer of some friends to accompany him, for, the Guru had not mentioned the need. (If it was today, perhaps, some one would have suggested to him to take at least a transistor radio with him, so that he could listen to his favourite film songs!)

Reward for humility and reverence

While leaving with the 500 head of cattle, Sathyakama asked for the blessing of the Guru; he enquired when he could return, and got the answer that he could think of returning, as soon as the herd had increased to a total strength of 1000! He lived up to his name, Sathyakama (he whose sole desire is to preserve and propagate Truth), led the cattle to a charming valley where he camped with them. He rose with the morning star, recited prayers, performed prostrations to the rising Sun and was lost most of the time in Japa and Dhyana, though the tending of the cattle was not neglected in the least. He did not evince any anxiety to return home, but bided his time, patiently. (If it was today, he would have counted the cattle every day to see that he does not remain out for a single day more than necessary. Or, he would have somehow made up the number, adding a few stray cattle smuggled in or making up some story about the 1000 being already there, though the absence of a few could not be properly accounted for!) One morning soon after the morning rites, Indhra, the Chief of the Gods, appeared before him, for the gods were watching over the solitary cow-herd! He told him that the

tally was 1000 head of cattle, and so, he could return. Indhra offered to take him back, safe and sound. On the way, they halted four nights in four separate villages, and on each night, Indhra taught him one Veda, so that when he reached the hermitage of the Guru, Sathyakama had mastered all the four Vedas; his face shone with a strange splendour, since the Vedhic illumination had been imparted to him by no less a teacher than the Lord of the Gods! The Rig Veda is the Veda full of prayers to God for the realisation of the aims of life; the Yajur Veda describes the ceremonial and ritual aspects of worship; the Sama Veda extols the Gods through song and poetry; the Atharva Veda gives the secret formulae for preserving health and security of body and community. He became master of all these four Vedas. That is the reward for humility and reverence. These qualities are fast disappearing in the cities and towns; the pest is spreading fast destroying the crop in the villages also. But, they are still powerless to affect the simplicity and sincerity of village life. That is the reason why I like villages very much. I shall not give up Puttaparthi and live in some other place or town. In the village, every one will come to the help of a man, if his house is on fire or if his well has had a landslide.

In the towns, you will find people making merry aloud, when some one is dying in the neighbouring house. Reverence towards elders, and faith in the Divine are present and active in the villages. They alone can help in the restoration of Dharma, the task on which I have come.

The body is the tabernacle of God, the chariot in which He is seated in all majesty. Do not identify yourself with it and its modifications and transformations. You are the atma and so, you are above these affections of the body.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

30. The commentary on the message

Date: 11 October 1970 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara, Vijayadasami

THE Dasara Festival has filled your eyes, ears and minds with Anandha for ten days. And, with the bodies transformed by this rich experience, you are returning to your places. Let me tell you something which will grant light, so that weight will be less for the journey of life. Man has always tried to conquer nature. In this contest, he has employed all his physical, mental and intellectual skills. Nature is a composite of the three Gunas: the pure, passionate and dull. Therefore, it can be overcome only by developing the qualities of truth, love and tolerance. When man taps the energy of the Divine in him, he can easily master Nature, which is only the vesture of the Divine.

Drawing on the Divine that is inherent in you - is the lesson of the Geetha. When you picture to yourself Arjuna in the two-wheeled chariot, four white horses yoked to it, Krishna sitting in it holding the reins and answering the queries of Arjuna, then, you miss a great part of the significance of the scene.

Arjuna is the Jeeva (individual entity) and Krishna is the Dheva (Divine entity). When both are in contact, impregnable might results. You may have enormous quantity of electricity, but, it can demonstrate itself as work only through some medium or instrument. So too, Krishna had to work in and through Arjuna, so that the reign of Dharma is re-established. Arjuna means: "white, pure, unblemished;" hence, he is the proper instrument. The other four brothers are the horses, they are also without blemish! Arjuna provided the appropriate heart-throne where the Lord could install Himself. The five brothers represent the five elemental principles - the earth, water, fire, air and the ether (sky). They also symbolise the five vital airs that activate man.

God is to be recognised in all human beings

The hundred Kaurava cousins were all destroyed, because they stood for aggrandizement and justification of means, provided the end is gained! The Pandavas surrendered completely to the Will of God and so, they could draw

on the Divine, and gain victory. When they gave up everything in the end and tramped along the road to the Himalayan silence, one by one, they dropped dead; only the eldest was able to reach the abode of the Gods. His name, significantly, is Dharma Raja (the Monarch of Righteousness)! People are satisfied with repetition of cliches, even in the field of religion. Ask any one where God is, the reply is - "Everywhere." But, the hearts of many have not been filled with Him. Probably, "everywhere" does not include the inside of their hearts! It means only their tongues, presumably) "Worship God," that is the road to victory. This is another cliché. But, God is worshipped only in pictures, images, idols; He is not recognised in all living beings, in beauty, harmony, melody, truth, goodness.

Devotion must be undeviating

Let Me tell you one fact, in order to warn you against hoping too much. Worship such as this, offering of incense, flowers, repetition of hymns of praise and other rites are only commendable ways of utilising time; good activity! Unless they cleanse the heart, widen sympathies and deepen faith in one's own divinity, they are unworthy of the name sadhana. Among those who label themselves as theists (believers), 99.75 per hundred can be heard complaining, "I believe in God, but, He is making me miserable; that fellow is an unbeliever, but, the same God is heaping one joy after another on him!" Can this be devotion, dedication? Devotion must be undeviating, whatever happens. Prahladha had that unshakable faith; he had surrendered so completely to the Lord that no torture could turn him away from fidelity. When you start judging and pronouncing judgements on the basis of your own prejudices and information, you only demonstrate that your faith is shallow, it is only a fair-weather phenomenon.

Those attached to God, aspiring for God, aware of God, adoring God have certain distinct marks by which they can be identified. Pronouncing judgements like this is quite contrary to the nature of dedication. Again, such people have a compassionate heart. If a person turns the rosary on the fingers, and is intently engaged in watching the tip of his nose, unmindful of the distress that dances around him, we can at best name him a sloth, that is

all. Get up, place the rosary in its bag, and engage yourselves in relieving distress - that is the true spiritual path. Do not waste all your years with stone images, pictures or idols. Learn to see in every living vital active person, the embodiment of all energy, all beauty, all beneficence, namely, God. God is subtler than ether, filling the smallest crevice with His Majesty. Know this and serve His manifestations, wherever you meet them.

Turn the mind vigorously towards God

Some institutions profess to train persons in dhyana and hold dhyana classes! How can any one put trust in these? It may be possible to train to sit aright, and to go through various contortions of the body; but, how can any one help another to concentrate more keenly? Love God and no distraction can turn you from the thought of God. Valmeeki was a highway robber, terrorising the travellers and killing without mercy. Rajas (passion) was the predominant quality in his make-up. When he chanced to meet the Seven Sages and listen to their counsel, his heroism, bravery and persistence turned Godwards in a flash; he became so ardent an ascetic that an ant-hill grew over him as he sat unmoved. You need not rely on another for success in dhyana and japa and await contact with some sage in order to get from him a manthra for recitation. Pray to the God within you and you will receive the needed guidance.

Turn your mind towards God; dedicate yourselves to God; then you will find life one continuous stream of Anandha (bliss). Have a fan in your hand and sweep it towards you; then, you feel comforted. So also, use the mind as the instrument, and turn it vigorously towards God; then, it can give you the Anandha of liberation. Rama is the name for Anandha that is inherent in every heart; recite His name, let the Anandha respond and upsurge. Do not pretend and get charged with hypocrisy. Be genuine, sincere and true inheritors of Bharatheeya culture! You have to outgrow the idol, picture and image; they are the kindergarten materials in spiritual schools; seek to know the Divine Energy, that is burdened with no Name and no Form. Rise higher into the empyrean heights of the Pure, Attributeless, Transcendent One.

"My life is a commentary on My message"

I shall not change my course even by a hair's breath, as a result of what people may say about Me. I am not afraid of any one or thing. Truth has no fear; untruth shivers at every shadow. This body of mine is named Sathya (Truth); the principle that is in this body is also Truth. Truth enclosed in Truth has been rendered the Truth of Truths (Sathyasya Sathyam). This Form has been assumed in order to lead mankind from untruth to Truth. I eat as you do, move about as you do, talk in your language, and behave as you can recognise and understand, for YOUR sake - not for My sake! I turn you towards the Divine, winning your confidence, your love, your submission, by being among you, as one of yourselves, one whom you can see, listen to, speak to, touch and treat with reverence and devotion. My plan is to transmute you into seekers of Truth (Sathya-anveshaks). I am present everywhere, at all times; My Will must prevail over every obstacle; I am aware of the past, present and future, of your innermost thought and carefully guarded secrets. I am sarvantharyami, sarva shaktha and sarvajna (Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient). Nevertheless, I do not manifest these powers in any capricious manner or merely for display. For, I am an example and an inspiration for whatever I do or omit to do. My life is a commentary on My message.

"My hand always gives, never takes"

For example, you must, have noticed that I never call a woman, alone for the 'interview.' I call women only in groups of ten or fifteen. I want that you should note this and infer that one has to be extremely cautious in dealing with the other sex, for, though I am above and beyond the Gunas, since this body is obviously masculine, I want to teach both men and women how they have to regulate their social behaviour and be above the slightest tinge of suspicion, or of small talk.

Again, I am active and busy all the twenty-four hours of the day. Every day, the mail brings me thousands of letters, and you hand over to me personally hundreds more. Yet, I do not take the help of any one else, even to open the

envelopes. For, you write to Me intimate details of your personal problems, believing that I alone will read them and having implicit confidence in me. You write each one only a single letter; that makes for Me a huge bundle a day; and I have to go through all of them. You may ask, how I manage it? Well, I do not waste a single moment. And, all this I do, not for personal gain, but only because I have come for your sake. I never seek another's help; I offer help, never receive it. My hand always gives; it never takes. Conclude from this that this must be Divine, not human power. Some of you may be wondering, "How does Swami arrange these elaborate festivals and functions? Whom does he charge with the various items of work?" I do not allot work to this person or that, or consult any one for ideas and suggestions. All this is done by the Divine Will, operating through the force of Love. For example, though there are thousands gathered here, absolute silence prevails. Under what compulsion? Only the compulsion of Love. In other places, where a hundred people collect, a hundred and fifty constables are present to keep them quiet! Here, there is no need for any one to see that silence is maintained. For, here God is the Master, and Creation dances in joy. There is no third entity here. Only Purusha and Prakrithi (God and Nature) are here. A glance from the corner of the eye is enough to get things going towards successful conclusion. Love activates, Love fulfils.

When you have Kamadhenu, why seek a cow?

When the Giver of Grace is here, you run after persons who claim that they got this or the other article from Me or were blessed with this gift from Me! When you have Kamadhenu (wishfulfilling cow) here, why seek to know and secure a cow? Kamadhenu can give you all that you need. When you have Kalpatharu (wish-fullfilling tree) here, why bother about fruits on a tree? Kalpatharu can give you all that you ask. When you have here the mountain of gold and silver, Meru, why cringe for silver and gold from persons who are themselves beggars? When you have God come among you to support and sustain you, why grovel before crude vulgar entities? Avoid places where they bargain in terms of gifts, donations and payments for Grace and Upadesh, for spiritual guidance and transmission. Go straight along the true path; be not drawn into byelanes, by quacks and crooks. Some happenings in Madras and

in Mysore are to be drastically condemned. I know there are some who proclaim, "Devotees have grown out of all proportion in these parts and so, Baba has allotted this region to me and directed me to take up the work of teaching and guiding you; so, admire my acts and adore me." I never allot in this manner, nor do I hand over powers to any one, nor can such low minds deserve My Grace. No, never. For Me who has the burden of the Universe, can a region or a few more devotees be too much? I am surprised at the stupidity which swallows such absurdities and flocks round these pitiable quacks. They could carry a begging bowl and go from door to door; that will save them from at least the consequences of a life of deceit and sacrilege.

God will be your Guru from within

Do not lend ear to such and be led astray. Carry on sadhana for your elevation, from one stage to another. God Himself will be your Guru from within. He became Himself the Guru of Meera and Hemareddi Mallamma.

Do not proclaim that this Name of God is superior or more efficacious than the other. To assert that Rama is superior or that Shiva is superior, or even that Sai Baba is the Avathar that is the fullest of all - all this only reveals that you have not understood what Divinity is. Rama is a Name that combines the ra of Narayana and the ma of Namasshivaya, the manthras of the Vaishnavas and that of the Shaivites. So, Rama means, the quality of Shiva and Vishnu. Or, Rama has the ra of Hara (Shiva) and the ma of Uma (the Shakthi aspect of Shiva); so, Rama is the name of Shivashakthi! How can faction arise when each name is so resonant with the lesson of the unity of all Names? Some persons pray to Me, "Swami! All my people go on pilgrimage to Thirupathi; why don't you turn their minds and make them come to you?" What an absurd question? What colossal ignorance of My reality as well as of the manifold majesty of God! Cleanse your minds of evil thoughts. I find some of you spread your handkerchiefs on the carpets and then sit upon them; you feel that the carpets, which have upon them the dust of the feet of countless devotees, is unclean! Now, when you take so much care to see that the place where you sit ought to be free from dirt, how much more attention should you pay to clean the heart, where you expect the Lord to seat Himself.

Clean your heart with detergents japa and thapa

Clean the heart with the detergents - japa and thapa (penance) - using the water prema. Detergent alone will not do; water too is essential. Carry on the duties of the position in which you are as if they are the dictates of God. Every act that you dedicate to Me reaches Me. Do not grieve that you are not able to come to Puttaparthi to have Dharshan (audience). Offer Me Namaskaram (the homage of prostration) wherever you are; it reaches Me at the same time as it is offered.

Resort to the recitation of the Name when your mind is agitated by fear, anxiety or grief. To make a cup of coffee, it is not enough to have decoction in one cup and milk in another. You have to pour one into the other and mix well. Mix the decoction of Vairagya (sense-control, detachment) with the milk of Bhakthi-Shraddha (devotion-steadfastness). And you get the drink that satisfies. Return to your homes with these words enshrined in your hearts, ruminate over them alone and in silence. Then it will be easy for you to put a few of these ideas into daily practice and ascend step by step the heights of spiritual achievement.

31. The ray of God

Date: 29 October 1970 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Diwali

THE Upanishaths say that the human is a spark of Divine Love, encased in five sheaths: the Anna (Gross, material, food component), the Prana (vital air, breath), the Mana (the mental, emotional, volitional), the Vijnana (rational, discriminatory intellectual) and the Anandha (blissful, equanimous, balance). It is the fragrance of that Love that emanates from him as love towards things, beings and ideas. That Love is ever urging and surging for expression, enlargement and enclaspings. But the tangles of fear, greed, egoism and aggrandizement do not allow the spark to grow and illumine the sheaths as well as the world around. This day is the Festival of Light; that is to say, of Love. Knowledge too is praised as light, but it is often a clouding fog, a weapon of offence, a burden on the head, a drag on the hand of charity, a shackle on the feet. It ripens into a liberator only when it is earned through love and put into practice through love. Love alone gives Light. Love unfolds first on the lap of the mother. The eyes of Love fasten themselves on the caressing face of the mother. It then spreads towards the father, brothers and sisters, kith and kin, friend and playmate, region and language, world and its Maker. The I that lives within the body is like a lion in a cave. It is the monarch of the forest; but it limits itself to the few square feet of rocky floor. Let it come out, renouncing the petty possession. So long as you crib yourselves into the body-consciousness (I am the body), you are the lion moping in the musty cave! Do not feel, Dhehoasmi (I am the body). Roar, Brahmasmi (I am Brahman, I am all this and more, I am all this is, was, and will be) - and littleness, time, space, ego, all will flee from your heart! You will be Love, Love, Love - and nought else. That is to say, you will be Divine, one with the One.

Light has no boundaries, prejudices or favourites

Expansion is Love. Expansion is the essence of Love. Love is God. Live in Love. That is the Diwali Message I give you. When a lamp is lit from another, there are two where there was but one. The first one did not stop emitting

light. You can light a million lamps from one; but, yet, the first will not suffer a jot! Love too is like this. Share it with a million, it will still be as bright as when it was alone. There is another lesson too which the illuminations on Diwali Day tend to teach. Each house in the street, lights a few lamps and keeps them on the door sill, the parapet wall, the gate, the porch, the well, and, what is the effect? The town is filled with light, the residents are happy, the children dance in glee and the sky shines in the glow of earthly joy. Light spreads; it mingles with the light from other sources of light, it has no boundaries, no prejudices, no favourites. You may not like your neighbour. But the light from the lamp on your verandah shines hand in hand with the light from the lamp on his verandah! You cannot keep it back!

Hold fast to God through any of three paths

Diwali is intended to teach you this lesson of light and love; move out, clasp, spread, expand, give up limits of mine and thine, his and theirs, caste and creed, in one limitless flow of Love. That is the culmination of all spiritual sadhana. Competition, the desire to defeat and overwhelm the other person, whatever the means necessary for his downfall, the greed to earn wealth, fame, superiority, these have put out the lamp of Love in the human heart today. Resolve on this Festival Day to light it again. When the worship of God starts in the shrine room, the first act of yours is 'lighting a lamp,' isn't it? Without a lit lamp, no auspicious ceremony is initiated. When the lamp of love is shining, God manifests! Keep it burning bright and pure, God persists! Allow all to light their lamps from it, God showers Grace! God, first; the world, next; myself last! That is the legitimate sequence for the sadhaka; and, who is not a sadhaka? You have to be one, now or later, so that you can be liberated from this cycle of birth-death! Now, man, in his callousness towards his own welfare, has turned it topsyturvy! It is 'myself first, the world next and God is last.' So, God is lost, too! Hold fast to God; then, you will be safe.

You can hold fast to him, either through jnana, Bhakthi or Karma marga (paths of knowledge, worship or work). You may travel first or second or third class in the train; the destination is the same, for all jnana proceeds on the assumption that God is immanent and transcendent. Bhakthi believes that

God is Creator, Preserver and Destroyer, that He is to be adored, and propitiated by deeds that He appreciates, that God is Master and you are privileged to serve. Karma takes into account a third category - Nature! It is not simply God and man. Man has to manipulate Nature, live in Nature, live by Nature - always dedicating his activity to the further Glory of God, resigning himself to the worshipful activity, unconcerned with the fruits of his activity, for they are in the hands of God. Do your duty; leave the rest to God. A disc with the seven colours of the rainbow, when rotated quickly gives not the band of vibgyor, but, a band of white! So too, the three colours, Jnana, Bhakthi, and Karma are different only when the white light of God is passed through the prism of human reason and mind. Activate them in deed, they are but parts of one ray.

Love is the breath of the Sadhaka

Believe that All are God, through Jnana; even then, compassion compels you to love and serve. Believe that God is Master or Father and that you are His children or servants, through Bhakthi. Even then, His command is to wipe the tears, nourish the sick and help the lame to climb over the stile, through pity and sympathy. Believe, through faith in Karma, that God has to be adored through dedication; even then, Love says the highest form of adoration is by means of Seva (service), done in Love.

Love, therefore, is the breath of the Sadhaka and I call upon you to celebrate the Diwali, not by feasting and exploding crackers to disturb the peace of the neighbourhood, but by silent lighting of lamps and silent service through Love.

32. Re-conditioning man

Date: 20 November 1970 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: All-India Conference of Workers of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organizations

TO HAVE this Conference of the representatives of all the Units of the Sathya Sai Organisations at Prasanthi Nilayam is a source of great pleasure to Me. I am sure everyone here knows the purpose and significance of this Organisation, that has spread all over the World. It is necessary that the obligations too are always kept in view. Discipline is essential for the success of every endeavour of man, whatever the field, whether it be economic, social, educational, or merely material and wordly. It is even more essential for success in spiritual effort. The discipline of concentration, for example, is indispensable for even common acts like walking, talking, writing or reading. Spiritual progress and bliss depend on disciplined effort. It can come only through hard and difficult toil, not through pleasant easy paths. Life becomes worth living only when one has disciplined habits, concentration of mind, renunciation of sensual pleasures and faith in the Atma (the Self).

Discipline and Concentration are as the embankments which control and direct the flood waters of a river into harmless and fruitful channels. You are engaged in sadhana and the inquiry into the Self and, in this great task, these two will be of great help. No one ignorant of the path can reach the goal; no one unaware of the goal can choose the path and tread it. You must have the proper conception of the path, as well as its destination before you decide on the journey.

Before seeking an office consider your capacity

Again, people aspire only for the fruits of authority; they shirk the responsibility that the authority involves. Do not think that this is so only in India, it is the attitude of aspirants all over the world today. Power is sought; but the burden that comes with power is not welcomed. The chaos and misery of the world today are the creation of persons who have climbed to positions of authority but do not discharge the responsibilities of those

positions. No one is entitled to such position who is unable or unwilling to shoulder the responsibility inherent in it and who does not discharge it sincerely. Whatever their status, however deep their scholarship, however rich they are, they do not deserve the position they crave for or hold. In the Units of this Organisation too, the same rule applies. No one has a place who does not possess the skill, the capacity and the willingness to carry out the responsibility. Before you enter the Organisation or seek any office therein, consider well whether you have the yearning and the capacity; else, if you join or complain against some person or some programme, you are only revealing your own smallness or weakness. Make due inquiry, give full consideration, before you join the Organisation. Having joined, co-operate with others vigorously and carry out all your duties conscientiously.

Senses are obstacles in the path of the Spirit

This Organisation has spread far and wide, but I must say that it has drifted away from the purpose for which it was started. It has not resulted in the least benefit. For, in the Spiritual path, the first step is 'Selfless Service.' Through selfless service, man can realise the Divinity that is all this Creation. Of course, all beings and all things are Divine - but, through intelligent analysis, you have to choose the beings and things that will help you and to avoid the beings and things that will hinder you. This is the way of Wisdom. Take the electric current, or fire, or a sharp knife. They are dangerous if you do not know how to use them; they are beneficial if you know how to handle them discreetly. They can be either friends or foes. So too, the senses. If we allow them to master us, they become our deadly enemies; if we master them, they help us to realise our Goal. Man has to master the senses which draw his attention to the outer World. Man cannot liberate himself from bondage to the wheel of duality (pleasure and pain, joy and grief, etc.) so long as he is led by the senses. The senses are obstacles in the path of the Spirit which leads you into the inner Consciousness, not the outer World. Birds and beasts are not troubled by the thirst of the Spirit but man is. He is awarded this great gift, by God's Grace. Man can liberate himself from the cycle of birth and death through detachment from the senses and attachment to the inquiry into his real nature. You may know of persons who are friends

or foes today and who may turn out to be foes or friends tomorrow. But, of this be certain: Kama (Desire) is a perpetual foe. The more we yield to this foe, the more dominant it becomes, the more you are enthralled and enslaved. Each one is saturated today from head to foot, with desires of one kind or another - for wealth, for social status, for fame, for luxurious life, etc. Sundry cravings assail man from all sides at all times. They go on growing in number and force, incessantly. The embankments of discipline and duty are swept away by the flood of desire.

Be sincere in thought, word and deed

So, you should cultivate detachment, develop renunciation and keep desire in check. The end of human life is not wealth or vanity, gold or worldly fame. Be moral, be virtuous. Be sincere in thought, deed and word. Be honest to yourself. Money comes and goes! But, morality comes - and grows! So, man has to give up the yearning for money and yearn for more and more morality.

The Sathya Sai Organisation is working with persons belonging to all religions. They do so because all religions - Christian, Parsi, Hindhu, Buddhist, Jain, Muslim - have, as their basic doctrines, Love and Non-violence. Develop these qualities. Then, you get the title to preach them to others and propagate them.

This land, Bharath, has been declaring since ages the way of Life, viz., "Having crossed yourself, help others to cross" the sea of turmoil and travail, of grief and pain. Realise - and then help others to realise. Be an example. That is the best way to teach. Bharath is celebrated as a holy land, for here the people renounced desire and earned fulfilment. The Saints liberated themselves and lived in joy and peace; they also inspired the common man and sweetened his days with love and faith; unaffected by the Ego and its greed, they skipped the years in joy and lived for over a century. But, today, on account of the impact of egoistic desires, life is becoming shorter and more miserable:.

Promoting enquiry into four basic problems

The Sathya Sai Organisation is established to translate the principles of Love and Non-violence into daily practice. It has also to promote inquiry into four basic problems- (1) The Body - What is it? (Deham); (2) The Body - I am not it (Naham); (3) Then, who am I? (Koham); (4) Well, I am That (Soham).

First, the Body. Consider what it does, whether it really benefits us. There is the story of a man who came upon human faeces while walking along a path. He stepped aside, disgusted; but the faeces was enraged. It called him an ungrateful traitor. "I was a sweet juicy fragrant fruit yesterday; I gave you strength and sustenance; I sacrificed my strength and beauty and my very existence for your benefit. In return, you have reduced me into this foulness and condition and, adding insult to injury, you are turning away in revulsion! It is I who ought to turn away from you in disgust! Contact with you has brought this disgrace on me." The man listened and wondered why he was all that nasty. This led him into an inquiry about the nature of the body he was in. We say "my hand," "my book," "my mind," "my act," "my thought," because there is an I that owns all these, that uses all these as its instruments. Who is this I? Like the current which activates and operates the machine, (with all its nuts, bolts, wheels and belts), the I activates the inert body and its components, inner and outer. We have a microphone here, before me, and there is a wire which is fixed in it. But, even if the microphone is of the latest model and the wire is of the best quality, if there is no current coming through, my voice cannot reach you! In the body too, there should be this I, this Divine power, prompting and performing the hand, the eye, the mind.

Desire liberation from the see-saw of duality

You must carry on the activities of your Unit in the faith that a Divine Will is the basic motive power of all you plan and do. Who are you? You are that Divine Will, that gives you life, vigour, will and wisdom. Realising this, is the goal of life. It means an end to ignorance, delusion (maya).

The Sages have laid down four goals for man on earth' dharma

(righteousness), artha (wealth), kama (desire) and moksha (liberation). That is to say, man must earn wealth through righteous means and desire above all for liberation from the see-saw of duality. Liberation is the goal that must dominate all the activities of life. The rest of the three have to be subordinate. If you need flowers from a tree or its fruits, you do not water the boughs and twigs, where the leaves, buds and shoots are! You feed the roots! So too, when you seek the last of the four, moksha (liberation), foster dharma (righteousness); that will sanctify your artha, and purify your kama and win for you the moksha you strive for. Develop dharma and let it saturate your efforts to earn wealth and comfort.

Every worker in this Organisation must rid himself of the idea of separateness or distinction, between one person and another, on the basis of caste or creed, poverty or richness. He must always be eager to share the sorrows - and what is more difficult - the joys of others.

Power of the Atma only can save the world

My desire is that whenever any slight misunderstanding arises among you, you must set it right among yourselves, exercising love and tolerance. You should not plunge into a passion over it and let things blaze into a quarrel or a factional split. Recognise that you are engaged in the exercise of widening your hearts, of reaching the Feet of the Lord through the expression of love. Unless you cultivate love, tolerance, humility, faith and reverence, how is it possible for you to realise God?

At the present time, when we see all over the country, confusion, fear and anxiety, each worker in each one must contribute his share of cool, calm love to suppress the anger and fury. No governmental authority can suppress it as effectively and as quickly as you can by love and brotherliness.

The world can be saved only by the power of the Atma, inherent in everyone; this has to be tapped by individual sadhana, and by the Grace of God which can be won only through love, purity and service. If these two are absent, Pralaya (devastation) is certain; it is inevitable. Love is the scarcest article

today! There is no love in the home, between father and son, between husband and wife, between brother and brother. Is love to be scarce, between member and member, in our Units too? No. You have to prove by your conduct and attitude, that love, based on the realisation of the One Atma in all, can cure the problems of the world. Living has become very artificial. Men are moving in blind fear, not knowing what might happen to them at the next step. Prepare yourselves to be lamps, to guide them aright.

Become embodiments of Love

Be lamps of love. That contains all. Then, there is no need for japam or thapas. Love, loving service of others (who are forms assumed by the Divine) will provide you the Grace of God. Therefore, resolve today to enshrine love in your heart, to cultivate it; make it Universal, free from selfish desire. Become Premaswaruupa (embodiments of love). I am not interested or elated when this or that District claims to have a larger number of Units of this Organisation than the other one. I am interested in the work, in the loving heart, in the selfless service. There are Units that exist only in name! There are others that function in ways quite contrary to our purposes and ideals! Instead of allowing these to continue, it is best they are wound up, immediately. Better to have two or three that function well than hundreds that function badly or not at all. Two ounces of cow's milk are preferable to a potful of ass's milk. If Units are started or if they are functioning only with the idea of helping the Office-bearers to attend these Conferences, if the members have no faith and devotion, if they do not make constant effort to realise the ideal of the Organisation, then it is necessary to wind them up. If we allow them to continue, they will create in the Organisation the confusion we find in the political scene.

Consider well the qualities you have to retain, the qualities you have to discard. And, act this very day to give up the undesirable and cultivate the desirable. Look forward; recondition yourselves and march on.

33. Faults and failures

Date: 21 November 1970 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: All-India Conference of Workers of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organizations

PEOPLE may say that the Vedas are only a collection of sounds, of series of letters, but they are much more. Veda is Wisdom; Wisdom is God. The culture of Bharath built on the Veda elaborates this Truth and enjoins its practice. This Truth has now to be lived in daily life so that the dire problems affecting the individual and society can be solved. Many practices and patterns of behaviour have been added to this Culture in the course of history. It is necessary to discard these and purify the outlook. This is one of the main tasks of this Organisation. Economic development and five-year plans may raise the standard of living, but unless, along with these, the fundamental Wisdom enshrined in the Veda is assimilated by the people, such progress will end in disaster. Morality, a virtuous character, is the very foundation of progress, the very basic need. It grows in the realm of the Spirit. But, today, the Spirit is neglected. Physical and animal needs are catered for, they are accepted as the ends of living; all efforts are directed to these. In the Kritha yuga, Dharma (righteousness) was accepted and sought after as the very base of life. In the Thretha Yuga, the next Age, God who was installed in the heart was accepted and sought. In the Dwapara Yuga, developing contacts and attachment with kinsmen and friends was considered enough to keep one safe and happy. In the Kali Yuga, the modern age, food and sustenance are taken as the very essentials of Life.

Developing Love is the way to deserve leadership

People have now more faith in medicine (which has taken the place of good food) than in Madhava (God). Life is built on capsules and tablets. Pills (mathra) supply the power for this pilgrimage (yathra), to God knows where! Examine the contents of the pocket of any one going to office; you will not find there the picture of God or a copy of the Bhagavath Geetha; but you are certain to find some Aspirin or Saridon tablets! It is the same in the case of boys going to school or fathers going to the cinema! Even the vanity bags of

ladies contain tablets and capsules. Though you may dine on the best of foods, pills are certain to ruin health. You should not make these temporary make-shifts a permanent habit. Even great personages who claim to be Masters of Spiritual Learning and Teachers of Spiritual Discipline are upset when the habits that have mastered them are disturbed. Their japa or dhyana cannot proceed unimpaired when the morning cup of coffee is delayed for a few minutes! See how weak they are! What can such men achieve? How can they realise the Atma (all-pervading Self) as their Reality? They care more for the body they live in, than for themselves! They have no faith in the Atma which they yearn to visualise. They have no genuine yearning for Wisdom. They are only imitating the ways and words of others who have gone before. Develop Love, demonstrate Love, draw Love from your surrounding - that is the way to deserve leadership.

Spiritual attainments shun publicity

There are many who go about the country, preaching about japa and dhyana, pretending to be highly advanced experts. They claim to be masters, so that they can collect huge audiences and show off their skills. But, such exhibition of talent is not a sign of spiritual attainment. Spiritual attainments shun publicity. Spiritual practice is to be done in silence, away from public gaze. The name and form of God are extolled by Meera as Precious Gems;" precious gems are not brought out as wares to the market place; only vegetables are so exhibited for all to see. The Units of our Organisation should not encourage pomp or show - for they are alien to the Spiritual Path. The Sai Organisation is set up to develop and foster Love; it is not set up through compulsion; it arose from the heart and it expands the heart. The inner desire to achieve Love and expand Love has taken outer shape as this Organisation. Our thoughts are the cotton, the desires which they mould are the threads, and the intermingling and the interaction of these desires is the cloth, made out of warp and woof. When the threads (desires) are removed one by one, the cloth (mind) disappears. It is best to have as few desires as possible. "Less luggage, more comfort, make travel a pleasure," as the Railways remind you. If you have to lessen your luggage for a short railway journey, how urgent it is to lessen the luggage when you are on the much longer journey of Life! This

process of lessening luggage is called, in spiritual language, Vairagya (detachment). The Atma, the Formless Absolute, when it is reflected through the Sathwik (pure, unagitated) medium, reveals itself as Ishwara or God. When it is revealed in a Rajasik (active, passionate) medium it is jeeva or the individual person. When it is revealed in a Thamasik (dull, inert) medium, it is matter. All is Atma, only cognised through different media. The Atma is the only Reality, the Adhwaitha, the One without a Second.

All good acts lead to immortality

There are certain characteristics of human behaviour from which we can draw good lessons. When a man does a good deed, say, feeding the poor or building a temple, he feels an urge to share his joy with others. But, when he is prompted by a bad urge to do a bad act, he does not want to share the shame with others! Again, think of another trait of behaviour! When man proposes to do a good act, he is prone to postpone it; for something tells him that he will be alive the next day or a few days hence or a long time after. But when he decides on doing something bad, he does it the very moment. "I may not be alive tomorrow," he feels! All wrong acts lead to death, all good acts lead to immortality. That is the lesson you have to learn from these. The morning shadow moves in front of you; however fast you run, you cannot catch it, on plain or mountain. Or, the shadow may pursue you and you cannot escape from it. This is the nature of desire. You may pursue it or it may pursue you - but, you cannot overcome it or match it. Desire is an unsubstantial shadow. But, turn desire inward, towards spiritual treasure; then, it yields substantial results. When you are engaged in the various activities of this Organisation, dedicate all desires to God, do everything as the command of the God, whom you have installed in your hearts.

Elevate the human into the Divine

Office-bearers of all Units are here; you are about to consider and approve various Rules and Regulations. But, you must first consider and make certain the answer to a basic question: Why are we in this Organisation? What is the purpose? You must have the firm belief that the aim of this Organisation is to

remove the obstacles that keep man away from God, that separate manavathwa (humanity) from Madhavathwa (Divinity). There can be no human; it is all Divine. This Organisation must elevate the human into the Divine.

There are certain persons in our Organisation who revel in factions and who dwell on differences; there are others who have no faith in it and its task, others have no enthusiasm for work, they are full of envy or malice. When you water a margosa tree, you cannot get the sweet mango from it. Pour the water of Devotion to the tree of sadhana; you will get the sweet fruit of Bliss.

Treat every one as the embodiment of the Divine which you worship; treat every word and deed of yours as an offering to the Lord whom you adore. Then, you can escape the taint of envy or malice, falsehood or greed, anger or egotism. These evil traits should not be found in any one in this Organisation.

If you take in as members only those whom you like and keep away anyone who has faith and devotion, you are committing sacrilege against God. This Organisation does not attach value to the likes and dislikes of any office-bearer. It is based on devotion and faith only. Whoever has these and loves the Organisation as his own life, all such have a place in it, have a right to be in it.

Base all your activities on Dharma

There is also another point. We are deciding it tomorrow but I shall give you some indication of it, even today. We have for every Unit a President, a Secretary, a Joint Secretary and a Treasurer. But I wonder why we should have a Treasurer, when we are not concerned with money! The name indicates that we have a treasure, which we have collected, which we guard, and on which we rely! We deal with something much more valuable than money, Love. Where money is collected and kept, misunderstanding grows, factions are rampant and love departs. Money and the ways in which men run after it, have caused chaos in the world. Base your activities on Dharma, fill

your hearts with Prema - then I will shower Grace and be ever with you. Where is the need for money for Bhajan, for Dhyan and for Nagarasankeerthan? For Nagarasankeerthan, you require only legs to move, tongues to sing and hearts to receive the Name of God. For special purposes and on special occasions, funds are collected only from Members of the Samithi. This has been the rule from the very beginning; it is the very basis of this Organisation. For all other activities, you need no funds. You need only a loving heart, a pure heart, a wide heart.

There are some faults in some Units of this Organisation which I have to point out. I am mentioning this now, so that when I meet the Representatives from each State separately, you can make your representations to me in the proper spirit. If I warn you now, your attitude may become calmer and clearer.

Co-operation and tolerance should prevail

The selection of the District President or State President is done by me but I shall consult your wishes too. There must be an atmosphere of love and tolerance, not one of envy, excitement or aggrandizement, when names are considered. When once a person is selected in the atmosphere of peace and love, co-operation and tolerance should prevail and everyone must follow his directions and respect his guidance. It is only then that the Divine Grace will be conferred on you.

In some places, there are Units which do not carry on any activity. Or, if they do, the activities are quite contrary to the principles and practice of the Prasanthi Nilayam or to the Rules laid down for the Organisation. Wherever there are such Units, the State President or the District President must take steps immediately to remove them from the Organisation. In some Samithis, members do not attend meetings, even 50 per cent of them. They are absent for 100 per cent of the meetings. Some Samithis do not hold meetings at all, so that no one can calculate the percentage of attendance. It is for such Units that Rules and Regulations are imperative. If rules are not observed as laid down, the Organisation will come down in confusion.

This is the opportunity to tell you of some other faults too. Some Units are established with the sole purpose of earning money for the promoters. When a certain name or person is known all over the world and revered by all, such men are tempted to utilise that name for filling their own pockets or for earning name and fame for themselves by associating their activities with that name. This is natural strategem. A number of such persons are found to emerge everywhere. When this happens, the Organisation gets a bad name.

Everyone in distress deserves help

It is also laid down strictly that those who are in our Organisation should not have any connection with other Organisations of spiritual or religious character. Of course, so far as service is concerned, members should help and serve all, without distinction. Every one in distress deserves help. But no member of the Samithi should have any connection with other such institutions or societies. For example, there may be a Sai Samaj (Sai society) in your locality. "Sai is Sathya Sai; Sathya Sai is Sai." I have declared often and you know it and have realised its truth. Why then, you may ask, is the Sai Samaj distinct from the Sathya Sai Samaj? Well, this body with the name Sathya Sai, has full authority over all institutions established under this Name. For the Sai Samaj, there is no Body with that Name to hold and exercise authority and so, if funds are collected, used or misused, this Body has no control over the Sai Samajs in a tangible manner. So, it is best to keep the two distinct and allow those Societies to go their own way. There are a number of other institutions also started and run by Swamis of various types. If we have any who associates with these, I ask the District and State President to remove them immediately. Though people can revere and worship whomsoever they like, we should not have in the Organisation men with dual loyalties. Only those with faith and devotion to this Name and Form can carry out its objectives with zest and enthusiasm.

Of course, every person is Divine but there are degrees in the manifestation of that Divinity. The fire at the end of a lighted scent-stick or cigarette, is incapable of igniting even a dry stick of wood. But, a forest fire can consume in its conflagration even the greenest tree. There is difference in the degree

of the manifestation of the Divine element - in the voltage of the bulb which turns the current into light. Some persons may claim to be superior or supreme, but though they have reached heights, their eyes are roaming, like those of vultures, searching the plains for food. Their forms and names are those of advanced Masters but their thoughts are low. Do not associate with such people, however high their positions, if their vision is low. Save yourselves by your own effort; acquire discrimination and realise the Truth. Then, you can move out, to help others to realise.

Do not give room for personal misunderstanding

There will be State-wise Meetings in the Prayer Hall. When I come there, you can suggest to Me without any emotion or factional spirit, the names of District Presidents and State Presidents whom you would like to have, in Districts and States where there is no President so far. Even in places where we have them already, you can suggest changes, if you feel like having changes. But do it after mutual consultation and agreement. Avoid personal animosity and do not give room for personal misunderstandings. Remember that the essential qualifications for members are faith and devotion. Remember also that the development of this Organisation will bring Peace and Tranquillity to the World torn by chaos. The World can be bettered and saved only through spiritual progress, by the efforts of spiritual organisations. People may claim that they are engaged in social service, that they are directing or sharing in Government activities which promote the welfare of the Community. But, whatever is done as a job, without inspiration or renunciation and heart-felt Love, cannot be "Service." I have come for Lokhasangraha (promotion of the welfare and happiness of the world) and so, when you spread Concord and Love, throughout the world by means of this Organisation, your activity will certainly please Me. We can have Peace and Prosperity in the land if all Units work in Love and tolerance and mutually cooperate in service.

Give ear to things that give tranquillity

Some State Presidents and District Presidents have written to Me that they

are being misunderstood and maligned and that they receive letters-attacking their bonafides. To be agitated by these letters is a sign of weakness in a Sadhaka. Beware of losing peace by giving ear to such maligning. Give ear to truth, things that give tranquillity. Then, your sadhana will succeed. Even I am not free from calumny. You can see how my hair covers my ears. Reports come to Me from devotees, also from those who want to malign others or talk ill of others and spread false fears. The hair "filters" these reports and only the reports that are true or that give joy, can enter my ears!

I have been rather harsh today talking about faults and failures; I shall compensate for this tomorrow by giving you directions about the best ways of using your skills and capabilities for spiritual advancement.

34. Questions answered

Date: **22 November 1970** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam** / Occasion: **All-India Conference of Workers of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organizations**

THE fulfilment of man's life on earth consists in filling oneself with Love of God and transmuting that love into acts of service, service of man who is the embodiment of God. If man has no love in him and if he does not share it with all beings, he is but a burden to the earth. Make your emotions pure; make your mind strong to resist the force of ignorance and the wiles of the senses - then you are assured of peace and joy.

You maintain health by physical exercise, so too, you must maintain mental health (for the mind can lead you into bondage or liberation) by means of certain exercises. By means of pure food, the mind can be rendered subtle and sharp; it can then cut through obstacles and temptations, rend the veil of misconception. You must also try to be constantly in a good environment, a good company, a Spiritual Organisation. In the Spiritual Organisation, members do not discuss about what can be seen or heard, or touched and tasted; they are interested in the investigation of the Unseen, the basic Truth beyond the senses (outer and inner), the processes by which the mind helps or hinders the individual's journey to God.

Mind has to be subordinated to buddhi

The mind is called a karana (an instrument). The senses are instruments, which are used to contact nature and gather information about objects. Mind is the overall instrument, which controls and directs the senses. It is called the Anthahkarana (the Inner instrument). Higher than the mind is the buddhi (intellect) which analyses and categorises the impressions as gathered by the mind, through the senses. The buddhi is subordinate to chiththa (consciousness, as such) and the ego, or the I-sense, which is fundamental for the individual. The mind has to be subordinate to buddhi but usually it serves the senses, which are but its servants. That is how the mind leads man into bondage.

A number of people have handed over questions to Me regarding the nature of the mind. So, though I have often explained this in my discourses, I shall speak about it again. You are all now in Prasanthi Nilayam, gathered in this hall; but, if your mind is wandering in Madras or Calcutta, you will not be seeing the man sitting in the line before yours, or hear Me speak, though I am speaking so loud! Though your eyes and ears are present here, effective and sound, if your mind is not controlling them and directing them, the senses are powerless, they cannot transmit any information to the Anthah-karana! The operations of hearing, smelling, seeing, tasting and getting the feel of touch, cannot be done effectively and meaningfully if the mind is engaged otherwise!

The body is as a torch; the eyes are its bulbs. Intellect is the switch. But, the essential cell is the mind. You may have fresh bulbs, the switch may be on, the torch may be brand new - but, if the cell is not in position, the torch will not emit light.

But, beyond the mind, and beyond reason and consciousness and the I-sense, is the Atma, the reality, the Cosmic I or God.

Rational knowledge is illusory knowledge

Rational knowledge or knowledge accumulated by the exercise of the senses and stored and sifted by reason, is but illusory knowledge. It is worldly material knowledge, subject to correction or modification. The knowledge about the five elements (earth, water, fire, wind and space) derived through the five senses which are so framed that each can sense the special attribute of each element (earth - smell; water - taste; fire - form; wind - touch and space - sound) is illusory.

How can you be content, living in this illusory world, gathering and relying on this illusory knowledge? Realise the person beyond all illusion, who is the

Creator of this illusion, who is revealed in and through this illusion. Worldly knowledge is of the temporary, the particular, the finite, the individual; how can it reveal the Eternal, the Universal, the Infinite, the Absolute? The Veda has the answer. It asks us to analyse our dream-experience. Dreams are unreal, they are illusory. But yet, for as long as we are dreaming, the experience is real and valid often in the dreams as a result of the illusory experience itself, awareness of such extreme is created through fear or horror or pain or excitement, that the person dreaming wakes and the dream is destroyed. What has caused the awakening? The dream itself helped in the destruction of the dream. So too in this "wakeful dream" - in the illusory world where every wakeful experience is deemed true and valid - some experience or the roar of the Vedas in the Mahavakyas (Divine axioms, which ring through the sacred texts) wakes man into the higher awareness.

The Universe is only relatively real

Some questions handed over to Me relate to Creation and how it came into being. Well, if you can understand how your dream comes into being, you can know how this creation came into being. Sleep causes dreams; the maya (the deluding power) of the Divine has caused this Creation! This Universe is as unreal as the dream. It is only relatively real; it is not absolutely real.

The Vedhic sages, out of the illumination of their purified intellects, declared in Bliss, for all mankind to know:

Thath Thwam Asi (Thou art That);
Prajnanam Brahma (Wisdom is That).
Ayam Atma Brahmam (This I is That).
Aham Brahmasmi (I am That); I am everything, I am the Supreme; I am the One, without a second.

When these depth-stirring declarations reverberate in the heart, men awaken

to the vision of Truth. The realisation that you are the Atman and that there is nothing except the Atman anywhere at any time - this is Self-realisation; it is the Atma-Sakshathkara , the realisation of the Atma by the atma of yourself by yourself as the Self.

This is also called bhooma , the vast limitless, the changeless, the unaffected-by-time-and-space; the bhoomi (this earth) is limited; it has a past and a future different from the present. So, it can never reveal the Truth. Bhooma alone can reveal it. So, live in the bhooma, breathe the bhooma, think, plan and act in the limitless, the changeless that is in you!

You desire God not for God's sake

You are the very centre of your desires and activity. You crave happiness for your own sake. Your Truth is in your own self. Even when you try to make others happy, it is your own happiness that you are after! You love a terylene shirt, not for the sake of the shirt but for your own sake. You desire a sweet dish not for the dish's sake, certainly. The mother fondles the child for her own satisfaction. You desire God, not for God's sake, but for your own sake. And what is this "You" which desires, which serves, which tries, which yearns and which is satisfied or pleased or happy. It is the 'I' which makes you and every other conscious being declare 'I' 'I' 'I'. Now, you ignore this 'I' and you affirm that you are the body with its equipment, its implements, its instruments.

This ignorance, this misconception, has originated from the very principle which endows you with wisdom and light! The Sun produces light, as well as the cloud that hides it from view! The eye that sees produces the cataract which clouds and often closes that Vision. From the same Athmic principle which illumines and vitalises, is born the maya (illusion) that hides and confuses! The fire from the embers creates ashes which cover up the embers! But we can blow off the ashes and reveal the cinders; the cataract can be removed; clouds are wafted away by winds. So too, sadhana can remove the veil of illusion which hides the inner 'I' from consciousness, the Atma from our awareness. As regards sadhana, I have here a number of questions. They ask:

We are serving others relieving their pain or misery. We are feeding the hungry, poor; we are engaged in many good acts; are these not sadhana? But, this is not service to others, it is service to yourself. A person may invite all of you Office-bearers for a dinner! And he may declare afterwards, "I gave a dinner to all the delegates." He too sat and ate with all the delegates and so, he served himself too, when he served the others, did not he? He derived joy as a result of the dinner he arranged and so, it was a piece of service rendered to himself ultimately.

Good thoughts will get desires in good forms

When you feel that it is not the 'other' whom you are serving - but, yourself then, your service will be better and more effective. Establish this attitude more and more firmly in your mind. If you do good, you get good from those around you and from the universal entity, God. If you do bad, you get bad. Divinity but resounds, reflects, reacts! God has no favourites, no prejudices. The thought creates a desire, the desire creates a form through which it is expressed. Have good thoughts, you get desires in good forms.

Ahalya was lying as a stone, for many years, as a result of the curse of her husband. Inside the stone, there persisted human thought, which was again turned into human form with the touch of Rama's feet. If Ahalya had become a stone, with no trace of 'Thought,' she would not have emerged as a woman from it. So, unless all trace of 'Thought' is destroyed, the form will sprout and grow and decline; that is to say, birth and death are inevitable.

The Ramayana gives another example of the power of 'Thought.' Ravana was a great person who had mastered the Scriptural Texts and who was earnest in Spiritual Observances. Every morning, he used to go the round of many temples of Shiva. He had mastered the four Vedas and the six Shasthras and so he was praised and depicted as having ten heads! His Queen, Mandodhari lamented over her husband's defeat and death, at the hands of a mere man leading a host of monkeys! She had learnt from the Shasthras that death caused by drowning or by the fall from a tree or through monkeys converts the dead into ghosts that wander in the realms of' darkness. So, she

wondered why such a fate overtook the great scholar, the pious devotee, that Ravana was. Then she remembered that the spark of lust that he harboured in his heart had burnt all that scholarship and all that piety into ash! He was not able to control his senses or sublimate the sensory urges. A bullock that does not yield to the yoke, a horse that resists the reins, a car without brakes and a person who knows no self-control, are all equally heading towards disaster!

Have your Vision steady and your Will strong

Follow regular sadhana in order to control the senses and the emotions. Do not pay heed to others who may ridicule you, for your changed way of life. They may point you to others and laugh, "Look at this man! He has become a great Sai Bhaktha!" "Look at him with his japa and bhajan!" But have your Vision steady and your Will strong. Do not deviate; march straight on. There are some questions among those handed over to me, on the Name to be used in japa, whether Ramnam or the five-lettered Nama-Shivaya or the eight-lettered Om Namō Narayanaya or whether I would suggest some other Name. The Scriptures have given a good answer for this:

God is one without a second.

You can adore Him according to your own fancy and pleasure. He does not change. He is not changed, when the Names you adore Him by are changed or the Forms you picture Him by, are changed. We have many kinds of sweets - many Names and Forms. But sugar is the One substance that makes each one sweet. You may prefer one sweet thing more than another; you are welcome to prefer it, but, do not condemn or prevent others preferences.

God will assume the Form for which you thirst

You may adore Krishna, for that name and form gives you the greatest joy,

the maximum thrill; but, do not find fault with a brother who worships the same God through another Name-Form: Rama, Shiva or Vishnu, or any such other. He has as much right as you, to worship God in the form he likes. The effectiveness lies not in the Manthra or in the Name and Form it is centred upon. It lies in the heart, in the yearning, in the thirst. God will assume the form and answer to the Name for which you thirst! That is the measure of His Grace. When the child in the cradle starts weeping and wailing, the mother who is on the terrace of the house will run down the steps to fondle it and feed it. She will not stop to discover whether the wail was in the correct key or on the proper note! So also, the Supreme Mother of the Universe will come down from Her Sovereign Throne to fondle, caress and console Her child, provided the yearning comes spontaneously from a full heart, a pure heart. She will not investigate the correctness or otherwise of the pronunciation of the manthra or the perfection of the picture formed in the mind of the Divine Ideal yearned for. It is the feeling in the heart that is the crucial test - not the length of time devoted or the amount of money spent. Be sincere in sadhana; do not attempt to imitate others; let it arise out of your own genuine yearning.

You should not also be urged by competitiveness or the desire to show off. "That bhajan mandali is conducting Nagarasankeerthan twice a week; let us also do twice a week; or, let us do thrice a week." This kind of rivalry or exhibitionism has to be given up. There are others who desire to bring down units that are doing good work, for, they cannot tolerate or suffer the fame those units earn! So, out of sheer malice, they try to harm or injure the units so that their good work may suffer. But there is another way of bringing those units down and making your unit more liked. The teacher draws a line on the blackboard and asks any one of his pupils to come up to the board and, without touching the line drawn, make it shorter! The pupils are puzzled but the teacher shows them the way; draw a longer line a little distance above it; the line is now the shorter of the two! Let your unit do more acts of service more efficiently to more people. That is the proper way to carry on the activities - not calumny or criticism, but work.

Prema-yoga alone can lead you to God

What I am about to say in answer to another question handed over to Me might pain some of you - but, I feel the truth must be told. There are some who are attracted by various systems and methods like Hathayoga, Kriyayoga, or Rajayoga, which claim to help people to realise the self. But, I must tell you that no one of these can make you realise God. I am saying this most emphatically. **The Premayoga - Discipline of Love - alone can lead you to God.** Those yogas may calm the mind's agitations temporarily and may improve health and prolong life for a few more years - but that is all that they can do. What is the good you hope to achieve with that body in those extra years? If Love is absent, they weigh you down like big burdens; if Love is cultivated, then, the body can be used for serving others, without regard for the interests of the body.

Dharma guards those who guard dharma

The body should be guarded and sustained for the service one can do with it to others, or for realising the Atma, while in it. There are some who observe strict discipline in spiritual practices, who follow a rigorous time-table of japam, dhyanam, etc. Of course, this is good practice, but do not stick to this time-table or that programme, even when you have a call to go to the help of some person, whose need for service is great and urgent. If you give up your dhyana and serve him, you will benefit more, from the service than what you may gain from the dhyana.

If you feel that the person next to you suffering pain, needing relief, is a nuisance and move on to some place where your dhyana will not be disturbed, you surely are not going to get the merit of that dhyana. It is certainly a wrong you have committed and you do not deserve Grace. When God Himself comes down and has come down to serve man, He will indeed be pleased if you too serve man.

Engage in those activities which will please God, which you feel and know will please God, rather than in activities which will please you. God is pleased with Truth, with dharma.

Dharma (righteousness) guards those who guard dharma.

Know your dharma and observe it. Do not put forward false claims and boast that you are bhakthas (devotees). There is a proverb in Telugu about such devotee being good strict conformists so long as they listen to sermons and admonitions - but, as soon as they leave off listening, the old evil tendencies and habits seize their minds and mould their behaviour. When you move away from this atmosphere of love, tolerance, humility and reverence, there is the risk of losing these qualities. So, hold fast to them, be firm. The desire to please others, to win their esteem, or to create in their minds a false picture of yourselves should not arise and grow in your minds.

No text-book or class can teach meditation

When you attempt to deceive another, remember there will emerge some one who can deceive even you. There was a thief once who was skilled in all the stratagems and tricks of that profession. There was not a single one that he had not mastered. One day, after collecting a large number of costly articles and bundling them up, he was moving along a lonely road with the booty on his shoulder. He saw a child standing on the bank of a wayside tank, weeping aloud, in great distress. The thief went near and asked, "Why are you weeping? What has happened to you?" The child said, (and here, you have to remember that it does not matter how old or how young a person is, it is the intelligence that matters) "I came here for a bath, my golden necklace fell into the waters, right there, where I tried to have a dip. The place is too deep for me." The thief thought that he could get away with this necklace too, for it was a little child that stood between him and the jewel. So, placing his bundle on the bank, he went down into the waters to retrieve the necklace. Meanwhile, the child lifted the thief's bundle and running a short distance, disappeared into the jungle. The thief came up disappointed, for the necklace was but a fiction, only to find that he had been robbed! Whoever deceives another will have some one cleverer, to outwit him.

There is a suggestion mentioned in a chit handed over to Me by a delegate: regular classes for training members in dhyana should be held in Prasanthi Nilayam, for, through these trainees, dhyana can be spread all over the country. I laughed when I read this suggestion. Can any one train another in meditation? Or claim to train? It may be possible to teach a person the posture, the pose, the position of the legs, feet or hands, neck, head, or back, the style of breathing or its speed. But, meditation is a function of the inner man; it involves deep subjective quiet, the emptying of the mind and filling oneself with the Light that emerges from the Divine Spark within. This is a discipline which no text-book can teach and no class can communicate. Dhyana classes! Those who handle them do not know what dhyana is; those who attend them do not care to know! Purify your emotions; clarify your impulses; cultivate love. Then only can you become master of yourself. That mastery is the purpose, the process of meditation or dhyana.

Mind is pervasive, wanders far and wide

The mother can sit near her child and utter words to encourage the child to speak; but, the child has to use its own tongue and put in its own efforts. So too, a person can teach you how to sit and keep the torso erect, the legs folded, the hands straight, the fingers crossed, the breathing steady and slow - but, who can teach you how to control the wayward mind? The mind is very subtle and expansive. It is very light and pervasive, floating hither and thither, on any gust of desire. It behaves like a ball of cotton, with no weight of seed to hold it down. It is much lighter than fluff; it wanders far and wide. So, if you must control it you must attach something heavy to it. The body which houses the mind is heavy, no doubt, but, the mind is fickle and free. It flees afar as it fancies.

All faiths are mutually indebted to each other

The mind must be allotted some heavy piece of work to hold it down. This work is called dhyana. Keep the mind above the upper lip, between the two nostrils, right: in front of the bridge of the nose. Inhale through the left nostril, closing the right with the right thumb. As the breath goes in, it utters

So (meaning, He); then exhale through the right nostril, closing the left nostril. As the breath goes out, it utters ham (meaning, I). Inhale and exhale slowly and deliberately, conscious of the identity of He (the Lord) and I (yourself) which it asserts, until the breathing and the awareness grow into an unnoticed process. Keep the mind as a watchman, to note the incoming and outgoing breaths, to listen with the inner ear to the Soham that the breath whispers, and to witness the assertion of your being the Divine, which is the core of the Universe. This is the dhyanam that will give victory.

When this Soham dhyana has stabilised itself, you may start stabilising in your mind the ruupa (form) of your Ishtadhevatha (the Lord of your choice). Picture the Form from head to foot, taking at least 15 to 20 minutes for it, dwelling on each part of the body and imprinting it clearly on the heart and then, proceed from foot to head in similar way. This will help to fix the form in the altar of the heart. Then, you will see in everyone that Form only; in all beings, you will find Him only. You will realise the One manifold as many.

Shivoham, Soham, I am Shiva, I am He, Only He is.

Here is another question from a Muslim who is the Vice-President of the Sathya Sai Seva Samithi, in his town. He asks whether he can partake in the Nagarasankeerthan, dhyana, puuja, etc., that the Samithi is having on its programme. If he desires, he can; if he feels that it goes against his inner conviction, he need not. One should not give up his conviction in the face of ridicule or persecution. He can carry on dhyana (worship) according to his conviction in the privacy of his own home; there is no compulsion that he should thrust them on the attention of others, outside. All faiths are inter-related and mutually indebted to each other for the principles they teach, and the disciplines they recommend.' The Vedhic religion was the first in time; Buddhism which appeared about 2500 years ago, was its son; Christianity, which was influenced much by the Orient was its grandson. And Islam, which has the Prophets of Christianity at its base was like the great-grandson. All

have Love as the Fundamental Discipline of the Mind, in order to chasten it and merge man with the Divine.

Bhakthi is the foundation for all religions. Of course, japa or homa or offering of flowers, or going on pilgrimages to holy places cannot be taken as bhakthi! They are good acts that help promote bhakthi. True bhakthi opens the door of jnana.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

35. Truth of Truth

Date: **22 November 1970** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam** / Occasion: **All-India Conference of Workers of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organizations**

THE thought manifests as word, the word manifests as deed; the deed develops into habit; the habit hardens into character. So, watch the thought and its ways. Let it spring from love, love that is born out of respect for all beings, for, all beings are Divine. You are all embodiments of the Divine. Never forget that reality. Since two days, you have been listening to spiritual discourses and moving in holy thoughts. This All-India Conference for which you have come is just an excuse, for bringing you all here and charging you with Grace, for carrying on your duties with greater zest and understanding. Through the Units of the Organisation of which you are the Office-bearers, you are worshipping God. For, service to man is service to God. When God comes embodied as man to serve man, how delighted He must be to find man himself taking up the role and serving brother-man to get rid of disease, distress or doubt! You have no reason to feel proud when you are able to help another, for, your skill or wealth or strength or courage or official position which gave you the chance to serve was the gift of God - whether you recognise it or not. You are only offering this God's gift to another God's gift, namely, the poor, the illiterate, the weak, the diseased, the grieving, the broken-hearted, who seek your help.

Mind has to be drilled into recognition of the Unity

A person stands knee-deep in the Ganga or Godhavari river and uttering Vedhic hymns in praise of the river, he lifts up in his palm the sacred water of the river and pours it back as his offering to the deity that the river represents. Its water into itself - God's gift for God's. gift - that is all that one is capable of; that is all that one needs to do. He has endowed you with this wonderful body, this sweet tongue, this amazing instrument called mind. He has granted you intelligence, the powers of analysis and synthesis, the capacity to receive and give up, to remember and to forget. Acknowledge these gratefully and use them to the best advantage. Use them to see Him

everywhere in all beings, to seek Him through all the ups and downs, the joys and griefs, the doubts and decisions of life.

These dual impacts are the result of the waverings of mind. The mind revels in the diversity of name and form; it has to be drilled into the recognition and the enjoyment of unity. It suffers from a false sense of values and tries to discard what is good for it. The child has to be educated into an appreciation of hard chewable food, it will not welcome it in the beginning itself. So, too, the mind has to be trained to picture the vast, the limitless, the overwhelming majesty that underlies time, space and causation. First, it must develop a taste for the Personal God and later for the Impersonal, without Name and Form, the Impersonal which is all Names and Forms attributed by the mind. Bhajan, dhyana, Namasmaran, Nagarasankeerthan - these are all steps in that education. The Bliss that is won by mergence in the Divine, is the consummation of that education.

A person who is ill has to swallow the mixture himself and that too as long as he is ill, however bitter the medicine may be. A person, who is ill with ignorance and therefore is suffering from egoism and discontent, has to take the medicine of japa-dhyana; the disease of over-attachment to worldly objects can be cured only by the drug of attachment to God, cultivated through japa and dhyana.

You crave liberation but fix shackles on

There are some who count the number of years during which they have taken the drugs and who feel they have not improved at all and get desperate about the course of treatment itself. They find fault consequently with the Guru, the method, his advice or even with God and turn atheists or worse. But, how can water be stored in a leaky pot? You may fill your heart with faith and devotion earned through japa and dhyana but it has sprung leaks, the leaks of cynicism, of fear, of fanaticism, and of delusion. There is no justification for denying God when you are not able to visualise or realise Him; it is but a sign of wanton foolishness. How can you condemn water as saltish when you have put into it salt, in place of sugar? You find no sweetness in it,

because you have added salt. You crave sweetness but add salt. You crave liberation but fix shackles on. You crave Peace and add unto yourselves the disturbance of duality. You complain that your neighbour began his spiritual discipline only two years ago, while you have been keeping the schedule since 20 years. But, he has secured happiness while you are miserable. You feel you have been coming to Me since years but I take near Me those who have come just a short while ago. Your reactions lead you to ascribe injustice and partiality but the answer lies in the past about which you are not aware.

The Immanent God can be experienced as Real

Twenty hammer strokes have been given to a slab but it did not break. Another fellow comes along and at his second stroke, the slab is broken. The man who dealt the 20 is disappointed and the man who broke it in 2 is elated but, the slab broke as a result of the cumulative impact of the 22. Your neighbour has to his credit 20 years of sadhana, stored up in the causal body into which he came from his previous birth to his present one. Your nature and your predilections are shaped by the way in which you loved and wrought, fed and fought, in the long series of lives you had already.

The green fruit is sour or even bitter, but as it ripens, the sourness or the bitterness is transmuted onto sweetness. The attachment to the senses and to the sensory world must be transmuted into attachment to the Atma, to the Lord, so that it may confer on you the Sweetness of Bliss. Once you are in that Bliss, you will see, taste, hear, experience only Bliss. Ishavasyamidham - All this is God.

But the question is asked: Then, why is He not seen? Well, He is, as butter is in Milk, in every drop, through and through. If butter has to be seen, then certain processes have to be gone into - boiling, curdling, churning, etc. So too, by certain spiritual disciplines, like repeating the Name on the tongue, He who dwells in the heart can be visualised; the Immanent God can be experienced as Real.

Man has an inborn thirst of God, an in-built yearning for the Anandha (bliss) of

the highest order which will never fail or falter. It is only by drinking God that thirst can be quenched; not by substitutes or palliatives. The Chathaka bird of legends is not distracted by the darkening sky, the reverberating thunder, the blinding lightning and the mad destructive rain. It flies up with open beak to receive into itself the first few virgin drops between earth and sky; that is its thirst, its yearning, its destiny.

When questions arise answers will be vouchsafed

When the raindrops are soiled by the ground, they become undrinkable; that is the conviction of the Chathaka. So too, the pure yearning for love, for service, for expansion, for expression, for fulfilment, is soiled by contact with selfish ends, with greed and envy, malice and hatred, lust and pride. It is soiled by one's egoistic reaction to blame or praise, loss or gain. It is best that this yearning is treasured and cultivated alone and in silence, until it is strong enough to meet failure or success, with composure. Namasmarana (remembrance of God) within the silence and solitude of your own heart, is very beneficial for this purpose. When questions arise, the answers too will be vouchsafed unto you; when doubts emerge, as they must in order to strengthen and deepen faith, the decisive lines of argument will also be provided. Namasmarana can be elaborated also into Nagarasankeerthan (public community singing of spirituals). This has both individual and social consequences. When you inhale foul air, your health suffers. The air is polluted by unwholesome vibrations when people shout hateful, lustful slogans or even talk, without love and reverence. In order to purify the atmosphere, vibrations that are holy, healthy, happy have to be circulated, even before the citizens come out into the open with the break of day. When a group of good men and women move from one end of a street to the other singing aloud the Names of God, each Name redolent with fragrance and resonant with Love, it clears the air and renders it pure for all to breathe. It also calls people living in the houses on both sides to begin their daily round of duties, with the Sweet Name of God in their ears and the charming Form of God in their hearts.

Vibrations of hatred and greed can pollute the air

When an Atomic Bomb is exploded thousands of miles away by America or Russia in some faroff country, the fall-out travelling all over the world contaminates the atmosphere, poisons vegetation and distorts life, say the doctors who have to deal with them. The vibrations of hatred and greed, of pride and envy that result from the shouts and discontent of animosity also pollute the air equally seriously.

Man exhibits great mental and physical courage, on the battle-fields and during adventures on land, sea and air. He has evinced in history, vast reinforcements of courage inside him, to meet all varieties of obstacles. But the courage to give up entanglement with the material world is a great achievement. Valmeeki was a highway robber who waylaid and killed hundreds without hesitation; he was the slave of passion and emotion but, when the seven Sages whom he waylaid one night, counselled patience, forbearance and self-inquiry, he turned heroically into the path of Ram (giving up the path of kama (lust)), and achieved immortality, immortal fame as the narrator of Rama's story. From the Rajasik (passionate) stage, he transformed himself into Sathwik (balanced). The spiritual adventure, the spiritual leap from darkness into light needs extraordinary courage, and Divine Grace is the reward for courage.

Contemplate the OM, symbol of the Inner Flame

For this adventure, all are candidates, women as well as men. Sex is but a vesture worn by the Soul for the role of life on earth. It does not affect the life of the Spirit, which is Eternal, and on the supra-sensory plane. Man and woman have each to purify the inner consciousness so that the Divine may reveal itself in all its Glory therein. There are some crude thinkers who declare that women are not entitled to pronounce the sacred syllable OM, but that is a pernicious narrow doctrine. With one voice, these people revere the Mother, acclaiming the dictum 'Mathru Dhevo Bhava, (May your Mother be your God) and with the other, they disgrace the Mother by denying her the fight to save herself? This is hypocrisy. The A U M of the OM, represents the Om Thath Sath principle - the "Thath is the Truth," "I am the Truth," "the

Truth is One" principle. The Om is the ever-present Voice within, the echo of the Divine call, from the cavity of the heart. Listen to it, be thrilled by it; that is the inner adoration, of which the external puuja (ritual worship) is the outer symbol. With the ego rampant and rambling, how can the mind be balanced and faith be steady? Contemplate the OM, the Symbol of the Inner Flame, which shines through the waking hours, the dream twilight and the sleep night. That way can earn Grace abundantly. Every place of authority or influence has certain responsibilities attached to it. The Tahsildar is the highest authority that most villagers know; he has the responsibility of fostering the villagers under his care and winning their love and co-operation. The offices that you hold as Presidents and Secretaries of the Sathya Sai Organisational Units lay on you responsibilities with which, perhaps, no other Organisation burdens! its members. These have been drawn up by the Sub-Committees and revised by Me and will be read now. The duties and obligations of the State Presidents and the District Presidents and of the Members and Office-bearers of each Unit, will also be read.

The Units should not compete in a spirit of envy

The responsibility of running Bal Vihars (children's classes) is now assigned to the Mahila Vibhag (women's section) and a new rule is laid down that, in no Unit, except Mahila Vibhag, should there be women members. The Seva Samithi (service organisation) will guide and help the Mahila Vibhag, which will work as its subordinate Unit. A Seva Dhal (volunteers corps) will be trained and organised and fully utilised for seva activities. One member of the Samithi will be the Convenor of the Seva Dhal. Every member should be active and enthusiastic, all the time, in seva.

The conviction that I am everywhere, watching everything and aware of everything must keep you on the straight path of sadhana, through seva and study. I want that every Samithi (and every Unit complementary to it) must be bubbling with joy at the work already achieved and with enthusiasm for the work ahead. Love, respect, tolerance, mutual co-operation, forbearance - these must flow from the hearts of each to all. There should be no eagerness to capture Office from the other's grasp or to hold it back when another is

ready for it. The Units too should cooperate with each other and not compete in a spirit of envy or faction. You are all limbs of one body, namely, the Sai body. The Samithis should be guided and if necessary corrected by the District President; the District Presidents should be guided and, if necessary, corrected by the State President and the State Presidents should have constant contact, advice and guidance from the Centre.

Develop a sense of belonging to the Unit

This Conference has laid down that women must not be members of any Unit, except Mahila Vibhag. For any public function or celebration they may arrange, they should seek the help and guidance of the Seva Samithi. Every Samithi must start a Mahila Vibhag without delay and Mahila Vibhags must consider Bal Vihars as their most important and most useful activity. The Seva Dhal, the Bhajan Mandali, the Study Circle, the Prasanthi Vidwanmahasabha must all be guided and activated by some member of the Samithi selected for the purpose and nominated for the work. They are all limbs of the Samithi of the place with its 11, 15 or 25 members.

The routine expenses of the Samithi or the Seva Dhal, etc., must be shared by the members only. There should not be any attempt to collect from non-members. For special occasions, voluntary gifts of material or services from devotees may be received. But, there is no need for a Treasurer; the Joint Secretary can manage whatever accounting there is. Every member of the Samithi must be given some particular work so that he may develop a sense of belonging and he may contribute his skill, intelligence, faith and devotion to the promotion of the objects of the Association.

The members of the Samithi must all partake in the Nagarasankerthan. If they have not that steadfast faith, why have their names on the list? They should be active in sadhana and attend sadhana camps, arranged by the Samithi.

Units should have no contacts with cheats

Embodiments of Divine Atma! This Bharath land is the centre of spiritual

progress for ages past and the region where Divine incarnations re-establish Dharma for the good of humanity. In order to make known My majesty and My glory as the Divine that has Incarnated, miraculous happenings of an amazing nature do take place in certain areas. Taking advantage of the attraction that those happenings draw upon them, many misuse them for personal propaganda and aggrandizement. They trade for money the Vibhuuthi (sacred ash) that the pictures in their altars shower! They go about pretending that they are "superior devotees" of a higher order and conferring boons and blessings on the innocent folk whom they fleece. Others put forth false claims that vibhuuthi is emanating from the pictures of Baba in their homes, that Amrith (nectar) is dripping from them or that material objects are falling from them, like written answers to questions. Samithis and other Units should have no contact with such cheats and crooks. Any one who is attached to such or who encourages such can be immediately removed. There are others who claim that I am speaking through them, and answering questions put to them. These people must be either insane or hysteria-affected or they are possessed by some ghost or by the greed to earn money thereby. I can only tell you that it is not I that speaks through them. I do not need media; nor do I need substitutes or subsidiaries or representatives. There are some crooks who are publicising that I have allotted them some regions for ministration by them on My behalf, because, they say, My devotees have increased so much that I am unable to attend to all of them, single-handed! On the face of it, this is an absurd lie. Moreover, consider another aspect.

Evil forces try to draw away aspirants

Even those who cry in pure agonising yearning, Sai Sai Sai, and lead pure unselfish virtuous lives, even these find it hard to realise Me; how then can these low scheming vulgar men who know no sadhana, sincerity, truth and humility, how can these people claim that they have been blessed by me? They may wear the same style of dress, imitate gestures and style of speech but these will only bring their falsehood into greater prominence. That I am supposed to "possess" such people or speak through them or shower My Grace on them is an assumption of which one ought to be ashamed! How then can anyone believe it, I wonder. Evil forces which design to damage or

diminish the faith and devotion of the simple and the sincere do emerge into action and try to attract attention by devious means. They try to draw away aspirants from the spiritual path into worldly paths of avarice and malice. There is a big chasm of difference between the Sai Shakthi (Sai Power) and these inferior shakthis. Since the opportunity has now offered itself, this has to be said. There can be no limit for Sai Shakthi, no hindrance, no opposition or obstacle. You may believe it or you may not, but Sai Shakthi can transform earth into sky, the sky into earth. Only, there is no call for that transformation. This Divine Behaviour is far distinct from the mean exhibitionistic tricks of the inferior shakthis. This is spontaneous manifestation; those are calculated to collect customers and exploit the ignorant. The inferior shakthis may imitate the dress or the gestures, for imitation cannot be prevented. But you have to ask yourselves the question: "Can all green feathered birds be parrots? Or, can all worms on petals turn into butterflies? Or, can a donkey wearing a tiger-skin become a tiger or can an overgrown boar be honoured as an elephant?" Beware of being cheated by dress or speech or by tricks. Nor need you feel angry or upset by these.

Falsehood can never become Truth

For Truth is ever Truth. Falsehood can never become Truth, whatever its tactics. This is the very embodiment of Truth. It has no unreality or falsehood in its composition. But, those afflicted with jaundice can see all things only as yellow. Those who have no appetite or digestion find even delicious food, bitter. Such men may proclaim this in their own manner, as different from what it is; but I am not in the least perturbed nor will I change. Others who are taken to be elders have posed certain problems, to confuse the mind. Krishna, they say, showed many wonders, with amazing disregard of the Laws of Nature and therefore, according to them, Krishna had to meet his death from the arrow of a hunter. Jesus, they say, suffered crucifixion for, he too manifested many miracles. Their argument is that since I am defying the laws of nature, I too will suffer likewise. They plan to create panic and spread false alarm. But, these are the prattlings of weakness, helplessness and envy. These can never be Truth. They only plan to decry and diminish the glory they cannot understand or tolerate. Whoever may join in this campaign, whatever

tactics they employ, even if all the 'fourteenworlds' unite as one, they cannot succeed; they cannot affect Me in the least. And, even if ten more worlds, say 24 in all, lend them their support, their falsehood will not be accepted or established as Truth.

Do not allow your faith and devotion to decline

Truth can never be tarnished or turned into falsehood. You may be subjected to all kinds of pressure and publicity; but, do not lose courage, do not allow your devotion, faith and steadfastness to decline. Resolve to achieve success in the sadhana you have taken upon yourselves. Then, this Sathya will reveal itself, without fail, as your own sathya (reality). I do not depend on outer manifestation and actions; I am related to you through the inner principle of Love. If you are to be drawn by outer attractions, advertisement is imperative. For example, if such a Conference or such a Celebration is held in any other place, invitations have to be printed and sent out, personal requests have to be made so that this person or that can attend. Considerations have to be held forth to many so that the invitations may be accepted and the function made a success. But here in the Prasanthi Nilayam, no invitation has ever been printed and distributed on any occasion, asking people to come. No one has been specially requested to take part. It is Love, the invitations of the Heart to the heart, that has brought you in tens of thousands to this place. The validity and value of Love are proved by you; Love is the most potent of My powers.

When you light a lamp in your home, you have to go round the homes of others and invite them to come and admire it. But when the Sun rises in all its splendour, there is no need to draw the attention of the world to the event. This is the splendour of the Sun. It will itself command attention. No one need be invited to notice it. Of course, it is only natural that doubt may arise in you on some occasions based on My form or My words or My action but, when you are eager to know My reality, you must observe in action My teaching and follow Me. Then, certainly, My Divine Reality will be revealed to you. Having looked at this form through your eyes only, you start guessing and concluding, as your wavering fancy dictates, and lay waste your intellectual

and mental efforts; you even allow your devotion and faith to flow into wrong channels. I am advising you against this, with the force of a command.

No generation is more fortunate than the present one

Swami Karunyanandha declared yesterday that he believed for a long time that those who lived in previous Ages were far more fortunate than those of this Age, since they could secure the dharshan (direct sight) of the Incarnation of the Lord. But he said, it has now become clear to him that there is no generation more fortunate than his; that declaration is true. It is thrice true. For during no previous Age did man have this unique chance. No organisation of this nature was established, no Conference of this character was held in the Presence and no opportunity was given then to derive Anandha through such close association, through conversation and singing together. Undoubtedly, you are all singularly fortunate. Therefore, do not let the opportunity slip through your hands. Hold fast to it and make the best of it. With steady faith and enthusiastic devotional activity, tread the path indicated and reach the Goal of Realising the Reality. I bless you that you may attain the Bliss of that Realisation.

36. Feast of Grace

Date: **November 1970**

THE Vedas, which are the most ancient scriptures of man, have laid down that man has to utilise the special gifts that God has endowed him with, (namely, an intelligence that can look into the future and decide on a long-term basis what is profitable in the ultimate analysis, and a capacity to discard and keep away from satisfactions of a temporary nature so that one can pursue undisturbed the lasting satisfaction of eternal Bliss). That is the reason why this Yajna Saptaha (Week-long sacrificial ritual) is called Vedapurusha Saptaha Yajna; the Vedapurusha is to be propitiated by the adoration of the Vedhic Gods, especially the Sun and Fire, through ceremonial Namaskar (for the Sun) and oblations of ritually sanctified ghee (for the God of Fire). Rudhra is adored by the worship of the thousand Lingas every day and the Mother aspect of God (which is most revered during the Navarathri is adored by means of the puuja which you see performed with scrupulous correctness. The Vedas are recited with authentic syllabic exactitude, just as it was recited centuries and millennia ago on the banks of the river Saraswathi or Yamuna, by the simple sages of Aryavārtha. By this means, the reciters, the worshippers, the performers and the participants, listeners and those who are vibrating to the holiness of the place, wherever they may be, are filled with bliss and peace.

Yajna maintains order of the Universe

Yajna means sacrifice; the manthras emphasise this, the ritual symbolises this; the namaskar (prostration) is but the physical act which highlights this; indeed, all life is a sacrifice of a portion of one's span of life every day to the Sun, of a portion of one's time and strength and attention to some one or thing every moment. There can be no progress without yajna (sacrifice). Yajna maintains the order of the Universe. Sacrifice pleases the gods; the gods send rain; the rain feeds the crops; the crops yield harvest, the harvest strengthens the limbs and widens the outlook; it broadens the heart, clarifies the vision, until man reaches the goal, where there is no more struggle or

death.

The highest and the most fruitful sacrifice is that of the ego. Crucify it and be free. Dedicate it to God and be rich beyond all dreams. Prepare yourself for this supreme status, by engaging in holy karma, that is to say, karma cleansed in the crucible of dharma, and attain Brahman (the One Indivisible Absolute), which appears as all this multifarious Universe. The Mahabharatha is also eligible to the reverence due to the Vedas; it is revered as the Fifth Veda by those that know. There, we find the eldest of the Pandava (pure) brothers called Dharmaraja (dharma-born). But, all his success was due to the fact that he had, on his right hand, Bheema (the embodiment of strength) and on his left hand, Arjuna (unsullied virtue). The strength that comes from the mastery of the senses and the fortitude and equanimity won through the conquest over impulses, emotions and passions are both valuable reinforcement for dharma to scale the bastions of Brahman.

Five steps in the path of dedicated living

The Vedas have prescribed five steps, to enable the individual to cultivate the spirit of Yajna' Dheva yajna (adoring God in the domestic altar); Pithra yajna (keeping in mind the debt one owes to the parents who endowed this body and fed the lamp of life); Manushya yajna (feeding guests and those who come seeking shelter and food); Brahma yajna (the study of the sacred scriptures and the initiation into the spiritual path) and Bhuutha yajna (the feeding and fostering of pet animals, of cattle, of horse and sheep and dog which are the helpmates and comrades of man). The Vedas insist on every householder to attend to these five rites, every day and thus, he is encouraged along the path of dedicated living to reach the goal of total surrender to God. The cow grants man milk, butter, curds, ghee - all valuable nutrients; they consume only grass and drink that which is undrinkable by man; and they bestow on man, in return for the care and kindness he evinces, life-giving and strength-sustaining food! Gratefulness demands that man should not neglect or injure them. So too, man should not allow plants and trees that he has grown to suffer from hunger and thirst and go dry and wither. You must have seen people placing sugar or flour at the mouths of ant-

hills. It is a flash on the universal compassion which must mark out the heart of man. It is as much Bhuutha yajna as the care of cows, though it does not reward the giver.

The One Willed to become many

Ignore the temporary and trivial Name and Form of the embodiment of the Divine spirit; then, all distinctions of worm and wolf, of atom and avathar, disappear and the knowledge that basic Truth is One is realised. Creation or manifestation or the outburst of blossoming expansion started, as the Upanishads say, when the One willed, Ekoham bahusyam - "I am One; let Me become Many." So, it is the One that is all this. It is the integer (I) that fills the zeros after it with value and validity! The realisation of the function of the I and the ignoring of all the zeros that come after it, is the end and aim of human endeavour. When the mind is unruffled and the intelligence is sharpened, this realisation will take place, without further effort. Through the sadhana of seva (discipline of selfless service), it is possible to cognise the One of which the many are appearances. He who serves a master with his eye on the pay packet cannot be called a sevak. He is the servant of the pay packet. That type of service will only bind him to the profit or loss that it entails, and bring about disappointment or elation. Service has to be rendered either from a supreme sense of duty or as a humble dedicatory offering to the Highest, or in a spirit of total surrender to the Will of God leaving all thought of the consequence to His Grace. Done with these pure motives, the act of service will develop detachments, but, will not encourage sloppishness.

Shiva is praised as Thryambakam, that is, three-eyed; the eyes are held to be eyes that see into the past and the future, as well as the present; but, they represent also the three urges namely, desire, activity and knowledge - thirsts that move men and decide his fate. These three urges make all beings kin in the Divine bond; those who serve beings with love and reverence can contact this core of being and save themselves. They will see in all, the unmistakable reflections and images of the God whom they have enshrined in their hearts.

Man has forgotten the task for which he is born

When you desire to transform a silver idol of Ganesh into an idol Krishna, you cannot succeed by simply covering the Ganesh with a cloth and uncovering it, after a few seconds! You have to break it into pieces and melt the bits and pour the silver into the Krishna mould! So too, when you yearn to transform the human into the Divine, you must pull down the pieces through detachment, melt them in the fire of jnana, and pour the mind stuff into the mould bhakthi. Then, the entire consciousness takes on the Divine Name, Form and Substance. Then, whatever is spoken or done or thought assumes the splendour and purity of the Divine. I have often told you that My Life is My Message. Avathars proclaim so and demonstrate their Divinity that way. They are children among children, men among men, women among women, so that they may respond to their joy and sorrow and console them and infuse confidence and courage into their drooping hearts. The Avathars appear among humans since birds, beasts, trees and the like have not slid into the unnatural and the strange. It is only man, who pursuing the will-o'-the-wisp of worldly happiness and sensual pleasure, has forgotten the task for which he has come to earth. Since God assumes human form in order to restore Dharma and lead man back into the path of virtue and wisdom, nothing can please God more than rigorous adherence to Dharma. One can stick to the path of Dharma if one is conscious of the Divine in every thing that he sees or hears, touches or tastes. That will fill every moment of his life with the thrill of self-realisation.

God listens to the agony of the heart

Have faith in God; He sees everything; He is everywhere; He is all-powerful. When queen Dhrou-padhi was dragged into the open court by the wicked cousins of her consorts, and they threatened to insult and dishonour her, she did not call on her human lords - Dharmaraja the great master and practitioner of Dharma, Bheema the redoubtable warrior, Arjuna the unexcelled bowman, Sahadheva the knower of everyone's future, Nakula the embodiment of bravery - she sought succour and prayed to Krishna, the Lord and protector of righteousness, God who listens to the agony of the heart.

He is in every heart. He is all this. You know He has said in the Geetha, Manmana bhava, madbhaktho Mad yaji mam namaskuru Mamevaishyasi yukthaivam Atmanam mathparayanah. "Have your mind fixed on Me; be devoted to Me; worship Me; prostrate before Me; Have Me alone as the Goal; when you are fixed in faith in Me, you can attain Me." Here, I and Me refer to the I and Me that is in every being, namely, the Atma which is the real I of the atom and the avathar. Even the person who is contemplating suicide declares, "I must die so that I can be happy, rid of all these worries!" The I which will be relieved when the body falls off is the Atma.

The individual I believes it is limited; but, that is an illusion. It is the same Universal Spirit, imagining itself to be limited. This awareness can come to man either through a flash of intellectual analysis or a flash of Universal Love. The awareness is an act of identification which involves and insists on Love.

Love is God; Love is the means and end. That is why there are no atheists, for, there is no being without love of some kind or other. And, love of any kind, of any measure, is but a spark of Divinity. Love knows no fear, it promotes truth, it finds peace, it builds faith, it promotes concord.

In spiritual matters, faith is the basic requisite for progress. That faith has to be guarded carefully.

Yield to the Lord, who is more kin to you than your own parents, yield to no other.

Do not allow your faith to falter with every passing gust of wind. Believe that all the three worlds cannot unseat Truth, all the fourteen lokas cannot seat falsehood on the throne.

Your duty is to carry on sadhana undisturbed by what others may say, holding fast to the certitude of your own experience.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

37. Amazing appendix

Date: 12 December 1970 / Location: Cabo Raj Nivas, Goa

EACH one has come embodied into this world of joy and grief, of growth and decay, of hope and despair, in order to discover the way home, to get back to the source from which he has strayed into this wilderness. This has to be done within the allotted time of sojourn, from each day the Sun steals a fraction away. But, man is attracted by the phantom lights and noises of the wilderness, by the seeming sweetness of its impact, and he ignores the call of destiny. The senses lead him on and on, deeper and deeper into the maze, until he dies with a moan and a whimper, instead of with a smile and a gesture of gratitude. The years between birth and death are spent in wasteful acquisition and worthless achievements - for, all the time, his heart is sore with unsatisfied desires and unhealthy emotions, that affect the tranquillity that is his real reality. This is the delusion that has been haunting man, the maya (illusory power) that has been shadowing the Divinity that is his essence. It is only by the cultivation of detachment, by denying the senses the thrills they thirst for, it is only by diving deeper into the depths of one's being, by believing that you have some depths that will reward exploration, that one can capture the exhilaration of that tranquillity. This is the highest morality, for when this is done, man is saturated with love and has no trace any more of malice or hate or greed or lust. The vision is purified by the ideal of the unity of all in One and the proliferation of One as all. The tendencies towards hate, malice and greed which cause individual and social conflicts and complexes can be overcome by yoga (divine communion) and thyaga (renunciation), the practice of emotional imperturbability and the reduction of wants and mental cravings. This is the message of Bharath, through the centuries, declared and demonstrated through clear, convincing precept and countless unimpeachable examples.

God knows best what each one deserves

The feeling that activity is "mine" and that it is for the sake of some benefit, that must accrue to "me" - it is this that causes ill-feeling, sorrow, and

illnesses. The ego exults or bewails; it laughs and weeps; it competes and mopes; it swings like a pendulum between joy and grief. It gives man no moment of rest, of equanimity. It is agitated when the fruit of the activity is less than expected, or even when it is more, or different, or distorted. That is why the Shruthis (divine scriptures) prescribe that everyone should dedicate all his activity to God who knows best what benefit everyone deserves and who doles out the fruit in the manner He Wills. But, there are many who doubt or question the very existence of God to whom all the intelligence, the vitality, the virtue, the urges which lie beneath activity are to be offered in worshipful activity. For such, the Divine occasionally, out of innate Grace, reveals Itself, through the marvellous manifestation of glory, beyond the limits of the human. The doubters receive without asking; the door is opened without even a knock; the answer is proclaimed for all to hear.

Illness assumed to relieve a devotee

Take the illness which came into this body, for example. It is the nature of the human body to generate disease through faulty food or foolish habits. This explains the illness of ordinary men, not the illness that you witnessed during the last two days. That was an illness assumed, willed, in order to relieve a person, who could not have survived it or even borne it without perturbation. This is one of the functions of the Divine, for which it has incarnated - the pouring of Grace on the devotee. The appendix was inflamed and it became an abscess, which the doctors said could be cured only by an operation immediately done. The devotee could not have borne that agonising pain; I have come with this body in order to save these other bodies from pain and suffering. This body will ever be free from illness and pain; disease can never affect it. That is the real truth.

One day, Krishna developed a type of agonising stomach-ache! The sage, Naradha, happened to put in his appearance and witness the suffering. He was upset, and he prayed that he may be commissioned to bring to Him the drug that will cure the pain. "There is just one drug that can assuage it, but can you bring it for me?" asked Krishna. Naradha said, "Tell me; it will be done!" "Bring for me the dust of the feet of any real devotee; that will stop

the pain," replied the Lord.

Naradha moved out very fast to procure it, but at the door, he remembered that he himself was the most earnest and sincere devotee. So, he turned back and suggested to the Lord that the dust of his own feet may be used. But, the Lord said, "No; no. Egoism has tainted it and so it has contaminated the drug." So, Naradha had perforce to go abroad and seek it from others who he knew as great devotees. But, no one of them gave him the dust! Some were afraid, some were ashamed, some withdrew fearing sacrilege, some asserted they were not devotees, being only mere aspirants of Grace.

Surrender your judgement to the Lord

Then, Naradha went into Brindavan where the simple Gopees were. He told them of his plight and Krishna's pain. At this, each one of them collected the dust of the feet and within seconds, Naradha's hands were full of packets. "Rush with these; may the pain cease!" - that was their response. The petty little ideas of superiority or inferiority, of pride or humility, of shame or fear did not enter their minds. "The Lord is in pain; it must be cured," that was all they knew and cared to know. They did not stop to inquire whether the Lord could really be suffering, whether the dust of their feet had any curative property, whether the mission on which Naradha had come had any deeper meaning for them or the world! They heard, they gave, they prayed, they were happy. They felt the pain that Krishna had; they responded to the command. They were all equally affected, and their reactions were all equally prompt and sincere. You must surrender your judgement to the Lord; then, the Lord will assume full responsibility and be the guardian, guide and motive power. It is such a devotee, a person who has surrendered everything, even his judgement, to Me that I had to save, by taking over this illness and going through it. The signs of that illness have disappeared today and they shall not recur again. There is also another reason that lies behind that episode. The Divine is recognised by gifted people as the vast, the magnificent, the beautiful, the mighty, the majestic, the awesome. But, for the generality of mankind, the consciousness that each one is a miracle sustained by God, that each breath is a witness of God's Providence, that each event is proof of His

Presence, comes but rarely in life. When this Body, that is apparently human, behaves as if it is filled with suprahuman potentialities, then, amazement draws the attention of all towards the Divine that is the inherent nature. Off and on, it becomes necessary to give this lesson to mankind, so that faith in God and power to recognise Divinity are added to human faculties. Then only can the mind of man be turned from the world to the Master of the Worlds. On Tuesday, the thousands of Goans who had assembled in the City to listen to Me were disappointed; I had to inform them that the rescue of devotees is paramount among tasks and so, I know they had to go away disappointed. But, I shall very soon meet them again and give the Anandha for which they thirst.

God cares more for the motive behind the deed, the ideal that prompts the effort, the bhava, not the bahya.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

38. Rushing to the rescue

Date: 18 December 1970 / Location: Panjim, Goa

THE Sathyam-Shivam-Sundharam (Truth-Love-Beauty) manifestation of God responds to prayers addressed to any of Its manifold Names. It is endowed with infinite patience and compassion, though It has now assumed human form and can be expected to have human traits and even human failings, for, It has to deal with human frailties and rescue man from himself. Man has to be shown the means by which he can enlarge the circle of Love, and spread the Light of his reason wide. Unless man is able to see all humanity as One, he cannot be declared a devotee of God; for humanity is the progeny of God. The Divine is the string on which all this floral variety is strung into a garland. Yoga is the method by which the inner kinship is realised, and one's affinity with the Universe is experienced. Udh-yoga, the word which is now used for any type of employment, is best used for the highest job on which man can be employed - the discovery of this innate kinship. Of course, at first sight, the Divinity inherent in all beings and things will not be clear to the vision. How can any one read the sign G as jee, without being told by some one who knows and accepts that statement in good faith? Then, he reaches the stage when he can read G O D as jee o dee. But, what persuades him to read it as God, and not as jee o dee? Again, it is the Guru, whom you trust and who knows these things well. And, how do we know that the sound God represents for all the inscrutable all-pervasive Intelligence that pervades the atom and the star? Again, it is the Guru who had taught us so to accept it.

The I is a reflection of God in the body-mirror

But it is not enough to know just this from the Guru. One must pursue the search and reach the ultimate Truth, the Truth that can explain the atom as well as the most distant star, now and for ever. Only the Kshethrajna knows the Kshethra - only God knows the Universe. To know the Universe, one must become God. In fact, there is no becoming God; one is God, masquerading as Sohan Lal, Sundher Lal or Indhu Lal! The I which you feel you are, the I that you were, when you were a baby, a boy, a young man, a middle aged man,

an old man and a decrepit senile individual - that I is but a reflection of God in this Body-Mirror! You are but a wave on the breast of the Ocean, namely, God. Know this, experience this - that is the consummation, the goal! Know that all are waves, and then, realise that the wave is but the Ocean, with name and form that appear, last for a short time, and then disappear. In order to attain this Vision (Vijnana), man has to transcend three sheaths (koshas) out of the five in which he is encased - the Annamaya kosha or gross, with its equipment of the senses; the Pranamaya kosha or subtle, with its instrumentality of vital airs and the nervous system; the Manomaya kosha, the Causal, with its pattern of desires, motives, resolutions, wishes, both positive and negative, which form the complex called Mind. Deeper than these there is the Vijnanamaya kosha, the sheath of Intuition, which is laid over the Anandhamaya kosha, the sheath of Bliss. But, man is now caught up in the tangles of the first three, and he does not venture any deeper, so that he is denied a glimpse into the truth whose door lies at the Vijnana stage only, and passes beyond the Anandhamaya kosha itself.

There are no short-cuts to Self-realisation

Embodiments of the Divine Atma! It is only through the cultivation of Love that the heart can be enlarged to receive these eternal absolute experiences; it is only through the practice of Truth that the great TRUTH can be experienced. Here are many teachers who have emerged recently, extolling each one, his own special brand of spiritual exercises by which he claims to give you supreme bliss. They give these brands attractive names, names redolent of the past, like Kriya Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Karma Yoga, Anthar Yoga, etc. But, there are no short-cuts to selfrealisation. The goal can be reached only through the purification of character and the cultivation of unselfish Love. Any yoga that does not result in the control of emotions, of the egoistic tendencies, of the greed for prestige and reputation, is bhoga (the path of enjoyment) not yoga (restraint). The body is but an assembly of instruments for Self-realisation; that is the culmination of all the lives which earned for you this equipment. The culmination of the tree is the fruit and the sweetness thereof! Embodiments of the principle of Universal Love! I was to have come and given you dharshan and this Anandha of sambhashan (delight of divine

discourse) some days back; you had come that day and gone back disappointed. I know that some stories that heightened your anxiety were circulated, as the reason for my absence that day. And, even those who came to know the real reason attributed it to what they called miracle or mesmerism or some such cause, which they held to be reprehensible! It is easy to dismiss the Divine by some cheap phrase; but, that does not mean that you have negated It or understood It. I had to take on Myself the illness that would have been fatal to a very good person who had surrendered to God, and the call was so urgent and sincere that I could not possibly postpone My response, until all My engagements were fulfilled! You believe in such things when they are related to Rama or Krishna or others; for, you feel that belief does not impose any obligations on you. But, in the case of the Incarnation before you, you apprehend that when the Divine is recognised, certain consequences follow, and you try to avoid them. But, I carry on My task of Bhaktharakshana (rescuing the devotees, good and sincere seekers) regardless of what the world may think of it.

Cleanse your mind of the temptations and tenets of ignorance; make it free from dust, so that God may be reflected therein.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

39. Bring me the pain

Date: 25 December 1970 / Location: Mumbai / Occasion: Christmas

THE fulfilment of human life consists in the service that man renders, without any thought of return, in an attitude of selflessness. Service rendered in this spirit sheds light in the dark interior of man, it widens the heart, it purifies the impulses and confers lasting Anandha. This country has been emphasising the fundamental unity of mankind; this truth can be fixed in the experience, by means of dedicated service. India is a garden of flagrant colours; it has a variety of faiths and creeds, all emphasising this Unity and this path of service, in order to realise it. All creeds here declare that every one is brother or sister to every one else - that is the message of every saint and sage in this land. With the passage of time, and the inroads of alien cultures and ungodly attitudes, this message has been neglected and we are in the pathetic plight of factions and fights between those who once were brothers! Passion and blind emotion have filled the heart of the nation, which was responding bravely to the call of brotherhood and service. Passion and emotion are as calamitous as earthquakes; their consequences can be felt far and wide. We have to cool down the passions and develop a sense of balance and equipoise in the human mind, through the cultivation of Prema (Love).

Sathsangs can arouse the latent Love in man

This is the land where Thukaram, on his way from Kashi to Rameshwaram, with sacred Ganga water in a pot on his shoulder - water that he had vowed to pour ceremonially on the Linga at Rameshwaram - saw a donkey dying of thirst! And, the sense of unity with all living beings overpowered him so much that without a second thought, he poured the holy Ganga he had carried so far for the sacred purpose, down the parched throat of the 'brother' and was happy to see in him the Linga he longed to adore! So, universal Love is latent in the traditions of the people; what is wanted is only awakening them from slumber. Sathsangs (good holy company) can arouse the latent Love; this work has to be done among the youth, at the present time. For the burden is on the shoulders of youth. The world (and not God who is expressed through

it and beyond it) is the centre of attention at the present time. The reaction to the world depends on the feelings which prompt the dealings with it; the feelings depend upon the experience gained already; the experience is coloured by the desire which urged the contact and drew the reaction. Desire is based on ignorance of the real nature of the world) The world is maya, a mixture of fact and fiction, but it is valued as Truth! It is a fiction built on the basis of fact. The fact is Divinity; the fiction is variety. This deluding agent is God, for, the fact is hidden and the fiction is imposed by the leela (play) of God. And, God is but the appearance in Form of the Formless, Intangible, Immanent, Absolute, the Nirakara Paramatma, the akasha (space) within the hridhaya (heart) of man and all living beings as well as of all the other Bhuuthas or Principles, unbound, without' beginning or end.

The attribute by which Akasha can be cognised is Shabdha (sound) or the Word! In the beginning was the Word! The word became the object, it got embodied, concretised. That is why we call "object" as padhartha. Padha means word, artha means meaning or purpose. The "object" is the purpose of which the word was uttered, the meaning which makes the word valid) We have the word 'tree' and the meaning is the tree that stands opposite! We have the word 'man' and the meaning is you. The word and its meaning are inseparable, indistinguishable. The word did not arise without the object, nor the object without the word.

God is and can be, only One, not more

The word God too is the indication that there is the Padhartta, that there is God. If there was no God, the word God would not have originated and gained currency. You may see God or you may not, but the word is proof that there is God. God is Omnipresent; He is in the past, the present, the future. I am placing this garland on my finger. See, the part of the garland to the left of the finger is the future, the part to the right is the past and where it contacts the finger, that point is the present. Now, I roll the garland on the finger and pull it to the right. The future comes up and becomes the present and moves down into the past, but, the present is always present. God is always present, watching the future rolling on into the past!

And, God is and can be, only One, not more! "There is only One God and He is Omnipresent! There is only One Religion, the religion of Love. There is only One Language, the language of the Heart." This God has to be visualised by means of constant spiritual discipline. Do not involve yourselves in doubts and hesitations. If only you observe the disciplines and purify the Consciousness, you can see the God installed in your heart. There is sugar in the cup, but the water is insipid, for you have not stirred it well. There is God in the world, and by stirring the Divine well into every drop or atom thereof, you can make the world a sweet thing to live by. Intelligence is the spoon; Sadhana is the process of stirring. Saturate every moment of life with God; it becomes sweet thereby.

God is the 'I' in all beings

As a matter of fact, you are even now dedicating everything to God; only, you do not do it consciously, with the joy that is your due! You say, "I do it for my pleasure. I go there to be happy. I am reading it for my satisfaction, for my progress." Who is this I that is doing, going, acting, reading, enjoying, being pleased? It is the I that sees, that hears, that thinks with the eye, the ear, the brain, etc. It is the I that Rathana Lal says, he is! Sohan Lal, Pran Lal and Indhu Lal all say I, I, I. This I is in every one. It is the individualised Atma in each, it is the Universal that is reflected in the particular. So when you say, "I do it for my pleasure," you do it really for the pleasure of the I within you, namely, God. That is why the Geetha says, Mam anusmaran, mam ekam sharanam vraja: "Surrender yourself to Me!" Who is this 'me?' God. Why is He called 'I'? Because He is the I in all beings. In the Annamaya kosha (material sheath), that is to say, when man is established in the physical, and in the Pranamaya kosha, when he is in the nervous and vital spheres of activity, he feels that life is fulfilled by means of food, recreation and a contented, comfortable existence. When he rises up into the Manomaya kosha (mental sheath), his imagination opens further vistas, and he gets glimpses of the glory and majesty of the Divine, which makes him adore and revere. The next kosha, the Vijnanamaya kosha (intellectual sheath), then steps in and makes him inquire into the validity of the experiences and leads him on to the fifth kosha, the Anandhamaya, the stage of Bliss, with the confirmation of the

hypothesis of the Divine, that the intellect framed. This liberates man from fear and doubt. Wisdom alone can grant full freedom. Just as the end of culture is progress, the end of knowledge is love, so, the end of wisdom is freedom.

Bhakthi Yoga alone can save and sustain

Do not fritter the days in attaining affluence in material possessions, which are often impediments in the journey of life. Money comes and goes; morality comes - but, grows! Money is not true wealth; it loses value, it bloats the ego and hardens the heart. If it does not circulate, it destroys health, as blood does. Embodiments of the Divine! Do not take it amiss, for, I am telling this only' out of the fullness of my love. There are many nowadays who go about with various short-cuts to liberation, paths which they have marked out and are determined to preach, attracting disciples and forming groups; they concoct these out of Hatha yoga, Kriya yoga, Raja yoga, and some thin Vedantha and then, start out as guides and leaders. But, the fruits they confer are only flippant and flimsy; they are not lasting or truly liberating. Bhakthi yoga alone, as laid down and practised through the centuries, can save and sustain. God can be realised only through love. Without love in the heart, God will not reside in the desert. Other paths develop conceit, separate man from man, man from beast. They contract, they do not reach out, they shrink your sphere of awareness of the Divine! Love is expansion and expansion is Divine Life. Sow Love; it blossoms as compassion and tolerance; it yields the fruit of Peace (Shanthi).

Respect everyone since the same Atma is in all

God is reflected in the medium of Nature, in everything His image is to be cognised. If the medium is Sathwik (pure), then, God is as divine in the image as in His own Divine state; if it is reflected in the Rajasik (the active passionate) medium, the image becomes the individual Jeevi; when the Thamasik (the dull) medium reflects it, then, the image is 'matter.' The 'Moon' is One; and it is so distant and unaffected; but, its reflections in various pots of water differ in brightness and steadiness, according to the clarity and

calmness of the water. The Sathwik is the pot of gold, the Rajasik is the pot of copper, and the Thamasik is the iron pot! Their value may differ, but, the moon is reflected equally well in the water that each may have in them. Again, the golden pot is the Mahatma, the copper one is the believer, the iron one is the atheist; but, in all three, the Atma is the inner motivator, the indweller. So, respect everyone, since the same Atma is in all. The teacher must practise what he teaches, avoid what he wants his pupils to avoid; then only can his teachings affect the lives of those who are committed to them. Now, the Guru is riddled with desires and he coolly advises his disciple to discard desire! He smokes cigarettes but warns him against the habit! Such Gurus care more for publicity than genuine practice. The Sathya Sai Organisation has no desire to exhibit any superiority; it tries to hold forth the ideal, to be witness to the truth of certain fundamental spiritual truths and the validity Of certain spiritual disciplines.

Authenticity of Sai Avathar

Embodiments of the Divine! This is the best time to tell you something about the authenticity of this Advent. I am saying this, not for establishing a claim for superiority or importance for this Body; I only wish to communicate the Truth. There are many who cannot bear or tolerate the splendour that I am manifesting, the Divinity that is expressed in every act, the wonders and amazing happenings that are the result of Grace; these people label these as acts of mesmerism or miracles or feats of magic! They hope to .bring these down in the estimation of people. Let me tell you this: Mine is no mesmerism, miracle or magic. Mine is genuine Divine Power. There are others who cavil at these, and whisper that miracles are not conducive to spiritual development, that they will be handicaps in the process of realisation of God, and they persuade you to stray away from the true path. These people are too weak to conceive the Divine; they have no strength or stamina to understand its magnificence and majesty. They have small minds and limited intellects.

Kamsa, the wicked uncle of Krishna, knew that he was to meet his death at the hands of Krishna; so, he was so terror-stricken that he saw Krishna wherever his eyes were turned! He saw him beside him, before him, behind

him, above him, all around him! So, he shook his fist against the appearance and saying, "Krishna, fie upon your magic! I spurn your tactics to terrify me!" He boasted that his physical prowess could overpower the effects of the direct magic. But, when the little seven-year old boy, Krishna jumped up in the arena and gripped him by the neck, and sat on his chest, when he fell, to pound him to death, Krishna shouted into his ear, "Uncle! This is Magic! Magic! Magic!" you cannot declare that you have understood a phenomenon when what you do is simply to slight it by the use of a certain word!

You have no reason to suffer in the play of Love

God can do anything; He has all power in the palm of His Hand! My powers do not abide in Me a while and then, fade away! Indhra jalam idham - All this is apparent manipulation by Divine Will. My Body, like all other bodies, is a temporary habitation; but My power is eternal, allpervasive, everlasting! This body has been assumed, to serve a purpose: the establishment of Dharma and the teaching of Dharma. When that purpose is over, this Body will disappear, like the bubble on the waters.

The other day a very serious illness came upon this body, in Goa. When they came to know about this, many devoted to Me were plunged in anxiety! Illness can never affect this Body; it cannot approach it. If it comes sometime, that is but a passing phase' it belongs to some one and it comes to Me and goes, just as it came! When it comes, this body 'appears' to be ill! But, I have no contact with it, no affliction! Many people, when such a thing happens, take courage even to suggest to Me(!) ways of dealing with the situation! They tell Me, "Why Swami! Why do you allow the illness of another to come upon you? If he suffers from it, only one person suffers! But, when you allow it to come over you lakhs of people suffer? Leave it to him, Swami!" they say. When this body is 'suffering,' it is the nature, the duty of devotees to suffer in unison; but, I must also follow My duty! To take upon Myself the sufferings of those who have surrendered to Me is My duty! I do My duty, and you; may do yours. But, when you look at the Truth squarely in the face, you will know that I have no 'suffering' and you too have no reason to suffer! The entire thing is the play of Love! It has been taken over by Me on account of Love and so, I

have no pain or suffering) You suffer on account of Love. It is Love, Love, fight through; there is no reason for sorrow or pain or suffering!

Never deviate from your faith in God

Cultivate Love; become intoxicated with it. We have here tens of thousands gathered, calling themselves devotees, but, when you try to find out how genuine they are, you have to admit that ninety-nine per cent of them are only part-time devotees, not full-time devotees! Had you known the Truth about Me, you would not have suffered at all, at the news of illness from Raj Bhavan, Goal There were some who had their faith severely shaken when the news came in! Devotees must shine ever steady, in the joy of faith. A mother and son developed disagreement so fast and so seriously about the property rights of each that they were completely estranged, and they stood in court, facing each other, in opposite boxes, before the judge. The judge asked the lady, "Do you know this young man standing there?" and the lady replied, "Yes; he is my son!" However violently she might hate him, she has to admit that he is her son! The young man is asked, likewise, "Do you know this lady?" and he replied, "Yes; she is my mother!" You too must never deviate from that faith whatever might happen, to pull you and God apart!

Pray for the welfare of all mankind

Faith so stable as this is fast becoming a rarity. When your wishes fail, you deny God; when wishes fructify, you adore Him with greater pomp, and have a few more pictures in your shrine, and you spend more money on flowers and incense! God has no preferences and prejudices; His is but reaction, reflection and re-sound! He comes, to confer Anandha, to foster Anandha, to teach ways of acquiring and activating Anandha. He takes upon Himself the pain and sorrow of the world, in order to prepare the hearts of men for Love! This Day marks the beginning of the Christian Era, the year of Christ. Christ sacrificed his life for the sake of those who put their faith in him. He propagated the truth that service is God, that sacrifice is God. Even if you falter in the adoration of God, do not falter in the service of the living God, who has assumed human shape and is moving all around you in such large

numbers and wearing such manifold costumes of apparel and speech! Only those who can pour out compassion to fellow-men can claim a place in the Grace of God. This is also the highest spiritual discipline; it impresses on you the unity of the human community and the glory of God's immanence. May this discipline which the Seva Dhal has taken up with genuine delight spread all over this country, and may the land be happy and prosperous. May the world have peace and happiness, and loving trust. That is My blessing. I want you to pray for the welfare and prosperity of all mankind.