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1. Kingdom of Mother Sai

Date: 05 February 1981 / Location: Anantapur

When man makes mind his master It burdens him, worse than any beast; When man makes buddhi his master It raises him, high as Lord of the Living. Will the good, and you are happy. Will the bad, and you are sad and lost. Don't will at all, and be at peace This is the Truth, the Word of Sai. Embodiments of the Divine Atma, Teachers and Students, Man has achieved immeasurable progress in science and technology. But, in the field of morals, he is still unable to rid himself of narrow cynicism, limited outlook, and the demonic hold of selfishness, pride, envy and other evil traits. When we examine the basic cause for this state of affairs, we discover that it is the consequence of egoism that has struck deep roots in the heart of man. It has reduced man to the status of a puppet. It pollutes his thoughts, words and deeds. It directs him to gather and hoard material riches. It does not allow the Atma to shine forth. When the veil of egoism is set aside, the Athmic Essence, and with it anandha and jnana, will be revealed. Time is invaluable; do not waste even half a minute. The hours that have passed cannot return; the wheel of time will not halt for any person. So, examine your thoughts, words and deeds and find out whether spending precious time on them is worth while or not. Death is always waving its sharp sword over the head but, unmindful of this imminent and inescapable fate, many are lost in plans to build rich, prosperous and luxurious lives for themselves. They live in hope and dreams of better days. The Fire of Wisdom alone is capable of reducing these plans and hope into ash.

Education must broaden the vision

You are striving to gain education in this College in order to earn your livelihood. But, it is very hard to earn riches, to use them rightly and to keep them safe. When riches accumulate, pomp and pride become more insidious. As a result, one's character is lowered. Vemana says that when one loses wealth, his bad qualities also become too weak to hurt him and others. When the calf grows in age, the horns become longer and sturdier; so too when

pride grows, the horns of greed and envy become stronger and sturdier. Education today does not feed the roots of law, justice and morality, three fields which ought to receive special attention. Can a system concerned with food for the stomach, train pupils to meet the challenges of life which require a strong self-reliant character? No. It can only smother even the inborn virtues of love and truth. Education must instil the fundamental human values; it must broaden the vision to include the entire world and all mankind. When earning money is held as the goal, the system fosters falsehood and injustice, it restricts the vision to family and community, and brings in its train, anxiety, sorrow and hatred. Education must equip man to live happily, without making others unhappy, to evaluate things, pleasure and possessions correctly and without prejudice, and to fix one's attention ever on the highest and the most precious achievement of all, the Athmic victory. The spiritual stream must flow in the heart as the source and spring of all endeavour. Women are the makers of the home, the nation and the world. You are the mothers who shape the generations. So you must enshrine in your hearts the spiritual urge towards Light and Love, Wisdom and Bliss.

Mind works havoc when left alone

The human body is spoken of as a temple where the individual jeeva is installed. I would prefer to describe it as a house taken on rent by you. God is the master, the owner. The jeevi (tenant) has taken it on rent and is occupying it. The rent has to be paid in the form of good deeds, good thoughts, good speech and good conduct. But, the tenant ignores the owner and does not pay the rent. So, the Master has to compel the man to vacate. He sends 'notices' reminding him of the need to vacate, unless he pays the rent. "Grey hairs are the first intimation; the tenant dyes his hair and pays no heed to the warning," The teeth fall out; that is the second warning. The tenant gets a denture fixed and ignores this reminder too. Cataract in the eye is the next warning of the need to leave the house; an operation helps him to pass it by. Glasses restore his sight. The skin becomes loose, wrinkled. This warning too is unheeded; the man hides the signal with the help of cosmetics. So, the owner has to send his emissaries - a few fatal illnesses - and force him to clear out of the house.

Why stick on, for years, like crows? Far better to live happily like a royal swan, albeit for a short span. Live ideal lives through controlled minds. The mind is like a sheet of paper; once rolled in one way, it will always roll along that direction only. You will have to roll it in the opposite direction in order to flatten it. It is now rolled outwards. So, roll it inwards to normalise its ways. Left alone, the mind works havoc. Witness the communal and caste conflicts, the fight between regions and religions; the discontent and disruption in campuses. The primitive fears and desires of man have not yet been overcome; they persist in various forms and explode, when opportunities arise.

There are four Houses - the House of God, the House of Education, the House of Food and the House of Medicine. In each of these, you must seek only that for which it is dedicated. Of course, in the hotel you ask for food and in the hospital, you ask for medicine. But, in the House of Education, you do not seek education. You carry into the process of education other needs, wants and cravings. There is no concentrated craving for what good education can do for you. In the temple too, the same is the case. You enter it for one purpose and you pursue other purposes. In the temple, you do not seek to become aware of God. In the college or school, the process of self-education is disturbed and delayed, by extraneous activities.

Use spare time in holy activities

The old students of the Bangalore Sathya Sai College have formed the "Kingdom of Sathya Sai" and they have decided upon projects of social service. Here, too, you have formed the "Kingdom of Mother Sai" and you are praying to be allowed to take up service to the community. Of course, girls cannot venture as freely as boys into this field; still, they too can successfully translate their precepts into practice. Use your spare time in holy activities. If you cultivate faith in compassionate service, it will be of immense value for the uplift of society. Old students of the College can by the example of their lives inspire and instruct others to lead pious, purposeful lives.

Prices of articles have risen sky-high today, mostly because the desires of

man have increased wildly. Limit desires, decrease the demand and the prices will have to come down. Develop vairagya as Vedantha instructs. Vairagya means 'renunciation' - not renouncing property and family ties, but renouncing the hold that the mind, and the desire it breeds, have on you. Burn all traces of envy, pride and greed. Fill your hearts with selfless Love. Be examples to others, I am sure by this means the people of this land can live in peace and prosperity.

It is dedication to the Lord that sanctifies all activities. He is the *raison d'etre* for all activity; He is the prompter, the executor, the giver of the required strength and skill, the enjoyer of the fruit thereof.

So, dedication must come naturally to you, for, all is His and nothing yours! Your duty is to believe He is the impeller of your activities, and draw strength from that belief.

Until the wound heals and the new skin hardens, the bandage must protect the place. So too, until reality is realised, the balm of faith, of holy company, and holy thoughts must be applied to the ego-affected mind.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

2. Vidhyarthi and Vishayaarthi

Date: 01 March 1981 / Location: Brindavan

No object in the world can be without a creator. Here is a loud- speaker. It has the power to broadcast sound. Someone must have produced it. Who could have created it? Only somebody who had the knowledge and skill to produce such a contrivance. He may not be visible to you, but somewhere the person who produced it must exist. The person who produced your watch might exist in Germany or Switzerland or Japan. He is not visible to you but without such a person the watch could not have come into existence. For everything which man enjoys in daily life there is a creator. But we are also seeing objects which are beyond human capacity. The stars which twinkle in the sky demonstrate their existence. The glory of the Sun and the Moon which illumine the world is also visible to us. These are not human creations. Have they come into existence by themselves or is there someone who is not visible to us? What kind of person could be the creator of these super objects? Can any ordinary person create the stars or the sun and the moon? The supreme power which has the capacity to create such marvellous things has been described by the Vedas as Aprameya, which means, one who is beyond all proofs and all limitations. He cannot be described in words. The primary object of man must be to seek to understand this Infinite Power. It would be a total waste of this human existence if one does not make any effort to find out the nature of the Creator. To recognise the Creator, there are certain criteria. There are three types of evidence determining the existence of a thing. The first is prathyaksha (direct perception), the second is anumana (inference), the third is sabdha (the authority of revealed scriptures).

Determining the existence of Brahman

We generally consider direct perception as the most important type of evidence. We are able to see our body. We are able to see how many hands we have, how many legs we have, how many eyes, and so on. That is not all. We boil milk and add some curd to it at night and the next morning find that the milk has turned into curd. For the conversion of milk to curd, our own

action provides the direct proof. The evidence of our own eyes is enough to convince us about how the change from milk to curd has occurred. We do not need anyone else's authority for that. But our mind is not visible. We cannot understand what is meant by Atma.. We believe in the existence of the Atma on the strength of the statements made by the great sages who have had the experience and who have conveyed the teaching. Anumana or inference is another form of proof. We see smoke on the top of a distant hill. We infer from the smoke that there must be a fire on the hill. Although we see only the smoke, we infer that there is fire. To infer the existence of the "unseen" from the presence of what is "seen" is Anumana Pramana (inferential proof). To take another instance: If a person who has gone to Kashi gives us a description of the place, those who may have seen the place would be able to appreciate or agree with the account given by the visitor, but those who have not been to the place can only appreciate the verbal description but cannot have the experience of direct perception. But these methods of determining facts are applicable only to the external universe. For determining, however, the Divine Principle-we must depend only on the Sabdha Pramana of the Vedas. When the Divine is described as without attributes, eternal, ever-existing, pure, free, and self-effulgent, this description will not make the Brahman visible to us. It is only when the state of Brahman is realised by us that its existence becomes valid.

Seek that which is unchanging.

All subjects in the universe have three characteristics, which are derived from the Divine. These are asthi, bhathi and priyam. These qualities are also otherwise represented by the terms sath, chith and anandha - Being, Awareness and Bliss. The existence of an object is derived from asthi. What it is, is known from bhathi, that is, from how it appears to our eyes. That it is a useful or enjoyable object is derived from the quality of priyam. While these three are fundamental qualities, the forms and names may change. For instance, a silver plate is capable of being, converted to some other article. Silver is fundamental and the value of the article, is dependent not on the form or the name but on the 'silver in the article. While man can change the forms and names of objects, he cannot create the basic materials out of

which the various objects are made. Equally the scientist makes use of materials available from nature for conversion to various uses but the primary material itself is not created by him. Man must seek that which is unchanging. What exactly is the underlying cause of all the conflicts and confusions that affect the world today? The institutions imparting learning have succeeded in equipping man with fantastic skills. Look at the field of atomic engineering or space exploration and conquest. Man has achieved astounding feats. But in actual daily life, these feats, have not resulted in peace, happiness and harmony. Castes, races and classes clash with each other with unremitting hate. Even students and the youth have taken to this dangerous course. The situation is fast becoming beyond control.

Education has not done its duty to the youth

The number of students in schools and colleges is sky rocketing. We proclaim that formal education, which was for long the privilege, of a few scholars and the sons of the rich, is now provided at the very doors of everyone. We rejoice when schools and colleges rise up more and more in every country of the world, without realising that what is happening through them is 'the worsening of the sickness of the community. Unrest, fear and anxiety are increasing as a result of improper and incomplete, education. Education can yield peace and prosperity only when, along with technical skills and objective information, students are equipped with moral ideals, righteous living, and spiritual insight. Now, the education process does not involve itself in these values. It works even counter to them. It is quite unwilling to emphasise dharmic living. It lays no stress on morals.

As a consequence, the products of this process, who have no sense of values, gradually' enter the Professions and positions of authority in the administration of nations and rise up in time to higher levels The world has come to the brink of disaster as a result. Bharath which shone among nations as the land of forbearance, self-control and service, is being fast converted into a land pursuing pleasure. Each one desires to loll on sofas in airconditioned office rooms. Can this be named pleasure? Can this be the ideal for an educated person? No. This state will only breed physical and

mental illness. How can a student be regarded as a success, if at the end of the course, he knocks at the door of every office, exhibiting the diploma he has secured, and clamouring like a beggar asking for jobs? Education has conferred on him this disgraceful role. Can it claim that it has done its duty? No. The educated person must serve the people through sweat and toil. Education has to inspire youth to offer service, to sacrifice and to help. It must not inspire youth to amass money as its goal, and to travel farther and farther to earn more and more of it. For, accumulated money breeds arrogance and arrogance brings in its train other vices.

Humility is the hall-mark of true education

Modern education is creating for the nation a deplorable malady. Originally, the British instituted a system of education in India primarily to prepare men for administrative jobs. To-day, education has been expanded and we have to create more jobs, and with greater emoluments. The result is the Government has to spend more and more on salaries and face increasing demands from public servants. There are strikes for higher wages and when wages are increased, taxes have to be increased. The result is increase in prices and increasing discontent. Prices can come down only when the people's desires are limited and the demand for goods is reduced. Many people feel proud about the enormous expansion of education in the country. But, is there any reason for feeling pleased with this situation? An unhealthy expansion of education is as undesirable as an unhealthy bloating of the body. Acquiring degrees at great cost and developing contempt for one's parents out of intellectual pride is not a sign of proper education. Humility is the hall-mark of true education. Arrogance, envy and ostentation should have no place in a properly educated person.

Men crave for peace and happiness but they do things which can only bring unhappiness and worry. Having been born as human beings, you should try to rise above the level of animals. You are all essentially sparks from the Divine, but like sparks coming from a furnace which after a time turn into ash, you are forgetting your divine origin. While pursuing your education for worldly purposes, you should also pursue the spiritual discipline, which will lead you

to the Divine. You must consider yourself extremely fortunate in studying in this institution, in which there is a spiritual atmosphere. If you adhere to Sai ideals and practise even a small fraction of Sai teachings, you will be realising the true purpose of education and the true object of human life.

Education without right conduct is of no value. You must make use of what you have learnt, not only for earning a living but for service to society. Only then will your degrees have any meaning. Whatever job you may take up, wherever you may be working, you must continue to practise spiritual discipline and aim at Self-realisation. Without a spiritual basis, education is futile. May you all lead exemplary lives, bring happiness to your parents and render help to society, and bring credit to the College where you have studied for many years.

3. Getting or giving

Date: 08 March 1981 / Location: Sathya Sai Vidya Vihar, Hyderabad

When man is mastered by the mind He falls far below the level of pashu (animal).

When man is mastered by the intellect He rises up to the level of Pashupathi (Shiva).

Thus declares the Parthi Lord.

Students! Teachers! Educationists! Those eager to promote Education!

Undigested food brings about illness in the body; similarly undigested knowledge imparted by the present day educational system has brought several illnesses in the social organism and the body politic. The disease is promoting contrary feelings that are expressed in mutual conflicts. The educated are reacting with envious emotions towards those who have secured jobs; when they are unable to get jobs, they impute motives of nepotism, etc. and develop resentment, anger, and hatred. The system of education is the root cause of the prevalent discontent and resentment. In the past, western rulers of this country established a system of education which can produce suitable men for the jobs they could provide for the natives. Today, since we continue the same system, we have to create suitable jobs for the people who are educated on the old lines. This is a strange reversal of the role. It is clear that the agitations, anxieties, fears and frenzies that disturb the country are traceable to education as it prevails today.

The four goals laid down by Sai

Though mankind has achieved incalculable progress in science and technology, the mind of man is still polluted with greed, envy and gross

selfishness. Egotism has struck deep roots in the heart of man. It has grown into demonic proportions. Man has become a puppet, yielding to every pull of the string. He craves all things that can confer joy on him; he accumulates things that cater to his sense of power. He examines every item from his own selfish point of view. Therefore, he is enslaved by the monsters - envy, pride, fear, and prejudice. True knowledge alone can save mankind from ruinous downfall. The four goals laid down by Sai, are in fact those laid down by the Vedas. They are Sathya, Dharma, Shanthi and Prema. Mankind has to understand the importance of these four goals, accept them, adore them, and practise them in daily life. Only then can the Divinity latent in man shine forth in all its glory.

Sathya or Truth is the first ideal. It is realised by the sadhana of the tongue. The second, Dharma (righteous) living, is realised by the sadhana (discipline) of the body and its components in relation to the society which surrounds man and the objective world which affects him and is affected by him. By his right action and right conduct, man can attain the third goal, Shanthi (equanimity), unaffected poise or peace. This can be won by discipline of the mind. Sathya establishes itself on the tongue through Sathwik (pious) sadhana; Dharma is achieved by the exercise of Rajasik (active) regulation; Shanthi or peace is the consequence of Thamasik withdrawal and even inactivity. But, Prema (love), the fourth goal, is beyond these three modes and beyond thought, word and deed. The Divine Prema is not easily comprehensible. So, my emphasis is not generally understood in its full significance. Prema is God. God is Prema. To consider it as a method of speech, an attitude of mind or as physical behaviour is to sorely demean it. Prema has no trace of selfishness; it is not bound by motives.

Moral and spiritual standards must be raised

The educational system must be based on these four principles. But, this has not happened. Therefore, we find it burdened with problems. It is full of conflict and confusion. Humility, detachment, discrimination, eagerness to serve others, reverence, renunciation - such virtues are absent among the educated. No one is prepared to give up; every one is anxious to grab. A

garland can be made only when we have flowers, thread and needle. A system of education needs intelligence (flowers), devotion (thread) and the spirit of renunciation and service (needle) to become beneficial.

Raising the standard of living must also mean raising ethical, moral and spiritual standards. Then only can education lead to progress in human values and harmony in social life. This is the purpose of which the foundation stone for the school building is laid here today. Children born in this holy land deserve this integrated educational system. The present set-up is producing discontent and agitation in social, economic and political fields. The upheaval of student unrest has become well nigh uncontrollable. The number of students undergoing this barren education is sky-rocketing; primary schools in every village and raising middle schools, high schools and colleges everywhere. We believe this to be progress and are delighted. The opportunity to benefit by education which only a few had in the past is now being granted profusely to all people.

Certainly, every human being must be educated, irrespective of race, religion, caste, colour or creed. But, like the foolish mother who is happy when her child's limb swells with disease, believing that it is getting stronger, we too mistake this increase in size and number as a healthy development! In reality, we are only witnessing a disease, which results in debility, greed, hatred and envy.

What we can give others must be the concern

Persons who are educated through these institutions, in time, occupy positions of authority and influence. How then can the condition of the world become better? Education must assume full responsibility and enter the moral and spiritual lives of pupils. The imparting of worldly information and training in technical skills are not enough. Moral and spiritual education has to supplement them. The idea that a posh bungalow, with costly sofas, dining tables etc., or a heavy pay packet from Dubai, Iran or Iraq, is the ideal to be worked for should be given up. This ideal breeds evil. The ideal should be - hands dedicated to hard work, heads dedicated to service, and hearts filled

with compassion. Vivekananda exhorted students to cultivate compassion. No one should suffer harm or pain through our words or deeds. For, when another is hurt by us, what really happens is insult and injury to our true nature, as men. Attention is now paid solely to the self and its wishes. This must be reversed. Not what we can get from others but what we can give others - that must be the concern.

4. The cleansing process

Date: 05 April 1981 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Ugadi

Cleansing the mind of dirt, Grow in it pure and holy thoughts: Then you can view the world With Wisdom Vision, as Right and Light. No fruit can grow on tree sans flower; It cannot ripen into sweetness Without emerging Grace. Disciplined work alone can grow Into devotion; and that alone can transform into Wisdom deep. As the core of this Universe, about which we speak and which we describe, is Paramatma (Supreme Self), about which we cannot speak and which is beyond all description. Both the cognisable and non-cognisable have emanated from the same One Indivisible Consciousness. Each is full and complete in itself. The individual consciousness is the manifestation of the Cosmic Consciousness. When the material sheath falls off, it merges in its source. The Vedas declare, "That is full; this is full. From the full, emerges the full. When the full is taken from the full, the full remains full." So, the Cosmos, the world, the individual - all are embodiments of the Full. Nothing can be fractional or incomplete. The symbol of the full is OM, the Pranava. The Vedas announce: "The One indestructible sound Om is Brahman, the Universal Absolute." The moving and unmoving, everywhere are only paraphrasing OM, elaborating its nature, illustrating its potentialities. The past that has gone, the present that is here and the approaching future are all also OM. The Pranava is the Name, (Nama), and Paramatma is the Named, (Nami). The two are not separate. "Sarvam Khalu idam Brahma". All this is indeed Brahman (Paramatma). But, this awareness of the immanence of the Universal can come to man only when the I - consciousness is forgotten; when the 'I' disappears, man becomes fit to know the non-'I'.

The four steps in sadhana

In order to delve deep into the principle represented by the Pranava (OM), four steps have been demarcated in sadhana. One may doubt how the eternal unique integral Om' can be understood in stages! The steps, however, are designed to help the identification of the principle itself. Wakefulness, dream, deep sleep and the "fourth" are the steps. They are known as jagrath, svapna,

sushupthi and thureeya in the Shasthra. Jagrath means "being awake", "exterior alertness" , or "outward vision." The consciousness is gross, while in this stage and in dreams the impressions that impinge on the consciousness are reflections and images of the Truth. In the sushupthi or deep sleep stage, the individual is not conscious at all; he is just a witness, who acknowledges later, (after awakening) that he slept well. The consciousness is not aware of itself. It is pure unaffected prajna or awareness. It has no contact with the objective world or the senses, outer and inner. It is pure Brahman Consciousness (Prajnanam Brahman). The last stage is thureeya. It is the stage when the consciousness is fully aware of itself. It cannot be identified as such by any means! We can try to delineate it a little by saying that it is the silence that prevails, after one OM and before another OM follows it. These four stages of Pranava are associated with the deities Vishnu, Brahma, Rudhra and the Paramatma. Vishnu means that which is omnipresent. The visible Universe is suffused with beauty and beauty is God. Since the Universe is the Body of God, the Supreme Person, Vishnu, is also described in the scriptures as "He who delights in decoration" (Alankara Priyo Vishnu). The material Universe is saturated in harmony, law and symmetry and is therefore charming and fascinating. Through this attraction, the external world, the Universe, draws man into various paths and exertions. The five elements, the five senses, the five vital airs and other phenomena teach man various lessons to mould his nature. So the objective world can be taken as his Guru.

Experiences in dream and deep-sleep stages

Vishnu is the deity who fosters and feeds, who moulds and masters. Moreover, He is the guardian of the Cosmos, the Jagadrakshaka. The scriptures teach man to sanctify the waking hours - jagrath stage - for they belong to Vishnu, and are charged with the Vishnu-principle. They exhort man to avoid wicked deeds, polluting thoughts, and all types of errors and failings. During the dream stage, we can experience holiness and bliss, only when we engage ourselves, while awake, in steady pure unselfish activities. In dreams, we see diverse objects and persons, strange worlds, of skyscrapers and castles. From where did these emerge? Through whom were they presented? Prajnanam Brahman, the Supreme Consciousness, is the basis for the creation

of this variety of dream appearances. Brahma is the deity that creates. So, the dream state is the Brahma-phase of consciousness. Then, the deep sleep stage. Here, the experiences gained during the waking hours or gone through in dreams do not impinge on man. They have all been extinguished. Rudhra, the deity into Whom the Cosmos ultimately merges, is therefore associated with the sushupthi phase. Next, we have the thureeya or the fourth stage, the stage of Atma-Consciousness. When the salt doll is dropped in the sea, it reaches the bottom and is dissolved. The same happens to the seeker of the Atma. He is dissolved. He becomes one with that which he sought to know. He cannot return and describe the experience. "The A of OM is the Vishwa; the U is Thaijas; the M is Prajna" - ,this is another interpretation in the scriptures. Vishwa is the Waking, Thaijas the Dream, Prajna, the Deep sleep stage. The Pranava Sadhana (the spiritual exercise of meditation on OM) is therefore very important for seekers. The Vedas prescribe the repetition of the Pranava while studying holy texts, reciting the Name of the Divine, carrying out daily duties and offering gifts.

Nine essences and sustainers of human life

The Pranava is the essence of all sustenance, the embodiment of Rasa. Of all creation, moving and un-moving, the Earth is the Rasa; of the Earth, water is the Rasa; of the Water, food (Oshadhi) is the Rasa; of the food, the Human Person is the Rasa; of the Human Person, the word is the Rasa; of the word, Rk is the Rasa; of the Rig Sama is the Rasa; of the Sama (Veda) OM is the Rasa. These eight Rasas, the earth, water, physic, person, word, Rig, Sama and OM lead to the ninth, Anandha (Bliss). These are the Navarasas, the Nine Essences, the Nine Sustainers. Anandha (Bliss) is the goal which man is seeking, the aim of human life. Man struggles variously to attain Anandha. Anandha is the height of happiness, the embodiment of joy. It is sought in three different ways, according to the innate quality of the seeker - the sathwik, the rajasik and the thamasik. The sathwik path is poison in the early stages and nectar while coming to fruition. It invokes firm control and regulation of the senses, of cognition and action. This will be very hard to accomplish. But as one progresses in practice, the joy increases and bliss is attained. How can such a goal be secured without undergoing hardships? The

scriptures say, "Happiness cannot be won through happiness": Na sukhad labhyathe Sukham. Happiness can be won only through misery. Pleasure is but an interval between two pains. To achieve the sathwik happiness that is positive and permanent, man must perforce take on trials and tribulations, loss and pain.

The Rajasik and Thamasik paths

Now about the second type - the rajasik. In the early stages, this path is nectarine but later, it slides into misery, for the happiness is derived through the senses from objects of the external world. The pleasure soon reveals itself as unreal, false and exhausting. Once the process starts, it drags on with no facility for rest. Man becomes too weak to pursue the goals of dharma (righteousness) artha (prosperity) kama (wish-fulfilment) and moksha (liberation) which are laid down for him. His intellect, imaginative skill, intuitive faculty - all are rendered lame. Man can even lose his human-ness. The blind pursuit of objective sensual pleasure has today resulted in this very calamity. Man has forgotten his true Divinity and surrendered his life to unholy activities.

Lastly, we have the thamasik path. People who prefer this way of life are unconcerned with the problems of the world; they sleep away their lives, deriving joy in sloth and darkness. Of these three paths towards the goal of Anandha, man must accept the sathwik road, whatever the hardship, the loss, the misery, the anxiety and the labour. He must attain the awareness of Divinity, the experience of Godhead (Bhagavan) and be established in the Anandha.

Nine lamps that can illumine the mind

What is the inner meaning of the expression, Bhagavan? The Vedas say, "Brahmaithi, Param- Atmaithi; Bhagava-theethi sabdyathe." (The Bhagavan principle is the same as Brahman, Paramatma). Bhagavan is the Ultimate, the Full. Bha means having full auspiciousness and prosperity. Ga means deserving praise and adoration. In the Ramayana, Bhagavan is described in

clear terms. He sustains the Universe using His creative power as the means. He creates and fosters what is created. So, He is Sambhartha or Bhartha, He who raises, He who rules and saves. Bha also means light, splendour. Bhagavan is He who sheds and spreads Light. Bhagavan is Jyothiswaruup, embodied Light, Effulgence. Since He can and does illumine all things and beings everywhere at all times, He is Bha-ga-van. When do we need Light? Not during the day, but when night prevails. Then we need a lamp, a flame, the Moon. So too, until wisdom enlightens us, we need sadhanas; until we experience the One Unified Divine, we have to accept and practise discipline, regulations and sadhanas. Ignorance is the Night. Knowledge is the Light. There are nine lamps that can illumine the mind and free it from darkness - sravanam (listening), keerthanam (adulation), smaranam (remembering), padsevanam (showing respect by touching the feet), archanam (ceremonial worship), Vandanam (paying obeisance), dasyam (doing service), sakhyam (friendliness), and atmanivedanam (self surrender). We must shape ourselves into fit instruments for the spiritual pilgrimage. There are four classes of persons: those who pay attention to their own faults and the excellences of others (the best); those who highlight their own excellences as well as the excellences of others (the middlings); those who pay attention only to their own excellences and only to the faults of others (the worse type) and those who present their own faults as excellences and the excellences of others as faults (the worst). Each one can discover for himself the group to which he belongs. Remember this: when one is yearning to become aware of the Full, the Sacred, the Prema, the Atma, the Bhagavan, he has to prepare himself for the first and the best group - discovering his own faults and observing only excellences in others. This is the most desirable sadhana.

Uphold-the true glory of man

Man is suffering today because he is engrossed in the external world, with no sadhana or steady practice to correct his vision. What can ten baths a day do to cleanse a person, when his mind is fouled by evil thoughts? What can the shaven head and the ochre clothes do to foster spirituality when his mind is riddled by desires and wants? You may rotate a ball of sweets outside the mouth but unless it is put into it and eaten, hunger will not be abated. So,

develop sincere longings, cleanse the mind, purify the thoughts, and put the precepts into practice. In Vedantha, this process is mentioned as, karma marga, the path of activity. There is no fruit without a flower; there can be no devotion without karma. The fruit ripens and becomes sweet; bhakthi ripens into jnana (wisdom). So, we must first take up holy activity with clean intentions: One sadhana that is cultivated on a large scale today is dhyana: (meditation). But, the dhyana that is done is not in consonance with the principle of Bharatheeya Culture. In the absence of a purified mind, dhyana can never achieve the mergence. How can a house be built without brick and mortar?

By sadhana you can correct your faults

It is said that one can succeed in dhyana by indulging in it whenever a little time is available and that one can be engaged in this sadhana, whatever the habits one is prone to, whatever feelings and thoughts reside in you and whatever path you follow. But this advice is not correct. If one has to remain quiet for sometime without being distracted or disturbed by fear or anxiety, one could indulge in drink or consume opium. Dhyana must have far higher aims and far stricter credentials. Or else, the culture of Bharath will suffer great damage. Therefore, fine virtues have to be cultivated first, good thoughts have also to be entertained One should uphold the true glory of man.

Many people come to me distraught and pray, "Swami! I have no peace. Give me peace" But peace cannot be got from the outer world; it has to be sought in the heart. Wicked desires breed misery; beneficial desires result in joy. The removal of desire ensures peace (shanthi). When desire after desire multiply in the mind, how can peace be gained? After bhajan and dhyana, you repeat shanthi thrice, praying for physical, mental and spiritual peace. But the awareness of the atma, being the reality of all, can only confer shanthi. A single mango seed is planted; the tree yields thousands of fruits and in every fruit, you find the seed! The same atma is in every Being! The Lord is the seed that is manifested as thousands of seeds. "Ekoham (I am single) Bahusyam (shall become many)", said the Lord. When we posit differences

and distinctions due to ignorance of this fact, we are afflicted by fear and shanthi disappears. When man doubts and disbelieves brother man, how can shanthi prevail? Now, the mind of man is tending towards evil. The mathi (mind) has become durmathi (bad mind). The year that begins today, Sunday, is "Durmathi" and people apprehend that evil may increase. The year begins on the day of Sun who is, according to ancient astrological texts, the King for the next twelve months. The Sun is also the Lord of the Peoples, the Lord of Rain Clouds, and the Lord of Curative Herbs. Moreover, the Moon is His Manthri or Minister. Since the Moon has no independent source of light and energy, the King and the Minister will move amicably and so, the year will be a happy and prosperous one. But, whatever astrology may indicate, you can direct your mind (the Moon) and your intellect (the Sun) into propitious channels of peace and prosperity. By sadhana, you can correct your faults and mould your excellences and ensure shanthi for yourselves, your society and your country. Pray everyday for the welfare of all the world: "Lokas samasthas sukhino bhavanthu". This is my message for the new year.

5. Day of Dedication

Date: 12 April 1981 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Days that are marked out as festivals in the calendars of all races and religions are significant because they have a deep spiritual meaning. They have to be used by man for examining habits and practices, prejudices and partialities, and for cleansing the mind of these. The attitudes and guidelines that are clogging progress have to be discarded and fresh fruitful ones welcomed. The days have to be dedicated for trimming the old and planting the new. How is a holy festival day celebrated now? Immediately after dawn, people take a bath and wear new clothes or fresh washed clothes. The house and the space around it are swept clean; the walls are white-washed; the furniture is dusted; the cobwebs are swept off. Festoons of green are strung over the doors. We find joy and laughter on every face. All partake together a feast, prepared with love and care. The past is forgotten; the present is filled with happiness; tomorrow is not allowed to cast its shadow on today. Hope, faith and enthusiasm fill the air. All this is certainly good. But there is more in a festival than these ostensibles. Behind the seen, there is a sublime unseen. The seen and the unseen are two halves of the One, or rather, two phases of the One. From the Full, the Full has emerged, leaving the Full ever Full. The Created is as full of the One as the One whose manifestation it is. The Experiencer is as Full as the Experienced. A grain of sand is as full as a star in the sky. The Paramatma, who is the One Fullness, has willed mankind which is co-sharer of that Fullness. Man has to fulfil himself, half through the Grace of the effort and half through the Grace of the indwelling Divine. Awareness of this Fullness, escaping from the illusion of incompleteness, is the goal, the destination of human life. When man knows, visualises and experiences the Creator, he becomes as mighty, as majestic and as knowledgeable as the Creator. The ultimate cause cannot be the object of direct vision, nor can it be discovered by logical inference. One has to rely on the Word, the Sabdha, the Vedas, and proceed along the path laid down therein.

Use discrimination to decide on the path of truth

Success in this sadhana depends on self-control and sense-control. Even for the successful execution of daily routine chores we find that these controls are very beneficial. Why? Birds and beasts, insects and worms suffer much when they allow their acts and movements to be guided by the senses. Many have learnt .to check the fatal tendency to obey every whim or to pursue every thing that attracts. Discrimination has developed through necessity for survival in most living beings but, in man, it has become a highly developed skill. Man has to use this skill to separate the chaff from the grain and decide on the constructive path of truth and righteousness. Meditation is now practised and propagated in a very new-fangled manner. Without cleansing the mind of its evil thoughts and low desires, how can one use it to win good results? Food cooked in unclean vessels is not fit to be eaten. The prime need for progress in spiritual practice is a pure mind, rid of evil thoughts and feelings. Work is purified by the attitude of worship. Dedicate all your activity to God. Then, it will not be warped and worsened by the ego. Sathsang, such as you can have in the Hostel, will be a great help. Each one of you must hold on to the discipline that can keep you straight. No one anywhere else has such congenial opportunities and such constant encouragement.

Dedication is different from service; in service, there is the element of ego: "I serve, He is the master, He acquires my service, I am necessary for Him." But, in dedication, the I is wiped out. There is no desire for the fruit; the joy consists in the act being done.

To cultivate that attitude of dedication, every one must think of God, remember the Name of God and deepen faith in God.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

6. Raama the ideal

Date: **April 1981** / Location: **Bengaluru** / Occasion: **Golden Jubilee Hall, Lal Bagh**

Mankind has progressed much in exploiting the material resources of the earth in order to promote the standard of life. But, neither the individual nor the society has learnt the way to inner peace and contentment. Envy and greed have fouled the relations between nations and between persons, suppressing the awareness of the Unity that underlies all Creation. The main cause of this calamitous situation is rank egoism, each one tries to grab for himself whatever adds to power and comfort. The ego is making puppets of them all. The words and deeds of men reflect this tendency of selfish aggrandisement. Every move is decided by the needs of the self only. No step is taken that does not promote one's selfish interests. In order to restore peace to the individual and in society, the mind, where desires are born and resolutions are framed, has to be purged of its attachment to the self. The mind has desires, as its warp and woof. When desires are ego-oriented, time and effort are wasted; duty is neglected; the body and its skills are misused. And all this when life is being shortened every day. With every second, life drips, as water from a leaky pot. But man is not aware of the tragedy that is imminent every moment.

Embodiments of the Universal Atma! Man has in him the capacity to grow into a pure Divine personality. But, due to ignorance and waywardness, he has become stunted. He has chained himself to low ideals and so, he has fallen into fear and grief. The Upanishads exhort man to awaken and become master of himself. "Utthishtta, jagratha, prapya varan nibodhatha" - they warn. Man is overcome by the sleep of ignorance. He has to be aroused and taught by elders who know the precious heritage he is losing. The sleep is caused by the eeshana or attachments - -to the mate, to the children and to riches. Of course, a person must have enough to lead a simple life. But, wealth accumulated beyond reasonable levels intoxicates the self and breeds evil desires and habits. Wealth has to be held in trust for activities that are beneficial, for promoting righteous living and for fulfilling one's duties to Society.

Renunciation is the real yoga

India has been very fortunate. It has had seers and sages throughout the centuries who have held forth the value of high ideals. It has had the example of Avathars of Godhead. The emphasis has all along been on the Atma that is the core of every being - a teaching that can confer courage, contentment, peace and harmony. It is indeed pathetic to see people following the vagaries of the mind and courting disaster, instead of using the intellect to discriminate between the transient and the permanent.

The mind should be checked by the intellect. Or else, evil resolutions will result in sorrow. Resolve on good actions and reap joy. Of course, if one can desist from desires and the tendency to pursue them, one can have unshaken peace. If the mind is let loose and given the mastery, man is driven from one inequity to another- He loses his self-respect. He sets at naught law and justice, rules of conduct and regulations of social behaviour. His life becomes a frantic rush from place to place and object to object. Detachment alone can give happiness. Thyaga (renunciation) is the real yoga. Three evil qualities have to be renounced before man can rise to his real role. Anger which smothers wisdom (jnana), lust which pollutes the deed (karma) and greed, which destroys one's love (prema) for God and man. The touchstone which pronounces an act as meritorious is 'renunciation'. If an act is self-directed, if it helps to inflate the ego, it is a sin.

Story of Rama is cream of the Vedas

What India needs most today is neither a new creed nor a new ism, neither a new society, nor a new ideal but men and women who adore and follow pure feelings and motives, persons who renounce anger, lust and greed. The story of Rama embodies this vital message. It is the cream of the Vedas, a veritable Ocean of Milk. Valmeeki has named each section of the epic, Kanda, a name which means a length of sugarcane. However crooked the cane may be, every slice is as sweet as every, other. Similarly whatever the situation depicted or motion delineated, whether coronation or exile, victory or defeat,

heroism or dispiritedness, love or hate, joy or grief, the epic is equally sweet and charming.

There are two predominant rasas or streams of feeling or mood in the Rama story, the stream of compassion (karuna) as Rama and the stream of Love (prema) as Lakshmana. It is the merger of the two that evokes anandha (bliss)..Anandha is the very nature (svabhava) of Rama. He is Bhagavan Himself, though Valmiki has not explicitly declared it anywhere. He refers to Rama as equal in valour to Vishnu, but not as Vishnu Himself. It is only through the mouths of Rama's own sons that the mystery is revealed. Bhagavan means: Bha (effulgence) ga (manifestation) van (he who is capable) - He who has the power to manifest Jyothi (Effulgence) - the Divine Jyothi, the Atma Jyothi. He is also Sambhartha - He from whom this Created Universe has emerged and He who is intent on fostering it. All who adore Rama as manifesting and protecting the Universe and projecting the Cosmic Effulgence and Intelligence are entitled to be known as Bhaktas. But, most seekers are but part-time devotees to-day. They are not sathatham yoginah (always in union with the Lord) They are yogis in the morning, bhogis (epicures.) at noon and rogis (sick patients) at night!

Rama has set the standard for everyone

Rama enlightens every seeker in the spiritual field, since he put into daily practice all that he deemed right. So, He sets the standard for every member of the household, of the society, of the nation and of the human race. He went into exile to maintain the highest ideal of a ruler responsive to the reaction of his subjects. The former holds forth the duty of Pithruvakyaparipalana (respecting the command of the father) and the latter, the regal duty of Janavakya pan, palana (respecting the wishes of the ruled). The root is: the 'word', of the parent, of the people. The fruit is moksha, liberation. For liberation is the ultimate goal, the inevitable destiny. The bud has as its inevitable goal, through the emerging fruit and the mature fruit to become the sweet ripe fruit. These three stages do follow each other. That is the reason why the Vedas lay down karma (the bud), which becomes upasana (the flower) and jnana (the fruit) in kandas - sections. Rama illustrated in His

own life this process of the onward evolution of the soul into its Awareness.

Rama was the embodiment of steady adherence to sathya and dharma. Only those who are saturated in Rama-bhakthi can dive into that glory. He is the grand ideal, upon whom you can contemplate. By doing so, you can imbibe and develop his virtues, slowly and silently. A tree grows silently for years before it yields fruits. It does not produce them on the spot or in an instant. The coconut palm, the mango tree, the jack tree are of this type. Their gifts are plenty and full of nourishment. There are plants that yield few fruits pretty quickly and die soon after. The fame of divine personalities grows with every word they speak and every deed they condescend to enact. Rama's glory shines brilliantly even after all these centuries. It will shine as resplendently for ages to come. Rama means He who pleases. Nothing pleases man more than his Atma, which is an eternal unfailing source of joy. One must prefer the awareness of the Atma and the bliss that the awareness confers, to all other minor momentary joys. The Upanishad says, "Thyagenike Amruthathvam Anasuh" - "By renunciation alone can the Bliss of Immortality be won".

Everyone of you has in possession a ticket for liberation from the cycle of birth and death. But, most do not know the train which they have to board; many get down at intermediate stations, imaging them to be the terminus and wander helplessly in the wilderness or are carried away by sights and scenes.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

7. The faith and the ideal

Date: 13 April 1981 / Location: Bengaluru / Occasion: Rama Navami

Even to place one foot forward, man needs an inner urge, a purpose, a prompting. His will is moved by his wish. Therefore, man must endeavour to wish for higher and holier goals. His mind is a bundle of wishes; turned hither and thither by the dictates of each wish, man wastes the time allotted to him and the skills he is endowed with. He slaves his conscience believing that he is acting right.

But, man has to recognise the preciousness of time. Not even a fraction of a second should be wasted. He must be engaged always in the investigation of his own Truth and his own Duty to himself. Life is dripping away, drop by drop, from the leaking pot! Time hangs over every head like a sharp sword, ready to inflict the mortal slash. But, man pays no attention to this everpresent calamity.

Cynics declare that statements like "Man is the crown of Creation" are only for text-books and platform. But really speaking, human life is holy, sublime, sacred, ever-new, ever-fresh. The Upanishadhs try to arouse and awaken man into the awareness of this Truth for man is slumbering in ignorance, wrapped in his ego and his desires. "Awake and adore the Sun and recognise your Realty in the light of his rays," that is the call reverberating from the Upanishadhs. But, man is deaf to this entreaty. Three eshanas (ardent desires) are holding man back: he is enamoured of wealth, wife and children. These obstruct him at each step and act as handicaps to spiritual advance. Of course, wherewithal is essential for the process of life and labouring for it cannot be avoided. But, beyond a limit riches foul the mind and breed arrogance. They must be used for good purposes, promoting virtue and well-being, fostering Dharma (virtue) and fulfilling one's duties along the Divine path. If riches are spent for realising fleeting desires, they can never be enough and the ego discovers newer and more heinous ways of earning and spending. It is indeed deplorable that this eshana (craving) for dhana (money) has laid hold of the people of this holy land, where Divine Incarnations have

taught the lessons of selflessness and service.

Peace has to be attained through spiritual efforts

People are ignoring the very beacons which illumine the darkness and reveal the path of liberation from the bonds of incessant struggle, endless pursuit, bewildering agony and ceaseless activity to gain the unobtainable! What is the reason? The mind guides him, not the faculty of the intellect. The intellect discriminates; it probes, it analyses. But the mind follows blindly every whim or fancy. The intellect helps one to identify one's duties and responsibilities. Slavishly bound to the vagaries of the mind, man hops from one spot to another, without rest or peace. He runs to catch a bus, rushes to the office, to the cinema hall, to the club and has no moment of calm silence. Peace has to be attained through spiritual efforts, that is to say, through spiritualising every thought, word and deed. What has to be planned today to set the world aright is not a new spiritual order or institution but men and women with pure hearts. They alone can uplift this land from the morass. To purify the heart, one must practise shama, dhama and other sadhanas which can control the senses of perception and action. These may seem difficult in the early stages but any work that is worth doing has that drawback. Take riding a bicycle, for example. You will have to go through many falls and scrapes and lose many square inches of skin before you learn to balance and pedal on an even line. But once you have mastered the art, you can ride safe without holding on to the handlebar. It is the same for a person learning to drive a car. At first, when you keep your foot on the clutch, you cannot hold the steering wheel; you cannot lift the foot from the clutch, when you hold the wheel and when you manage both, you forget the brake. When you attend to all three, you do not watch out for pedestrians who run across. But when you have mastered the art, you are aware of the ups and downs, the stops and lights, and the roads - along and across - quite spontaneously and you can drive safe and fast conversing with the persons sitting to your left and on the back seat, and even singing a song to win their acclamation.

Happiness consists in helping others

Control gives power; regulation gives greater strength; discipline reveals divinity. People pine for happiness. But, can one gain it by allowing a free rein to the senses? Can one be happy eating four meals a day, or riding prestigious cars or living in many-roomed bungalows? No. Happiness consists in helping others. It is brought about by giving up, not by hoarding. Catering to the senses makes man bestial. They will drag him into dirt and disgrace. The yogi is the person who has fixed his mind on the Divine, not on the mundane. The Geetha exhorts man to transform himself as "Sathatham Yoginah " - "ever a yogi ." But man is a yogi in the morning, turning into a bhogi (sensuous man) at noon and a rogi (disease-stricken person) when the day ends! Man lives today without faith. (the base) and without ideal (the superstructure). Dharma should be the base and Moksha (liberation), the superstructure, but the world has neglected both and it relies on artha (wealth) and kama (desire) for happiness and liberation. How can mankind progress without the first of the Purusharthas as the faith and the last, as the ideal?

You wear coloured glasses and see every-thing through those glasses. Correct your vision; the world will get corrected. Reform yourselves; the world will get reformed. You create the world of your choice. You see many, because you seek the many, not the One.

Try to subsume the many in the One; the physical bodies of yourselves and others, the family, the village, the community, the state, the nation, the world. Thus progressively march on towards more and more inclusive loyalties and reach the stage of Unity, in thought, word and deed.

This is the Sadhana of Love for, Love is expansion, inclusion, mutualisation. The individual has to be Universalised, expanded into. Vishwa-swaruupa.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

8. Eternal harmony

Date: 1981 / Location: Mumbai

It may be possible to acquire proficiency in all branches of learning.

Or win victory in debates in an assemblage of scholars. It may be possible to give away as charity houses, lands and cows, and even to fly into the skies and count all the stars. It may be possible to know and name all the jeevas in the World, or attain mastery in Ashtanga Vidhya, or to reach the Moon. But alas/difficult it is indeed to gain mastery over one's senses (indriyas).

Steady the mind, gain inner vision, and maintain peace and equanimity at all times. One can attain mastery over all the Shasthras, and become proficient in Veda and Vedantha. One may be a king, living in a palace or a great warrior winning victories in battles

One may have conquered the Goddess of Poverty and won vast riches.

But, alas, all these are of no avail, unless one has devotion and earned the grace of God. Unless man has understood his inner nature, unless he has mastered his mind and grasped the inner truth, he is of no use to the world. The individual has to be responsible for the progress of the world by upholding the values of life and striving for the good of the community.

Understand your inner spiritual reality

Today, scientists and leaders of nations have forgotten the true values of life and the real good of the world. They are obsessed only with material progress. Unless they are awakened to the spiritual values of life, there cannot be any peace and prosperity in the world. Without spiritual basis, even if men have eyes, they are blind; even if they have ears, they are deaf; even if intellectually brilliant they are insane. Spirituality alone confers true vision, and makes man full and wholesome.

Today man is a contradiction in himself. His thoughts, words and deeds are incongruous. Without this harmony how can he contribute to harmony in the community and in the world? He can only create chaos. That is the misfortune in the world today. Man has therefore to understand himself, his own dignity and his inner spiritual reality, then only will he have the right perspective. Otherwise, it is like the story of the ten foolish disciples. Each one of them does the count and finds there are only nine and wails for the tenth missing man. Each one of them has forgotten to count himself and has plunged not only himself but others too in grief. The leaders and the so-called scientists of the world today are just as foolish as the ten. Without trying to understand one's inner reality, they try to probe the moon, the planets and stars. First, one has to cultivate purity of thought and mental equanimity. This mental equanimity is not something which one can purchase or obtain from outside. One has to generate it from within. When one has gained equal-mindedness, amidst pleasure and pain, he will be free from sorrow and will enjoy peace.

Man has to understand the reasons for sorrow. The three sources of sorrow in Vedanthic parlance are (i) Prakrithi (Nature), (ii) Jeeva (self) and (iii) Daiva (God). These are Adhibhautika, Adhyatmika, and Adhidaivika.

Our experiences are our own creation

We should first try to understand what Prakrithi is. Prakrithi, is not a permanent reality. It is something which has come in between; it is only of relative value. Whichever is not a lasting reality is an untruth. We should therefore transcend the consciousness of Prakriti. It is only when we forget what we should forget, we will be happy. The Prakrithi we see around us cannot give us happiness. From moment to moment it is changing. The experiences Prakrithi gives us in the waking state get obliterated in the dream state, and those of the dream stage cease when we wake up from the dream. The dream experiences are our creation. And so are the waking state experiences! What we see is nothing but our own creations. The vision-experience of the world is but a projection of our mind and the reflection of our own inner thoughts. As the thought, so the vision. The colour of glasses you wear determines the colour in which things appear to you. If you wear red

glasses, everything will appear red. If you wear green glasses, everything will appear green. Pure thoughts make the world appear as pure. If you view things with prema, with a loving heart, the whole world, the whole creation will appear to you as a reflection of prema. The selfishness fouling our love is veiling divinity from our vision. What is the reason for the selfishness which is veiling Divinity from us? It is simply our attachment to the body; it is the weakness of our mind and our enslavement to our senses. What is the way to overcome or sublimate this selfishness? For this, first, we should have a proper evaluation, a proper understanding of our body, senses, mind, etc. They are not ourselves. In ignorance we identify ourselves with them. They are our vestures, they are like the dress we wear. The body is not we, the sensory organs are not we; the mind is not we. They are merely our vestures. That is why we say "this is my body, etc." We never say 'I am the body'. We should therefore try to realise that we are really apart. The self that is apart from these is the real entity in us, and we are that.

The Atman is a form of God Himself

The physical body is constituted of the five elements, which are material in nature, and it has therefore to fall off and disintegrate one day or other. The one that survives and abides eternally is only the 'dehi' (the resident) in the body. The resident of the body has neither birth nor death. He is the Atman and is an aspect and Form of God Himself. The body is just an Upadhi, a vesture of the Atman. As to the sensory organs, they are like reins for the horse. The senses have limits. Each sense has a specific function, e.g., the eye is for seeing, the ear for hearing, etc. Each faculty has a particular and limited function. The eye cannot hear, nor the ear see. We should appreciate the great harmony with which the senses function. The eyes notice something attractive, the mind wants to get it. The legs take you there. The hands pick it up. Its acquisition brings satisfaction and joy to you. You see the co-operation that exists between all the sense organs. Further, see how much mutual sympathy there is between all the sense organs. Also see how much mutual help there is between them and the co-ordination with which they all work. When we are walking along the road, the eyes notice a thorn along the path and the legs instantaneously move aside or cross over the thorn. In case the

foot is hurt by the thorn, eyes shed tears. If the eye is hurt, the entire body feels the pain. Thus, the pain suffered by one organ is shared by others. What a great lesson in harmonious living they teach us! The body is described in the Upanishads as a chariot, the rein is the mind, the senses are the horses, the intellect is the charioteer and the Atma, the Lord, is seated inside. The mind is like the rein for restraining the horses (senses). Mind is a cauldron of sankalpas and vikalpas (resolves and indecisions). It is a conglomeration of thoughts of various kinds. Sometimes when the thoughts become exciting, it gets upset and throws itself into grief. But in truth, it is just a bundle of imaginings. Just as the many threads' woven together make up the cloth, so also many thoughts make the mind. No thought, no mind either. A pure mind is the one with good thoughts or God-thoughts. We have to eschew all bad ideas and bad thoughts and harbour only good thoughts. You should exercise your intelligence and discriminate which thoughts are good and which, bad.

Desires create the phantom of the mind

The mind is also referred to as self, the pseudo-self. In truth, it is maya (Once appearance). Everyone says, "I am mentally worried. My mind is troubling me much". But has any one seen this mind? No one knows what the mind is, but they suffer from the mind, from its illusory existence. 'The worry which you suffer is your own creation. Fear too is self-created, When we imagine the mind is there, it shows up. Deny it or enquire into it, it vanishes totally. Instead of enquiring, we give the mind undue prominence and allow it to ride over us and subject ourselves to suffering.

On one occasion, someone came to Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and wailed, "My mind is troubling and torturing me". Ramakrishna gave a very witty reply: "Oh, is your mind giving you so much trouble? Catch hold of it and bring it to me. I will punish it". Ramakrishna wanted to stress only that the mind is but his imagination. It is our desires alone that create the phantom of the mind. If desires are subdued, the mind vanishes. We must delve beyond the body, beyond the senses, beyond the mind, beyond the intellect and reach the source of all these - the Atman. It is the substratum, basis and source of all else. For everything we see there has to be a base, which we do

not see. For the car that is moving, there is the road, which is the stationary ground for the car to move on. The car may swerve but the road does not swerve. If the road also moves, what journey can the car make and whereto? So also, the Atman is the basis for the functioning of the mind and senses and body. Atman is their sole support and basis.

Buddhi stands foremost among the faculties

I have referred to the chariot simile. We have to remember the pre-eminent role of intelligence in the journey by chariot. The horses may have been bridled, the chariot is ready but if the charioteer is not there, what purpose will be served? There is a good motor car. Petrol has been filled in the tank. Air has been filled in the tyres. But if the driver is not there, of what use is the car? The intellect (buddhi), is like the driver of the car. The faculty that decides between good and bad and what course one should take is buddhi. The buddhi has to exercise its discretion in the light of injunctions from the Atman, its Master. Buddhi is the superior most amongst all the faculties, and its pre-eminence is due to its proximity and closeness to the Atman. The horses are in front of the chariot; the reins are outside equipments, but the charioteer sits close to the master inside. Therefore, amongst the instruments, buddhi stands foremost; below buddhi is manas (the mind), below the sensory organs is the body (gross body). The brilliance of the Atman directly falls on buddhi which derives the maximum benefit and strength from the Atman. Therefore, buddhi can judge aright and choose the right path. Only when a man uses his intelligence properly we call him buddhiman. If he does not use its direction properly we call him moodha or aviveki.

The Divine Prescription for life

The buddhi should exercise its control over the mind, and the mind over the senses. But what happens generally is that the buddhi does not exercise discrimination; the mind arrogates to itself superiority over the intellect and the senses arrogate to themselves superiority over the mind. And the chariot runs in the wrong direction and the purpose of the journey does not find its

fulfilment. To avoid this, buddhi has to act in the Athmic light, and the mind in subordination to buddhi. When buddhi is centered and anchored in Atman, it receives the Athmic light and brilliance and it gains its strength in fulfilling its role efficiently and fruitfully. It is not as if our daily life is different from Adhyathmic life. In our day-to-day life, if we use the intelligence to discriminate between right and wrong, and follow the dictates of the Atman, then everything will be right. This is the Divine prescription and panacea for life. What is therefore required first is faith in the existence and supremacy of Atman. If one has no faith in Atman, no self-confidence, and if he goes ahead with his egoistic vanity, how can he ever benefit by the divine light and guidance? How can he know the Athmic splendour?

Character and spiritual wisdom are wealth

Prema Swaruupas (Embodiments of love)! This created universe has two aspects. One is impermanence (anityam). The second one is unhappiness (asukham). In Geetha, Krishna has said: "Anityam Asukham Lokam Imam Prapya Bhajaswa Mam" - Nothing in this world can give happiness i.e., true and lasting happiness. Mistaking this world as 'All' and forgetting the Atman which alone is eternal and is the only refuge, is the greatest folly of man. Today, man is pinning all his hopes on this slippery world and is madly running after amassing and hoarding wealth. Of course, material needs are to be taken care of, but within limits, and not at the cost of spiritual values. Money and mansions are not the only wealth; hoard the wealth of the Spirit. Character is wealth. Good conduct is wealth. Spiritual wisdom is wealth. Prema Swaruupas! Try to promote the wealth of good conduct, strive to earn the eternal wealth of the Wisdom of the Spirit. All other acquisitions will not be of any avail to you. They will attract relatives and friends to you just as frogs come to a pond when it is full. Once the pond dries up, not one frog will be found there. When one loses his riches, friends and relatives forsake him. Such is worldly love. Friends fall apart, kinship gets strained, brothers separate, families get estranged - this is the play of worldly wealth. Therefore do not get obsessed with amassing worldly wealth. But strive to earn the wealth of good conduct. Cultivate love of the spirit and engage yourself in selfless service of others. Through service, you earn good character. It

promotes pure love and a good character. Devote your body, mind and senses, in the service of others. "Paropakartham Idam Shariram" it is said. This body is intended to do only good and serve others. The body is not gifted to you so that you hate and nurture jealousy against others and live selfishly, worse than an animal. You should devote, this precious gift of the body in selfless and loving service always.

Do everything in name of God

You should also bear in mind that it is nothing great if you do-Giving, giving only should be your motto good to one who has done you good. This is like give and take. Doing good to the man in spite of the harm he has done to you is nobler. For a Sai Sevak, giving, giving only, should be the motto. Even if you do not get anything in return you should be giving and giving. Anyone may blame you, but you should ignore all such blame and go forward in doing service without rancour. Serving is your only duty. The Universe is a manifestation of God. So also is the individual. All these three are like Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara, the Trinity. Actually there are no Three, they are one, it is unified Godhead. Cherishing this thought of oneness, and serving the society is true Adhyathmic or spiritual life. Further, you should take to "Sarvadhya, Sarvakaleshu Sarvathra Harichintanam." It is just not sufficient holding a mala and doing japa, once in the morning during the Brahma muhurta time, once in the afternoon and once in the evening. All the twenty four hours you should be having remembrance of God. You should all the time be striving to awaken the spirit within you and for its blossoming (Atma Vikas). This is the real purpose of life. True education is only Atma Vidhya. The education today is oriented towards earning money only. For feeding a small stomach, should one have to learn so many things? There is knowledge of music, knowledge of arts, science, etc. But all pale off into insignificance in the light of the knowledge of the spirit. All other branches of knowledge are like rivulets which flow into the sea. (nadeenam sagaro gathi). Just as all rivers flow into the ocean, all types of education will find their true fulfilment when they lead and end up in spiritual knowledge and wisdom only.

Prema Swaruupas! Every day whatever work you may be doing, do it in the

name of God and make your life sacred. You should not think that worldly life and spiritual life are different. Do not make such distinctions like spiritual life is sugar and worldly life is tasteless water. You have to stir the water in the glass, and let the sugar at the bottom dissolve well; then enjoy drinking the sweet mixture. In this way, worldly life should be blended and harmonised with spiritual life.

Give each problem the attention it deserves; but do not allow it to overpower you. Anxiety will not solve any difficulty; coolness comes from detachment. Above all, believe in God and the efficacy of prayer; the Lord has said that he who does good, thinks good and speaks good will not come to harm. That is the way to get equanimity, shanthi.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

9. The flowers that God loves

Date: 12 May 1981 / Location: Mumbai

It is in the experience and practice of the citizens of Bharath that they generally worship God with flowers, offer puuja (ritual adoration) and make obeisance to God. But there is something which is more sacred than this. There is a distinctive type of devotion by which you worship God with a good, clean mind and good conduct. This has been given the name of Para Bhakthi. By worshiping God always with puuja and flowers, the sadhaka (spiritual aspirant) will remain stationary in his place. This is good in a way but to remain in one place all the time and failing to rise to a higher position is not good. It is a superior type of worship - to worship God through good qualities, good conduct, good thoughts and good company. The Shruthis (scriptures) have described this kind of worship as worship through good qualities. By offering what kind of good qualities can we please God?

The first flower with which we can worship God is ahimsa - non-violence. The second flower is dhama (control of senses). The third flower is dhaya (compassion to all living beings). The fourth one is kshama (forbearance). The fifth flower is shanthi (peace). The sixth flower is thapas (penance). The seventh one is the flower of Dhyana (meditation). The eighth is the flower of Sathya (Truth). The inner meaning of this statement is that God will shower grace on you if you worship him through these eight flowers. The flowers in nature fade always, drop down, lose fragrance and also develop an odour which is not pleasant. Instead of worshipping with such worldly flowers, which are impermanent, and receiving impermanent rewards from God, we should worship Him with what is truthful and thereby attain a stage which is higher.

The true meaning of ahimsa

The flowers which you are using for worship have not been created by you. You are bringing flowers which have been created by the sankalpa (Will) of God on some tree or in some garden and are offering them back to the Creator Himself. What is the greatness in using the flowers created by God

and giving them back to God Himself? Many people bathe in the Ganges, take the water from the Ganges into their palms and offer it back to the Ganges itself. This is not what you have created. This is not what you have the right to offer. From the tree of your life, to pick out such fruits which you have protected and which you have grown in the form of good qualities and offering them to God, there is some distinctiveness in that. In order to promote good qualities, you have to undergo several troubles. So, it is through these good qualities that your mind can also acquire a divine concentration. Without good qualities and without good thoughts, how can you fix your mind in meditation? The first flower is ahimsa pushpam. We regard the word ahimsa to mean not causing harm and hurt to other living things. The true meaning of the word is not to cause hurt and harm to any other living being either through your thought, word or deed. Cleansing and purifying these three - thought, word and deed - has been called a Thriputi in spiritual parlance. This kind of flower of ahimsa has been described as Thrigunam, Thriputi, Ekabilvam. All of them should be harmonised and brought together to one unit of flower.

Use the sensory organs along the right path

The second flower is the control of sensory organs. Our senses run without any control. If running horses or animals are not controlled, they pose a danger. God has created each organ of the human body for a specific purpose. It is only when we use these sensory organs along the right path for which they have been created we will be entitled to God's grace. God has given us a nose. We should make an attempt to breathe in and breathe out through the nose and only accept fragrance through the nose. If we use such a nose to take snuff into it, the purpose will become useless. In the same manner, He has given us the mouth and a tongue in order that we may take sathwik (pure) food. If we use the mouth to take in unholy food, intoxicating drinks, then we will be using the mouth for a wrong purpose. In the same manner, we should understand under what conditions and in what times and in what manner we should use each of these organs and put them under control. Our inner strength will become less and less on account of excitement or unnecessary sorrow. The body will become ill by mental

agitations and distractions. Man ages very quickly through excitement and sorrow. The reason for your not preserving this sacred instrument in sound condition is lack of control over these sensory organs. The second flower of sensory control should be used for worshipping God.

The third flower is compassion to all living things - Sarvabhute Dhaya Pushpam. Looking merely and superficially at human nature, which had diverse aspects, we are forgetting God in this field.

From the seed of divinity the tree of creation has grown. In this tree of creation the fruits are the human beings which are the Jeevatmas. In each of these human fruits, there is divinity in the form of seed. That is why in the Bhagavad Geetha, Krishna has said, "Beejam Mam Sarvabhuthanam" (I am the seed in all the living beings in the form of Atma). Recognising the truth that God is present in the form of Atma in all living beings, we say compassion to all living beings is the next flower.

One's love should encompass all living beings

The fourth one is Kshama pushpam. Kshama or forbearance truly is the highest quality of a human being. But in human life because he develops narrow ideas, man wants to live in a constricted place. He thinks 'I' and 'my family' are what matter, others are all different from 'me'. It is not possible for us to develop the flower of forbearance as long as these ideas are in us. It is only when we love that we can have patience and forbearance. One's love should encompass all living beings That will fructify as forbearance. There is a small example. In our home there are our children. Along with our children, there is also a servant. In the house, a son may be pilfering something or the other and developing bad habits. In many ways we will try and control that son by beating, by scolding, and persuading him to return to good ways but we will never take him and hand him over to the police. In the same house, if the servant boy steals a small spoon, at once we will take him and hand him over to the police. What is the inner meaning of the situation in which we do not punish a son, even if he steals day after day, but we hand over a servant boy immediately to the police when he steals even a small thing? The reason

for this is the narrow idea 'that this boy is my son.' Because the servant does not belong to you, there is no place for forbearance and patience. So you see that when you have the broad idea 'that everyone is mine' there is room for patience and forbearance. It is only then that our love will also grow.

With truthful thoughts man will have peace

The fifth is the flower of Shanthi - shanthi pushpam. This flower of peace should not be interpreted to mean that you should be silent whosoever is attacking you, or whosoever is blaming you. It is not that. If you are unmoved and unperturbed in spite of anyone finding faults in you, this can be called real shanthi. If you can fill you heart with love, then peace will come into you from outside. Through bad qualities, to some extent, we lose peace. With truthful thoughts, a man will have peace. With untruthful thoughts, a man will not have peace. If you can get rid of all thoughts, you will become a saint. It is only when you can be free from all thoughts that you can have peace. Your own bad thoughts are responsible for all your pain and sorrow. By good thoughts and by good ideas, you will become a sadhu. Sadhu does not mean one who merely wears an orange robe, shaves the head and wears Rudhrakshas (holy beads). He who has good thoughts and good ideas is a sadhu. A sadhu is one who is a Sathya Sankalpa Swaruupa (embodiment of truthful thoughts). In the state of peace, human nature will be like the unruffled water surface. If there is water in a vessel, you will find 'there are ripples on account of the wind. Your reflection also will be disturbed on the surface of the water. On an impure surface, our reflection is also impure. On a clear surface of water, our reflection is also clear. In the same manner, although the basic truth is only one, whenever reflection takes place in a mind which is full of Thamo guna, (materialism) you will find there is impurity in the image. If the reflection takes place in a mind of Rajo guna (egoism), that will be called avidhya (lack of knowledge). On the other hand, if the reflection takes place in a Sathwik (balanced) mind, that will be called Maya (mere appearance). Ishwara (God) has maya as His robe. The reflection in Rajo guna is individual and that in Thamo guna is creation. While the basic truth is one, yet the three reflections, creation, jeeva and maya are not different from the basic truth. We should make an attempt to recognise the

nature of the basic truth. We take a fruit. Even if it be a neem fruit, when it is fully ripe, it becomes sweet. When you attain the totality of peace, then only you find the sweetness of it.

The flowers of penance and meditation

The sixth one is the flower of Thapas - Thapas pushpam. Thapas (penance) is not to give up your wife and children, go to a forest, put your head up and feet down; that is not thapas. When we think of real thapas we should abandon bad thoughts from our minds. The co-ordination of thought, word and deed is thapas. Whatever thoughts sprout in your mind, to utter them as word and to put them in practice as your work that is thapas. It is in this context that it is said - Manas Ekam, Vachas Ekam, Karmanyekam Mahatmanam - that one is a Mahatma (great soul) who can co-ordinate his thought with his word and his word with his deed. Giving up bad thoughts from your mind will become sacrifice. That sacrifice will become yoga. But giving up one's property and one's wife and going to the forest is not yoga. The seventh flower is one of meditation - Dhyana pushpam. Today, meditation is taking many forms. Many types of meditation that people are adopting today are against the culture and tradition of Bharath. To sit in padmasana (lotus posture) and to make the Kundalini shakthi rise from Mooladhara (basal plexus) to Sahasrara (the cranium) is not dhyana. True Dhyana consists in recognising the presence of God in all types of work. God is Sarvantaryami, Sarvabhutantharatma and is Sarvavyapi (the indweller of all,. To make an attempt in your dhyana to confine Him (God) to one place which you choose, cannot be Dhyana.

The flower of truth is the form of divinity

When you are driving a car, the car is your God. When you are doing business in a market, the market is your God. According to the culture of Bharath, we first make obeisance to the work which we have to do. Before we undertake to do any work, we should regard that work as God. Thasmai Namaha Karmane - that is what the Upanishadhs are teaching us: "The work I have to do, I regard as God and make obeisance to God in that form". Let us see the

person who plays on the tabla. Before he begins to play on it, he pays obeisance to the tabla. The harmonium player will make obeisance to the harmonium before he starts. A dancer before she begins her dance will make obeisance to her gungroo. Even a driver who is going to drive a lifeless car, before he holds the steering wheel, makes namaskar to the steering wheel. You do not have to go so far. While driving, if the car hits another person, immediately we make namaskar to that person. The significance of all this is the faith and belief that God is present in all things. Thus to regard the entire creation as the form of God and to perform your duty in that spirit is meditation. The next flower is Sathya (Truth). If you simply speak what you feel and tell what you have done, this can be called *loukika sathyam* - worldly truth. This cannot be called truth. Truth is that which does not change at any time. What you have seen is truth at that moment. At the next moment, it becomes untruth. All material things which you see in this creation are things which will decay, which are bound to change. In this transient changing world, how can what you see and what you hear become truth? Truth is God. This truth is the eighth flower. This truth is the form of divinity. In the world, we experience truths of a relative nature. Let us take Chemistry as an example. You take some chemicals and mix them together. They change and you get some other chemical. If you mix turmeric in lime, you get red colour. This is chemistry. You take Physics. If you take a 3-inch needle and put it in fire, it will become a longer needle. This is the truth of physics. How long do these truths of chemistry and physics remain? These are temporary, worldly, scientific truths. But spiritual truths are such that they will remain unchanged whatever you may do to them, whatever fire you may use on and howsoever you may change the circumstances. So, whatever does not at all change is truth. Cruelty and harshness are predominant in the world today because we are not attempting to promote such sacred qualities. Today, among believers, non-believers and the believing, the same kind of attitude is developing. That day when we can promote such good qualities in the minds of the believers, the nonbelievers will disappear from this world.

Recognise Society as a form of God

We must try to rise to higher stages from natural devotion through Para

Bhakthi. Although 12 years have elapsed since the establishment of Dharmakshethra, with having the chance of rising higher and higher in the manner now described, remaining stationary in the same position, you are feeling much disappointed. Perform your bhajans, perform your puujas, but when you enter society, recognise society as a form of God, recognise what exists as omnipresence in society and thereby acquire good qualities in serving society. Forget the agitations in the world. Then you can have peace and enjoy bliss. If you develop an idea that God, who is omnipresent and is in the entire creation and the universe, is confined in a picture which is three inches by four inches, you are narrowing your conception of God. Broadening your heart and making it bigger and bigger, you should make it as big as God Himself. If you look at a balloon, in the initial stage, it is flat. If you go on blowing air into it, it will go on bigger and bigger and at one stage it will burst. Though beginning with the ideas of 'I' and 'mine', if you ultimately move on to the place that "all are mine", "all are one," gradually you will become broader in your vision and you burst and merge into God who is omnipresent. You should recognise the truth that man's life should consist of making the journey from the position of 'I' to the position of 'We'. If all the time you simply stay, sit in the place of 'I', you will remain where you are. This creation is like the bridge which connects man with God. 'I' is one hill. 'God' is another hill. The bridge between the two is the aspect of creation. If you break and destroy the bridge, you can never reach the destination. I am hoping that you plunge into society and do service to society and thereby use the bridge to reach God.

You may say that progress is possible only through My Grace, but though My Heart is soft as butter, it melts only when there is some warmth in your prayer.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

10. Light and warmth

Date: **May 1981** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam**

Many among you might wonder, "We have been coming to and staying at Prasanthi Nilayam for years. But, Swami is not talking to us. He does not even look at us." Now, what really is the reason? The sparks that leap out of the flame of fire go into the distance and soon become ash or dark dust. Of course, everyone is fundamentally Atma, but, moving away from the awareness of that Reality, one reduces oneself into ash or dark dust. You are in Prasanthi Nilayam, certainly. But, your thoughts wander everywhere else. When your thoughts revolve around your desire to attain Prashanthi or Supreme Peace, when your deeds are directed by the regimen laid down for attaining it, when your words are soft, sweet and soaked in Love, you can, without fail, enjoy the warmth of this Fire. Often, when you watch the range of hills around Prasanthi Nilayam, you can see, specially in summer, streaks of light creeping fast over the tops. This is due to the vegetation catching fire. You can see the light from afar, but you cannot bask in the warmth. So too, you only see Sai Baba; you do not derive the Grace He is ready to grant.

The reason is: You do not dedicate all your thoughts, words and deeds to Swami. Whatever you do (wherever you are) feel that it is prompted by Swami and let it be acceptable to Swami. I am the recipient of all your efforts and attempts. For example: The army recruits dhobis (washermen) to wash and iron uniforms and clothings. It has barbers and sweepers on the payroll; they work in camps and move with the military personnel. They may be engaged in different types of work but every one has to undergo physical training and drill, every day.

The way to earn Swami's Grace

So, too, one of you may be working in an office, another in a shop, a third in the press but every one must engage in sadhana with devotion, discipline and a sense of duty. Do not feel that your role is low and the other person's high. Do not be depressed when you find your role is minor; do not be proud when

you discover that your role is a major one. Give your best to whatever role is allotted to you. That is the way to earn Grace. When can you secure Swami's Grace? In what form? One may get it as a chance to have darshan (audience)' another as a chance to touch the feet, a third as a chance to exchange a few words. Others may not be the recipients of any of these. Why? Their ideals and desires may not be proper. Even if they are proper, they may not be gladly pursued in daily lives. There are five fingers in every hand. If each finger points towards its own peculiar direction, how can the hand hold or manipulate any article? If they come together and stay together, the hands can accomplish whatever they plan. Similarly, when one of you turns your head away at the sight of another, and ten people insist on ten diverse directions, how can any deed be done? You must all be equally alert and active and co-operative. Why must you compete and quarrel? Nothing in this world can last as such for long. The Buddha diagnosed this correctly. He declared, "All is sorrow; all is transient; all are but temporary contraptions of ephemeral characteristics." Why should you be as fatally fascinated by these finite things? Strive to gain the eternal, the infinite, the universal. One day, you have to give up the body you have fed and fostered. How long can you keep all that you have earned and possessed with pride? Trivial thoughts and desires award only sorrow; holy thoughts and desires award divine peace. Therefore, cultivate good and beneficial feelings and desires. Keep away from bad company and bad thoughts. Realise the holy purpose of life through pure thoughts and words and selfless service to your fellow-beings.

When Kama and Krodha are rising in hot flames from the heart, how can the cool rays of Shanthi, Sathya, Ahimsa and Prema emanate therefrom? This human birth is a rare chance! Use it for spreading joy, not grief. Of course, it is natural for man to resent, to grow angry. But you should not allow anger free and furious scope.

The raging floods in the Godavari have to be restrained by bunds, anicuts and dams so that the water may reach the sea without scouring the fields on either bank. You must set limits to your own anger and hate, and honour those limits.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

11. The Gaayathri

Date: 26 June 1981 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

The Gayathri manthra has in it the validity of the Vedas. It contains the essence of Vedhic teachings. Each of the four Vedas has a core axiom (Maha Vakya) enclosed in it: Thath thwam asi (That thou art), Prajnanam Brahma (Consciousness is Brahma), Ayam Atma Brahma (This Self is Brahma) and Aham Brahmasmi (I am Brahman). When all these are synthesised, the Gayathri emerges. Gayathri is all Gods in One: The triple stranded Yagnopaveetham (Sacrificial Strand of Thread) is to be worn by every one who is initiated into Gayathri recital, for he has to perform the three sandhya rites when the Sun rises and sets, as well as when the Sun is at the zenith. The rites are in adoration of the Trinity - Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. The purpose of the rites is to invoke the Gods to bless the novice to lead a good life at all times (past, present and future), in all places (heaven, earth and nether region). The Gayathri divinises the five elements; it represents the presiding deities of all the five. Gayathri is worshipped as a Five-Faced Goddess - Om, being the first, Bhoor-bhuvahssuvah , the second, Thath Savithur Varenyam, the third, Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi, the fourth, and Dhiyo Yonah Prachodayath, the fifth face. Through meditation on the Gayathri, one can become aware of the inner motivating principle of the five elements, the five vital airs in the human body and the five sheaths which encase the Atma. Just as there are three basic energies that govern man - the physical, the metaphysical and the psychical, the Adhi-bhowthik, the Adhi-daivik and the Adhi-athmic, Gayathri has three facets Gayathri, Savithri and Saraswathi. Gayathri fosters the metaphysical, Savithri, the physical, and Saraswathi, the psychical. These three karanas or instruments have to be cleansed and sublimated so that man can realise the goal of life. Through the recital of Gayathri manthra and meditation thereon, this great task can be achieved.

Believe firmly that the body is the residence of God, that the food you eat is the offering you make to your Deity; that bathing is the ceremonial bathing

of the Divine Spirit in you; the ground you walk upon is His domain; the joy you derive is His gift; the grief you experience is His lesson that you tread the path more carefully. Remember Him even in sun and shade, day and night, awake or asleep.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

12. A happy human community

Date: 27 June 1981 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

This country's youth are makers of tomorrow's India. The fortunes of India, good or bad, are dependent on them. On their skill, on their character, on their eagerness to learn and to serve, are based the progress of India. They can also bring about, by their conduct and character, the disintegration, the decline or the debilitation of its culture and fame. The poverty and misery that the country suffers from at the present time are the consequence of our youth ignoring their duty. India, which was for centuries the ideal land for many peoples following many faiths is today struggling to provide a mouthful of food for her children! How has this tragedy come about? The reason is the attitudes, the desires and the acts of the youth have become unholy, impure and polluted by selfish and greedy motives. They are not seeking the education that can implant and develop qualities befitting mankind such as tolerance, humility, and the spirit of sacrifice. How are thieves able to steal flowers and fruits from a garden? Because it is not fenced in; there are no watchmen. In the Brindavan of the heart of youth, fresh, fragrant and green, holy emotions, impulses, feelings and desires bloom and fructify, but before they ripen into goals which are pursued with determination into projects and programmes implemented in daily life, thieves like evil habits and vices invade the hearts and overwhelm the youth. Therefore, the first requisite is to erect the fence of discipline and to foster the practice of virtues in the Brindavan of each heart.

Whatever has a form and name, definite and distinct, has also a cause, a creator, a maker. Every deed involves a doer. But there are among men both optimists and pessimists, the hopefuls and the depressed. The optimists keep their eyes always on higher values; the pessimists slide down into dispiritedness and despair. During nights the optimists look up at the starlight; the pessimists look down and grumble at the darkness around them. The optimists draw confidence and courage from the twinkling of a myriad lights on high. The optimists have eyes only for the flower on the rose plant. The pessimists see only the thorns underneath the flower. So fear of thorns

results in rough handling and the petals of the lovely rose fall off.

Faith is essential for human progress

Seeing a glass half filled with water, the optimist is glad that it is half full, while the pessimist is sad that it is half empty. Though both statements are correct, the optimist hopes to fill the other half too, while the pessimist gives up in despair. The one has faith; the other has no faith to sustain him. So, we must develop faith by steady effort. Faith must lead to effort. Faith is essential for human progress in every field. Knowledge, and through knowledge, wisdom can be earned only by means of faith and effort. Equipped with these, man can venture into the heights and emerge victoriously. Of course, one has to be warned against cultivating too much faith in things that are merely material. One has to develop it deep in the eternally valid Truth, God. Faith is power. Without faith, living is impossible. We have faith in tomorrow following today. That is what makes us take up activities and projects that extend beyond this day. People with no faith cannot plan; they court misery by their want of faith. A rich man in South Africa once heard a divine voice which promised him a gold mine, if only he would dig at a certain place. He dug at that place to a depth of 200 feet and failed to discover any vein of gold. His faith waned. He doubted the authenticity of the voice. He talked to others how the voice had played false. When another rich man heard his story, he developed great faith in what he believed to be God's command. He dug in the same areas and laid bare a rich gold mine barely three feet below the surface of the earth. That became the richest and the most famous of the gold mines of South Africa.

Want of faith brings death

During the Second World War, a steamer carrying Indian sepoy was bombed by the Japanese and it was sunk. Many lost their lives. Only five men managed to row their life-boat and hoped to have a chance to survive, in spite of the surging ocean. They were tossed about for many hours. One of them became desperate. "The sea will swallow me. I will be food for sharks," he cried, and, in panic, he fell into the sea. Another sepoy wept for his family.

"I am afraid they will suffer much. I am dying without arranging for their future", he said. He too lost his faith in his survival and breathed his last. The third man said, "Alas! I have with me the policy documents of insurance. What a pity I did not give them to my wife. How can she get the amount, now that I am dying?" And he also died.

The other two men reinforced each other's faith in God. They said, "We shall prove by sticking to life, however desperate the situation. God has created us for some good purpose. We shall not yield to fear. We shall not give up faith in God's compassion and power". They had to give up the leaky boat and swim towards the shore. Within five minutes, a helicopter sent from a coastal ship which had received signals for help from the sinking steamer, sighted them and hauled them up to safety. While safe on land, they said, "It is only five minutes between victory and defeat". Those who dug for the gold mine could well say, "It is only three feet of soil between victory and defeat". Faith won the victory; want of it brought about defeat and death.

Humans are the crown of created beings

Faith is the very breath we live by. Every being is the effect of some cause and has been created for some purpose. Man has been made man for some cause he has to serve. Young persons must firmly believe in this cause-effect principle. This silver plate has a purpose. The plate did not exist as plate; it existed only as silver. So too, the pot is already in the mound of clay, as cause; it has not yet manifested as effect, at the hands of the potter. Cause and effect are indistinguishably intertwined - Avina-bhava-samban -dham. Silver is the cause and plate is the effect; clay is the cause and pot the effect. In the same way, Divinity is the cause and Humanity is the effect. The effect reveals the cause. The pot is the effect of clay. Why can't pots be the effects of water or of sand? When the cause (the clay) assumes the form of the effect (the pot) it reveals itself in the effect. The Dharma (innate nature) of the cause will be evident in the effect also. Dharma means 'vesture', that which is worn. The effect has the same vesture, characteristic pattern, as the cause.

Salt is salty; if it loses its saltiness, it is not salt. Fire must burn; if it does not,

it is no longer fire; it is only cold coal, not hot embers. Chillies must taste hot; if they do not possess that characteristic and unique quality, they are not chillies. Each thing has a unique quality for which it exists. Man too has unique quality which marks him out from others. It is 'Thyaga, the capacity and the willingness to give up, renounce, sacrifice, He is endowed with that quality for a high purpose.

What exactly is that purpose? The Vedas declare it in clear terms. "By renunciation alone can immortality be gained". Immortality, not death, is the genuine dharma or nature of the human being. This is the reason why humans are the crown of created beings.' But man has lost hold of this precious quality and he lives in bondage to selfishness. When man attaches himself to the ego (swartha) he loses access to the higher levels of consciousness (parartha). This downfall results in his losing grip of the Reality (yathartha). And, when the Reality eludes him., he is confronted by a crowd of contradictory conclusions (nanartha). This calamity (anartha) in the thought process results in mental confusion (ashanthi).

Evil desires rob man of peace

Students must make all efforts to know the Reality (yathartha) by boldly entering the realm of the spirit, as Shvethakethu, the son of Uddalaka, is said to have done in the Upanishads. Shvethakethu sought to discover the First Cause, the Reality, that which is neither born nor subject to death, which has neither beginning nor end. The hypothesis that food was the cause of life was rejected. His father led him from one theory to another, which he visualised as the ultimate Truth. Shvethakethu was convinced that the Cause could not be either water or fire or air or ether (akasha). It could only be God. The One Divine remains one, though It is cognised in and through diverse Forms. It can and does assume these forms. It wills to be Many. Ekoham bahusyam - I am one; I shall be many. So, all things and beings in the Universe have God as the cause. Scientists who have not attained the knowledge of the totality suffer from want of faith in the Divine Will. You must give up this weakening complex and venture courageously on the path of discovery. That is the purpose of religion, as emphasised in Indian culture. There is no defect in the

goals that Indian culture has laid down; the fault lies in the minds of those who judge it. Cleanse the mind of material desires and sensual longings. Then you will find that the teachings of all religions are sound and satisfying.

Lesson offered by Karna's life

Evil desires rob man of peace. The tender hearts of students must be guarded against hypocrisy, conceit, and pomp. Karna, the great hero of the Mahabharatha epic, had the Sun-god Himself as his progenitor. He had divine blessing in ample measure. As a consequence, he possessed enormous powers. No one could overcome him in battle. But, on a few occasions, through man's own innate wilfulness and wickedness or through his goodness and purity, blessings are transformed into curses and curses are sublimated into blessings. Karna's life offers a good lesson in this respect. He approached Parashurama and desired to learn archery from that divine sage. He sought also to gain some supra-human weapons like the Brahmastra, from him on the conclusion of his training; Parashurama had vowed to destroy the entire Kshathriya caste, for Kshathriyas had dealt with his father, Jamadagni, very cruelly. So, no Kshathriya boy was accepted by Parashurama as a pupil. Karna therefore claimed to be a Brahmin himself, of the same caste as Parashurama. Parashurama accepted him as a Brahmin boy and instructed him in archery and taught him the use of the Brahmastra also. But, in the end, he came to know that Karna was a Kshathriya: He grew angry. He said: "Since you learnt archery from me through impersonation, I curse you that you shall never succeed in using this sacred Brahmastra".

Therefore, when you approach the preceptor, you should not try to deceive him. Let there be no trace of ego in you. Do not boast or exaggerate. Do not parade your learning or wealth or physical power. Be his pupil and learn from him, in a disciplined and humble manner. Since Karna was arrogant and cunning, he had to suffer defeat at the hands of the Pandava brothers.

Importance of truth and morality in life

Another warning, for you. When you are aware of the Truth and when you

know what action Dharma (virtue) dictates at a particular time, you should not play false to yourselves. Apply the knowledge of Truth in every crisis during your lives; follow the path Dharma has laid down; do not be misled by falsehood or wickedness by fear or favour. Bheeshma had won great fame from the vow by which he abjured wedded life as well as throne to which he was entitled. He was the teacher of both the Kauravas and the Pandavas. He was a great warrior, a fearless fighter, an unfailing guide. He knew all the intricacies of dharma. But, yet he failed to guide Dhuryodhana and Dhussasana at a critical moment when they dragged queen Dhroupadi by the hair and insulted her in open Durbar before himself and others! Of what avail was his mastery of dharmic codes?

Sathya and Dharma go together; they are the two faces of the same coin. Sathyannasthi Paro Dharmah - There is no Dharma higher than Sathya. Righteousness is built on the foundation of Truth. Since Bheeshma, Dhrona and others did not rise to the occasion and stop the wanton wickedness of their wards, they covered themselves with infamy. What was the reason for their inaction? It was consideration for the self, sheer self-preservation. They were overcome by a sense of gratefulness. Conscious that they were eating the salt provided by Duryodhana, they attached more importance to the impermanent body and its needs and ignored the permanent values of truth and morality.

This day there is a great need to assert and proclaim by every means possible the power of truth and morality, their holiness and their unique importance in life. This must be proclaimed both by words and deeds. Youth must demonstrate the value and validity of truth and morality (dharma) by adhering to them under all conditions. For, God is the motivator for truth and morality. The inner urge to uphold them is the urge of the Divine in us.

Do not lead barren lives, live for others

Students! The information and the physical and intellectual skills you gather and gain will be of use to some extent in your dealings with this material world. Scientific knowledge can be expanded through the manipulation of

matter, or through the understanding of the world and the changes that happen in them. Scientists can describe the composition of matter and its behaviour, but they cannot delve into the why and wherefore of things. The real aim of education must be to help the student discover the Divine in every being. Saint Vemana says: Scholars Study! Study! Study! But the fools know not who they are! Studying, studying, studying. The scholar is not free from vice Nor has he become wise. Then, why study these mean mortal things? Study only that which is deathless. The most desirable subject for study is the secret of the soul which is immortal. Do not be satisfied with the education that helps you to eke out a livelihood during your sojourn on earth. Even birds and beasts eke out their livelihood somehow. You have come to the world as humans in order to manifest fully the special human endowment, of intelligence and intuition. This is the goal which Prasanthi Nilayam is seeking to realise through the schools, colleges and university.

Live for the progress of the country

You should not confine yourselves to the study of books. You should expand the love latent in your hearts and translate it into service to man. Service to society is the worship you offer to the Lord. Do not lead barren lives, concentrating on your own advancement. Live for others, for the promotion of the welfare of society, for the progress and prosperity of the country. It is not as if you are not aware of the conditions in this country. They are serious and ever frightening. Wherever you turn, people are anxious and agitated. Peace and security are not available for them. Your responsibility is, therefore, tremendous, for you have to lift India out of this morass of poverty, hatred, ignorance and violence. By the example of your lives, you have to restore confidence among the people in the higher values of life. Do not neglect the great lessons embedded in Sanathana Dharma, which have sustained countless generations in this land for many centuries. "May all the Worlds be happy" - this is the goal towards which Sanathana Dharma is leading us. Welcome within the fold of your love all men without distinction of race, religion, colour or class. Have the picture of the happy, united, love-filled human community in your heart. That will give you enough encouragement in your mission.

Develop simple living and high thinking

Students! Only two paths are open before you: the path of individual freedom and the path of social service. Adhering to individual freedom, you should not lose yourselves in egotism. Students must develop simple living and high thinking. In the name of high thinking, do not lose yourselves in tons of books and waste your energies in barren pursuits. The mind will only confuse, confound and weaken your reason. Use only the energy that the situation and the need of the moment demand. Take the example of the electric bulb. The drawing room should have a higher wattage bulb, while the bedroom does not need it. If you fit all rooms with brilliant bulbs of high wattage, for the simple reason that electric current is available, you will be wasting precious stuff and paying heavy costs. Energy too has to be conserved. Pay careful attention to the time, place and purpose, and your action will be correct. You are falling a prey to Western manners and behaviour patterns. They are not in line with the culture of India. Their social life and habits are suited only to the conditions of their countries. You cannot adopt their modes of living without injuring your own. So, adopt only those which are in accord with our cultural traits. Give up all habits which are completely unrelated to our ideals and goals.

Man has in him vast resources of power. When he does not utilise them while discharging his duties to himself and to the society which sustains him, he is only becoming a target for ridicule. When you are on a railway station platform waiting for the train that is due, and when you come to know that it will arrive five hours late, how do you react? You fling abusive words at the train. When the coaches receive from you such treatment, how much worse treatment you deserve for not fulfilling your duty and for disappointing the expectations that you have raised by your being a man! Utilise your skills and learning as consistently and as effectively as duty demands. Unless used, a watch get rusted what can be said, therefore of unused skill? The body has to be exercised to keep it trim as a tool for serving your fellowmen. The body has not been granted by God in order to be fed and well clothed and to be paraded around in pride. Plunge into the problems of society, take up the

burden of the family, and advance the interests of your country. Shine as examples of loving service. This is the ideal of the Sai Colleges. Cast aside all egotism, pluck out the root of pride, destroy the weed of envy and cultivate the Divine Consciousness. That will make you true students of these institutions.

Many people think of God only when grief overtakes them; of course, it is good to do so; it is better than seeking the help of those who are also equally liable to grief. But, it is infinitely better to think of God in grief and in joy, in peace and strife, in all weathers.

The proof of the rain is in the wetness of the ground; the proof of bhakthi is in the shanthi the bhaktha has, shanthi which protects him against the onslaughts of success as well as failure, fame and dishonour, gain and loss.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

13. The highest saadhana

Date: **04 July 1981** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam** / Occasion: **Advice to teachers of Primary School**

Parents entrust their dearly beloved children to the teachers in schools, believing that they are capable and willing to guide the kids and instill into them skills and habits that can later help them to stand up against the hardships and temptations of the world. Teachers are therefore burdened with a great responsibility. When a child needs help, it rushes to the mother; when the mother needs help to equip the child with knowledge and strength of character, she rushes to the teacher. Therefore, the teacher has to be more than a mother for the kids. Her anxiety about the child's physical, mental and moral health and her vigilant attention and care have to be more constant and knowledgeable than the mother's. The teachers must speak to one another only in loving terms. They should not indulge in mutual recrimination, for the tender minds of children will be tarnished by the slightest tinge of hatred that pollutes the atmosphere of love. No harsh word can be uttered in their hearing against the Ayah (maid) who brings them from their homes with loving care. The children will develop negative reaction towards the teacher who slights the maid or any other employee or worker, like the cook or the gardener. Do not parade before the children as a hierarchy or a bureaucracy. Each one has a distinct duty assigned according to the talent possessed by the one; no duty is superior or inferior. Let this lesson soak into the consciousness of the kids. Be cheerful always. If you keep in mind this fact that you are engaged in the divine task of furthering the unfolding of the petals of purity and piety in the hearts of the kids, the process of vikas (enlightenment). I am sure the rare good fortune that has been showered on you will keep you smiling, whatever may happen to mar the joy. Contemplate the bubbling springs of innocence before you, and sadness will flee from your minds.

Children yield to affectionate advice

Every person in the Sishu Vikas or primary school must feel a sense of Sai

kinship with every other. Consult every person involved in the task of unfolding, caressing and caring. Let there be harmony in the office, the classroom, the dormitories and the dining table and the play ground. And, whenever any one is asked to do a thing or not to do a thing, ensure that the person knows how it is relevant and important. This will help quick and proper execution. When you have to reprimand a child for some misdemeanour or delinquency, do not pounce all of a sudden or terrorise by shouting. Tell them politely: "If another kid did the same to you, or took away for use your article or hit you, won't you feel hurt? Now, is it not wrong to hurt the other kid? When you do not like a kid to do you any harm you too should refrain from inflicting harm." Kids will understand, soon feel sorry and resolve not to repeat the act or word. They yield to affectionate advice.

The Primary School where teachers accept children aged five is the very foundation, not only for all higher grades of education, but even for advancement and the progress of mankind. Therefore, teachers engaged in this task are doing the highest sadhana, which benefits themselves, the children and society. It is a sadhana that can certainly win the Grace of God.

Of what profit is to have a car, if you are ignorant of the art of driving it or using it for moving about? Of what profit is to have a radio, if you are unaware of its working and of the ways of benefitting by it? Of what benefit is it to have a body, If you do not seek to know how best to utilise it?

Learn from the saints and sages who have realised the truth about the path you shall tread and the goal you have to attain. That Goal is God.

He is beyond all notions of good and bad, right and wrong. These are earthly measures, by which the temporary is weighed and judged. He has no Form, no Limbs, no qualities, no references, no prejudices, no predilections.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

14. The foundation stone

Date: 08 March 1981 / Location: Hyderabad

What exactly is the underlying cause of all the conflicts and confusions that afflict the world today? The institutions imparting learning have succeeded in equipping man with fantastic skills. Look at the field of atomic engineering or of spatial exploration and conquest. Man has achieved astounding feats. But in actual daily life, these feats have not resulted in peace, happiness and harmony. Castes, races and classes clash with each other with unremitting hate. Even students and the youth have taken to this dangerous course. The situation is fast becoming beyond control.

The number of students in schools and college is sky-rocketing. We proclaim that formal education, which was for long the privilege of a few scholars and the sons of the rich, is now provided at the very doors of everyone. But, those who expand the facilities for education must examine how far these goals are realised. We rejoice when schools and colleges rise up more and more in every country of the world, without realising that what is happening through them is the worsening of the sickness of the community. Unrest, fear and anxiety are increasing as a result of improper and incomplete education. Education can yield peace and prosperity only when, along with technical skills and objective information, students are equipped with moral ideals, righteous living and spiritual insight. Now, the educational process does not involve itself in these values. It works even counter to them. It is quite unwilling to emphasise dharmic (virtuous) living. It lays no stress on morals.

Educated persons must serve the people

As a consequence, products of this process, who have no sense of values, gradually enter the professions and positions of authority in administrations of nations and rise up in time to higher levels. The world has come to the brink of disaster as a result. Bharath shone among nations as the land of Forbearance, Self-control and Service.. Now, it is being fast converted into a land pursuing pleasure. Each one desires, to loll on sofas in airconditioned

office rooms. Can this be named "pleasure"? Can this be ideal for educated person? No. This state will breed physical and mental illness. How can a student be regarded as a success if, at the end of the course, he knocks at the door of every office exhibiting the diploma he has secured, and clamouring like a beggar asking for jobs? Education has been conferred on him this disgraceful role. Can it claim that. it has done its duty? No. The educated person must serve the people, through sweat and toil. Education has to inspire youth to offer service, to sacrifice and to help. It must not inspire youth to amass money as its goal, and to travel farther and farther to earn more and more of it. For, accumulated money brings arrogance and arrogance brings in its train many other vices. The educational institutions do not at present instruct pupils on these lines and inspire them to practise these ideals. They do not strengthen and sublimate material and secular instruction into moral and spiritual training. Only when this is done can man evolve into God who is his reality. It is for this reason and with this purpose in view that this Foundation Stone is being laid by Me for this Home for Students (Vidhya Vihar) here. When such institutions spread more and more, there can be no doubt that the ancient invaluable culture of Bharath will renovate dharma and establish shanthi (peace).

This is the bedrock on which you can build the mansion of happiness, this recognition of the Divine, that motivates you from within.

You claim to be devotees, with hearts full of love and devotion; you roll rosaries over your fingers, and roll the Name over your tongues; you indulge in breathing exercises or contortional feats, but, unless you revere all and worship all in the abandon of selfless Love, you only insult the unique tradition of this land. Passion, agitation, anxiety - these degrade human nature. They are born out of hatred, malice or envy, which Love alone can counteract.

When you have here the very Embodiment of Love, as your dearest Treasure, why welcome into your hearts the waves of hatred, faction, fear and doubt?

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

15. The Universe - the Guru

Date: 17 July 1981 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Isha vasyam idam sarvam - All this is enveloped by God. All this is soaked in God, saturated with God. Everything is the substance of God. We are on the Earth; around it revolves the moon. Both the Earth and the Moon are illumined by the Sun. Dependent on the Sun, planets like Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto, Saturn, dutifully move along the prescribed orbits, at different speeds. Their satellites too belong to the solar family. When we lift our eyes up at the sky at night, we notice stars beyond numbers. And in the Milky Way, we see thick masses of star clusters. There are in space more than ten thousand crores of stars, and of galaxies in the Milky Way and elsewhere, we have more than ten crores. Without being lost in numbers, we must ponder over the mystery of the Unity and Harmony of this Cosmic Projection. The Sun is about 90 million miles distant from our Earth. The most distant planet so far known is Pluto, which is nearly 3670 million miles away from the Sun. It takes 248 long years to make one journey round the Sun. Well! Has God planned all these heavenly bodies out of sheer caprice? Or, does He intend to convey any lesson through these happenings? God will never produce an effect without cause or purpose. Nor will He manifest any substance without value. Why? The rotation of the Earth on its own axis, for example, causes night and day; its circumambulation round the sun causes the seasons, the formation of clouds, the falling of rain and the beings. God has graciously willed to establish peace and prosperity on earth. Let us see the purpose behind the alternation of day and night. After the activities of the day, night is provided to man and animals for rest and recoument. Sleep refreshes the mind as well as the body; without sleep, man is in danger of being too exhausted. Night, which restores health, is a gift of God to man. Placing faith in God's compassion, one can measure the benefits one derives even from stars and galaxies, the waves and the sea.

God is the best friend for man

In fact, the best teacher is one's own heart. Time is the best preceptor and

awakener; the world is the best scripture; God is the best friend for man. So there is no need to wander in search of a guru (preceptor). Learn lessons from every living being, everything that you find around you. Learn faithfulness and gratitude from the dog, patience and fortitude from the donkey, perseverance from the spider, farsightedness from the ant and monogamy from the owl. It is not possible to consider creation and the creator, Nature and God, as different or separate. Can we say that waves are separate from the sea? They are of the sea, with the sea and from the sea. Man too is of God, with and from God. The bubble is born in water, stays in water and is lost in water as water. The Cosmos too is a bubble born in the Absolute, exists as the Absolute and merges in the Absolute or Paramatma. Nara (the human) is the bubble; God (Narayana) is the sea. Recognise this truth as the bubble cannot be conceived without positing water, the Cosmos, this world, cannot be conceived as without God. Of course waves rise and fall, advance and recede, but the sea has no such agitations. The movements of the waves do not affect the sea. As a consequence of human activities, man has ups and downs in life, growth and decay. But the God in him is not affected at all.

Be God-men, always associated with God

Activities (karma) are of three kinds karma, vikarma and karma, (action, inaction, and unaction). Of these unaction is the most subtle of activities, for it is neither sloth nor action motivated by desire. It is simple awareness, the deepest experience, it is neither thamasik nor rajasik. Action is rajasik when urged on by selfish motives. Inaction is thamasik. But unaction is sathwik. Based on these three types of 'activity,' the nature of humans can also be distinguished as characteristic of three types - the beast-men, man-men and God-men types. Those who do not pay any attention to anything other than their own selfish ends, these belong to the beast-man level. They have no trace of devotion and dedication. They do not share in helping others. They have no concern with the sorrows and sufferings of others. They do not take them to heart. They do not worry over the children they have borne or the life partner they are wedded to. The man-men, however, involve themselves in the welfare of their wives and children and the small circle of their kith and kin. They spend their lives in this restricted sphere. Of course, the nature of

these people is not laudable; but there is at least the possibility of the little spark of love becoming brilliant and expansive through contacts with society, or impact of saints, or participation in some projects of selfless service. Man-men can raise themselves up into Godmen. The God-men are described in the Bhagavad Geetha as Sathatham Yoginah - "Always associated with God." They are never apart from God. They experience God in and through all things at all times. Whatever they see or do, they believe it is in God and for God.

God cannot be distinct from Creation

In order to rise to the full height of his glorious destiny the only equipment that man has to strive for is prema (love). Man is not a mere bundle of skills and acquisitions. Man has in him the yearning and the capacity to proceed from the narrow circle of 'I' to the wide horizon of 'WE'. The human essence in man is Divine. It leads him from Aham (I) to Soham (He I am). It urges him to give up the tiny 'I' with its petty little desires and seek the vast limitless. 'He', that is the Reality.

Giving up the little 'I' is what renunciation or thyaga means. Thyaga does not mean running away from hearth and home into the jungle. It means sublimating every thought, word and deed as an offering to God, and saturating all acts with Divine intent. This is the best sadhana, to cultivate prema. Love gives itself for ever; it never asks another to give. Shower it and you will be showered in return. Stop sharing prema; there will be no more to share. Prema thrives on thyaga; they are inseparable. The essential reality of man rejects the ego as a blemish. When we investigate into the problem, "Who am I?" and find that every one is I, love expands limitlessly. In the Sanskrit alphabet a (as in hard), the two together form aham, meaning the 'ego'. The ego should not be allowed to express itself, as it smothers the spring of love. God is love; so, all things created by God are filled with love.

A silver cup is all silver; it is silver with an identifiable name and form. The Cosmos has a name and form; God became the Cosmos; God is love and so the Cosmos is Love. From the silver cup, you can never separate the silver as

a distinct entity. So too God cannot be distinct from Creation. Nothing is mean or low, ugly or disgusting; every thing is adorable. To get fixed in this universal God-consciousness, one has to tame one's impulses and educate one's desires. But, unfortunately, man is fast losing steadfastness in spiritual pursuits. Learn from the poor little spider this lesson of inflexible determination to succeed. It struggles again and again, in spite of repeated failures, to fix the basic threads of its web, so that it can weave it taut and strong. Man, however, loses heart at the first disappointment, either foregoing faith in God or incensed with Him-and applying for a 'writ' against Him. Is this fickleness characteristic of human nature? No. Even a dog is more steady in loyalty. Give a dog a morsel of food for two days in a row; it will serve you faithfully for long. Man, however,, eats out of God's hand for a whole lifetime and yet has no gratitude in his heart. He behaves worse than a worm.

Money is of the nature of manure

Man has been enslaved by money. He lives a superficial, hollow, artificial life. This is indeed a great pity. Man should seek to possess only as much money as is most essential for his living. The quantity of riches one must own can be compared to the shoes one wears; if too small, they cause pain; if too big, they are a hindrance while walking. Money too has to be with us only just enough for a life of physical and mental comfort. When we have more, it breeds pride, sloth and contempt for others. In pursuit of money, man descends to the level of the beast. Money is of the nature of manure. Piled up in one place, it pollutes the air. Spread it wide, scatter it over fields - it rewards you with a bumper harvest. So too, when money is spent in all the four quarters for promoting good works, it yields contentment and happiness in plenty. But today, such deeds of renunciation and such holy thoughts are absent. We pride ourselves today as being 'modern'. Does modernism involve giving up morality and justice? Or, allowing the senses to run amok? Or, blindly running after countless desires? No. Modernism means self-control and selfconfidence.

Prayer is not mere pronouncing of words

This day, we are celebrating the holy Guru Poornima. Many people celebrate the day by garlanding the Guru and placing costly offerings before him. But, the true Guru is not a human preceptor. It is the Cosmos Itself, Prakrithi, Creation, the World around us. Life must have an ideal before it, it must proceed towards a goal; it must be a constant march. Life has as its sole purpose the divinising of man, the transformation of the 'man' we profess to be into the God we really are. Gu in the word Guru, indicates the quality of gunatheetha, that is, unaffected by attributes and attitudes, not associated with any one particular characteristic. And Ru means ruupa-rahitha, that is, not limited to any form, pervasive in all forms. In this context, the Universe and all its components are to be looked upon as one's preceptors and lessons learnt from each.

What is the proof for having learnt such lessons? The proof lies in wholehearted service, in sweetness of speech, which reveals the divinity in man. Vidhura once advised Dhritarashtra, "A tree when it is axed might yet put forth leaves; but a heart axed by a bitter word can never sprout again." The next step is hard work. A Telugu proverb says "work until your bones ache, and eat until your teeth ache." We clamour for food all day, because we do not work until our bones ache. A person who does not work has no right to consume food. Only those who labour with both their hands can exercise the right. The third step is Prayer. It may be said we are praying every day. But prayer is not the pronouncing of words. Prayer is the yearning one experiences to awaken the divinity latent in the heart. Embodiments of Prema! A heart without words is far more precious than words without a heart. Words cascade from the tongue but they are mere froth. People blabber a billion words but never do a deed. Be examples in doing, not doling out advice. Well, the past is past; begin life anew from tomorrow. Revere the world as divine; do not underestimate it as unholy. "Yaccha kinchith jagath sarvam drishyathe shruyathepi va," says the Upanishadh. It means, "All that is seen or heard is God." "Anthar bahischa thath sarvam, vyapya Narayanah" - The inner world and the outer world are both immersed in God. "OM Thath Sath", the Upanishadhs declare. "Thath" is That, the Cause "Kim yath thath" - these three words are to be thought over. Kim (what?) yath (which?) thath

(that). That is the Brahma principle. Thwam (you) is the Effect, the Jeeva, the Individual.

God teaches us through Nature

Prayer must emerge from the effect to the cause. The individual self has to yearn for the Supreme Self. It must emerge from a pure heart. Prayer (drinking cup) must be clean both on the outside and the inside. Prayer should not arise out of the tongue, as music rises out of a gramophone record. When the song does not come from your depth, when you are not involved in it, how can it draw God unto you? Your self must achieve confidence. Then, that self-confidence will lead to self-sacrifice and self-realisation. Man means he who marches from the status of self to the all-inclusive Self, from Atma to Paramatma. Towards the success of that march, all Nature can provide advice and guidance until the very end. The real Guru one must rely upon is Nature, saturated with God. God does not teach us direct; He teaches us through Nature which surrounds us. When we teach OM to children, we pronounce it loud and at the same time write the letter OM on a slate. God has written OM on every speck of Nature; that is the slate from which we have to learn of Him.

The Message

So, do not renounce the world or condemn Nature. Do not restrict the God of the Universe to any one Name and Form. Love all names and forms. Expand your letter world-wide. Just consider; when boiled dhal (lentle) is served for lunch, if it has less salt, you set it aside. We take such great care about a moment's sensation on the tongue. Well, when we have to spend 70 or 80 years of life on earth, imagine the care we must take to see that we realise the purpose of life. Virtue is the salt of life. Love is the highest virtue. Develop love by sharing it. Revere the Universe as your Guru. That is the message I wish to give you on this Guru Poornima.

Ice and water are but one
in two names, and forms;
hard ghee and liquid ghee,
are one and the same;
so too, the Nirguna and Saguna aspects
are both the same God-head.

Sri Sathya Sai Baba

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

16. Why Sai colleges?

Date: 18 July 1981 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Man is essentially mind, and mind is a composite of thoughts. These thoughts shape his fortunes. We are experiencing the effects of the actions provoked by such thoughts. What exactly is the reason why the world today is different from what it ought to be? The reason is human activities are not of the nature they ought to follow. Why, then, these activities? Because, man's thoughts are polluted; they lead him into wrong paths. The remedy, therefore, lies in reshaping these thoughts so that they are pure, holy, tending towards detachment and service to others. Every activity of man has an urge which impels it. When he goes to the bazar, it is to shop for provisions. When he reaches home with them, that activity ends. That urge is over, purpose is served. The student goes to school to acquire education. Each little act of ours has to be in pursuit of a goal. We forget that the great big activity of living on the earth for years and years and years must also have a goal, a purpose, an urge that impels us. For whom is life, for what do we live? No one asks himself these questions and no answer is sought. Many reply proudly that they live for themselves alone; but this is totally wrong. Probe them still further. Each one will assert, "I eat when I am hungry. I drink when I am thirsty; I breathe myself the air I need. I apply a bandage on my foot when I have an injury there. I swallow tablets myself when I am ill. I am living for "myself". Besides, two people sleeping on the same bed have distinct dreams; they do not have the same dream. So, it is clear one leads a unique special life of his own.

But, consider the case of one of these persons, appealing before the manager of an office for a job slightly bigger than what is offered. He says "Sir! I have my mother, my father, and four children. I have my wife. How am I to maintain so many persons? Please, therefore, give me a higher salary!" Now, for whom does he work on the job? Why does he seek more wages? Does he not feel the responsibility for keeping others in comfort? He works for himself and his family too.

Duties are not limited to oneself and the family

This is not all. Ask the person another question. "Guru Poornima is being celebrated at Prasanthi Nilayam. We are going there. Do you join us?" He replies, "What a pity? I have exhausted all the 'leave' at my disposal. I cannot think of joining you." In spite of this, if his wife has a sudden attack of illness, he admits her into a hospital and goes on leave for fifteen days foregoing his salary for the entire period. Or, let us think of another situation. This person is sitting with a plate in his hand containing his favourite savory, 'gare', and is just about to relish the first bite when some one rushes in with the news, "Your son is caught under the wheels of a bus." He throws away the dish he likes so much, forgets the hunger that gnawed his stomach and runs to the street where the accident occurred. He loves his son more than himself. He runs about frantically to save his life. So, his assertion that he lives for himself is obviously not correct. He lives for himself and his family. Most people's lives centre around only these two. Highly learned men and leaders in political fields are no exceptions to this rule. This narrow outlook is the cause of all the endless troubles that haunt the world. Our duties and responsibilities are not limited by these two entities. We have to rise to higher levels of obligation. When the village or town we live in is swept by an infectious disease, the people gather and resolve on counter-measures. This person, who announced 'I live for myself,' is also one of the leaders who have to carry out the measures. He is now struggling not for himself nor for his family but for the townsmen. He feels that any calamity that visits the town will be a personal calamity. So, we have to concern ourselves with the society in which we are.

Our lives are spent largely in the social milieu. Our birth, our residence, our demise are all bound to social conditions. Without the human community, man cannot survive at all. This is the truth; this is the special good fortune of man.

Each must promote the happiness of others

The long-beaked stork never gets upset thinking over the sad fate of the

living beings it swallows. Students of today are also unconcerned about the society that fosters them and expects their gratitude. **Every individual must prepare himself to promote the happiness of ten others.** Students have to resolve to look upon society as fostering their own lives. This involves renunciation of one's own fond dreams of gain. This attitude of renunciation can alone render life holy.

Students talk of friends and friendship but what do they mean by it? They mean by it an easy way to vicious paths. It does not encourage the adoption of holy, spiritual attitudes and paths. Friendship must serve as lids for the eye, as sandals for the feet. The friend must be "another me." He must experience in equal depth the joy and the grief of the other. Friends must be like milk and water. Let me elaborate this example. When milk, into which some quantity of water is poured, is placed on a burning stove, the water goes off as steam. The milk laments the separation and boils over. Then, the only way to keep it calm is to sprinkle a spoon or two of water; its friend is back and it is happy. Milk cannot tolerate separation from its friend. Your friends today attach themselves not to you but to your purse or to some advantage they can gain through your father's kindness. When your purse is empty or when your father is no longer in power, they bid you good-bye. Friends who drag one away into evil habits and vicious deeds are prowling around in search of victims. A Telugu proverb says,

"Long before Truth put on her shoes, Falsehood completes her journey round the world."

Falsehood travels fast. False friends stick faster. Truth will reveal itself only slowly through the clouds of denial and doubt.

Plan to be rich in virtue and devotion

Students have to cultivate gratitude, compassion and tolerance. Sympathy

with the distressed is a fundamental human quality. They must also develop a sense of gratitude. We feel thankful to some one who gives us food when we are gnawed by hunger, to the doctor who cures us of disease, the friend who pulls us out of a crisis, the officer who gives us a job when we are desperately in need of one. But, are we grateful to God who equipped us with this wonder-filled body and endowed us with qualities and skills to live through the passage of time? Alexander expressed gratitude to his mother for the body he had. But, he also said that God who enabled the mother to retain and release the body has to be thanked more. Youth is the stage in life when the slightest turn towards wrong will spell disaster. Thoughts shape the career. You plan to earn much wealth, because you imagine that rich people are very happy. The rich have plenty to eat, but they have no appetite. The rich wield power over others but they are held down by disease. The rich can have many servants but they cannot live in peace. So, plan to be rich in virtue, in devotion and in dedication to good causes. Be rich in sovereign character. Steady adherence to truth, renunciation, genuine prema (love), selfless service - these are the essential components of character. Follow the dictates of your conscience; you will never be wrong.

Today's scholars have no steadiness of conviction

Students now believe that the study of books is all that is needed. But, the test for scholarship is Are soft and sweet words uttered? Are good works planned and executed? Are the scholars involving themselves in society and doing good for society? Are they grateful to those who promote their happiness? These are the tests; not how many books they have read or how many degrees they have collected. Consider the learned scholars of today! They are bond-slaves to greed, suspicion, envy and factionalism. They have no steadiness of conviction. So, they have no sleep, they do not relish food. Each one suspects the other. The reason for this sad condition is that they have no spiritual outlook and experience. A person prayed to Lakshmi, the Goddess of Wealth, so long and so sincerely that she planned to follow him to his house and be there. But, on one condition and one only: "You should not look back. If you turn and try to see me coming. I will disappear at once." He agreed and started walking towards his house. He could hear the jingles on

the feet of the goddess and her chuckling laughter. Yet, suspicion haunted him. Was it the real Lakshmi? He turned back to verify and Lakshmi disappeared from view. We too are haunted by disbelief. We do our duty but are doubtful whether we would receive our needs. This is a sign of weakness. The reward is certain. Why hesitate? Be satisfied that you have done your duty well; never fail in that. But, nowadays, even those who break the law and behave in evil ways quote the law and claim its protection when their interests are affected. This is indeed a tragic situation.

Youth must learn the art of renunciation

Sai has been witnessing this trend advancing in all lands. It is to end this evil that Sai is establishing these colleges. Here, youth must learn the art of renunciation; they must acquire character, these are the two eyes which can guide him safely through life. Renunciation is the golden key that opens the door to liberation. An educated person should not revel in acquisition and accumulation of properties and possessions. Sai does everything only for your sake and for teaching you high ideals. But, since your capacity to understand the underlying purpose is limited, you might fall into wrong conclusions. Sai has not built these colleges and these hostels at the cost of crores of rupees for projecting himself. The world has a million colleges. But, these **Sai Colleges have as their aim the production of a generation of youth who live ideal lives. If only the students imbibe the right ideas and plunge into society with their thirst for service as a spiritual duty, they would be proclaiming that their humanness is worth-while.**

Ask yourself whether you deserve the 'human' nature implanted in you? Humility, readiness to serve, commiseration at the suffering of others - these are the human traits of which you should be examples. Once, a friend asked Bala Gangadhar Tilak, who was a fearless fighter for the independence of India, "Sir! You are in the forefront of the national struggle for Swaraj. You have declared that Swaraj is our birth-right and that you will win it. Well! When we achieve independence, will you be the Prime Minister of Free India, or will you accept the Finance Portfolio?" Tilak replied, "My dear friend! If by some freak of fortune, India attains Swaraj, I will go back to the High School I

have founded long ago at Poona and work, once again, as the teacher of mathematics. I am not content to be a leader; I wish to prepare a hundred leaders every year. I like to be a Kingmaker, not the King." The teacher offers; the student receives. The teacher should possess much to impart; the student should feel the want within. When the tank is full, water will flow when the tap is opened. And, the tank must have a store of potable water.

Only a great teacher can mould a great student

Kalidasa has described an incident in his memoirs which is appropriate to this point. Two famous pandits were engaged in a duel, dealing arguments and counter-arguments to the delight of the Emperor Bhoja and his courtiers. Neither one was able to outwit the other, though the competition continued for days on end. It was feared that a victor would not emerge at all. But, Kalidasa suggested a way out; he had a plan to discover who among the two was superior. He wanted the Emperor to arrange a competition between the pupils of the pandits and declare that pandit to be the victor whose pupil was able to win in argument over the opponent's pupil. The pupils were ready to enter the fray and fight the rivals who challenged their Gurus. The inference is: only a great teacher can mould a great student.

Students and teachers have both fallen prey to slothfulness. They do not take to work enthusiastically. For one naya paisa of work they demand four hundred rupees. The ironed fold should not be disturbed; they should sit comfortably under a fan or in an airconditioned office; they must be paid every month thousands of rupees as salary. Is there a way of life worse than this? Such people are ruining the country. People do not work but desire handfuls of money. Is it not greed? From whom are they getting these handfuls of money. You reply, the Government pays. Who pays to the Government? The people, isn't it? Is all the education you receive to be used only for robbing the people? Students! Do not entertain such nefarious ideas and follow such ruinous paths. Earn money with toil, with hard work with the sweat of your brow; then only can you and your family live comfortably and happily.

One other point: You must all understand well the affection that Sai is showering on you. He is caring for you, his tender children; he has built for you these splendid buildings and given you all the help you need. I am not pleading for gratitude in return. No. Like the Hindi writer, Prem Chand, who could not wipe out of his mind his agony when his younger son did not touch the feet of the parents while the elder did, **I too feel pain when you take the wrong turn and neglect the royal road to truth, righteousness, peace and love. I feel hurt when I see you wasting the most precious period of your lives. I am anxious about your future, for your own sake. I do not get praise if you lead good lives, nor do I get blame if you enter bad ways. I do not care for either. Have the reputation of your Colleges in mind; have the good that the world expects from you in mind. And, stabilise in yourselves the two qualities of thyaga (renunciation) and sheela (character).**

17. Call to Sai Samithi members

Date: **August 1981** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam** / Occasion: **Baba's message to members of all Sathya Sai Organizations**

My Dears! Accept my Love and Blessings! The world to-day is in the grip of a supreme moral and spiritual crisis. People everywhere are feeling frustrated and helpless and anxiously wondering what is in store for humanity. The hopes raised by the advances of science and technology have proved dupes. While science has overcome the barriers of time, distance and nationality, it has done little to promote better understanding between man and man and nation and nation. Never has there been so much distrust, hatred and violence as is witnessed to-day, in almost every country. Men have forgotten their essential divine nature and have even failed to observe those basic human qualities which raise them above the level of animals. In the ceaseless pursuit of material acquisitions and sensuous pleasures, they have forgotten that the real source of happiness and bliss is the discovery of the Atma (the true self) that is in each of them. There are, however, heartening signs that earnest people in many countries are turning to the way of the Spirit as the answer to the crisis that faces humanity. There is a spiritual hunger that is growing in every country.

Without the conquest of one's passions and desires and without realising the divinity that is immanent in every living thing, man cannot achieve peace, bliss within or harmony with the outside world. The message of "Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man," which Jesus Christ proclaimed 2000 years ago, should become a living faith for the achievement of real peace and the unity of mankind. The oneness of all creation affirmed by the ancient seers and sages must be expressed in a transcendental love which embraces all people regardless of creed, community or language.

This is Sai's Message to you all. May you all develop this Divine Love and stand out as the harbingers of a new age free from selfishness, greed, hatred and violence. Let each of you be light unto himself or herself and thereby be a light unto others. There should be no differences among devotees in the Sai

Organisations. There should be no scramble for power or position. What matters is the purity, intensity and sincerity of the devotion and the spirit of selfless sacrifice in which each devotee renders service to the needy and the suffering.

Swami is always with you, in you and around you. When all differences are eradicated and devotees in Sai Organisations conduct themselves with selfless devotion, you will all realise that Swami and You are one.

18. Character training

Date: 29 August 1981 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Verily, he, who does not have All the virtues in full, is no Guru at all! How can one be held high unless he is humble? Education fosters good traits, good thoughts, Strong faith in Truth, in God, and devotion To discipline and to duty. The real guru is one who teaches these, And the real pupils are those who learn them.

Every country, wherever it may be and whatever its stage of progress, must have three requisites' material resources, protective power and a proper educational system (producers, security personnel and teachers). The peace and prosperity of the world depend on the work of these three classes of people. They form the legs of a tripod. Even if one leg is weak, the other two cannot sustain. When production is plentiful, it has to be guarded against loot and plunder. When soldiers and security men become powerful, they turn into a menace to the country while production declines. When production and protection are adequate, if the educational system takes a wrong track, the country is weakened. The development of material resources and the defence of the country ultimately depend on the kind of education that is imparted. But a tripod is not only 'three legs'! How can one sit on three legs? There should be a plank, resting on them - the plank of LOVE, that is to say, Love of the Country. "Country" does not mean a specific area on the map, the soil. It means the human community inhabiting the territory. And 'Love' means the sense of inter-relationship and involvement of the individual with that community.

This degree of love is absent now in many highly educated, highly placed persons. As a result, the process of education too is suffering from misuse, and crores of rupees, set aside for it, go to waste. And since education affects the other two sections too, even the money spent on the producers and protectors does not yield full fruit.

Education has to open the doors of the mind

Education is being confused with the acquisition of verbal scholarship. This is wrong. Education has to open the doors of the mind. Many describe science today as a powerful acquisition, but, science holds before mankind a great opportunity, that is all. It cannot be as great a power as it is imagined to be. If it is devoid of character, it brings disaster. It can then cause evil and wickedness. Intelligence can be found to be very high among clever thieves. So, too, scientific knowledge can be misused for destructive purposes. To enter Heaven, man must transform himself into an innocent infant. This is the Truth. To enter the heaven of science, man has to mould himself into a humble, unselfish seeker. This is as true as the former statement. Mankind is caught in the mire of egotism, self-seeking and envy and, as a consequence, it is wandering in the realm of demonkind. Education is not merely the gathering of scientific knowledge; it should endow man with heroism in action. It should instruct man to decide on what has to be done and how. It must make man recognise the kinship that exists between himself and others. On the other hand, scholarship or punditry pores over many tomes and texts and devises many wonders, witticisms and feats. This is just a fanciful rut into which the intellect falls. True beauty lies in true education. Vidhya is the hidden treasure. It guards us even while we are in foreign countries, like an intimate kinsman, standing by us, behind, beside, before.

Youth must be full of yearning to know

The system of education prevalent in India is antagonistic to the progress of the people. It appears to be a system which teaches students to live without dirtying their hands with the soil. The process ignores the human traits of man. It is not right to do so. Education must aim at enlarging the heart and awakening the latent intelligence and skills of man, and inspiring him to calmly welcome physical labour and exhausting work. How can education shine in man if he does not attain these fruits? Gandhi once said, "Knowledge without character is a powerful evil." Today, there is knowledge but character is seldom seen with it. Practice promotes Vidhya. Experience is the Guru. But he is not visible at all. Teaching ends with the school, but learning ends only when life ends. Vidhya does not mean mere attendance at school or college,

mere study of some books, or mere mastery of a few subjects.

Living, not for the sake of food but for the sake of an ideal, that is the goal of education. The human personality must blossom into enthusiasm for work, into eagerness to raise society to the highest level. Without character, man becomes the plaything of every passing whim, a kite whose string has broken, or a counterfeit coin, without benefitting any one. In order to manifest genuine human excellence and instruct others to do the same, spiritual sadhana alone can equip one with necessary qualifications and authority. Education is now solely materialistic. The Governor quoted in his speech the axiom, "Sa Vidhya Ya Vimukthaye." (That is, Vidhya which liberates). Vidhya is that process which makes us aware of the bondage we are in, the suffering we live through and the darkness within. The Upanishadh exhorts us: Utthishtatha, Jagratha, Prapya Varan Nibodhatha (Arise, Awake, Approach the wise and learn).

Teachers decide the future of a country

Education has become mechanical today. The spirit of inquiry is absent. That alone can enable one to discover Truth. For this, youth must be full of yearning to know, and to shine through that knowledge. Success begets success. Success will encourage and ensure success at a higher level. Students must learn more about persons who have achieved success despite obstacles of every kind. Their examples have to be of the heroic mould. Even failure is commendable, if it befalls one while pursuing a high ideal. "Better far to fail in bagging a tiger than succeed in killing a lame jackal," says a Thelugu proverb. Aim high and strive for grand victories. When one's interest is rooted in some field of knowledge, attention on it becomes firm and memory will enshrine it in the mind. Students now remember the trivial details of the lives of film stars, since they are victims of a barren fascination. Steady interest is essential in order to master worthy knowledge.

Education is now oriented more for earning a living than leading a worthy life. As soon as they secure degrees, they succumb to the lure of money and run off to Iran or Iraq. Education must be oriented towards the attainment of

character for leading clean simple lives. Rivers are dammed. and the waters are stored in reservoirs. Of what earthly use are these if the waters are kept therein? Through canals, they have to be taken to the fields to feed the crops in order to appease the hunger of millions. So too, we store the knowledge available in libraries in our heads as reservoirs, But, is that enough? Can this be the end of education? It has to be utilised through canals of service in order to fertilise and feed the minds of one's fellowmen and make them more intelligent, more skilled and more loving. The nation will thus become more prosperous and happy.

Character is the best qualification for a job

Vidhya or education is a penance, a thapas; but it is being reduced into a dull routine, thamas. Teachers decide the prosperity or poverty of a country. Theirs is the most responsible profession. Tilak declared that when India achieves Swaraj, he would prefer to be a teacher in a High School rather than be the Prime Minister of free India. Teachers have the task of sculpturing the leaders of peoples. Teachers should not descend into politics; their status is far too high. They have to do service to the sacred, the innocent, the tender minds of the children of the land. Politics breeds selfishness; their task is to live unselfishly and promote the spirit of unselfish service on the young.

Even if man does not elevate himself to divinity, he must at least be at the level of man! But, he does not live in a human way now. He has become an inhuman inhabitant of the earth. Science has brought him to the very brink of total disaster. The duty of science is to promote love, sympathy, brotherhood and charity. In Bangalore, many have known Sir C.V. Raman. He is known all over India, too. He was a great scientist. When he was the Director of the Indian Institute of Science he had to interview candidates for jobs. One young man did not give the correct answers to some of his questions and so, Raman, told him not to have hopes of securing the job. He advised him to try his luck somewhere else and asked him to leave. The candidate left the room slowly with a broken heart. He descended the steps and stood alone in the foyer. After sometime, when Raman came down, he noticed that he was still hanging around! He rebuked him and told him once again that he should give

up all hopes of being taken for the job. The young man replied, with folded hands: 'Sir! I am only waiting for the office to open. I have been paid five rupees extra by them as fare and daily allowance through wrong calculation. I shall return that amount and leave.'" On hearing this, Raman's heart melted; he patted the candidate on his back; accepted him and gave him a job. Character is the best qualification.

Emphasis is laid on spiritual education

In order to promote truth, righteousness, and universal love, the Sathya Sai Trust is establishing primary schools, high schools, junior colleges and colleges where emphasis is laid on spiritual education so that good character becomes the core of the personality. The sankalpa of Sathya Sai is to offer, for serving humanity, heroes of action and heroes of self-sacrifice. A few minutes ago, the members of the Executive Committee of the Kingdom of Sathya Sai, were introduced to you. The students of Sathya Sai are free from any trace of blemish. No one can point their finger at them and discover any fault. They possess the highest virtue; they have enough riches, but they have renounced desire and attainment; they have come in to serve society. They earn first classes and ranks in University Examinations. Their attitudes and feelings are not in the least agitated by worldly things or events. Many old students work in our College without remuneration. Some may imagine that the alumni grouped under the name "Kingdom of Sathya Sai" are idlers or revellers. These students, when the truth is known, will put such people to shame. Our students have no egotism; they do not cater to the self; they offer all they have and even their lives for the sacred task of social service. With Devotion and Duty, only such persons can ensure for Bharath the happiness she craves for.

We want students of this exemplary nature. That means, the teachers, who train them have to be examples themselves of these noble ideals. As Vice-Chancellor Vishwanathia said, Yatha raja thatha praja (As is the ruler, so are the ruled). Teachers of past ages were embodiments of renunciation; they had no illusions; they saw clear and deep. The instructors of today do not often deserve the appellation of teachers or preceptors or gurus. Money

should not be the target or the yardstick; morality should be the scale. We fight for rights, while functioning entirely on wrong lines. Our right is the fulfilment of the duty laid on us. Discharge your responsibility without demur or deviation, to the best of your ability. That is your Right. No one should hinder you while doing that duty. But teachers do not work as sincerely and as fully as their salary demands. They are demeaning themselves by this negligence of duty. Plunge into work whole-heartedly. Is it 'work' to lounge under a fan in an airconditioned office, without damaging the crease of one's coat? The only justification for accepting remuneration is hard work with bone and muscle, sweat and blood, hard work to bring peace and happiness to the country and the world.

19. The teacher's task

Date: 30 August 1981 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Wholesome happiness arises only from the fullness of love; Truth, peace, charity, fortitude - these can fructify Only in the atmosphere of love - sayeth Sai. Men yearn for good times, high status, power, good life; But seldom do they yearn for good thoughts, wisdom, and virtue. What better advice can Sai give Man's feelings and activities move along three courses: the emotional, the actional and the rational, otherwise denoted as bhakthi, karma and jnana paths. The first type does everything in a dedicatory spirit of worship, which promote purity and goodness. The second type does actions which are service-oriented, either towards the individual, or the society or the nation. They derive joy through such activity and realise their life-goals therefrom. They feel that activity is the purpose of living, its justification, its goal. The third type is moved by the spirit of inquiry into the basic principles governing life and nature, or as Vedantha states, into the thatthwa. Thatthwa is a word of two syllables - thath and thwa. Thathwa means the highest and the fullest knowledge.

The rays of the sun fall upon things, both clean and dirty; they illumine good things and bad. But they are not affected by them in the least. So too, the 'Thath' is unaffected by the consequences of karma or the ups and downs of life. It is the serene witness of the vishaya, the observer of objective Nature. Thath is Atma. Thwam is the ever-changing, ever-affected, Nature. Thath is Atma. Thwam is an-atma, the non-atma. The Rational type finds joy in analysing and discovering the Atma, discarding the Anatma. Surprisingly the term 'rational' has taken on contrary and crooked meanings. Its proper objective is the Athmic investigation for which man is endowed with the reasoning faculty.

A person's activity reveals his personality

These three types are actually three strands intertwined into one rope. They cannot be untwined. A house is built of brick, mortar and wood. So too, for the

mansion called human life, bhakthi, karma and jnana are essential, just as heart, hand and head. For spiritual success one should possess the heart of Buddha, the hands of Emperor Janaka and the head of Shankaracharya. The three together in one, form the Love of Sai. Of the three, the middle one, karma or activity, must be based on the synthesis of both bhakthi and jnana. The karma in which one is engaged is the measure of one's personality. Like a thermometer revealing the degree of warmth, karma reveals whether a man is predominantly thamasik, rajasik or sathwik. Karma is important from another point of view. It shapes one's personality. The nature of the karma decides the nature of the consequence. We find many who decide not to utter falsehood but are yet doing so. They vow to follow an ideal but fail to follow it. Why is this so? Man has in him the three traits mentioned above. Of these, the rajoguna (the passionate, emotional trait) has an offspring, kama (lust). The Thamoguna (the dull slothful trait) has children - Anger, Hatred, Envy and Selfishness. Lust is the leader of this gang of four. Lust forces entry into the heart through a gap he creates and the entire gang make it their den. Lust is all-consuming fire. Fire is known in Sanskrit as analam, which means 'not enough'! Moreover, one keeps away from fire when we see it even at a distance. What to say, then, when the fire of lust is a conflagration in the heart itself? How can we live in peace and joy when this fire is consuming us? We can quench this fire by the knowledge of the strategy of sense-control, through the exercise of discrimination.

Teachers must inspire the pupils

Teachers have to discriminate thus and develop a firm faith in the Atma. As the seed, so the crop. Unless they are able to implant this seed of knowledge, value orientation cannot happen. "Who am I?" is the question, the answer to which must be known and experienced. The Sanskrit word for I is "Aham" - this is formed by putting together the first letter A and the last letter Ha. It shows that all thoughts and expressions centre around the I; nothing is outside it. The I is the centre of all duties and obligations. Teachers and others complain that they are not given the respect that is due to them; if they fulfill their duties, they will certainly get their due. Both teachers and students must be intent on discharging their duties. They must be ever

vigilant against bad habits and vices gaining a foothold in their minds, for, like a brood of white ants, they will eat into the vitals until man crumbles. Teachers and students must develop constructive companionship. The teacher must share the sorrows and joys of the pupils as keenly as if they were his own. He must identify himself with them as milk does with water. When the water with which milk has been associated goes off as vapour when boiled, the milk is so saddened that it rises over the edge of the vessel and tries to fall into the fire. Seeing its plight, you add a little water and the milk is quietened and pacified when the companion rejoins it. Man has in him the Sun of jnana but he ignores it and behaves as if he has to live in a dark dungeon. This is what is called "maya" or "the great illusion." So, the teacher who is entrusted with the task of carrying illumination into tender minds has to become aware of the light within so that he may inspire the pupils under his care.

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 Upadesh.

If you seek wordly 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.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

20. Purity - The Real Value

Date: 31 August 1981 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Human life which is so precious, depends on breath, but man is prepared even to give up his life in order to realise the goal which captivates his mind. This spirit of renunciation must be dutifully cultivated by students. On neglecting this duty, students are lost in turbulent confusion, because of the deteriorating conditions in the country. They must realise that courage and confidence can arise only by the awareness of the Divinity latent in man. Three qualities distinguish man from other animals. They are sympathy, compassion and renunciation. Today a famine has dried up these feelings in the human heart. This tragic condition is generating agitation and disturbance among both students and teachers. Strikes have become normal routine events. The conviction that money can achieve anything has grown in men's mind, though it is impossible to promote peace and security through the accumulation of money. Money can buy plenty of food; it cannot buy appetite or hunger. Money can buy medical care and medicines; but it cannot buy health and immunity. Money can buy servants; it cannot buy goodwill. It can buy comfort, but not happiness. It cannot help to promote character or morality. This truth must be understood by both students and teachers. For, teachers mould the nation and students build the nation, sound and strong. Only a few students are intent on taking the nation along the royal road and only a few teachers are holding high ideals of love and service before the people.

Teachers have to be life-long students, engaged not in mere study, but immersed in practice too. Only a lamp that burns can light other lamps. How can a flame that has long been off light other wicks? Many teachers have now become dispirited and the flame of their enthusiasm is spluttering. This is the result mostly of the multiplication of desires. The great mission of the teacher and its obligations are often ignored.

Intellect has to serve for higher purposes

No one can live for himself. He is involved with parents, kinsmen, friends, foes, society, countrymen, etc., in ever widening circles. Buddhists declare, "I take refuge in the Buddha. I take refuge in the Sangha. I take refuge in Dharma (virtue)." The first is the involvement with the reality in one's own individual self. One must examine oneself whether he lives according to a mind, free from polluting thoughts and feelings. Buddha is the symbol of the awakened intellect. Is the intellect sharp enough for clear discrimination? This must be one's question to oneself. For, even an insane person asks for food when hungry. His intellect is alert for limited purposes. But, it has to serve far higher purposes for man. The second stage is refuge in the Sangha. Just as one yearns for and works towards securing property, welfare and 'happiness for oneself, one must also yearn for and work towards securing these very things for the sangha (society) to which one belongs. Without society to guard and guide, the individual is lost, like a drop of oil on an expanse of water. One's welfare is based on the welfare of society. The welfare of a particular society is based on the welfare of the country. The third stage is refuge in the Dharma. Dharma means the vesture of the Cosmos, that which is its very nature, namely, Prema or Divine Love. When one seeks refuge in Love that sustains and promotes progress, the individual, the society and world become a sublime Trinity. When asked which is the most valuable object, people will answer everywhere, 'diamond' or 'gold'. Of course, these have much value, but who gave such high value to them? The rough crude diamond is cut and polished by whom? Who discovers the veins in the rocks that lie deep down and powders them to sift the grains of gold? The gold thus mined and refined has become the basis for international dealings. Diamond and gold are only material things; man has made them precious. But, man is really the most valuable being on earth. He has recognised his uniqueness and importance for, he declares, Janthoonam narajanma durlabham. In spite of this awareness, man desecrates himself by bartering himself for trivial pleasures.

Learn the habit of making your words pleasant

His value lies in his capability to purify, thought, word and deed. The three instruments he has - mind, tongue and hand - have to be sanctified to raise man to the highest level. The spoken word though it may be short and

appears to be only a sound, has in it the power of an atom bomb. When a word of ananda is spoken to a person sunk in despair, it charges him with elephantine strength. When a word of despair is spoken to a person extremely strong and happy, he slumps on the ground overcome by sorrow. Words can confer strength; they can drain it off. Words can gain friends; they can turn them into enemies; they can elevate or lower the individual. One must learn the habit of making one's words sweet, soft and pleasant. A person is judged by his words. Words inflict damage in other ways too.

Whenever we talk disparagingly or defamingly or sarcastically or hatefully of others, they get recorded on the tape which is our own mind. When we record on tape the talk given by some one, it lasts even after his passing away. So too, even after we pass away, the impressions and impacts of evil thoughts, spiteful words and wicked plots survive physical disappearance. Never, therefore, use or listen to words that ridicule, scandalise, or hurt others. Slander is a direct sin. The ancient seers have prescribed mounam (silence) as a sadhana. Students and teachers today can benefit greatly by limiting talk to the absolute minimum, using it only for promoting joy and harmony.

Pride must be eradicated to realise Divinity

Human values can be listed as 50, 60, 70, 80 in all. But they can be better grouped under the following three heads' pure thoughts, pure words, pure deeds; thoughts, words and deeds coordinated with one another. When you read only dirt, your 'chith' (awareness) is contaminated and your 'sath' (Being) is disfigured. So, how can 'Sath-yam' (Truth) be revealed to you? Nowadays people appear too cowardly even to pronounce the words "God" or "Atma". They shout loud and long on irrelevant and indecent topics. It is difficult to understand why they are so afraid to pronounce the word God! They feel free to utter falsehood but draw back from truth. If Divinity is absent, everything is devilry. So, teachers and students must have faith in God and boldly call on God and pray. That will drive away the devilry that encompasses us. Of course, hesitation to address God is only superficial. During examinations, every student prays to the Almighty. When calamities happen, loss is sustained, members of the family are struck by disease and

are in mortal danger, people do pray to God. Why, then, yield to false pride and refuse to acknowledge God. This is sheer hypocrisy. Another characteristic of the educated, the intelligentsia, is their pride. They move around wearing the crown of the conceit. Pride is the wall that hides the Atma from the Anatma, the curtain between them, between Truth and Untruth. This obstacle has to be removed in order that Unity might be realised and Divinity manifested. Many students develop this pest called pride, for, they have physical charm, educational attainments and monetary resources, but they must be vigilant enough to eradicate it soon.

Qualities that provide charm to life

Once upon time, Socrates was asked by a pupil, "Master! God has allotted a hundred years for man. But, he seldom lives so long. 25 of them are spent in childhood, boyhood and ' youth playing silly games, 25 more in family and social entanglements and another 25 in allotting and apportioning properties among children. If he survives 75, he is ridden by disease or grief at the loss of son or daughter. He has no free time to think of God. It would be good if God grants 25 years more for him to dwell wholly in Him." Socrates responded with another equally sad statement. "Son! God has given us this vast house called Earth. But, three quarters of it is sea; the other quarter is mostly mountain, desert, lake and forest. I have no place to live," he wept. The pupil consoled him: "Why? When billions can live on earth you surely can secure a place." Socrates said, "When so many billion thoughts are framed in your mind, my son, you can certainly find room easily for thoughts on God." Only idlers complain of want of time for meditating on God. "Yearn, you will find a way; pray, you will receive Grace." The value that has to be inculcated is discrimination between the fleeting and the fundamental, the trivial and the precious. Do not tell students that the world is an 'illusion' (mithya). It is real, intensely real so long as we are present here. Let people live lives with deep interest in the process. For a meal that takes up a few minutes, we take trouble to make it a tasty, delightful experience. Then for a life that covers long decades should we not take the trouble to make it tasty? What imparts taste to living? Good thoughts, clean habits, virtues, good deeds - these provide charm and delight to life. Do not go home and loll in an easy chair,

with your head swollen with pride that you are a 'teacher' or a 'student'. Share joyfully in the work that your mother or father does. That makes living delicious.

A seminar different from others

Teachers and students must involve themselves in useful work without intermission. When left idle, the mind roams into insane regions of thought. Parents are leading children to ruin when they give them all the money they demand, provide them the dress they fancy, gift them cars or motorcycles to go places and allow them the licence to indulge in every desire. Teachers must meet the parents of their pupils at least once a month and warn them of the evil consequences of fondling children overmuch. Inspire pupils to love the Motherland, to do social service and to love simple living.

These days, many industries arrange seminars, and lakhs of rupees are spent on each, most of them with no profit. It has become a thriving business. This Seminar does not belong to that class. Here, every moment is utilised as judiciously as one would use a drop of blood. During many seminars the lecturers invited to participate would not be present; they would be going round with their families visiting tourist spots. For this Seminar, lecturers have come with love for the topics of discussion; they have wholeheartedly contributed to the discussions, moulded the lines of thought and helped in the formulations. Everyone came and stayed, out of love, meeting his own expenses; in fact, many are sad that they could not share this joyful experience. I bless the members of the Kingdom of Sathya Sai for having organised the Seminar and serving the participants so lovingly. I desire to give effect to the recommendations and suggestions made by the seminar, as speedily as possible. I am announcing today itself, at the valedictory session, that the Training Institute, which the Seminar has suggested, will be established shortly. I am ever ready to do everything that will promote the joy and happiness of these students. They are my real property. I accept you as my property. With this conviction, we can achieve great success.

Carry on your duties, as teachers and students, in the spirit of dedication to

love and service, and stand forth as bright examples to the country and the world.

You might have heard people talk of the 'miracles'; of my 'making' this, and 'giving' that, of My fulfilling your wants, of My curing your illnesses. Of course, I confer on you these boons of health and prosperity; but, only so that you might, with greater enthusiasm and with less interruption, proceed with spiritual sadhana.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

21. Good health and goodness

Date: 30 September 1981 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Health is the essential pre-requisite for success in all aspects of life, for realising the four ideals that should guide humans - namely, moral living, prosperity, fulfilling beneficial desires and liberation from grief. Everywhere man seeks to live happily and peacefully but happiness and peace are not won from worldly activities. The body that yearns to be happy and secure, is subject to disease, decay and death. The Dweller, the self, within the body, is however not born, nor does it die. It is the Atma, God. The body is the temple of God. Hence it is the duty of man to keep the temple in good condition. Health is necessary for gaining this world and the next, for earning worldly and other worldly progress, to realise the very purpose for which the Self has embodied itself in this human form, namely, to become aware of its source, the Paramatma. In order to attain this goal, the ideals of righteousness, prosperity, moral desire and release from grief have to be practised with the help of a sound mind in a sound body. What are the main causes of ill-health? Millions of living beings grouped as species dwell on the earth; they sustain themselves by means of food secured from Nature, as provided by Nature. It is only man that is an exception. In order to cater to his palate and other senses, he changes the composition and characteristics of the things provided by nature and prepares, through the process of boiling, frying and mixing, concoctions which have no vitality in them. Birds and beasts do not adopt such destructive methods. They eat things raw and consume the strengthgiving vital essence. So, they do not fall victim to the many ills that man brings on himself.

Evil thoughts cause ill-health

Plant a boiled pulse in the soil; it won't sprout. How, then, can it contribute life to the living? The vitamins and proteins that are valuable ingredients are destroyed while it is cooked to please the palate! The billions of cells in the body are so inter-dependent that when one is weakened or damaged, all of them suffer. There is a limit and a balance which every limb and organ has to

maintain. Insufficient or improper food will endanger this balance. An occasional cough helps to strengthen the lungs and to clear them of extraneous matter, but fits of coughing are signs of positive illness.

'Eat in moderation and live long.' This is the advice handed down through the ages by the seers of the past. This advice is seldom heeded. People fill themselves with such large quantities of food that they find it hard to rise from the eating plate. Ruining their digestive system by consuming heavy, rich foods, the affluent are proud when they host costly banquets. Those who know that physical health is the greatest treasure take great care to eat only sathwik food. Uncooked food, nuts and fruits, germinating pulses are the best. Use these at least at one meal, say, for the dinner at night; this will ensure long life. And, long life is to be striven for in order that the years may be utilised for serving one's fellow-beings. Evil thoughts cause ill-health. Anxiety, fear and tension also contribute their share. All these result from greed, greed to have more of things, of power and of fame. Greed results in sorrow and despair. Contentment can come only from a spiritual outlook. The desire for worldly goods has to be given up. One should not distinguish between "my work" and "work for God." All work should be worship. Whatever the reward, it is the gift of God. It is for our lasting good. If this attitude is developed, suffering and pain can toughen us and help us to progress towards Divinity.

It is through pain that pleasure is gained. Darkness enables us to appreciate light. Death teaches us to love life. Diseases which torment man are many in number; of these, hatred, envy and egoism are the worst. Even doctors cannot cure them, for most of them suffer from these. One should develop equanimity and serenity, if one desires to be free from these diseases. Do not seek to listen to vile and vicious stories. This tendency reveals a diseased mind. What is heard is imprinted, like a carbon copy, through the ear, on the heart. One is injuring oneself through indulgence in this evil habit.

Be vigilant about food habits

Anger is another enemy of health. It injects poison into the blood stream and brings about profound transformation which damages it. Two women, who

were neighbours turned into bitter enemies on account of a dispute over a very trivial incident. The cow belonging to one woman while going on the road dropped its dung in front of the other woman's house. The owner of the cow ran to collect the dung, while the other woman claimed that it belonged to her since it lay on her doorstep. From words they very nearly came to blows. Just then the other woman's little baby wailed from the cradle.

She rushed in to feed the baby and while the child was drawing in its food, she shouted most ferociously at her neighbour. Her anger poisoned her blood so much that the child died while drinking her milk! Another cause of ill-health is vice and vile conduct. People believe that a wicked person need not be a diseased person but most diseases are mental illness, fundamentally. Doctors, too, have to deal with patients sweetly and softly and consider their profession as one calling for dedication to their fellowmen. It is best to preserve one's health by good thoughts and good deeds. It is best to be vigilant about food habits. Coconut kernel, coconut water, sprouting pulses, uncooked or half cooked vegetables, and greens are good for health. Try earnestly to live long, without falling into the hands of medical practitioners. When they give you one injection, they keep another ready to counteract its reactions! While trying to cure one disease, they cause a dozen more. Moreover, the drugs they recommend are mostly spurious, since manufacturers want to amass a fortune by hook or by crook. Most illnesses can be cured by simple living, simple exercises and by intelligent control of the tongue. Live long so that you witness the career of the Avathar for years and years.

An empty iron box gets value when it contains jewels and valuables; then it is carefully guarded. The body too is honoured when it contains the jewel of an awakened consciousness and the valuables called virtues.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba



22. Make every moment a yajna

Date: 02 October 1981 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

How amazing is this! A person can get sacrifices galore performed through scholars versed in Vedhic ritual lore and himself perform them; A person can praise the holiness of diverse shrines and spots to inspire others to journey thereto and himself journey thither; a person can teach the eight Vidhyas to many and make them experts and himself master them all. But, few are there who succeed in mastering their bodies, senses and wayward minds and turn inward to gain perpetual and unchanging equanimity. Life is most precious. The breath (prana) which sustains it is even more precious. Nevertheless, it becomes often necessary to give up this precious prana while attempting to realise some goals. Human nature is such that man is never content with a single achievement. He feels "there is always room at the top." This urges him on and on towards higher and higher goals. He wins many victories and craves for more. He never attains satiety. To be ever discontented - that state alone gives him contentment!

Man embarks upon an undertaking with a purpose, goal, or an end in view. But, the endeavour is sublimated into a yajna (sacrificial rite which can draw down the Grace of God) only if the purpose, goal or end is the glorification of God, regardless of other considerations. "Yajno vai Vishnu", say the Vedas. God is the yajna, for He is the Goal. His Grace is the reward. His creation is used to propitiate Him; the performer is He, the receiver is He. When the ego of the sacrificer does not claim a place, the yajna is rendered Divine.

Without faith adoration is artificial

Aham hi, Aham hi, Sarvayajnanam: "In all yajnas, I am the Doer, the Donor, the Consumer, the Acceptor." This is the reason the Chief Priest in a yajna such as the Vedapurusha Yajna we are inaugurating now, is named Brahma. The priest nominated as Brahma has to guide the rest of the ritualists; he must have his wife by his side, or else, his credentials are inadequate. The wife represents faith (shraddha). Without faith, praise is hollow, adoration is

artificial and sacrifice a barren exercise.

Really speaking, the heart is the ceremonial altar; the body is the fire place; the hair is the holy grass, darbha; wishes are the fuel-sticks with which the fire is fed; desire is the ghee that is poured into the fire to make it burst into flame; anger is the sacrificial animal; the fire is the thapas we accomplish. People sometimes interpret thapas as ascetic practices like standing on one leg or on the head. No. Thapas is not physical contortion. It is the complete and correct coordination of thought, word and deed. When this is achieved, the splendour of fire will manifest. Talking of thought, word and deed in the context of the Vedapurusha Yajna, I have to tell you that the Rig Veda is vak (speech) taken form. The Sama Veda contains hymns that are sung. It is 'srothra' (hearing) which has taken form. Whenever the speech is saturated with truth and compassion, or inspired by service to others, it becomes Rig Veda. Good deeds are Yajur Veda. There is no compulsion that you should have an external altar as here. Only, you should be vigilant about the purity of the words you utter or listen to and the deeds you engage in.

Five yajnas are prescribed for every human being.

Every act of yours from sunrise to the onset of sleep is a yajna, remember! There are five yajnas prescribed as mandatory for every human being: (1) Rishi Yajna - activities devoted to the study of scriptures. (2) Pitr Yajna - activities devoted to the parents who conferred the body and who fostered and guided you. Acts by which you express your gratitude and affection, adoration and appreciation are really holy yajna.

(3) Deva Yajna - acts done as reverential homage to God who endowed you with mind, intelligence, memory and consciousness and who is inherent in every cell as rasa, the vital energy. (Raso Vai Sah - He is flow of energy). He is angirasa, present in every anga or limb. So, Deva Yajna involves the right use of these instruments God has given you. (4) Athithi Yajna - adoration of guests. Every one has, sometime or the other, the chance to welcome a guest and treat him with affection and please him with sincere hospitality. They may be one's own kith and kin or strangers, but they are all to be honoured

as if sent by God. Then, acts done to entertain them and to make them feel at home are raised to the status of yajna. (5) Bhootha Yajna - unselfish acts done while dealing with trees, plants, animals, birds and pets like cats and dogs.

There are also a few more yajnas prescribed in the scriptures. Jnana Yajna is one of such. Jnana is usually taken to mean knowledge gained from scholars and books and acting in accordance with that knowledge. But derived knowledge cannot be jnana. Knowledge can never ripen into wisdom so long as the ego persists in craving for results which can satisfy desire. When the ego fades away, Knowledge can shine as Wisdom. Jnana reveals that in the Vedapurusha sacrifice performed here and in all other yajnas celebrated elsewhere, God is the Prompter, the Promoter, the Sacrificer, the Sacrifice, the Product achieved and the Recipient of the product.

Many people perform yajnas without cleansing themselves. Only those yajnas that have, like this one, the peace and prosperity of the world (Loka-Kalyan) as the avowed purpose, can reach God. For He is Yajnabhuk (the consumer of the offering); He is Yajna-bhrith (guardian of the yajna) and Yajna krith (performer of the yajna). He is all; it is only when He is all that the act becomes genuinely yajna. If this attitude can soak into every activity, it will sanctify every moment of your life and make it a yajna. People resort to Gurus to receive manthras (mystically powerful formulae to be recited by them for their spiritual uplift); others seek medicine men and holy monks to get yanthras (esoteric talismans to ward off evil forces); some others learn from pandiths, thanthras (secret rites for attaining superhuman powers). But all this is wasteful effort. One should accept the body as the thanthra, one's own breath as the manthra and one's heart as the yanthra. There is no need to seek them outside oneself. When all words emanating from you are sweet, your breath becomes Rig Veda. When you restrict what you listen to and prefer only sweet speech, all that you hear becomes Sama gana. When you do only sweet deeds, all that you do is Yajur homa. Then, you will be performing every day the Vedapurusha Yajna, the yajna which propitiates the Vedhic Spirit.

23. Prema saadhana

Date: 02 October 1981 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

In your glorious quest for the vision of Brahman,
Why do you, O foolish mind, wander everywhere?
It is all the time in you; look for It there itself.

The Atma-principle, the God-principle and the Brahma-principle are but synonyms for the One. The Vedas which contain the earliest questionings of man, declare that man asked for the answer to one problem above all:

Kim (What?) What is the secret of all the mystery, all the multiple incidents and impressions? Is there a Person or is it Impersonal? Has it attributes or is it devoid of marks and motives? Has it consciousness or is it merely mechanical and automatic?

Human inquiry proceeded along these lines. And, when varied answers came from many directions, another question arose:

"Yath" (Which?) Which among these guesses is the correct one?

For, it was difficult, nay, impossible to delineate the Truth in words or even to delimit as an image for one's imagination. The wise seekers arrived at the conclusion that Brahman, the Universal Absolute, can be described only as "that from which the Cosmos was born, that by which it is sustained and that into which the Cosmos dissolves."

Still, the doubt lingered: "Can this conclusion be right? Can it explain all that is puzzling man?"

Intuition gave them the answer,

"*Thath*" (That). "That conclusion is correct," it affirmed. "Thou art That." There is no Thou separate or different from That. Both are one. That was the Truth which was revealed.

The Vedas consist of three sections or Kandas: *Karma Kanda* (Action-oriented), *Upasana Kanda* (Worship-oriented) and *Jnana Kanda* (spiritual knowledge oriented). Of course, the Thath of which the Thwam is a projection is indescribable and unreachable by action, emotion or reason.

The four types of karma

Yet, these three sections pave the way for the ultimate realisation of the Reality. The Karma Kanda, for example, cleanses the chittha, the levels of consciousness. Karma or activity cannot confer satiety or ecstasy, *thrupiti* or *ananda*. Even when some little is gained, it will be shortlived. It cannot last. For, there is nothing in all the worlds that lasts. How can things or events that do not last confer joy that lasts? Therefore, those who resort to karma believing that they can acquire lasting Bliss thereby are pursuing an illusion.

There are four types of Karma: Production (*uthpadya*), Acquisition (*apya*), Transformation (*vaipareethyam*) and Refinement (*samskaram*).

Let us take the first type, production. Land is levelled and ploughed, furrowed and fed, before seeds are sown, then saplings are guarded, and crops are fostered, before the grain is harvested. But, the grain does not give us lasting contentment and joy.

The second type is Acquisition. We acquire things which we hope will fulfill our wants, through the use or misuse of our status in society, position or authority, command over riches or other men, and our own physical prowess and intelligent skills. Even such gains and possessions do not confer lasting joy. While acquiring, while guarding what has been acquired and while spending or consuming it, we have to undergo painful effort and be ever vigilant. Acquisition is therefore fraught with difficulties and it has only temporary value.

The third type is Transformation. An example is the change caused in milk to produce curds; forging a piece of iron into a knife or axe. Even these articles do not last long. They disintegrate soon.

The fourth type of activity is Refinement, removing dirt and dross. When we decide to celebrate a holy day, we repaint doors and windows, clean the floor and polish door knobs etc., and make the house look spick and span. We wipe the dust from off the mirrors. The daily bath and washing clothes are also processes of refining. We have to refine the mind also. But refined things and minds do not last as refined; they have to be subjected to the same processes again and again.

One should treat all karmas as yajna

The conclusion is that the joy and pleasure earned by activities (*karma*) are only temporary. Nevertheless, one cannot desist from karma, one should not desist from karma. How then is one to act? One should practise detachment and desirelessness towards the results of karma. That is to say, one should treat all karmas as *yajna* (sacrifice) performed for the glory of God (and not for selfish ends), for earning lasting merit (and not for temporary benefits). The *Nishkama Karma* (desireless action) mentioned in the Geetha is really the truest yajna. Karma done in that spirit will not cause either greed or grief. It will cause only a sense of fulfilment of one's duty.

Karma can be considered under two heads: Worldly and Scriptural (*Loukika* and *Shasthreya*).

The scriptural karmas comprise three types:

Shrouta (based on the authority of the Vedas and in accordance with Vedhic injunctions);

Smartha (rituals and ceremonies laid down in the disciplinary moral codes or Smrithis like those of Manu, Parasara, etc. such as obsequial rites for the dead, rites of initiation, ceremonies for daily prayers, Shraddha,

Sandhyavandanam, Upanayanam etc); and

Pouranik (fasts, vows, pilgrimage etc., worship of idols, etc., recommended in the Puranas).

Through Vedic Karmas like yagas, man can achieve *Swarga* (Heaven), say the Vedas. But the same Vedas declare, "One can be in Heaven only as long as the merit he has earned lasts; therefore when that quantity is spent, one has to enter the world again." So, Heaven, too, is a transient luxury. A person who secures a majority of the votes cast can be a member of the Legislative Assembly for five years. When that term is over, he has to return home. So also, he who enters Heaven has to leave it when his deposit of merit is exhausted. So, Shroutha Karma does not grant perpetual joy. Where the Shruthi fails, how can Smrithi succeed?

Man symbolises the five elements of the Cosmos

The Smartha Karma, too, has only limited force. The Vedas can take you only to the proximity of the Almighty. For, the Vedas themselves assert,

Na Karmana Na prajaya dhanena (not through Karma, not through progeny, not through wealth),
thyagena ekena amrthathwam anasuh (by renunciation alone immortality can be gained).

Thyaga (giving up) is the means to gain eternal bliss. Of course, karmas (actions) can and do cleanse the mind of ego-sense and of sensual desires.

Consider the word nara, which denotes 'man'. Of these two syllables, ra means decline, decay, destruction, death. Na means 'without. 'Man' or Nara has no decay, he is immortal as God, for he is God. It is pitiable that man is misled to believe that he is the decaying, daily dying, physical frame!

Whereas 'Nara' means Man, Narayana is the name for God. Nara symbolises the five constituents of the Cosmos, the five *bhoothas* (projections, elements) which emanated from God to form the Cosmos.

The expression Naranarayana which is used in scriptures implies that Nara is Narayana. This yajna is performed by these pandits to propitiate the *Vedapurusha* (the Vedhic Divinity) the *Yajnapurusha* (Sacrificial Divinity), who is Narayana Himself in the mantras that invoke the deity. The Vedas declare,

Anthar bahischa (both inside and outside),
thatsarvam (in all that is),
vyapya (immanent)
Narayana (God)
sthithah (exists).

Engage in karma as a means of adoring God

Gandhi told someone at the Round Table Conference this truth. One person had come to London during that Conference from Colombo and during a conversation, he suddenly asked him this question: "Where is God?" Gandhi replied, "God is that mysterious power from which the worlds around me originated, through which they disintegrate, which is the base on which all creation rests and moves."

This power is so mysterious that, as the Vedas declare, "Words which attempt to describe It turns back defeated; even the mind with all its imaginative power cannot reach It." All things rise from It, exists in It and merge in It, as the Geetha declares.

One point has to be emphasised now. Things which are not definable, which cannot be delineated, are usually dismissed as false. Only those things which can be perceived by the senses are accepted as true! We assert that we have

minds but have we ever been able to see it in us? Has joy or bliss any form? They are experience-based not sense-based. God is not seen with these eyes but the vision is possible if one can earn the eye of jnana, of clarified and purified knowledge. When you desire to see the Atma in you, you look into the mirror. You cannot see your image, without a mirror to reflect you. How, then can you see your Reality without reflection through knowledge?

For every achievement, a path, a process, a discipline is essential. Without adopting the appropriate route, if one argues, objects and denies, he is only announcing his own foolishness. Divinity is omnipresent. It can be cognised only by transforming oneself through Holy *Prema* (Love). Love encompasses; it does not exclude. The Omnipresent God has, according to the Vedhic hymn, "a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet." This is to say, that the Effulgent Cosmic Person, God, the *Vishwa Virat*, is the individual multiplied by infinity. The individual mind multiplied by infinity becomes the Cosmic Mind, *Hiranyagarbha*, the Universal Consciousness. Love expands the one into Infinity. 'I' merges in 'they' and 'we', friend and foe, known and unknown, of all races, creeds and lands, and all become ONE, the Vishwa Virat. Adopting this path and progressing in it is genuine bhakthi or devotion, which discards selfish narrowness. Develop this ever-expanding love and engage yourself in karma as a means of adoring God, accepting its consequences calmly and gladly, and contribute your skills and strength towards the peace and prosperity of the society wherein you are. This is my message to you. I bless you that you succeed in this great spiritual endeavour.

24. Faith in the goal

Date: 03 October 1981 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

When each desire is fulfilled God is loved, adored and thanked; When no desire is fulfilled God is denied, discarded and dismissed! This Kali Yuga is praised in the scriptures as incomparably conducive to the salvation of man, for he can now attain the Highest through the mere thought of God and remembering His name. So, of all the Yugas, this Yuga is described as the most holy, the most beneficent. Dhyana (meditation) was prescribed as the means of liberation for men in the Kritha Yuga, thapas (penance) as the means during the Tretha Yuga and archana (ritual worship) for the Dhwapara Yuga. But, for people of this Yuga, the simple remedy prescribed is just Namasmarana, the constant awareness of the Name. In spite of this, it is a pity that men do not care for this path and so render their lives barren wastes. Unless you give up, you cannot acquire - that is the rule of life. Even trivial things cannot be won without parting with something. One has to pay to secure the most precious of all gifts, the gift of the awareness of the Atma! To earn this, one has to give up sensual pleasures, but is this too big a price? In fact, what is renounced is not pleasure at all. It is fraught with pain too. Can you not give up grief to earn joy, evil to earn good, diversity to earn unity, many to earn one? One must strive for victory in the struggle against the whims and wiles of the senses. One must focus all one's physical and mental resources to earn success; one must fill oneself with Divine Grace by offering his strength and skill for Divine purposes.

Purpose gives taste to living

Every activity has a goal, an end in view. Proceeding to the market, going to school - each has a purpose. When such momentary and short-lived activities are motivated by goals, how can one pass 60 or 70 years of life on earth with no purpose guiding him and leading him on? Purpose gives taste to living. When the pappu (boiled lentles) on your plate lacks uppu (salt), you push it aside! But, you wade through years and years leading tasteless, insipid lives without uppu (God) added to pappu (Life).

When praised, man gets inflated, when blamed, he gets deflated. But for one who trusts in God, for the Bhaktha, these reactions are signs of weakness. Man must withstand both praise and blame, success and failure, pleasure and pain, like the Meru mountain peak. He must strive to be steadfast and unmoved. Once you collect desires, you become their slave; you will find no end to them. When they are attained, others assail you and still leave you discontented. Be aware of your innate Divinity and show these recurring desires their due place. The Atma in you is unaffected by desire or defeat or victory. They are passing clouds. The Sun is not concerned with their comings and goings.

No one is unfamiliar with the Ramayana. It describes the Dhandhaka forest, heavy with thick darkness and terrible with the resounding roar of wild beasts. It was infested with frightful gangs of rakshasas (demons). Suurpanakha was a demoness who roamed therein. Khara was a demon of the same nature. On some open patches of this jungle, rishees (sages) who were leading pure unselfish God-centred lives had their hermitages. And, into this forest came, as exiles, Prince Rama, Lakshmana, his brother, and Seetha, Rama's consort. They spent some days with great sages like Agasthya and Sharabhanga. They found the ascetic Shabari also in her retreat. As a result, Rama destroyed the demons and restored peace in the region for the sages to perform their spiritual practices and rituals undisturbed.

Faith and surrender can ensure peace and joy

This is what the epic says. But, where exactly is the Dhandhaka forest? You need not look for it on any map or turn over the pages of history. It is the heart of every man. The evil feelings are the rakshasas; the good thoughts are the rishis. Rama is the personification of viveka, the discriminating faculty of the intellect. Seetha and Lakshmana are the higher levels of consciousness - sujnana and prajnana. Rama puts an end to evil feelings and promotes good thoughts. Rama is the Emperor of Ayodhya. That name means "Impregnable," "with no enemy," that is to say, no injurious or demeaning feeling or thought, can invade the heart when Rama is installed therein. Thyagaraja sang, "Thelisi Rama chinthana cheyave manasa" (Oh! Mind! Meditate on Rama with

the full knowledge of what He represents). When I speak, you hear the speech via the microphone through the loud speakers. You listen to the instrument, the loudspeaker, but I am the speaker. So, too, when your tongue utters the words, it is the Atma that prompts and shapes the words. The owner sits in the car and travels. The car, your body, has four wheels on the ground (dharma, artha, kama, moksha - the four human goals virtue, prosperity, desire fulfilment and liberation) and they are filled with air. Faith is the air which makes your travel smooth. It has to be uniform in all the four wheels. The steering-wheel inside the car directs the outer wheels. The wheel is the 'mind'. The food and drink you take is the petrol for the car and its 'horn' is the tongue. You are journeying along the road of ups and downs (Samsara) in this car. Recognise that God is the person at the wheel. He will take you happily to the destination. Have faith in Him and be free from fear, anxiety and agitation. Surrender to Him. His grace can save you, His wisdom can enlighten you, His power can overcome all your obstacles. Faith and surrender are the manifestations of bhakthi (devotion). They can ensure peace and joy for you and all mankind.

At the present time, when we see all over the country confusion, fear and anxiety, each one must contribute his share of cool, calm Love to suppress the anger of 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 every one; this has to be tapped by individual Sadhana, and by the Grace of God which can be won only through Love, Purity and Service.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

25. The garden of the heart

Date: 06 October 1981 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Man has to progress every moment; a stagnant style of living does not benefit him. How long can we tolerate a boy staying in the same class at school? He must proceed from one class to the next higher one, year after year. The spiritual aspirant too should not stagnate in one sadhana. From the master-servant relationship with God, he must advance to the body-limb relationship and reach the stage of merging in the All-inclusive One - that is to say, from dualism, through conditioned non-dualism to monism or non-dualism. In the initial stages, man worships portraits or idols of God in all the sixteen forms of reverential homage. Preliminary concentration (dhyanam), invocation (avahanam), offering seat (asanam), washing feet (padhyam), offering hospitality (arghyam), ablution (snanam), offering vestments (vastram), sacredotal thread-wear (yajnopaveetham), sandal paste (chandanam), flowers (pushpam), incense (dhoopam), lamp (deepam), food (naivedhyam), pan (thamboolam), camphor flame waving (neeranjnam), circumambulation and prostration (pradakshina namaskaram). But, good character, good conduct and virtuous life are essential qualifications for the aspirant. Of course, floral offerings are commendable. The sixteen items are good. But, one should progress from this stage to the awareness of the Atma. Flowers fade and rot soon. The effect of offering flowers may not last long. What God loves more are the flowers blossoming on the tree of man's own life, fed and fostered by his own skill and sincerity. They are the flowers of his virtues grown in the garden of his heart.

Inner peace must become one's nature

Of these, ahimsa, the virtue of nonviolence, is the very first. This involves much more than abstention from injuring living beings. One should desist from causing pain to any living being not only by deeds, but even by words and thoughts. One should not entertain any idea of hurting another, or humiliating another. The second flower is indhriya nigrham (mastery of the senses). One should not run after sensual pleasure and sensory joy. The third

flower is dhaya. Sarva bhootha-dhaya (compassion towards all beings and all things), for, "All this is God." It is said, "homage paid to any god reaches the Supreme" (Sarvadeva namaskaram Keshavam prathigacchathi). It can be said, with equal truth, that "humiliation caused to any living being reaches the Supreme" (Sarva Jeeva thiraskaram Keshavam prathigacchathi). The fourth flower is kshama, tolerance, fortitude. Kshama is identified by the scriptures with truth, righteousness, knowledge, sacrifice and joy. Without kshama man cannot be happy even for a kshasya (moment). It promotes divine qualities. It reveals inner Divinity. One has to perform sadhana to earn it and establish oneself in it. Nourish the idea that God is equally present in all, in spite of ridicule from the ignorant and sarcastic criticism from the blind- or even praise from admirers. Do not mind them. The fifth flower is shanthi - inner peace. Shanthi does not mean that a person should not react at all, whatever others may say or however they may abuse him. It does not mean that he must be silent as a rock. It involves mastery of all the senses and all the passions, inner peace must become one's nature. Shanthi has detachment as the basic quality. The sea, which likes to gather and possess, lies low; the cloud that likes to renounce and give up is high in the sky. Shanthi endows man with an unruffled mind and steady vision. The prayer for shanthi is usually repeated thrice. "Om, shanthi, shanthi, shanthihi," since Peace is prayed for, in the physical, mental and spiritual planes. Man should not bring his blood to boil nor he should yield to fear. Spiritual calm is exemplified by Emperor Janaka of the Upanishadic texts. He was known as vidheha (without body), not because he was disembodied, but because he lived in utter forgetfulness of the body and its needs. He saw, heard and spoke only from the Athmic plane of consciousness.

Offer God the eight flowers of virtue

The sixth flower is thapas (austerity). Thapas does not mean-forsaking wife and children and escaping into the loneliness of the forest. The real austerity is the exact co-ordination between one's thought, word and deed. The evil man can never achieve this; he behaves falsely to his own self. When man succeeds in this thapas, the words he utters will have such power that what he says will be transformed into manthras. Then, we have the seventh flower,

dhyana (meditation). Today, there are in vogue as many systems and methods of dhyana as there are hairs on my head. Every one describes it according to his own whim and fancy. Sitting quiet and transferring their emotions and feelings to God is no dhyana. They must transmute their emotions, desires, feelings with the help of God into Divine qualities. They should not bring God down to their level; they must raise themselves to the level of God.

The eighth flower is sathyam (truth), that which is unmodified by the passage of time. The Divine alone persists unchanged from the past, through the present into the future. When this flower blossoms in your heart it will reward you with eternal fragrance. Worship the Lord and offer Him these flowers. Now, when other flowers are used, devotion does not last after one comes out of the puuja room door! When one crosses that door-step, anger, hatred and anxiety possess him and degrade him. Without developing the qualities indicated by the eight flowers how can any one win the grace of God? Engaged in Asathya Narayana Vratha (False Sathyanarayana vow) on all 364 days, what is the good you hope to get doing true Sathya Narayana Vratha on the 365th day of the year? When you claim to be Sai devotees, justify the claim by cultivating these flowers of virtue and offering them to God.

Death is senseless projection of matter.
From ashes emerge vegetation;
And oasis emerges in sand-dunes,
Pedestal of life stands on decaying forms
Whose roots are embedded in insensate life,

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

26. Finish the game

Date: 07 October 1981 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Without the flower, the plant yields no fruit, Without the emerging fruit, ripeness cannot happen. Without intense karma, bhakthi cannot emerge., Without bhakthi, how can jnana be found? Somaka, the wicked, spumed and suppressed the Vedas; but, did he reap any happiness? The ten-headed monster coveted and kidnapped another's wife; but did he achieve any gain? The close-fisted Kaurava refused pin-point land to his closest kin: but did he keep his loot? The terror-bound Kamsa sought out and slaughtered each newborn baby; but did he escape from death? Wicked men, even now, shall meet this fate. Take this Sai word as the Word of Truth. The visible universe is the substance of our bodies, the subsistence of our minds and the source of our progress. The everchanging universe has in it the unchanging Absolute principle. Both are aspects of the ever-full Brahman. The individual is the Be coming of the Being. The individual consciousness is the projection of the same. Universal Consciousness and both are complete in themselves. Even after the body decays and disintegrates, the individual consciousness remains unaffected; it is as full as ever. The Vedas declare: "That is Full; this is Full. When the Full has projected the Full, the Fullness remains Full." The Ihsavasya Upanishadh describes this truth clearly and elaborately. It lays down that this Jagath or Cosmos is the dwelling place of God, "Ihsavasyam idam Jagath." It is a short Upanishadh, having only 18 verses; but 18 is a very sacred number. It is a number symbolising jaya or success. The Geetha has 18 chapters; the Mahabharatha has 18 sections, the Puranas are 18 in number!

Progress through four types of sadhana

The Upanishadh reveals another special feature of the truth of the Universe. The visible Universe has an invisible base! It has a material cause and an efficient cause, a Nimittha and an Upadhana. But man pays attention only to the efficient cause and not the material. This cup has silver as the material cause; the cup is the efficient cause. The cup is seen, but the silver is not

cognised. The Cosmos is seen but God is not cognised. God is the material cause; He is in and through the entire Cosmos as the silver is in and through this entire cup. The Ishavasya is the most important of all Upanishadhs. It is the essence of Vedanthic scriptures. It contained them all in a nut-shell. There is no text as sacred and as valuable as this one. It demonstrates the Cosmos as Divine and the Atma as immanent in all. It teaches that the Atma is unaffected, supreme over all else. "Inside and outside all, everywhere Narayana pervades." The five elements abide in Narayana, God. There can be no seed without a shell or husk. The husk is the Cosmos; the seed is God. They are both interrelated, and abide together. One must try to understand this fact through steadfast inquiry, jnana. The ignorant ascribe validity to the husk; the wise probe into the basic Atma. The ignorant person believes that the Universe is all that is, and reduces himself to a status worse than an animal, Animals harm only other animals; but the ignorant person causes injury to his own self! The Upanishadh directs man to progress through four types of sadhana: (1) some that have to be necessarily performed, (2) some that have to be experimentally performed; (3) some that have to be performed while observing vows; and (4) some that have to be performed for the sake of the experience they confer. These are all conveyed through manthras, These are not to be confused with mono-syllable, five-syllable or multi-syllable formulae. Manthra means a formula to invoke the All-pervading, Almighty Presence.

God has to be enshrined in the heart

Embodiments of Love! You learn this as well as many other Upanishadhs and recite them over and over. You recite the sacred "Thousand Names." of Vishnu and of Lalitha, You study many other holy books. Of course, the time spent in these activities is thereby rendered holy. But, these are not helping you to transform the work you are engaged in and making it more valid and acceptable to God. Are you putting into practice at least one percent of what you read or recite? Milk, it is true, contains butter; sesame seeds contain oil; cane yields sugar. To benefit from this knowledge it is not enough to read about it or recite it. Holding milk in the hand, you cannot get butter; filling the lamp with sesame you cannot light the wick, shaking the cane will not result

in a shower of sugar. When you keep heaps of sweets on a plate in front of you and recite 108 times. "Heaps of sweets", "Heaps of sweets," "Heaps of sweets," can your tongue relish or stomach receive the stuff you describe? The poet asks: Can the hungry man be satisfied When one praises the menu for him to hear? Can the agony of the poor be allayed When one glorifies wealth for him to hear? Can the suffering of the sick end When one sings aloud of medicines in his ear? Speech and song are not enough to cure the dire disease of recurrent birth and death. God has to be planted firmly in the mind, the omnipresent God has to be enshrined in the heart; God has to flow with the blood in the veins. God has to be visualised through the inner eye.

Utilise the world as the means to an end

There can no 'This' without the 'That'; no creation without the Creator. You are now attempting to possess the Creation, with no faith in the Creator. You are not even aware of the Creator. The body has a head above and feet below. Though the body, with all its limbs, forms one organic unit, the feet are despised and the head honoured. Nevertheless, when we invite a person to our homes, we cannot welcome the head and dismiss the feet. So, too, since 'Ihsavasyam idam Jagath,' the Cosmos is permeated with God, we cannot welcome one and dismiss the other. Man can earn wisdom only in and through the challenges the world offers and the opportunities for awareness that it confers. When once jnana is attained, the world can be left to itself; one need not be involved in it or with it. It is like the daily newspaper. When it has been read once, only an insane person will start reading it again. Today's newspaper is tomorrow's waste paper. When one has experienced the world, it would be a sign of insanity to wish for experiencing it again. Man relishes consuming the same meal day after day, washing the face every morning, listening to the same story on every occasion; he does not advance towards the Joy that awaits him.

Utilise the world as the means to an end; do not desire to stay on it. It is a caravanserai, where you can rest awhile during your pilgrimage to the Source. It is a bridge, wide and strongly built; can any pilgrim build a house thereon for himself? The Cosmos is changing constantly. The minutes that are

past cannot be retrieved even if tempted by a billion rupees. The past is not ours any more; the present slips from our grasp; the future is uncertain. You come naked into the world; you go out of it, without informing the survivors of the address where you can be contacted. In spite of this, attachment grows and you cultivate bonds. This is the great illusion.

One's experience alone can be the proof

How can the Omnipresent Divine be delineated and described? There is a Nepali story which says: "A person was asked, 'Who is your father'? He answered, "My father is so and so", but, how can you assert so? On whose authority do you declare him to be your father?" the questioner persisted. "My mother. Her word I believe to be the truth." So, too, when asked. "Who is the Father in Heaven," man answers, "God." "On what authority do you rely for that statement"? Man replies, "On the authority of Mother Veda (Veda Matha), the scripture, the Upanishads, which contain the genuine nectarine truths, which these seers churned out of their ascetic denials, discovered in the depths of their purified hearts and earned for the welfare of all mankind. But unfortunately the Vedas have been riddled with commentaries which endeavour to parade personal predilections. Each scholar interprets them as his fancy dictates and so, faith in the Divine has declined yielding place to atheism. The Divine is the Omnipresent ONE. It is the minute in the minutest, it is the vast in the vastest. The Atma that is not born, that does not die, that cannot be killed, that is the Universal, Eternal, Witness, the Brahman itself. This is the Truth which the sages visualised. How can any one describe to another the sweetness of sugar? One's experience alone can be the proof. It is foolish to doubt or deny the experience of another. Such behaviour can only promote friction and fear. Many stand forth and argue that there is no God. But, since others do not retort, "What right have you to insist that I should not believe in God. God may not exist for you; but I experience God and God exists for me," they continue their prattle.

Have faith first to practise the advice

Life is impossible without breath. Life is also impossible without faith. All of

you who have come to this gathering came here in the faith that you can return home. If that faith was absent, you would not have come at all. Some declare, "Experience first, faith next." This is similar to the declaration, "Swim first, water next." Have faith enough to practise the advice; learn to revere the directives. Then you attain the experience. How can the stomach be full without eating the meal? So, take up the effort. Plunge into action. Do not hesitate or doubt. Action, that is the Divine Task. That is the reason why the very first section of the Vedas is the Karma Kanda, the "Stage of Action." The Ihsavasya Upanishadh directs the sadhaka to cultivate the Inner Vision so that he can experience God, the Ishwara, the warp and woof of the Universe. He is the basic gold in the diverse jewels. What I wish to emphasise now is that you should ruminate over these truths underlying Creation, and bring about a transformation, however small, in your habits, attitudes and actions so that you can realise the goal of life. Animals seek tasty things, ruchi. Man must yearn for fulfilment, abhiruchi. Cultivate that yearning, and attaining that goal, finish the game. This is my blessing to you today.

You calculate wealth
in terms of land and buildings,
gold and silver,
and finally, feel unhappy
to leave them and go.
You drug yourself in the attempt
to escape from the hold of disease;
but you are unaware of diseases
that eat into the very vitals of
your happiness and make you
a social danger - the diseases of
envy, malice, hatred and greed.
Get the best advice of cure for these.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba



27. The unique University

Date: 08 October 1981 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara, Vijayadasami

This day, I am announcing an event which will give you great joy. Sai is ever full of joy. Anxiety, grief and unrest cannot approach Sai, not even as near as millions of miles, Believe it or not, Sai does not have the slightest experience of anxiety, for Sai is ever aware of the formation and transformation of objects and the antics of time and space and of the incidents therein. Those who have no knowledge of these and those who are affected by circumstances are affected by sorrow. Those who are caught in the coils of time and space become the victims of grief. Though Sai is involved in events conditioned by time and space, Sai is ever established in the principle that is beyond both time and space. Sai is not conditioned by time, place or circumstance. Therefore, you must all recognise the uniqueness of the Will of Sai, the Sai Sankalpa. Know that this sankalpa is Vajrasankalpa - it is irresistible Will. You may ignore its expression as weak and insignificant but, once the will is formed, whatever else undergoes change, it cannot change. Fifteen years ago, while inaugurating the College at Anantapur, I had said that it will soon be transformed into a University. People thought that Sai Baba uttered those words in that strain merely to enthuse them. We established a College at Prasanthi Nilayam only last year. While doing so., I said "This will be transformed into a University next year and so, we must ensure a stable basis." When I said so, Bhagavantam remarked: "It is impossible". "Institutions working for twenty or even thirty years, having acquired many distinctions and equipped themselves with postgraduate faculties, have yet to realise this goal. Swami is declaring thus! What course will this Sai Sankalpa take"? he thought within himself. He knows what course it will take. Still, it appeared to him doubtful that it would become a University in the very second year of its existence.

Uniqueness of Prasanthi Nilayam University

This is the second year of the Prasanthi Nilayam College. Since Swami's will is the Almighty Will, the Government of India has agreed to the inauguration of

a University by us here. Therefore, this very day, Vijayadashami, the College at Prasanthi Nilayam and the College at Anantapur are raised to the status of constituents of the new University. This University will not be imparting in its Botany Course merely a knowledge of trees in Nature; we will spread the knowledge of the Tree of true living. It will not be imparting the knowledge merely of economics; the knowledge of theistic ethics too will be included. It will not be merely teaching Chemistry (Rasayana Shashtra); it will also unravel the mystery of "Raso vai sah," the Supreme Embodiment of nectarine sweetness, the Atma. It will teach not only the science of the material world (padartha); it will also teach the science of the non-material world (parartha). It will not differentiate the material from the non-material or treat the nonmaterial as irrelevant to the material. We have decided that this shall be the uniqueness of the University.

This will not, like other Universities, adopt a few faculties and burden their alumni with degrees, which they can present as begging bowls while clamouring for jobs. This university will confer on its alumni the courage and confidence, the knowledge and the skill, to shape their careers by their own efforts, standing on their own feet and relying on their own strength. So, we have proposed that spiritual education is to be integrated harmoniously with the teaching of ethical, physical and metaphysical sciences in this University.

Sai Sankalpa is based on Truth and for Truth

A few minutes before I came here, I performed the Bhoomi Pooja (consecration of the site) for the Administrative Building of the University. There, on top of the range of hills, commanding a beautiful vista of nature's charm, the imposing, attractive centre of University activities will come up soon. For the mind, hayi (calm comfort); for the body reft (cool softness); for our life, Sai - that is the Reality here. On the hill behind South Prashanthi your eyes can feast on the sight of a magnificent building next year, at this time. Our construction schedules or schedules for other projects are not planned for five years or ten years. They are 'five-day' plans and 'ten-day' plans. Since we have to conform to the rules and limits set by the Government, this delay is caused. Otherwise, they can happen in a moment

because My resolves are based on Truth and are for Truth. Their purpose is the promotion of human well-being, the prosperity of the world. It is not tainted by either a sense of ownership or self-aggrandizement. So, there is no need at all to doubt. Sai Will must fructify at the specified time. May you all derive benefit and joy from these developments!

28. Poornaahuthi and Sharanaagathi

Date: 08 October 1981 / Occasion: Dasara, Vijayadasami

On Vijayadashami day, the seven-day long Vedhic ritual, performed for the promotion of peace and prosperity among all men in all lands and called Vedapurusha Yajna, (sacrifice dedicated of Vedhic divinity) concludes with the valedictory offering to the Gods who preside over various facets of nature. This is called Poornahuthi (the fullest Invocation) and usually a number of valuable things are poured and placed in the sacrificial fire, adored and fed during the entire week. The closing ritual is named Samapthi, a word usually translated as the End. But its real meaning is Samapthi, or the attainment of Sama and Brahma (Brahmic vision). The final offering is of one's self, which is the culmination of the sacrifices rendered all along. The significance of Poornahuthi is fulfilling one's earthly life by dedicating one's self to the Omni-Will or Brahman. This is also known as surrender or Sharanagathi. What exactly is Poornahuthi or Sharanagathi? The meaning that is most current is to declare: "My body, my mind, my possessions, my all, I offer to you." This is an incorrect interpretation. This interpretation is a sign of total ignorance. It concedes that you and God are distinct entities, But that is not true. God is not separate from you, for God is in all, everywhere, at all times. "Ishwarassarva-bhoothanam. "How then can you be apart? How can God be separate entity? Water, wave and foam are only apparently distinct. All three are the same; only their names and forms create the illusion of diversity.

You cannot give what you do not own

Of course, you can and do announce, "I surrender my mind, my thoughts, my feelings and imaginings, to God" But your monkey-mind escapes from your hold; how, then, can you capture it and claim it and surrender it to God? What authority do you possess to offer something you are not master of?. The whole process reminds one of the Thelugu proverb about gift by son-in-law of the property owned by the mother-in-law. How can anyone give another what he does not own? Is your body under full control? When blood starts flowing out of a vein on your hand, you cannot stop the flow. You rush to a hospital

and call out, "Doctor! Doctor! Tie a bandage!" When you suffer from a stroke and limbs on one side are paralysed, you are helplessly unable to repair them. How can you dedicate your body, which you cannot rule over? Such statements like surrendering body, mind and heart are only rhetoric sanctioned by tradition and long usage. The act of surrender is often highlighted as Atma-arpana. The expression is even more ridiculous. When you are atma in essence, how can atma (Self) offer it to itself? The body is a composite of the five elements; it cannot avoid disintegration, but the dweller within the body has no birth or death, no desire or despair, no attachment or bondage. In truth, that dweller is the God of Gods who resides as atma in you. This is what the seers have experienced. So atma-arpana is a meaningless expression. You have nothing in you or belonging to you that you can claim as yours to offer to God. Then, what does surrender of the self signify or imply? To experience God as Omnipresent, to be aware of nothing other than God - this is true surrender. To see God in everything, everywhere, at all times, is true Sharanagathi. He gives, He enjoys, He experiences. If you offer, and God accepts, you become superior; how can God be all-powerful? You should not reduce the glory of God through such high-sounding statements. You may be an erudite scholar who can interpret the scriptures. You may read or recite the Bhagavad geetha scores of times. Of course, these are good attainments and practices. But, one has to carry out one's duty with devotion and discipline. It is not devotion to parade the ochre robe; sins won't fade away when manthras (holy formulae) roll out of the tongue; spiritual merit cannot accrue in heaps when the Geetha is held in the hand and loudly acclaimed in speech. The real sadhu is he whose deeds are in accordance with the words of advice he utters. Devotion cannot tolerate in the devotee the slightest trace of envy or jealousy. Make your daily life holy and pure. Render your life worth-while through service to man and service to society. That is the most important aspect of surrendering the self. Conclusion of Veda Purusha Saptaha Yajna, Vijayadhasami Day, Poornachandra Auditorium,

Learn to speak little and to speak soft. That will reduce the chances of getting angry. Seek the good in others and the evil in yourself.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

29. Nara and Naraka

Date: 26 October 1981 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Diwali

The ryot, intent on agriculture, ignores even food and sleep, for he is too busy ploughing, levelling, scattering seeds, watering, weeding, guarding and fostering the crop. He knows that his family will have to subsist on the harvest that he brings home and that if he fritters away the precious season in idle pursuits, his family will be confronted with hunger and ill-health. So, he sets aside or postpones other pursuits and focuses all his attention on farming alone. He puts up with difficulties and deprivations, toils day and night, watches over the growing crops and garners the grain. As a consequence, he is able to spend the months ahead, in peace and joy, with his happy family.

Students and spiritual seekers have to learn these lessons from the farmer. The stage of youth is the season for mental and intellectual culture. These years should be intensively and intelligently cultivated; for, once wasted, they can never be retrieved or regained. One must decide to use them for one's progress, irrespective of difficulties and obstacles. Of course, obstacles have to be overcome. The clamour of the senses has to be silenced; hunger and thirst have to be controlled; the urge to sleep and relax has to be curbed. The attainment of the goal is the aim. When the valuable years are frittered away in petty pleasure, flimsy gossip, feast and festivity, idleness and sleep, one becomes unfit to receive or retain spiritual knowledge - the vital harvest one has to gain. This is the reason why in past ages, sages left hearth and home and retired into forest hermitages and achieved Divine grace. Without concentrated effort, success can never be attained. Laziness is a demon that possesses man and debilitates him. Its brother's name is conceit. When both of them join to dominate nara (man) he is transfigured into a naraka (demon). One becomes a demon or God or human; Devaki's own brother Kamsa was a demon; her son, the nephew of Kamsa, was the Divine child, Lord Krishna!

Lessons to be learnt from Narakasura's life

Man acquires during his life three types of visions - The earliest is A-jnana

drishti, the vision through the eye of ignorance. He is able to visualise only his own body and its needs, his own kith and kin and their fortunes and his own class, caste, community or creed and its value and validity. The second vision sees beyond these considerations and pays attention to character and virtues only. The eye that sees the good in all, irrespective of personal relationship, is the jnana drishti, the Eye of Wisdom. The third stage is vijnana drishti, the highest Universal Wisdom, the Eye of Divine Love. It sees the entire Cosmos as the Body of the living God. Beyond this stage, lies the Stage of Total Mergence. The mystery of creation is sought to be discovered by man but it is something unique and indecipherable. Man's talents can never fathom it. The how and why God's sport is known only to God. Man's task is to enjoy it and benefit by it. Human beings are born into the world in which they live until they die. The body that is dead cannot be contacted again, at any time or at any place. But, even after death, one can be contacted, through either of two ways - the noble deeds one has done while alive or the ignoble acts one has inflicted during his life Rama has become immortal as the embodiment of righteousness; Ravana has secured a place in human memory as a symbol-of demonic wickedness.

This day is the festival of Naraka Chaturdasi. It teaches man to remember how character decides destiny, designs achievements and demarcates one as either divine or demonic. Naraka, after whom this day is named, was a nara, human being. But since he grew into a demon, he earned the meaningful title, "Narakasura." Through his asura qualities, he proceeded towards Naraka or Hell. He was a king, who shaped his subjects through his counsel and commands, into images of himself in wickedness. The people in his kingdom were intoxicated with vice and violence. The Lord decided to eliminate Narakasura and redeem the people from the total ruin that faced them and guide them into the holy sathwik path of humility and goodness.

Anger drastically reduces one's stamina

Here, you must pay attention to a strange strategy that the Lord employed. The Lord invaded Narakasura's kingdom, not once but again and again! Of course, He could have accomplished the asura's destruction during the very

first campaign. But He did not do so. He forced him to explode into furious anger again and again, and each attack by the Lord made him automatically weaker. His resistance became feebler and feebler. Anger is debilitating in its effect. 'The nerves become weak; blood is rendered warmer; its composition changes. A simple burst of fury consumes the strength gained from food during three months! Anger drastically reduces one's stamina. So, the Lord made Narakasura flare up in anger, again and again, and even when he was rendered faint and flickering, the Lord decided that he did not deserve death at His Hands. He took His consort, Sathyabhama, with Him and directed her to kill the ruffian. She could do it easily, for three-quarters of his might had been subtracted by the Lord's strategy. The metropolis of Narakasura's kingdom was named Prak Jyothishpuram. This is a very meaningful name. Prak means "previous," Jyothi means "lamp, light" - "city which was previously fully lit;" that is to say, it was effulgent and luminous (with Atmaic Wisdom) until Narakasura succeeded to the throne.

Significance of the festival of lamps

This day is set apart to commemorate the destruction of such a demonic person. The significance of this festival is that, on this day, he killed the darkness of A-jnana - the unawareness of the Atma disappeared from people. "From darkness, lead me into light," darkness has no place. Where the light of Athmic awareness shines, evil thoughts, wicked speech and vicious deeds flee in fear; so one should cultivate the wisdom which can cognise one's Reality. This lesson is ignored and instead people celebrate this day, the battle between the Queen and the Demon King. One more point. This day we light thousands of lamps with a single lamp. We light many candles with the flame of a single candle. But, remember that only a burning candle can light other candles. An unlit candle cannot light other unlit candles. Only one who has earned wisdom can enlighten others who are in ignorance. One who is himself unilluminated cannot illumine others, dwelling in the darkness of maya: One must light his own lamp from the Universal Light of Love and thenceforward he can transmit illumination to all who seek and strive. All lamps shine alike, since they are all sparks of that Param-jyothi, the Universal Luminosity, that is God.

Give up and gain is the Divine law

Lamps are many but light is ONE. Every patch of water on earth has the reflection of the sun in it but the original sun is ONE. Just as the one sun is seen in a million pots or lakes, or wells or cisterns, the one Paramjyothi shines as wisdom in a million hearts, whether noticed or unnoticed. When the water in the pot or other receptacle evaporates, the image too disappears. But the sun is not affected in the least. So too, the Atma appears in the body (the pot) which contains desires (water). When identification with the body is given up and when, in consequence, desires dry up, the image Atma merges in the genuine Atma. This is the Eternal Consummation. This is the sadhana that should be undertaken today. You must learn to understand that the Atma in all containers is the reflection of the One Overself or Paramatma. But, the tragedy is that the one is misinterpreted as the manifold! The fault lies in the prominence given to the petty desires of the puny self. How can one, attached to the self, turn towards the higher Self? Detachment alone can lead one to the awareness of the immortal Self. That is the price one has to offer to receive the reward. Give up and gain, that is the Divine Law. When you seek to drink fruit juice out of a glass which contains water, you have necessarily to pour out the water and fill it with the juice. "In a head filled with junk, how can clean thoughts find place? When it is rendered free from junk, one can load it with good thoughts," says a popular song.

Remove evil habits to earn God's vision

Our brain stores millions of thoughts. Among them only a few are really useful and valuable. As a result of this indiscriminate acquisition, concentration on any beneficial idea becomes difficult. Many people come to me and mourn, "Swami! I am practicing meditation for ten years or twenty years, but, alas, I have not had the vision of God even for a second." I ask them, "But what are you meditating on, all these years? When your mind is contemplating all kinds of irrelevant objects, how can God find a place therein? Again, have you cultivated love? Have you developed compassion? These are the temples where God loves to install Himself. Instead, you have grown in selfishness and

so, the vision of God has become unavailable to you." Gopala Rao declared just now that he gave up his selfish attachment to one dish at Kashi and to another dish at Gaya, while he went to those places as a pilgrim. Renouncing the bitter gourd at one holy spot and the sour berry at another is not commendable as sacrifice. At sacred places, the pilgrim must renounce his evil habits and bad tendencies and attitudes. Then only can the pilgrimage be beneficial.

Similarly, this festival day, related to the killing of the Naraka demon, calls upon you to renounce the most harmful of vices Egotism, Aham-kara. Aham-kara means the assertion of I, 'I' as having power, authority, strength, and wealth; not the awareness of I as jeeva (which is mamakaram) or I as Brahman (which is Divinity), but the mistaken assertion, I am the Body. "Thou art That," "I am Atma." This truth has to be realised to become free from ahamkara. 'I am- the-Body' feeling often persists until death. So, it has to be overcome by continuous sadhana. The body is a vesture you have worn. One should not lament when it disintegrates after wear. Death is an inescapable fact of life. So, be warned. While life lasts, busy yourselves in activity: cross the lake while the boat is intact. Fill the reservoir when it rains, so that in times of drought, you can feed the fields. Do intense sadhana now, when you are young and strong so that you can be in peace and joy all your life. Many postpone spiritual exercises until old age, when they hope to retire from their professional activities. But, once you retire, every limb of yours will be too tired to work effectively. Make the most profitable use of this present period of your lives. Do not waste the hours in irrelevance and irreverence. Do not indulge in the condemnation of others or in selfcondemnation. These holy days have to be observed as days set apart for self-examination and self-improvement. On this Deepavali day, people insist on wearing new clothes. Let your hearts too rejoice, clothed in fresh ideals and feelings and resolutions. Relish these sweets from this day on, and mould your lives into sweet songs of Love.

Prayer must emanate from the heart, where God resides,

and not from the head where doctrines and doubts clash.

Prayer has great efficacy.

The Vedhic seers prayed for the peace and happiness of all mankind,
of all animate and inanimate things.

Cultivate that Universal vision.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

30. Village youth for villages

Date: 06 November 1981 / Location: Muddenahalli

Adopting all forms; serene; Assuming all names; supreme; Sath-Chith-Anandha; the One; Sathyam, Shivam, Sundaram. Education confers humility; Humility adds credentials; Credentials ensure prosperity; Prosperity assures tight living; Right living grants peace and joy Both here and hereafter. This day this Sathya Sai Grama (village) is blessed not by the dawn of the Sun, but by the dawn of anandha. Since the small hours of today until this moment, young and old, in large numbers have been busy preparing for this festival of joy and waiting with yearning eyes to welcome this delight. Such holy days are indeed very rare occasions for men. The day when deep devotees sing songs In praise of the Lord and please the ear; The day when sorrows of the poor are cured And men move close as brothers born; The day when servants of God are fed With Love and care, in thankfulness; The day when a Great One comes to us And relates thrilling tales of God; These indeed are the worthwhile days. The rest are like days dedicated to obsequies for the dead. The world now witnesses the devildance of injustice, anarchy, vice and wickedness. To end this and establish peace, tolerance, justice, joy and right living, we have to rely on the young, the students; they must become instruments for this transformation. This fact has to be recognised by all who desire a better world.

This age is Golden Age for seekers of God

Of the four yugas, the present Kali yuga is far more congenial than the previous three (Kritha, Thretha and Dwapara yugas) for the acquisition of wisdom and the cultivation of discrimination (viveka) for, we now have many simple paths available for liberating ourselves. The scriptures say, "No, no, dear sirs, no age is equal to the Kali age! Through just smarana and chinthana, we can reach the Goal. Smarana is the process of keeping the Lord ever in the memory and chinthana is the process of thinking of His glory all the time. Many people are scared because they believe that the Kali yuga in which we live will witness the ultimate Deluge. Others call it the Kalaha yuga,

the Age of Conflict, for it is now well-nigh omnipresent No, no. This age is the Golden Age for the seekers of God, for earning and learning viveka. In the past, institutions imparting education were rare. There were only a few, centred round the preceptors. They were known as Gurukulas. Now, every street has a school established therein. Knowledge is available in enormous quantities. There are also millions of means through which money can be earned. In spite of this, man is denied peace and joy. Why? The behaviour pattern, the type of activity - these are responsible. Though a person has all the virtues, when his actions and attitudes do not reveal their influence on him, he has to encounter loss and grief. So, he must cultivate justice and rectitude.

Objectives of Sai institutions

Educational institutions must adopt this royal road towards the good life. Education is losing its worth day by day because institutions seek distorted and devious roads and students are not loyal to the ideals of justice and rectitude. Vidhya must confer Vinaya - education must promote humility. Humility is totally absent today among students. Lessons on humility are found in the text books, but they are not reflected in behaviour, as precepts put into practice. In the past, emotions and feelings were trained and directed towards the achievement of humility. Why are personages like Shankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, Madhwacharya, Buddha, Jesus, Zoroaster and other such religious pioneers, revered in human hearts until this day? Is their scholarship the reason? No. Their virtues and lives reflecting those virtues - these are the reasons.

Piles of books are now plentiful in bazars. Schools abound; there is no dearth of teachers. But wholesome learning and sincere teaching are not to be seen. It is for this reason that these spiritually oriented educational Sai institutions are being established to impart teaching in proper ways, in order to preserve the hearts of students in pristine purity, stability and unselfishness, to develop them into workers dedicated to the progress of Bharath, intent on removing the anxiety and gloom that have spread all over the land and determined to revive the glory of Bharatheeya culture. They are being

established to fill the students of today with the courage and enthusiasm needed for this task.

There are now thousands and thousands of educational institutions in the world. But, there is a great difference between the rest and those founded by Sathya Sai. The fundamental objectives of Sai institutions are humility, adherence to discipline, and application of what is learned in daily life. If what is learned is not put into practice, the student is like a cow that does not yield milk, a fruit lacking in taste, a book bereft of wisdom. It is not really man's task to stuff his head with transient knowledge and waste time in acquiring it. He should not engage in valueless activities and fritter away years of life. When man ruins himself thus, he descends to the level of the beast. When man uplifts himself, he ascends to the level of God. Manava (man) can raise himself to Madhava (God). We have therefore to promote educational methods by which the humanness of man can be maintained and sublimated into godliness.

Sai sankalpa to promote advancement of villages

The Lion is the king of beasts. Yet, it turns round to watch the trail behind! It is afraid because it creates fear. Man too is nervous because he is intent on harming others. Do not entangle yourselves in violence and anger. Give up the backward look, the past habits and attitudes. Move bravely into the future. After joining the school and learning here, do not cling to old attitudes and prejudices. Watch your actions and ensure that they are right. Watch your qualities and modes of behaviour and ensure that they are also right. It is only when this is done that the true value of education and the sacredness of one's knowledge can be appreciated. The student has to pass this test in order to benefit from the education he absorbs. It is for this purpose, to revive this pure educational process, that this day the foundation stone for a Junior College was laid in this Sathya Sai village. Very soon it will rise as a beautiful building and later, it will become a limb of the Puttaparthi University. I bless that through this college and its expansion, the Sathya Sai village will develop fast. I also wish that here, too, a Degree College be established.

Have yoga as the goal, not udhyoga

Since the boys coming for education from the surrounding areas are all from villages, they find it very difficult to move into towns for higher studies. It is not within their means. This college at the Sathya Sai village serves boys from villages. They will have every facility needed for their educational progress, in this rural environment. We provide hostels for all of them. My sankalpa (resolve) is to promote the advancement of villages. The children who come from villages must spend their lives in their own villages in order to develop them in every way. That alone can make their lives worth-while. This is the Sai Sankalpa - to adopt methods by which they can improve their villages, to implement those methods and to instruct them how to succeed in this mission.

Since those born in villages are trekking into towns and settling there, villages are declining. But, towns cannot exist without villages. Villages have to be fostered first. The village is the heart of the town; without it, the town becomes lifeless. Krishna was born in a village; He grew up in the village and developed its prosperity. Its fame became worldwide, on account of Him. So, we should protect and promote the village to such an extent that its renown will spread in all the quarters.

Sai Sankalpam is this children who come from a village must, after education, settle in the village itself, develop the village and purify the village atmosphere. Educated villagers now rush towards towns seeking udhyoga (jobs) there. How can any one deserve an udhyoga without first acquiring yoga? Your lives should have yoga as the goal, not udhyoga! Engage in some profession in order to secure the means to live and let the society in which you live benefit by your services to your self, to society and to the country - these are the stages which should follow one another. Because people skip the earlier stages and enter the last one, the condition of the country has deteriorated so much. Students should study well and attain a high level of education; they should serve their parents and make them happy. If you make them shed tears through your ingratitude, how can your own future be happy? Students must get the education that can inspire them to promote the

happiness of their parents.

I wish that they imbibe through education the Dharma (virtue) that will shape them into heroes dedicated to the uplift of Bharath. Dear students! Become aware of your truth, start living in the light of that awareness, be humble before your parents and render obedience to them. Offer reverence to the elders of the village and speak politely to them, and be examples of moral living to the community.

31. Lessons on seva saadhana

Date: 19 November 1981 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Seva Dal Conference

Society is the coming together of people. Cooperation among people in a society, motivated by spontaneity and by pure intentions, is the hall-mark of seva (service). Seva can be identified by means of two basic characteristics' Compassion and willingness to sacrifice. History informs us that in all countries and in every age, man is a social animal. Man is born in society, he grows in and through society and his life ends in society itself. Man's songs and speech, his duties and diversions, are all determined by society. Society for man is like water for fish: if society rejects him or neglects him he cannot survive. What a single individual cannot accomplish, a well-knit group or society can achieve. A man walking alone will feel tired and miserable at the end of five miles; but, walking with ten others as a group he would find the five miles a jaunt. He arrives refreshed and strong. Social living contributes increased happiness and more efficient effort among birds and beasts. They are able to defend themselves from enemies, secure food and shelter, migrate to places beyond great distances when they act as a group. Even ants have learn, that immense benefits are derivable from group activity and social organisation. Monkeys also live in groups for greater security and happier lives.

Let me tell you that nothing is impossible of achievement if an organised society is set on achieving it. Even liberation from material entanglement (Moksha) can be won through serving and promoting the progress of society. Through the sense of unity, the willingness to sacrifice and the softness of compassion, all objects can be gained. So, the Sathya Sai Organisation must move forward with hearty enthusiasm in the field of service to society.

Service must bring about uprooting of ego

The first lesson in seva has to be learnt in the family circle itself. Father, mother, brothers, sisters - in this limited group which is well knit, one must engage in loving service and prepare for the wider seva that awaits outside

the home. The character of each individual member determines the peace and prosperity of the family; the character of each family is the basic factor that decides the happiness and joy of the village or the community. And, the nation's progress is based on the strength and happiness of the communities which are its components. So, for the welfare of the country and of the entire world, the spirit of service, vital enthusiasm, constructive imagination, pure motivation, and unselfish alertness are all urgently needed. Take Hanuman as your example in seva. He served Rama, the Prince of Righteousness, regardless of obstacles of all types. Though he was strong, learned and virtuous, he had no trace of pride. When asked who he was by the rakshasas (demons) in Lanka into which he had entered so daringly, he described himself, in all humility, as the 'servant of Rama.' That is a fine example of uprooting of the ego which seva must bring about in us. No one can serve another while his ego is rampant. The attitudes of mutual help and selfless service develop the 'humanness' of man and help the unfoldment of the divinity latent in him. Krishna was known to all as almighty, all-knowing, all encompassing and all-fulfilling. Yet, the enthusiasm to do seva prompted him to approach Dharmaraja, the eldest of the Pandava brothers, on the eve of the magnificent Rajsooya Yaga he had planned to celebrate and offered to take up seva of any kind. He suggested that he might be given the task of cleaning the dining hall after the guests have partaken of the feast! Krishna insisted on outer cleanliness and inner cleansing. Clean clothes and clean minds are the ideal combination. During the battle of Kurukshetra, which climaxed the Mahabharatha story, Krishna served as the 'driver' of the chariot of Arjuna throughout the day on the field and when dusk caused the adjournment of the fight, he led the horses to the river, gave them a refreshing bath and applied healing balms to the wounds suffered by them during the fierce fray. He mended the reins and the harness and rendered the chariot battleworthy for another day.

Seva rendered to every living being is Sadhana

The Lord sets the example for the devotees to follow. He teaches that service done to any living being is offered to Him only and is accepted by Him most joyfully. Service rendered to cattle, to beasts, to men is laudable sadhana.

Keeping the environment of our residences clean, providing help to those who live around the place, going to hospitals and serving the patients who are in the wards - in such acts of service the members of the Sathya Seva Organisation must take active part. Many do such things now as 'social service,' not as a sadhana in a fullhearted manner. The sadhana spirit is not found in the activity. Through seva sadhana, Hanuman attained identity with Rama, as the river attains identity with the sea. Arjuna too considered every act as sadhana to attain the grace of Krishna, for Krishna directed him to fight on, ever keeping Him in memory - "Mamanusmara Yuddhyacha." You too should keep God ever in your mind as the pace-setter, whether you are serving patients in the hospitals or cleaning a drain in the bazar. That is the thapas, that is the highest form of sadhana. More than listening to a hundred lectures or delivering them to others, offering one act of genuine seva attracts the Grace of God. The body has to be utilised for service to others. Activity is its main purpose. Krishna says, "I have no need to be engaged in work but I do work in order to activate the world." More anandha can be won by serving others than what can be got by merely serving oneself. Offer service to some one in need, with a full heart and experience the anandha that results. It need not be something big; it can even be small and unnoticed by others. It has to be done to please the God within you and him.

Avoid the ego marring your sadhana

We require today those who take delight in selfless service, but such men are rarely seen. You who belong to the Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, every one of you, must become a sevak, eager to help those who need it. When the sevak (helper) becomes the nayak (leader) the world will prosper. Only a kinkara (servant) can grow into a Shankara (Master). Of course, one has to eliminate the ego totally. Even a trace of it will bring disaster. However long you may do dhyana, however constant your japa, a little ego will render them barren of results. Bhajan done with egoistic pride will be as harsh as the crow's caw. So, try to avoid the ego marring your sadhana, even to a small extent. You all know the story of Vishwamithra, who had as a result of severe thapas for years, earned the power even to create another Heaven amenable to his will. His ego made him intensely passionate and short tempered

(rajasik). So, he was known as Raja-Yogi and Rajarishi. He was jealous of the sage Vasishta who was adored as a Brahmarishi and sought that title for himself. This made him even more rajasik. The wilder his desire, the higher rose the ego flames.

Be vigilant against doubts and fears

The Sathya Sai Organisation has laid down seva as sadhana, in order to uproot from your mind this evil trait. Service helps you to remove the ego. So, do not pay heed to what others might say when you engage in service activities. When you are doing good acts, why hesitate, why feel ashamed, why fear? Let Compassion and Sacrifice be your two eyes; let Egolessness be your breath and Love be your tongue. Let Peace reverberate in your ears. These are the five vital elements you have to live upon. God will not ask you, when and where did you do service? He will ask, "With what motive did you do it? What was the intention that prompted you?" You may weigh the seva and boast of its quantity. But, God seeks quality, the quality of the heart, the purity of the mind, the holiness of the motive. You know you have been doing, as seva dhal members, seva in many fields and directions, for ten or twelve years. You are not novices; you are aware of the seva-way of life. But since you are human, veils and fog, weeds and worms infest the mind. Doubts and fears haunt your work. But be vigilant against the onslaughts of these. Strive everyday, faithful to the ideal you have set before yourself, to improve your seva activities along pure, unselfish, sacred lines. This day and tomorrow, people with years of experience will be telling you the means and methods by which your seva activities can become more beneficial to a larger number of deserving people. You will also have group discussions on these topics. Confer among yourselves in a meaningful way and arrive at some proposals for bettering your service programmes. Later, I shall resolve any doubts that arise and advise you not only for seva here and now, but also for attaining peace and joy for ever. I shall converse with you and reward you with anandha through My Blessings.

The mind is like a lake.
When the water is calm,
the rays of the sun are
reflected on the surface of water,
like a mirror.
But if the water is disturbed
because the wind is blowing,
then there is very little reflection.
Man must learn to control his mind.
Man is Divine,
and if only he could
remember that,
he would see life so very differently;
he would cease to be affected by
so much of what goes on
in the world.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

32. The fingers five

Date: 21 November 1981 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

The Cosmos has only One Master, God, the All-comprehensive Supreme Consciousness, Chaithanya. It energises and operates the Cosmos, the Vishwa. It impels all the activities of Man. Man is but an instrument which the Chaithanya wields. God is not limited by time, space or circumstance. But, the physical body, the mind, the intellect the senses and their longings are moulded and modified by time, space and circumstance. Without believing in this fundamental fact man falsely imagines, "I am doing this," "I am planning this." It is the Supreme All- Pervasive Consciousness that unfolds the skills, motivates the senses and operates the intellect. All activities of man must result in cleansing his chittha - the levels of awareness. When these are done as offerings to God, they advance this cleansing process a great deal. The way man works, he shapes his own destiny. Work is sublimated into worship which fructifies into wisdom. The flower is Work (karma), the emerging fruit is Worship (bhakthi) and the ripe sweet fruit is Wisdom (jnana). It is one continuous and spontaneous process, this spiritual fulfilment of the sadhaka, the sevaka. They are like childhood, youth and old age, each imperceptibly growing into the succeeding stage.

While engaged as you are in karma, seva karma (service activity) as sadhana, you encounter many hurdles. But, that is the nature of the world in which you act. It is a world of dual characteristics - good and bad, joy and grief, progress and regress, light and shade. Do not pay heed to these; do what comes to you as a duty, as well as you can, with prayer to God. The rest is in His Hands. Mohammed preached monotheism and was driven out of Mecca. Jesus preached mercy and charity and he was charged with treason. Harischandra refused to give up his allegiance to Truth and was driven to such straits that he had to sell his wife and son as slaves. So, when you stick to the path of Truth and Righteousness, pain and poverty haunt you. But they are only clouds passing through the sky hiding for a little time the splendour of the sun. Karma is sadhana, when it is done as seva. The seva attitude is most beneficial to the person rendering it as well as to others. Service is the best

use to which the body can be put. In fact, you are not doing service to others. You are doing it always to yourselves, to the God in you, the God who is equally present in others.

Sai organisations should be an example for all

The seva dhal has been established to instil in the minds of youth these sublime ideals. Every one of you cannot engage yourselves in all the projects of the seva dhal. So, the activities or karmas have been demarcated into three categories and members are given the option to choose one or the other activity as their own contribution: (1) Those of you who have studied, up to some standards, can take up educational activities. (2) You can busy yourselves in activities relating to health education and enlivening life in slums and villages. (3) You can visit hospitals etc., and spread cheer among the patients. We are holding some conference or the other every year during the Birthday week. The resolutions we arrive at after discussions here, should not be treasured in files, but must be put into daily practice. Organisations easily fall into mere publicity and fanfare. The Sathya Sai Seva Organisations should be an example and inspiration for all. Practice alone can deepen your faith and justify the appreciation and affection that the Sathya Sai Seva Organisations have earned. Do not proclaim that you are rendering seva once a month or three times a year! That reveals laziness, want of enthusiasm and faith. Do you take food only once a month? Your hunger is not appeased even now when you have four meals a day! Your spiritual hunger can be quenched only by more frequent seva, at least for two or four hours a day. Each one of you waste more hours every day in gossip and scandal-mongering. Better than these barren pursuits, one can visit hospital wards or villages or sweep and clean bazars or bus stations.

Seva will develop the quality of humility

These little acts of seva can confer on you great spiritual benefit. Firstly, it will destroy your egoism. Pride will transform friends into enemies; it will keep even kinsmen afar; it will defeat all good schemes. Seva will develop in you the quality of humility. Humility will enable you to work in happy unison with

others. We have in our organisation, State Presidents, District Presidents, State Convenors, etc., but these positions should not be used for enthroning oneself and exercising authority. They are allotted to people so that they can be examples, through their own lives, of seva sadhana. But some State Presidents are too proud to share in seva activities! Leaders must lead; they should not push you from behind. State Presidents must lead others, giving them instruction and inspiration. If they cannot or do not, they have no right to hold office. Again, you must work together joyfully, as brothers and sisters. When any difference of opinion crops up between you, how can seva be done with uniform attention and enthusiasm? You have to reconcile such differences silently and with love, and place seva in the forefront of your activities. When seva calls, all must come together as one. There should be no politicking in seva. No trace of politics should pollute the seva you do. No idea of separateness should tarnish your thought. Do not talk harshly to any one; some people who are office-bearers in the organisation do indulge in strong unpleasant language.

Seva to man is the command of the Vedas

God is adored by you when you do puuja as Mridhu madhura bhashine namak - "He who speaks soft and sweet" This is a meaningful characterisation of the Lord. Through soft and sweet speech, we can transform even demonic persons into decent individuals. From words, honey drips; words are fragrant flowers; words enshrine Vedhic wisdom; words can build a heaven or hell. Words can plunge you into prison or release you into freedom. When any Convenor or President promotes factions or differences among devotees, treat them as pests, as termites and remove them. Be vigilant that they do not enter the units of the Organisation.

All units must work as a single entity like the fingers on one's hand. The Seva Samithi is the thumb; the Mahila Vibhag is the pointing finger; the seva dhal is the middle finger; the Balvikas is the ring finger and the little finger is the Bhajan Mandali. I find there is very little co-operation between the units now; it is mostly 'Operation' that is happening! Have high ideals of great sevaks like Hanuman before your mind's eye. Service to man is service to God. In the

Purusha Suuktha of the Rig Veda, God is described as having a thousand heads, a thousand eyes, a thousand feet. That means all heads are His, all eyes are His, all feet are His. So, seva to man is the command of the Vedas. Teach the illiterates in the villages how to read and write and broaden their vision. Visit the slums in the cities and instruct them how to avoid disease and maintain health. Welcome the slum dwellers into your group and work together with them to make the area clean and attractive. Once you take up seva, you will discover many ways of doing good. First cultivate humility and compassion. Then, learn the knowledge and the skill needed for the particular seva project. Thus, you can make your life meaningful. By this means, you can add to the anandha of the person who has given you the chance to render this seva to your fellowmen.

God is in you, but like the woman, who fears that her necklace has been stolen or lost, recognises that she has it round her neck when she passes a mirror, man too will recognise that God is in him, when some Guru reminds him of it. The joy that you then get is incomparable.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

33. An ideal university

Date: 22 November 1981 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Convocation

Students! Embodiments of Divine Love! Educators! Promoters of Education!

When we fall low in education or in knowledge, our parents feel great grief. When we fall low in morals and spiritual virtues, our motherland bemoans her fate ten times more sadly. We have to assuage the grief of the physical mother and the cultural mother, and promote the peace and prosperity of the motherland. Students alone have the enthusiasm and the skill necessary for this task. In this land revered as the treasure house of spiritual riches, dharma is declining day by day; unrighteousness, injustice, violence, anti-social acts, falsehood are running amok. They are indulging in their devil-dance unhindered. In this Kali era, students have to rise as lion cubs, reestablish peace and restore dharma in individual, social and national life.

Students!

Remember that all those whom we are accepting now as leaders, whom we respect as holding positions of authority, whom we worship as elders, were some years ago students like yourselves. Therefore, you in your turn will be the leaders, power-wielders and elders of tomorrow. Do not forget this destiny of yours. The motherland is not a mere lump of earth. When we desire its progress, we have to promote the progress of the people who dwell therein. The skills needed for resuscitating and reforming man are found only in students. The reforming process involves the removal, in daily living, of bad conduct and bad habits and the practice of good conduct and good deeds. A man's worth can be measured by his efforts to reform himself. This day, the Government has no capacity to reform the people and people have no authority to reform the Government.

The educational process is a holy endeavour

Students are the very foundation of the nation. When the foundation is strong, the building can be stable. To make the foundation strong, people, rulers, parents, teachers, and students - all have to co-ordinate their plans and efforts. These five elements, these five vital forces, have to work together towards this end. The solution for the problem is just one; the Light of Truth has to be fostered and spread in the field of education.

Students are proceeding along devious distorted paths, not because they are intrinsically bad, but because they are infected by the pollution rampant in all fields, social and national. The nation cannot advance through a reform of the educational system alone. The educational process is basically a holy endeavour. We have many lessons to learn, many duties to fulfil, many points to note while trying to improve it. In ancient times, moral excellence was the goal of this endeavour. After gaining that excellence even today, students can roam free and fearless in the realm of education, like lions in the forest. They should not degrade themselves to the level of cunning, deceitful, marauding jackals or wolves. Today, there are no lions in the jungle of educational institutions. But wolves and sheep abound! Acquaintance with the contents of a pile of books does not make one an educated person. Wherever there are students, the place must shine with the brilliance of peace and security; it must radiate the aura of sanctity. But have we peace and security in the campuses today? No. Real education must be judged by the concern for others which it promotes. Students should grow to be the guardians of the people. As the prospective protectors of the people, their future leaders and administrators, they should prepare themselves for national service. On the shoulders of students today rests the task of making India great. The educational system has to be shaped a new so that students can fulfil the task of brightening the future of this land.

Without faith man is a living corpse

Embodiments of Love!

Every man desires to acquire anandha. From where can anandha be acquired? Faith alone can win anandha. Peace can be got only through faith;

faith is the spring of joy. But now, we see sorrow wherever we cast our eyes. Why does this happen? Because, man has lost faith. He has no faith in himself. How then can he acquire anandha? How can a person, who has not got faith enough to live happily for a few days, win the grace of God?

This day, when education has achieved remarkable progress in many directions, man has lost faith in the highest and the supremest - God. He queries, "What exactly is God?" He argues, "Is there God? Well, I shall prove, that there is no God." Seek the Truth and you are seeking God. Truth is God. Truth exists; so, God exists. God IS, because Truth is God. Does anyone argue that there is no Truth? Come. I shall show him Truth. He who denies the existence of Truth can never be a man. Can there be a God higher than Truth? The human condition today is full of falsehood; it is sunk in wickedness. So, no one can understand the significance of Truth. Truth is generally understood to mean speaking exactly what has been heard by the ears. No; this is not the meaning of Truth. What has been heard undergoes change; Truth is changeless, it is the same in the past, present and future. Have faith that Truth exists thus and can be experienced. Faith is the very breath of life. Without it, man is a living corpse.

Education must broaden the heart

Many carry swollen heads because of the degrees they have won through the study of books. But of what avail is that load when they do not fold their palms to adore God? Humility is the mark of scholarship. If this mark is absent, the scholar is an ignoramus. Humility is the product of Atma Vidhya. Of course, the study of the material world is important. It should not be neglected. But, the study of one's Athmic core is essential. Other studies relate to the five elements, the energies, the composition of the objective world, the manipulation of Nature's forces for living more comfortably. How does the earth rotate and why? How far is the sun from the earth and the stars? How far do the rays of the sun reach? To what distance can they travel in a minute? By learning these facts, to what extent can man profit?

More important items to study and watch are, How broad is your heart? How

much benefit has society derived from you? What are the sadhanas that can make you better and more useful? How much are you aware-of your inner principle? What exactly is the purpose and goal of your existence? Bhagavantham has mastered the details about the world which I mentioned now. He has also taught them to many students of his and they in their turn have taught them to many others who were their students. That was all. He knew and he made others know that he knew. Those others knew and they passed on that knowledge to others. Thus it has spread from one set of people to another. Has this process furthered the peace and progress of the world? It has not helped in the least. As scholarship is accumulated, man is losing the compassion which urges him to love his neighbour, to discover the neighbour's troubles and anxieties so that he might give relief. He is turning more and more egoistic.

Embodiments of Love!

Do not think otherwise. When truth is made known, one is apt to resent it. Educated persons today are all afflicted with selfishness. Why! They have been rendered so helpless by this disease that they do not pay attention even to the misery of their parents. This is no sign of education. Education must broaden the heart, it must expand one's love. Fortitude and equanimity belong to the Reality in man. One must reveal this fact in every act, also gratitude for kindness shown.

Students should strive to earn virtues

People forget those who helped them to advance in life; they repay kindness with injury. The very teachers who contribute to the progress of students in studies are hit on the head by their students. The teacher may have faults but the student has no authority to search for faults or expose them or retaliate. Upanishad means 'sitting at the feet' of the teacher. The Guru is the Thath; the Sishya is the Thwam. Thath speaks; thwam listens. That is the lesson in humility which the Upanishad conveys. Students strive in many ways to attain 'ranks'; they do not strive to earn highly esteemable virtues. No, not even a thousandth part of that effort is spent for earning virtue. They are eager to

collect marks; they do not try to avoid remarks and ensure a good reputation. Strive to earn a good life, good conduct, good thoughts and good opportunities.

Students!

You are aware that there are now 108 universities in India. This University is the 109th, one more than that traditional total.

Lokah samastah sukhino bhavanthu.

May all the universities succeed and serve the country well.

But, this university must be distinct from the rest and attain a unique status. It must be the ideal for others. For this consummation, students, teachers, parents, rulers and the people must cooperate.

My entire property consists of My students

To have inaugurated a University cannot be a source of full satisfaction for me. It has to be fostered and made to fructify. It is like accepting the gift of an elephant; it brings with it the responsibility to feed it and utilise its potentialities beneficently. If some deviation occurs while managing it, the elephant might run amuck and destroy lives.

Students and teachers are valuable assets to make the University an ideal one. Along with subjects related to worldly knowledge, this University will impart instruction in ethical, moral and spiritual codes and sadhanas. It has as its goal the cultivation of the student's mind on these lines. Virtues, purity of the mind, adherence to truth, dedication to the Supreme, discipline, devotion to duty - these qualities will be fostered and promoted in this University.

Such seats of learning were established in ancient times by the sages and

seers of India and as a result of their self-sacrificing efforts, they have left for posterity the priceless heritage of Bharatheeya culture. This culture has sprouted from the vision they had of God, in every atom in creation. "God resides," it proclaims, "not only in the idol installed in the temple, but in every atom and cell, without exception." Bharatheeyas have allowed this all-inclusive, sublime, eternal culture to slip out their lives, in the frantic pursuit of illusory, trivial tantalising cultures.

Students! Teachers! Devotees gathered here! Administrators!

This is the inaugural day of our Institute. It has been planted today. The students are its roots. The tree will grow with branches on all sides; countless flowers will bloom; it will provide and promote peace and security to the world. In order that it may realise this result, students must as the roots do, remain firm and provide sustenance. I know that the roots have to be watered so that flowers and fruits may emerge. **Students are My all.** If you ask Me, what is My property, many expect the answer to be, "Oh! All these buildings, all this vast area of land." But, My answer is: "**My entire property consists of My students.**" **I have offered Myself to them.**

Wish happiness for those who are unhappy

But many are not aware of this fact. Some unfortunate people cannot believe the reality of this love, the love of a thousand mothers. Those who cannot gauge the depth of a single mother's affection for her child, how can they ever understand the possibility and the presence of the love of a thousand mothers? "When disaster impends, reason is perverted" says the adage. They ruin themselves by denying the fact of such love. I know that all the thousand fruits that a tree bears do not ripen into tasty edible ones. Some are stolen; some rot away, some are attacked by pests, only a few ripen and confer anandha on others. In running race, all do not win the first place. Many drop along the track. If at least a few students rise up to the high ideals we have set before us, I am confident this country can be prosperous and happy.

The chief characteristics of Sathya Sai are, let me tell you,

equanimity, forbearance (sahana). There are many who are engaged in criticism and calumny. Many papers publish all types of writings. Many pamphlets are printed. All kinds of things happen in the world. My reply to all these is a smile. Such criticisms and distortions are the inevitable accompaniments of everything good and great. Only the fruitladen tree is hit by stones thrown by greedy people. No one casts a stone on the tree that bears no fruit! There are some others who suffer from sheer envy at the increasing number and phenomenal progress of Sathya Sai Seva Organisations and the Sathya Sai Educational Institutions and they try to invent falsehoods and cause agitation.

Embodiments of Love!

Even if the entire world opposes Me unitedly, nothing can affect Me. My mission is essentially Mine. I am engaged in doing good. My heart is ever full of benediction. I have no ego. I do not own any thing. This is My truth. Those who have faith in this, My Truth, will not hesitate to dedicate themselves to it. Those who have doubts and defects react with anger and fear. But the person with no doubt and defect will not react so. I am aware of this and so I am always in ananda, ananda, *ananda* (bliss).

Many of the devotees from foreign lands wish Me "Happy Birthday!" I tell them "I am always happy. Wish happiness for those who are unhappy." There is no need to wish that I may have ananda or happiness. I am happy at all times.

Cultivate faith in God and Love towards all beings. And always, follow the directives I have been emphasising.

34. Learning of higher values

Date: 22 November 1981 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Convocation - Inauguration of the Administrative Building of Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning

Education today expands exceedingly wide
But, the Athmic glory, its heart, is mostly lost.
Living for all has become too huge a burden,
For the tinsel of pomp fascinates the student world.

Students! Educators! Patrons and Promoters of Education!

What exactly is education? What have we to learn through the process of education? What is the aim which educators must have in view? What are we gaining through education as devised today? Students have to pay attention to these four aspects first. One's standard of living depends on the way the mind is cultured. Culture does not imply any special transformation. It involves only the sublimation of one's habits and attitudes and their dedication to the Divine path. Education does not end with mastery of the meanings of words. It means opening wide the doors of the mind; it means cleansing the inner tools of the consciousness, the mind, the ego, the senses, the reason. Unfortunately, education is subserving the restricted purpose of making one fit for securing jobs which earn for him the wherewithal to live! True education must purge one of all traces of selfishness. But, today, what really happens is the elimination of love (prema) and joy (anandha) from the educated mind! Instead, the flames of jealousy are fed and fostered. The Divine spark in man is smothered. Modern education negates the virtues of discipline and humility. Science without a sense of values, activity dictated by whim, scholarship without experiential satisfaction, humanity with no involvement with humans, music devoid of sweet melody - these are all dull and dreary. They cannot inspire men to appreciation and observance. Therefore, you should give up selfish desires and welcome the Truth beyond

the reach of the mind operating through senses and manifest the Divinity that is your Reality.

Today's education boosts one's conceit

Education must award self-confidence, the courage to depend on one's own strength. To-day, one emerges from the process of education with a hardened heart. Education has as its goal the fostering of sympathy with the less fortunate, but the knowledge and skill earned by one are diverted to selfish ends. Einstein explained to a friend why he spent sleepless nights and Gandhi too once gave the same reason to a questioner: "The hardness which the heart gains through education"! The friend told Einstein, "But you are a product of the same educational system." Einstein retorted, "I am what I am, not because of it but in spite of it!" Education has become a means to gain self-importance and boost one's conceit.

Western education has spread so deep that culture is submerged out of view;

Western education has spread so deep that family bonds are loosened much;

Western education has spread so deep that Aryan wealth is frittered away;

Western education has spread so deep that gaudy speech and dress fascinate all.

It is considered wrong to talk in the mother's tongue; It is considered foolish to tread the ancient path; It is considered cheap to honour the Guru now. We have to be warned of these dangerous developments and prepare a generation of youth which can restore the glory of India in the coming years by enthusiastic and intelligent projects of loving service.

Self-reliance is the most desirable virtue

Bharath had unique goals for education in the past. You must relearn them and revive them. Vidhya, it was understood, caused splendour to emerge from the heart. Vidhya implied dedication for mutual service. Today, education does not impart the virtues of renunciation, selfless love and sympathy. Monetary return should not be the aim. Dependence on others should be avoided. Self-reliance is the most desirable virtue. One should always have the future of one's country in view and mould oneself into an ideal for others. The pity is, as soon as one secures a degree, he registers his name in the Employment Exchange and thereafter year in and year out, walks up and down that place, wasting his life in despair and distress. Narrow loyalties and limited visions inhibit student minds at the present time. Wherever students are, silence, serenity and security should prevail, for such an atmosphere alone promotes study. But, what do we find now? What prevails is fear, anxiety and restlessness! Those who come out of our colleges are not at all educated in the real sense of the term. Many behave even worse than their uneducated brethren. Students should be clear about their life-values, their true Reality and the ideals which should shape their lives. Now they are engaged more in judging and blaming others. When one has no knowledge of himself and what is good for him, how can one claim the right to correct or condemn others?

Who is the friend, who the foe? Who is the guru, who the pupil? Who is the poet, who the cast? Have you the head to surely know? If you haven't, do not resent the blame.

The chief goal of human existence

Unless, one is aware of one's powers and possibilities, principles and processes, one has no right to point his finger at the evils and excellences of others, or at the condition of his country or of the society in which he is born and bred. The end of education is CHARACTER. And, character consists of eagerness to renounce one's selfish greed. Persons without a good character cannot claim to be educated ones. At present, men of character are most needed. Our Organisation has decided to establish such colleges in order to promote the development of character through the educational process. You

must know that this is no commercial venture nor is it designed to foster personal reputation. We had to venture on this plan in order to realise and reveal the validity of the ancient ideal,

"Lokassamasthah Sukhino Bhavanthu" - "May all the worlds be happy."

The chief goal of human existence is the realisation of anandha (bliss) for mankind and the unity of all men in a world of Love. This is the higher learning which this Institute will teach. Service rendered to society is the sure road to prosperity. This is the lesson which it will teach, with the brotherhood of man, as its inspiration. When this Institute succeeds in this effort, it will be an example for other centres too and they too will strive towards the ideal. It will encourage transformations in moral, material, ethical, spiritual and political spheres too. Students who have to resuscitate the glory of the country, who have to protect and develop the country have to recognise and value these high ideals, for, the welfare and wealth of the country are based on their talents and virtues.

A Telugu proverb declares, "When the daughter-in-law is dark-skinned, the entire clan is dark." When students are good, the country will be good. As is the student, so are the people. Just consider all persons whom we revere today as elders and leaders have been, at one time, students like you. And, you too will replace them later. Make yourself ready therefore by utilising best the chances you have. Your education must make you self-reliant and selfconfident.

True humanness yearns for unity

On one occasion, a follower told Gandhi, "Independent India is your crown." Gandhi commented: "Independence is my crown; but, separation is my Cross." We have to grasp the sadness of that confession. Divisiveness has become the bane of the nation in all fields. The evil of separatism is infecting

the entire country and passions are rising sky high. True humanness yearns for unity. Man seeks the one in the many, unity in diversity. He should not break the unity into diversity. All limbs and organs have to work in unison in order to ensure health. The nation too is a body and the same rule applies to its various limbs and parts. The welfare of the nation depends on the welfare of the societies comprising it and the nation's welfare is proportionate to the welfare of its component States. So, we must promote human values at every stage. What is happening today is just birth, growth and death. Bharath has, through countless centuries, not only treasured the Vedas, the Puranas and other priceless spiritual teachings, but put them into practice, derived supreme delight in the process and, what is more, shared them with all mankind. Students of today must take a vow to continue the observance of those teachings and to drive the bliss they can confer.

The Thriveni and the Trinity

At first, our Shri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning had only the Vidhyagiri Campus College at Puttaparthi and the Anantapur College for Women. Gundu Rao, the Chief Minister of Karnataka, resolutely overcame the obstacles that had to be met and helped in adding the College at Brindavan, Bangalore, to this Institute. This day, the Institute has become the holy Thriveni - Anantapur, the Ganga; Bangalore, the Yamuna; and Puttaparthi, the Saraswathi. Ganga is the pure heart, the source of good works (karma). The Anantapur College has initiated service activities saturated with holy love. The women students visit villages and render various forms of rural service. The Bangalore College students cooperate lovingly in service in order to realise the Divine Athmic reality that is evident in all. The flower (the Anantapur College) emerged first; later, the fruit (the Bangalore College) developed; the fruit has become ripe and sweet at Prasanthi Nilayam. As a result, degrees which enshrine the sweetness are to be awarded here itself today.

This Trinity (Thrimurthi), the Three Eyes in the one face (Thrinethra), the Three Ages of Time (Thrikala), the Three Worlds in one Cosmos (Thriloka), the three Prongs of one Shula (Thrishula), the Three Modes of One Nature

(Thriguna), the Three Leaves in one Bilva (Thridala) are to be adored and symbolically offered today by the students. The Chief Minister of Karnataka has added to our anandha. He has ordered the incorporation of our Bangalore College into this Institute and given us such high anandha today. And, he has come personally to share the celebration and the joy he has himself ensured.

The Divine is recognised by gifted people in the vast, the magnificent, the beautiful, the mighty, the majestic, the awe-some. 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 supra-human potentialities, then, amazement draws the attention of all towards the Divine that is its 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.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

35. Awake! arise!

Date: 23 November 1981 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Birthday - 56

We can easily declare "Not this," "Not that." But who can declare of Brahman, "This is It?" For Brahman is Eternal Truth, Eternal Wisdom, Beyond the power of speech, To describe or communicate. Embodiments of Love! Sparks emanating from fire are neither different from it, nor identical with it. So, too the jeeva (individualised being) is neither different from Brahman, nor identical with it.

How many of those born are humans when born? How many grow into human status, after being born? How many who have lived as humans known the key to fight living and fight action? It is not by physical appearance that man is to be distinguished. The cotton tree bears long green fruits which resemble the mango; there are varieties of wild canes, but they are not all sugarcane; quartz may look like sugar candy but it is not edible. We should not be misled by form. The content is the important criterion, and the content is Divinity. Jeeva in the Body; God in the Heart, Both of them do sport some time, And then they part, each .from each. One there is, the puppeteer behind, And the puppets - Evil and Good. They play their pranks and go. Jeeva and Brahman become identical only when liberation is achieved. Until the sea is reached, the river remains as river. It has a different name and a distinct form. So too, the jeeva so long as it is involved with the physical case, the senses, the mind and the instruments of consciousness, it does not merge in God. It remains apart. The Atma is ever self-contained, self-sufficient. The material world exists on account of the other. The Atma is the basic Unity which assumes the appearance of diversity, the world. Its immanence is the unifying Truth, evident as the Divine in all beings. It is the duty of every one to live in the awareness of this Truth. He who lives on Earth must become Man at first. Then, he has to learn the way to God And discover the delight of the Spirit. This is the Rajayoga path that the Vedas teach.

Beware of your action belying your speech

The Atma illumines all objects; it needs no other source of illumination to shine. It is the seer of the Universe. For the Atma, the entire Cosmos is an object that is seen, even the eye that sees without the mind caring to see. And even the mind is an object, for the mind has to be prompted and kept alert by something else that wills and resolves. The warp and woof of the mind consist of "wills and wont's", of reaching out and drawing back." The reasoning faculty is itself a tool of the mind. The Atma has, as its apparent apparel, the body, the mind, reason, intellect and the inner tools of perception. Though it seems to be the centre of all activities and agitations, the Atma is unaffected. It is consciousness, pure and unsullied. The body and its accessories and equipment have birth and death, they develop and decline. But the Atma is free from change. The Eternal, with no birth and death, No beginning, no middle nor end; It does not die, it is not born, It can never be destroyed; It is the Witness, the Self, the Atma. The man who strives to attain the awareness of this Atma has indeed fulfilled the destiny of man. But, out of sheer ignorance, man today has no inclination towards it nor does he proceed in that direction. His march is not steady and straight. Shankaracharya once poured out his heart in prayer, to have three errors pardoned by God. "Lord", he said, "Knowing that you are beyond the intellect and even beyond imagination, I am committing the error of meditating on you. Knowing that you are indescribable by word, I am trying to describe your glory. Knowing that you are everywhere and I have been preaching so, yet I have come on pilgrimage to Kasi. My action belies my speech." Beware of this great error that is prevalent - saying one thing and endeavouring to achieve the opposite.

Man does not learn lessons the disasters convey

Man builds a frail nest on the sands, prompted by the delusion of certainty; a monstrous force upsets his hopes, without mercy. A sudden storm plucks the petals of a blossoming flower and scatters them on the dust beneath. Sunk in ignorance, man does not learn the lessons these disasters convey. He clings pathetically to his desires and designs. So the result he reaps is quite contrary to the plans he framed! He can get the success he planned for, only when his efforts and actions are in consonance with the results he seeks. The

supremest result of spiritual effort is "beyond the reach of speech, thought and imagination," as the Vedas declare. The Vedas use two words to indicate that goal: Nithya and Swagatha. Nithya means that which undergoes no change, in the past, present and future. Swagatha means that which, from one unchanging position, illumines the awareness (jnana prakash) for all from everywhere. The One sun, from where it is, spreads His splendour in all directions. The lamp, though on one spot, sheds light on the entire home. The Atma, likewise, is only ONE; but it awakens all by the light of wisdom.

The Atma-principle immanent in all things

The sun has two properties: Light and Heat. The Atma too can be viewed in two aspects: Swaruupa and Swabhava - its "It-ness" and "the effect of Its Itness." The innate truth or swaruupa is known as dharmi and its effect or quality or swabhava is known as dharma. When one is aware of the dharma, he can be said to have attained the Dharma-bhootha-jnana (the transformation resulting from the knowledge of the Atma Swabhava or dharma). The sublimation resulting from the knowledge of the essence or Itness or swaruupa of the Atma is Dharmi-bhootha-jnana.

The swaruupa of the Atma is Anu or atomic. Its dharma or quality is splendour. The Atma is described as Vibhu.

Subtler than the subtle anu, Vaster than the vastest, Witnessing all everywhere, Atma is Brahma, Brahma is Atma. This subtlest anu, Atma, is in all things and its quality is therefore evident everywhere. It occupies all, but it cannot be occupied by any other. The Atma-principle, the Brahman principle, is immanent in all things in the Universe, but nothing can penetrate it. Since the anu or the Atma which has that form is in all things, it is clear that all things are Atma! There is nothing in the Universe devoid of this anu force. This quality of the anu is cognisable in all things as the dharma. So, the dharmi or atma is omnipresent. The human body too is no exception to this. The atom or anu is immanent in it and so, we are the embodiments of Atma, of Athmic energy.

(Holding up a silver tumbler in His hand, Bhagavan said): To know this as a silver tumbler is knowledge of the dharma, knowledge of the effect; to know this is silver is knowledge of the dharmi. This handkerchief too has the anu characteristic. Burn it, it becomes ash; ash has atoms; the anu persists even when the substance takes another form. That is the reason why the Atma is announced as Eternal Truth by the Vedas.

Visualise the spiritual in the material

The body is composed of many substances but every substance is essentially anu in structure. Appearance and nomenclature may change through childhood, boyhood, adolescence, youth, middle age and senescence, but the dharmi, the Brahman-reality, shines in native splendour without being affected in the least. Ignoring this one Reality, the Truth, man is fully involved in illusory tangles.

Things are not so important; the transcendental truth of the things is of value. You must visualise the spiritual in the material, the gold in the jewels, the Divine in the diversity of character and conduct. Seek to know the Atma. All are equal in birth and in death. Differences arise only during the interval. The Emperor and the beggar are both born naked; they sleep equally silently, they both bow out without even leaving their new address. Then how can their reality be different? There can be no doubt on this score. All are basically the same. Who belongs to whom? How long does kinship endure? This attitude must not prompt you to escape your duties. The allotted duties have to be fulfilled by each individual. Brahman has no duties, no involvement. Though the world rests in Brahman, it is not affected in the least. The snake has poison fangs but it is not poisoned by it, the scorpion has poison in its tail but it causes no harm to the scorpion. When you see your own image in a hundred mirrors, you neither fear nor doubt. God knows that everything is His Image; He is not affected thereby. The Vedas distinguish three entities - the sea, the wave and the foam. The sea is the Kootastha, the Unchanging Base, the Omniself, the Paramatma. The wave that emerges from it and merges in it is the jeevatma (the particularised, individualised form of the Paramatma). The foam that forms on the crest of the wave and dissolves

in it is the dehatma (the bodyconsciousness, producing the illusion of distinction from both wave and sea, though essentially it too is the sea).

Man's love is narrow and centred in the ego

Since the Atma is in anu form in the body, body consciousness is termed dehatma consciousness. Jeevatma activates by its presence the individual consciousness. The Paramatma is the base on which everything rests. But, man believes he is the body and ignores the dehatma. He thinks he is a jeeva but ignores the jeevatma; he concludes that as an individual, he is separate; he ignores the Paramatma. Does the tree taste the sweetness of its fruit? Does the creeper inhale the fragrance of the flower? Does the book imbibe the inspiration of the poem? Does the pandit caught in activity experience the joy of detachment? But a guru who has the experience of Truth can direct you along the sadhanas. The guru can only inform and inspire; the disciple has to move and act. The mother speaks in order that the child might learn to speak. She cannot put her tongue into the child's mouth! It has to use its own. The scriptures can only inform and inspire. The wildness of the senses has to be controlled. Many try to do this by limiting the intake of the food, or inflicting, other types of punishment on oneself. But, these are perversions. The most effective means is the acquisition of Truth, the Truth of the Self. Since man is sunk in ignorance, the ignorance of the One Universal Eternal Atma that is the Truth in all beings, his love is narrow, restricted and centred in the ego. How then can he merge in Paramatma? Can an ant crawl over the waves of the sea? But, if he renounces his attachment to his 'narrowness' and resolves to join the sea, he gets the name and the taste of the sea itself. Seek to become vaster, the vastest, the sea, the Brahman.

Live in the light of the Truth

Unite - in the One. That is your mission, your destiny. Do not isolate yourself - "I for me," "He for him." If you hope to be happy while isolated, take it from me, it is a frail dream. Know that you are the Atma, just as everything else is. The Atma is self-luminous; you do not need a lighted lamp to discover a lighted lamp! You need no candle or lantern to see the moon. You can see the

moon through its own- rays. The Atma shines in all; you have only to open your eyes and know it. The scriptures declare, "All this is God," "God is in all." Mere repetition of these truths as slogans is of no benefit; experience the Truth, live in the light of the Truth. The guru initiated the disciple in the manthra "Shivoham" ("Shiva am I"). He continued repeating it constantly. Some one asked him what the manthra meant. He told him, "It means' I am Shiva" but he had still no faith in that fact. That questioner had heard of Shiva being wedded to Parvathi. So, he asked, "If you are Shiva, what of Parvathi?" The disciple was shocked. He had no courage to face the query and reply that Parvathi is the Shakthi-principle of the Shiva aspect of God. He had not become Shiva nor had he faith that he could become so. Embodiments of Love! The Divine has no special day, earmarked as Birthday. The day when you cultivate holy thoughts, attitudes and modes of behaviour in your hearts, the day when you decide upon some activity of pure unselfish service, that is the Day of Birth of the Divine for you. From that day, you can celebrate the Birthday as a festival.

Death stalks its prey
everywhere, at all times,
with relentless determination.
It pursues its victims
into hospitals, hill stations,
theatres, aeroplanes, submarines.
In fact, no one can escape it or
take refuge from its grasp.
God alone is the giver of life,
the guardian of life, and the goal of life.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

36. Two kingdoms with one king

Date: 22 November 1981 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Good motives yield good fruits; Bad motives yield bitten Madly pursuing "degrees" as your destiny Do not get bound in a servant's role; Have the glory of your country as the goal And master the art of working hard. Man's progress depends on strength of mind and purity of feelings. His mental condition and the actions which rise from his feelings, these two decide whether he will be bound or free, happy or miserable, rising or falling. The mind is the framer of all man's intentions and resolutions, his wills and wont's. These sankalpas motivate the senses and initiate activities that reveal their real nature. When a pebble is dropped into a well, the ripple causes further ripples and the entire surface is affected. So too, when an intention enters the mind, the waves it causes envelop the body and prompts many activities. When the will is pure, activities are also pure. When it is impure, the activities through which it expresses itself are also impure. So, one has to be vigilant. As soon as an intention is formed in the mind, examine it to find out whether it deserves to be put into action or whether it is unworthy to be acted upon. The intellect must be called in to conduct this examination. Intentions that arise in the mind have a great potency and vitality. Even after the death of the person, they can shape events, produce good or inflict evil. Why? They are the cause for the person getting embodied again and going through further lives! Therefore, one has to cultivate beneficial resolutions and maintain them. These are like swords. They can cut to pieces the weeds of evil thoughts, evil feelings and evil habits. As a consequence, good thoughts, good plans, good acts and good lines of action can grow freely.

Value of good intentions and good company

Students have to take particular care about one fact. When the mental resolutions take a bad turn and when you are then in the company of a bad one, your condition becomes worse on account of plus getting added to plus. The result is disaster. When your intentions and resolutions are good, and when you join the company of the good, you can progress faster. The

company of the good is like the noon-time shadow. It is short in the beginning but lengthens as the evening comes on. The company of the bad one is like the morning shadow. It is long when the day dawns, but becomes shorter as noon approaches. The comradeship and conversation of the undesirable appear sweet and profound in the early stages, but the effect is only pollution of minds and hearts.

Shankaracharya has emphasised the value of the company of the good to persons on the spiritual path, for it leads man to immortality. From Good company to No-company, From No-Company to No-Desire, From No-Desire to Un-moving Truth, From Un-moving Truth to Eternal Liberation. Evil company is easily secured; good company has to be sought and struggled for. To fall is quite easy; to climb requires strength of will. Therefore, man is tempted to choose the easier path. The objective world is an image, a reflection. When you take a shave standing before a mirror, you do not apply the razor to the image. You apply it to the actual face. God is reflected in the mirror (the objective world). You can see His image in man and beast and bird, in plant and tree and grass, in every cell and atom. But man is enamoured of the mirror and of the reflections, not knowing the original which is imaged therein. How can God shine in a heart that is darkened by bad thoughts and intentions?

Being good makes the surroundings too good

Vidhya (knowledge) must teach man to turn to God and discover that Nature too is God. Vidhya must awaken the consciousness latent in man and become aware of the Atma (Self) that underlies all its levels. Vidhya claims to increase man's knowledge. What is that knowledge worth? Without character, that knowledge is best cast into fire. The educated person is now more vicious, more greedy, more crafty than the uneducated! This knowledge encourages him to exploit and exterminate others. This knowledge pollutes and poisons the world. It destroys peace and prosperity all over the world. Words! Words! Words! The plethora of words! Nothing is practised; no one acts.

Today the student world is tossed in confusion. Not only in confusion but in

downright insanity. They wear white clothing; the hearts are still dark. Heads are full of evil thoughts; Ears are open for scandal tales; Eyes delight in peeping unseen; Minds crave for wicked plots; Reason pursues plans to cheat. When Vidhya perceives these in man, It will not stay a moment there. When this is the condition, how can one earn Vidhya? Of course, man's present situation and status are determined by his acts and thoughts in the past. The dog has to lap water with its tongue, even if it tries to quench its thirst at a flooded river. It cannot drink deep mouthfuls. Man has to formulate his plans, respecting the limitations he himself has imposed. Whether in a holy place or in vile surroundings, whether in an urban complex or in a rural homestead, his attitude and behaviour will only be in accordance with the bent of mind he has earned already. Frogs hop on the lotus but they do not inhale its fragrance or taste its nectar. But bees come from afar and imbibe both So the question of our reaching out to God depends on the fashioning our mind has already received. But man can modify his mental condition by means of constant practice of righteous actions. When we are good, our surroundings too tend to be good. When we hold a rose in the hand, the group around us also gets the fragrance.

Students should not disappoint their parents

Students, you must be ever on the move, ever alert on the road to goodness, usefulness and happiness. Do not allow the slightest blemish to enter your tender, bright minds. Do not allow any evil to rub you of the sacred chance you have secured to consecrate your lives. Your parents are looking forward with great hope that you will become scholars, occupy high positions, earn great fame and lead noble lives. Do not disappoint them. In the past, when the years of study were over and the scholar was leaving for home, he was advised by the Guru to revere the mother, the father, the teacher and the guest as God Himself is revered. Nowadays, the Convocation, where the students are awarded their degrees, has become a riotous rabble. Students do not bring joy to their parents. What a great calamity! Students of our college must cultivate commendable virtues, mould themselves into ideal men and women, promote the happiness of their parent, and be examples to others through their holy thoughts and deeds.

Seva to be rendered to the rural folk

Old students of the college should proceed to their own places and enter the professions suited to their skills and aptitudes. But, it is your duty, wherever you are, to hold on firmly to the disciplines implanted in you at this college. Calling yourselves members of the Kingdom of Sathya Sai, and old students of the college, but behaving contrary to its ideals and rules will mean that you are bringing disrepute on your Alma Mater! Do not yield to the temptations that the outer world places before you. Maintain untarnished the character and conduct that you have adored. Old students who are now members of the staff of the college at Puttaparthi and Brindavan (Bangalore) arranged a Polio Rehabilitation Camp as well as an Eye Operation Camp at Puttaparthi last month. You bore the major brunt of these camps and organised them very successfully. This is an important aspect of seva which the old students can render to the rural population.

Villagers cannot afford to proceed to the towns for medical treatments. They have no money to meet the heavy expenses involved. Seeing their plight, members of the Kingdom of Sathya Sai invited doctors, arranged for the operations, provided accommodation in their college, nursed them to normal health, provided nourishing food to the patients as well as their kith and kin who came to attend on them, and made the medical personnel grateful for the opportunity to render service.

Old students of the Women's College at Anantapur have an Association working on similar lines. They have named it the Kingdom of Mother Sai. They too are taking on village after village as centres for their educational and health service activities. Girls build walls, put up roofs and thatch houses in order to provide shelter for the homeless! The village folk are struck with admiration and amazement at the skill and enthusiasm the students evince. They visit slums and, with the co-operation of the hutment-dwellers, clean the areas. They move into bazars and markets and exhort the people to share with them the joy of cleansing the byelanes and drains. They are trying to provide electric lights to villages which are plunged in darkness when the sun

sets. By such seva they are giving great anandha to Swami. I bless them that they may offer seva in even greater measure, so that Swami can give them greater anandha.

Dharma will guard those who observe Dharma

These activities cannot be taken up and fulfilled by spirit of service alone. They require funds too. And, they are finding it by utilising a portion of the salaries they get as teachers. In appreciation of this, this day, the Central Trust is allotting a hundred thousand rupees each for the Kingdom of Sathya Sai and the Kingdom of Mother Sai. They will, I am sure, render excellent service to the rural folk around their colleges, for seva is the most urgent and effective sadhana.

What we find in our country today, however, is something different. No sooner do they finish their studies, students struggle to get out of the country to some overseas countries like Iran or Iraq clamouring for "money," "money." Mammon possesses them and ruins their lives. Our students do not allow themselves to be so enslaved. They know that so long as they are intent on good deeds of seva, they will not be deserted. Dharma will guard those who observe dharma.

37. Parama prema

Date: 25 December 1981 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Christmas

The Lord is Love, His Form is Love, All beings are Love, Love saves and serves, Through Love alone can Good arise. Love reveals the God in all. Love binds one person to another. Love attaches one thing to another. Without Love the Universe is naught. The highest Love makes us aware of the Lord in every one. The Lord is equally present in all. Life is Love; Love is Life. Without God, deprived of God, nothing and nobody can exist. We live on and through the Divine Will. It is His will that operates as Love, in each of us. It is He who prompts the prayer, "Let all the worlds be happy." For, He makes us aware that the God we adore, the God we love, the God we live by, is in every other being as Love. Thus Love expands and encompasses all creation. Looking a little closer, we discover that life itself is Love. They are not two but one. Love is the very nature of life, as burning is the nature of fire, or wetness of water, or sweetness of sugar. We tend a plant only when the leaves are green; when they become dry and the plant becomes a life-less stick, we stop loving it. Love lasts as long as life exists. The mother is loved as long as there is life in her; when life departs, we bury her without the least compunction. Love is bound with life. In fact, Love is Life. The person with no Love to share is as bad as dead. This is the reason why love expands in an ever widening circle. Love is the fruit of life. The fruit has three components' the skin, the juicy kernel and the seed. To experience the fruit, we have first to remove the skin. The skin represents egoism, the 'I' feeling, the excluding, limiting, individualising principle. The seed represents 'selfishness', the 'mine' feeling, the possessive, the greedy, desireful principle. This too has to be discarded. What remains is the sweet juice, the rasa, which the Upanishads describe as Divine, the Love Supreme. Parama prema is Jyothi, Amrutham, Brahma: "Apo Jyotheraso amrutham Brahma." Everyone has the right to partake of this nectarine prema and to share it with others. No one is excluded on the basis of race, caste, creed or place of origin. The only condition is: "Have the skin and the seed been removed?"

Give Love to God and be liberated from worry

When the Love Principle is known and practised, man will be free from anxiety and fear. Imagine your visiting a friend in a city and planning to stay with him for ten days. You have some money with you, and you are afraid to carry it about with you. Now, if you have handed over the purse to your friend for safe-keeping, you can happily go round, to all the places in the city and suburbs you long to visit. You can roam through the busiest market, with no trace of fear. The purse you had is Love; give it all to God. He will liberate you from worry, anxiety and fear.

Through japa, dhyana and seva sadhana, you have to cultivate Love towards God. Take Dhruva, for example. He prayed and practised austerities in order to induce God to grant him the rulership of the Kingdom. But when God appeared as Vishnu before him, he said, "Lord! I do not desire the Kingdom. I want you and you only." Similarly in the preliminary stages, one prays for worldly boons and material gain, but as thoughts get clarified and purified, one desires just one boon from the Lord - He Himself! For, God is the entity closest to man, dearest to man. Your mother and father might be a little afar but God is right with you, in you. Even if you do not love Him, He will not depart from you or move afar. "Anoraniyan" (smaller than the atom) say the Vedas. He becomes "Mahatho maheeyan," expanding beyond the cosmos and filling all with grace. In every cell. He will be in you. You can earn this awareness through intense Love.

Good works always provoke the wicked

Jesus was compassion (karuna) come in human form. He spread the spirit of compassion and conferred solace on the distressed and the suffering. Noticing the torture of birds and beasts at the Temple in Jerusalem, he reprimanded the vendors and drove them out of the precincts. He drew upon himself the anger of the priests. Good works always provoke the wicked. But one should not falter or fear when opposition obstructs. The challenge gives joy; it evokes hidden sources of strength; it brings down Grace to reinforce the effort. Pleasure springs during the interval between two pains. One has to struggle with difficulties in order to taste the delight of victory. Jesus was the

target for many mighty obstacles and he braved them all. As a result, his name and story and message are shedding splendrous light all over the world now. Not Jesus only, every Prophet, Messenger of God, Teacher of Truth and Spiritual Leader had to wade through ridicule, neglect and persecution. Though a diamond is cast in a dust bin, its lustre remains; its price will not diminish. Though a sweet pumpkin grows on a thorny fence, its taste remains; its attraction will not diminish. Even if a peacock's egg is hatched in a fowl-roost, its charm remains and its nature does not change. The Divine, though it moves among all the sundry, can never be affected or deflected. Envious folk heaped insults on Jesus. Even among his disciples, some betrayed him and deserted him. Self-dominated people turn envious at greatness and goodness. But since prema, the prema of Jesus, had no trace of self in it, Jesus was unafraid. The loveless are enveloped in fear. Love instills courage and promotes adventure. It delights in daring. If you follow the Master, you can face the devil, fight to the end and finish the game.

Love must bind all believers together

Jesus was Love. Sathya Sai too is Love. That explains the gathering of Christians of all sects, which we see here. In Rome today, Catholics gather to celebrate the Advent of Jesus. The Protestants celebrate it by themselves in their churches. The Jews are not welcomed anywhere. But, in the Presence of Sathya Sai, all are equally welcome. The Jews arraigned Jesus and demanded that he should be punished; in this Presence, Jews are adoring that very Jesus. The prema of Sathya Sai has transformed and transcended those memories. It made them realise that there is only one caste, the caste of Humanity, there is only one religion, the Religion of Love. A few moments ago, Al Drucker spoke to you on Jesus Christ. He got the courage and the wisdom to offer homage to Christ, because of the impact of Swami's Presence. He understands that there is only one God and that God is omnipresent. Names and forms are different naturally; but they are all aspects of the ONE. Love must bind all believers together; not only believers but non-believers too must be loved and served as His images. Love must be manifested as Service, Seva. Seva must take the form of food for the hungry, solace for the forlorn, consolation for the sick and the suffering. Jesus wore himself out in

such Seva. The heart full of compassion is the temple of God. Jesus pleaded for Compassion. Compassion was His Message. He was sorely distressed at the sight of the poor. This day, Jesus is worshipped but His teachings are neglected. Sai is being worshipped but His teachings are neglected. Every where, pomp, pageantry, hollow exhibitionism! Lectures, Lectures, Lectures! No activity, no love, no seva. Heroes while lecturing, zeros while putting what is said into practice. Develop Compassion. Live in Love. Be Good; do Good and see Good. This is the way to God.

God has endowed
you with hunger and
He supplies the food.
He has endowed you
with illness, and
He grows the species you need.
Your duty is to see that you get the
proper hunger and the right illness
and use the appropriate food or drug.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

38. The Shivam night

Date: 14 January 1982 / Location: Brindavan / Occasion: Sankranthi

A tree can be trained to stand up straight; A stone can be chipped to a charming form; A mind? Can it be so chipped and trained? Answer if you can! The need is great. Embodiments of Love! This day is reckoned holy all over this land. It is named Maha-Shivarathri. 'Rathri' means 'darkness-filled'. Of every twenty-four hours, we are experiencing this half the time. But this night is Shiva Night, the Night of Shiva, the Night that grants Mangala - the boon of blessedness. And, the Mangala is Maha, great, unlimited. Maha or limitless blessedness can be conferred only by the Divine Source; it cannot be acquired from worldly achievements and triumphs. It is dependent on the Immutable Triad, on Sathyam, Shivam, Sundaram.

It assumes all forms, this Shantham! It assumes all names, this Shivam! It is Sath-Chith-Anandh, this Only One! It is Sath yam-Shivam-Sundaram! The mountain peaks we see are rocks; the ground on which we stand is soil; the trees are wood; our bodies are flesh and bone. But, man manages to deal with these by attaching labels of names and imposing understandable forms on them. Really speaking they are only permutations of the five fundamental elements - Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Sky. Everything and every being is but a formation, a transformation, a vikara. But at the very central core of every entity, Shivam is present as Effulgence.

The tragedy is, as Karunyananda said, all are sunk in the sea of samsar, of flux and fear, of conflict and discontent. The world appears dual according to our likes and dislikes. If we like a thing, it is good for us. If we dislike it, it is bad. When you like a person, everything he does, even if it is bad, is pleasing; when you dislike him, even the good he does strikes you as bad. So the sages advise that you must trek through a dark jungle alone and come out safe. They dissuade you from braving the same journey with a companion. No one can determine who is likable or when you may be bothered by fear when you go in the dark. But a person who dislikes you or whom you dislike is to be avoided.

Search for Truth has to proceed inward

Harmful tendencies and thoughts multiply fast in the mind of man, as fast as white ants, unless he establishes himself in his Sathyam-Shivam-Sundaram essence. Then, no one can dislike you nor can you dislike any other. Even those who injure and insult you have to be forgiven and loved, for, love alone can shower anandha. The spring of love is in one's own core. The source of anandha is your innermost reality. But, like the man who searched everywhere for his glasses and found them at last on his own nose, man too becomes aware that the search for Truth has to proceed in the inward direction within himself. While describing the benefits of group bhajan, Karunyananda said that its effect is like keeping banana bunches packed inside a smoke filled room to make them yellow, ripe and sweet. But only mature bunches can thus ripen and sweeten. The rest might change colour but their taste will not. Spoiled milk cannot become good yogurt. Every individual of the group has to sing sincerely and with a longing to visualise God. Bhajan should not be imitative, mechanical or forced. Then only can bhajan expand the heart, reveal the Truth and arouse the springs of Love. The entire Cosmos is composed, according to the sages, of only five elements. The first of these is what we call the Earth. Though it appears dull and inert, it is resonant with Consciousness, Chaithanya, Energy. The second is Water. It is vibrant with vitality (prajnana). For example, when one is prostrate with thirst or weakness and is apparently unable even to react to his surroundings, a cup of cold water can restore him to activity. The third element is Fire. Fire is luminous with warmth, wakefulness and attention (jagratha). The fourth is Air. Air carries the life-principle, the anima, the prana. Air is not needed when there is no life in a thing. Prana is the image of the air principle. The last is Space (Akasha). It is the expression of OM, the Pranava.

Be like children of God, seeking Grace

Every being has all these elements in its composition. This is the reason why the sages asserted, "Ihswara sarva-bhoothanam." So every being has to manifest activity, vitality, vigilance, watchfulness and the awareness of the

OM in outer and inner space. Man has the unique capacity to know his destiny and destination. He should not fall into the whirlpool of desires and be carried down into the depths of grief. When breath starts to gasp, hair turns grey; teeth begin to drop, and eyes grow dim, man's greed to quench the clamour of the senses increases, instead of decreasing. Sathsang (holy company) is the only remedy, to make man live as man. Cruelty, jealousy, egotism, ingratitude - these should not emanate from Man, the crown of creation. Mutual help and compassion - these should serve man as his two eyes. Embodiments of Love! Do not entangle yourselves in kinship that lasts only for a day or two, a span of months or years. Attach yourselves to God who is your closest kin, today, tomorrow and always. Where exactly are you now? Reflect on that. Each one will secure only what is proportionate to what one has renounced, however long or however near you might be. Ticks attach themselves to the udder which is full of sweet nourishing milk. But, ticks secure only the blood of the cow, not the milk. The calf which comes skipping from afar drinks the milk. You have to be like the calves, like children of God seeking Grace. Do not become ticks that cling close but do not long for milk. Near, nearer, nearer! That does not help. Become dear, dearer, dearer. That is the proper sadhana.

Man can be happy if he develops togetherness

The situation in India and in the world today is: "Evarikivare, Yamuna theree" (Each for each on Yamuna beach). The fingers of one hand do not feel that they belong to each other. Four members of a single home trudge along four separate tracks. There is no togetherness. How happy can man be if he develops togetherness! Can you eat a meal with a single finger? When the five fingers work in unison, the stomach is filled in five minutes! When ten men work together, the task is done. So, no attachment should be developed, no wish is to be welcomed, nothing is to be sought for, no defeat is to be taken to heart, without delving deep into the consequences.

Thyagaraja advises that even the Name of God has to be resorted to after full understanding. The mind is a Lotus; it needs madhu to grow through and Kara to blossom under. Madhu means water, and Kara means "the rays of the

Sun." As a matter of fact, the Sun lifts up the water from the ground and pours it down again. The bees that are drawn to the Lotus flower are also called Madhu Kara; they carry away the flower and the fragrance. 'Madhu means 'Sweetness,' 'honey.' It is another word for prema. When the evil and the blemish in man are cleansed by the waters of love, the heart can bloom and gaze at the glory of God. Or else, man has to lie low in the slush, weighed down by dirt.

Education must feed the roots of faith

Students! The life around us teaches us many lessons. When the cow delivers a calf, the baby is encased in placental matter. The mother starts licking off the matter and cleansing the child. Its prema is so overpowering. Then the new-born calf rises on its legs as soon as it is freed from dirt! Just think of this, dear students! When the pashu (animal) does this so lovingly and so thoroughly in order to help the child to rise, can Pashupathi (the Lord of living beings) refrain from cleansing His children in order to help them rise and progress? When the 'go' (cow) is so eager to save the child and help it to run about in joy, how can Gopala (the Lord as Cowherd) allow you to remain dirty and handicapped? Be firm in this faith in God. This is the gain that you must secure from your studies. Education must feed the roots of faith. Vishwasa (faith) is shwasha (breath). Faith lives and thrives on Love. Prema is prana. Prana must charge bhajan or worship with faith. Faith prompts sweetness in your thoughts, words and deeds. The Uttharayana (the Northward Path) that begins today, must be marked by resolution to stick to the Godward path. Turn the mind towards God; that will keep it strong and sweet. Thyagaraja said that if he is armed with the Grace of Rama, the planetary missiles can never injure him. Purandhara Dasa, another great saint, asked, "What are eyes for?" and answered the question himself, "To visualise the Lord," and adds eyes that do not yearn to see You are black balls; ears that do not hear Your praise are narrow mountain caves where jackals live; the tongue that does not relish the repetition of Your Name can only croak like a frog." This is the period of life when you must cultivate faith and draw strength from the Grace of God. There are three types of people who are involved in work. The first can be named 'Non-doers' (Akarmins). They plan very pompously and

pride themselves on their talents but, at the first sign of failure or discouragement, they get so dejected that they give up all effort. They renounce all sadhana, even attending bhajan sessions. They are afflicted with the Thamasik (ignorant) nature. Keep away from such people; you should not allow even their shadow to fall upon you lest your enthusiasm is affected.

Sathya Sai's Shankranthi message

The second type is "All-doer" (Vikarmi). He plunges into work, without discriminating whether it is good or bad. He is too enthusiastic and too active. His is the Rajasik (passionate) nature. The third type is the "Good Doer, the God-Doer," the Sathwik (faithful) worker (Sukarmi). He does work with devotion and discipline, as his duty to the Divinity resident in him. He offers his work as worship and is content when he has done it to the best of his capacity. Man has taken birth, in order to suffer and purify himself in the crucible of life. His karma (work) caused his birth. The feelings of 'like and dislike' urged him to engage in work. He 'liked' and 'disliked' as a result of the impact of the environment he was in. That impact was helped by reason and rationalisation. They were moved by the influence of duality. Duality was the product of ignorance. If ignorance is overcome, one is in Bliss thereafter. Arjuna suffered from this basic ignorance and when Krishna granted him the light of wisdom, he was cured. Have faith in the Truth that can remove delusion. You cannot be argued into faith, nor can you derive it from books. You can know and experience Truth when you cleanse your heart and broaden it through seva and Love. Bheeshma, the unrivalled hero, the guardian of the cousins who fought among themselves in Kurukshetra, the great Vedhic scholar and sadhak, the paragon of virtue, the person who reached the acme of renunciation, postponed his moment of death for 54 days in order that he might pass into the heavenly regions. By drawing his last breath as Uttharayana dawned, he recited "Krishna, Krishna" and merged in Godhead. That was the measure of his devotion. Take this as my Shankranthi Message to you seek God in every one and you will be rewarded.

You can purchase drugs, but you cannot purchase health. You can purchase a bed but you cannot purchase sleep. You might employ even the most expert doctors, but you cannot ward off health. So, realise the goal of life, without delay.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

39. Offer the vessel bright

Date: 22 January 1982 / Location: Chennai

Sinking and rising, struggling in the Sea Of tasteless, futile, birth-death waves? Do you not see the Bhakthi Boat that the Lord In His compassion, has brought to rescue you? Life is a precious gift, sustained by breath. But there are victories to be won during life, sometimes at the cost of life itself. However many successes man wins, he pictures before his mind many more and advances from one venture into another. He has no santhrupti (satisfaction) in spite of all his achievements. He relishes new and newer wants and never reaches fulfilment. Combined effort is the natural mode of living. Co-operation among individuals grouped as a society guarantees security and stability. It is as the sages call it, Shri Rama Raksha (protection), the mark of Divine Grace. The surest sign of man's awareness of his Divine Nature is the recognition by him of the bond of kinship with other men. The bond of kinship has now snapped, and, as a result, life has been rendered meaningless. The evil spirits of greed and pride, of envy and hatred, are executing their demonic dance in the hearts of mankind. Men are not able to appreciate the value of the air they breathe, of the sun's rays that illumine the world, the drops of rain that sustain life, and the subtle power that underlies every object in nature. Humans have become low-minded and people who have dedicated their lives to high ideals are nowhere to be seen. What needs to be done today is "fostering men who are determined to stand and suffer, even risking their lives, for realising the holy goals of peace and prosperity for the entire world."

Learn from Mother Earth the lesson of service

The phrase "our country" denotes not the dumb ground but the living beings thereon with whom you are involved. You must grasp this fact. You are ignoring this truth today. Each one must regard the prosperity and joy of others in the community as one's own. Then only will India or any other country deserve that prosperity and joy. One's happiness is bound up with the happiness of Society. One's physical, mental and intellectual strength and

skills have to be dedicated, not merely to one's progress, but equally to the progress of society. Members of the Units of the Sathya Sai Organisation must try to benefit themselves and the society through such service. Use the strength, skills, and spirit of service for such work. A machine gets rusted if it is not put to use; the human machine too gets rusted if it is not put to constant meaningful work. The pulse is not the correct indicator of your being alive; work, activity that is the evidence and the value of real living.

Krishna declares in the Bhagavad Geetha, "There is nothing in the three worlds that I am obliged to do, nothing unaccomplished that I have to accomplish, but I am still engaged in karma (activity)." For, if God is inactive, the Cosmos will grind to a halt. Man's role is to translate his strength into activity along the path of duty. The young follow the lead of elders. So, elders must consistently hold on to ideals and work towards their realisation so that mankind can attain prosperity and peace.

Character is power more than knowledge

What or who is God? When the answer to this question is sought, one discovers that God is the Glory immanent in Nature. Nature must indeed be laughing at the sterile frenzies, the endless pursuits, the countless miseries to which man submits himself to, in his search for achieving the unachievable! Man must search in Nature for the sacred lessons it holds for him; then, he can understand how deep, how everlasting is the Truth it can convey. The earth rotates on its axis at a speed of thousand miles an hour. Consequently we have alternations of day and night, which helps us to live on this globe. Besides, it moves around the sun at the rate of 66,000 miles an hour, causing the seasons which bring rains for crops and vegetation which sustain human life. The earth does not profit in the least by these rotations but man exists and prospers on account of them. Mother Earth teaches her children this lesson of service and sacrifice. Good conduct has to be the main key to the life of man. It is the 'way of living,' the path of virtue, that keeps one in the memory of people long after death. If it is not the virtuous way, the person is as good as dead. It is often declared that knowledge is power. No. No. Character is power. Nothing can be more powerful on earth than character,

Riches, scholarship, status, authority are all frail and flimsy before it. A strong virtuous character cannot be earned from guide books; it is earned only through intimate involvement with society. There is no dearth of books today; nor is there lack of gurus. Educational institutions spread knowledge all around, To all appearances, the Sun of Knowledge (Jnana Bhaskara), is showering His rays in plenty. But, one can hardly notice those who have imbibed the nectarine wisdom thus offered and dwell in the ecstasy it can confer. The thick binding, encasing the books, seems to prevent wisdom from emerging. The mountain range with lust, anger, hatred, envy and pride as the peaks, shuts out the splendour of the Sun. Charity, compassion, fortitude, sympathy, and sacrifice, arise from the higher levels of consciousness while opposite tendencies breed in the lower levels. The latter cannot confer anandha; they can only plunge us in grief.

See Nature as a Divine loving entity

No one with the higher qualities or virtues or expressions of love is evident today. So, it has become impossible to discover 'man' among the inhabitants of the world. Man, Man, Man! What are the characteristics of God made Man? No man knows what they are, no man demonstrates them in life. Is anger a human quality? Or, pride? Or, self centredness? No. They reveal the animal, though people infected with these faults gain currency as 'men.' Man must reveal by his conduct that he has evolved higher; he should not inflict pain nor should he be affected by pain. Man is not merely flesh and bone. A gramophone record is not merely a circular plate with grooves on. Each groove looks like another groove, lines all over! In every groove are hidden voices, words, songs. In man, too, there is latent the possibility of all types of karma. Every object, event or experience of ours since childhood lies dormant in us. The rivers, mountains and stars we have looked at are all in us. We have in us the past, the present and even the future. We are all that was, is, and will be. Man sees Nature as cruel, because his mind is cruel. Clear the eye, purify the mind and you can see that Nature is a Divine loving entity. Do not seek faults and vices. Seek the right, the correct and the good. Develop sympathy and compassion. Cultivate vairagya, the attitude of detachment.

You may doubt whether there are any who have achieved vairagya (renunciation). Let me tell you there are not only a few, but many. They have no sense of I and Mine; they dedicate all acts to God and free themselves from attachment. To feel there are none is self-deception. Out of ten evil persons there will surely be at least one who can be guided into the good path and out of ten such, at least one will accept God and out of ten such, at least one will be eager to live in accordance with Divine Law.

Offer your body to God as pure as He gave you

In fact, the Cosmos is activated by one single Chaithanya (Consciousness, Intelligence). It is the Suuthradhari (Director). Man has only a role to play (pathradhari). That intelligence, the omniwill, urges all men to play roles decided on by it, and to think and work as it directs. The scriptures declare that the Body is the Temple and the I is the God installed therein. Or, you may take it that the body is a vessel for cooking food, given on loan to us for use, while hosting a festival. Can we return it to God, who has loaned it, in a worse condition? Should we not scrub it and clean it and return it bright and free from rust and dust? When the festival of life began and we received the body from Him, it was innocent of evil. It was pure, fresh and bright. Using it we have inflicted dents, leaks and other signs of damage, through lust, greed, hatred, anger and envy. Only the lowest would offer it back in that condition. Offer it as pure as He gave it; you can then be most worthy of Grace. Remember always the high purpose for which you have come into this world, equipped with potentialities to acquire and utilise all levels of knowledge. Have faith in Divine Grace, the grace of Gopal on the go (cow), of Pashupathi on pashu (bound animal). Wear the Garland of Devotion Gems round your neck and saturate your thought, word and deed with Divine Love.

The mind must become bhakthimaya (saturated with devotion); the intelligence must be transformed into jnana-deepthi (the splendour of universal wisdom), or jnana (divine knowledge); the body must be a willing and efficient instrument for sad dharmacharana (the practice of

righteousness).

Such a life is indeed the crown and glory of humanity. The rest are contaminated, contained, caged lives!

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

40. Bhakthi, stage by stage

Date: 23 January 1982 / Location: Chennai

Lord Shridhara is the embodiment of Love. He lives in Love. Love is His Divine form. His Love is pervading everywhere in the Universe. Love is the "Tharaka Manthra" (holy formula for liberation). God cannot be understood without this Supreme Love. How can you get good thoughts, without comprehending this Love, which is God?

If something gets rated, you can clean it. If there is husk over a seed, you can remove it. You can even remove ignorance from a normal individual. But it is not possible to correct a fool! You are all brought here today by bonds of Love. It is only Love that binds one person to another and one thing to another. The entire world is filled with Love. Life devoid of Love can be described as lifeless.

In Love, there are three levels. The first is the best and the highest level (utthama). Men at this level have full faith and belief that God, who is the embodiment of eternal bliss, is present in all beings without exception. They will have the feeling that Ishwara is present everywhere and in everything in the form of Love. For such people, "Adveshta Sarvabuathanam" will be the feeling. They see nothing but love in every being. They see no difference between their "own" people and others. Persons filled with such supreme love will experience bliss. Those at the second level care only for their own good and the welfare of their own kith and kin, their comfort and happiness. They do not care about others, about their merits or their faults. These people can be termed as madhyama, or middle level persons.

Lowest level of love to be avoided

There are others who don't feel happy if they see others happy; in fact they grow jealous of others' happiness. They will always be looking for faults in others and criticising them. They cannot tolerate other people being happy. Thereby they ruin all aspects of love in themselves. Just as a crow feels

jealous when a cuckoo sings well, these people feel jealous at others' attainments. Just as the crow ridicules the swan, these people ridicule good people. They are in the lowest level of love (adhama). Although love is present in all these three, they enjoy, experience and use this love in different ways. In every tree of life, love is present in the form of sweet juice in its fruit. But this is covered by a skin called desire. Hence we are not aware of the sweet juice in the fruit. Only those persons who remove the skin of desire and throw away the hard seeds of anger and jealousy, can enjoy the sweet juice of the fruit of Love. When one throws away seeds of likes and dislikes and removes the skin of desire, he can enjoy Parama Prema - Divine Love, which is Rasa Swaruupa (sweetness personified). The Upanishads say that this Rasa (tasty juice) is Brahman. With a view to experiencing this Bliss, they prescribe nine types of Devotion. Bhakthi is described in common parlance in many ways, but the Vedas say that there are three types of Bhakthi: Bhouthika, Ekantha and Ananya Bhakthi. These have been described in different ways and various commentaries also have been written about them.

Shravana (listening), manana (digesting what was learnt) and nidhidhyasana (practising what was preached and learnt), the rituals connected with yajna, the visiting of various kshetras (places) of pilgrimage, and various types of service such as charity (dana and dharma) are all classified as Bhouthika Bhakthi (devotion related to created or living beings). Japa, thapas and sandhya rites are all connected with this first type of Bhakthi. Constructing temples, consecrating idols, worshipping in temples and rituals connected with these are also Bhouthika Bhakthi. These are all connected with the 'jada' (the physical).

The second step in the path of devotion

Even though one may be immersed in meditation and experiencing visions of such idols, these have to be classified under this first type since all these experiences arise out of the body, mind and intellect, which are transient and not of a permanent nature. This body has to perish and hence experiences arising out of this body will also disappear with the body. Nevertheless, this type of Bhakthi is necessary as the first step. Travelling on this path, we

should slowly march to the second step of Ekantha Bhakthi. Many people think that Ekantha Bhakthi means dedication to one idol or form and experiencing mental vision of that one Form, exclusively in privacy. This is not correct. Ekantha Bhakthi is a subtle state achieved by effective control of the mind and experiencing one's inner self (Antharatma). It is not correct to think that control of the mind means holding it steady without wandering around. To be able to cleanse the mind of impure thoughts is the correct meaning of 'Ekantha.' This is a sadhana (spiritual discipline) to be practised in a lonely atmosphere, in a quiet place free from noise or disturbance of any kind. The best time for this practice is from 3.00 A.M. to 5.00 A.M. which is called Brahmamuhurtha. Selecting a particular time in this period, closing the door, contacting no one else, one should sit quietly and adjust the rate of inhaling and exhaling of breath. It is important that the pace of inhaling and exhaling must be the same. By gradual practice, the number of breaths per minute must be reduced from eight or ten a minute to two or one. You can take your own time; proceed gradually in the process of reduction of the number of times of inhaling and exhaling. Because of the flow of thoughts in the mind (Sankalpa and Vikalpa - mental resolves and doubts), the breathing also gets affected and disturbed.

Importance of purity and steadiness of mind

To control the breath in this manner and direct it in the proper path, there is a very effective method that can be followed. The tip of the tongue must gently touch the rear of the teeth. When it is kept in this position, the thoughts in the mind become less and one can concentrate on the control of the breath. When you control the sankalpa and vikalpa of the mind and detach yourself from thoughts of the body and things around you, you come to the stage when the mind is without thoughts and desires, when it can concentrate on God. In the state of Ekantha Bhakthi, the mind is dissolved and is in a still stage. God is everywhere in everyone; when the mind is rid of all impurities, God's presence alone is experienced by people with Ekantha Bhakthi. If you take a small tumbler with very little water and place it before the sun, you can see the reflection of the sun in the water. Though the quantity of water is very little, because it is steady and clear, you can see the reflection. On the

other hand, if you try to look into the vast expanse of water in the sea nearby, you don't see the reflection because the water is always moving as tides and waves. Nor can you see the reflection of the sun in a well where the water is muddy.

Even in the sacred river Ganges, you can't see the reflection of the sun because it is ever flowing, though the water may be pure and the bed sandy. Similarly, God will not be reflected in a mind full of likes and dislikes and desires or a mind that is disturbed with impure thoughts. If you want to realise the presence of God in the beings, you must recognise the importance of purity and steadiness of mind. When the mind is pure and steady Divinity will be resplendent everywhere.

The march to the final stage of devotion

To experience Divinity in this way Ekantha Bhakthi alone will help you. On any other path you may experience visions of different types. These are nothing but hallucinations and products of imagination. Without virtuous qualities, you cannot control your mind. How can you build a house without brick and mortar? To achieve purity and steadiness of mind, earnest practice is essential. Ekantha Bhakthi is not obtained by locking yourself in a room and worshipping an idol with devotion. This can only be called Ekaki Bhakthi; after all, the idol is only a created object. You should experience your Atma Swaruupa and not a created object. You should have a vision of the Primordial Divinity, whose reflection is your Atma. Worshipping an idol is necessary as a first step. But do not devote all your lifetime on the first step! By continuous training and practise of Ekantha Bhakthi, you will be able to know the 'Aatma' within yourself. The Atma is in you. You can't see it because of impurity and waves of likes and dislikes hovering round. When you remove these impurities, the mind rests in a pure state. At that stage, if you turn your eye inward you will have the vision of Divinity, the 'Sakshathkara'. This is the Ekantha Bhakthi we read about in books. Ekantha Bhakthi is realised only when you turn the vision inward, away from sensory objects and experience the pure Atma. Ekantha Bhakthi is anthar dhrishti or inner vision, while Bhouthika Bhakthi is bahir dhrishti or outer vision. After earning Bhouthika

Bhakthi and Ekantha Bhakthi, Ananya a Bhakthi will be easy to attain. We have a feeling that Ananya Bhakthi consists in surrendering to God, saying: "I have no saviour other than you." We think that simply by declaring "You are mother, You are father, You are friend and You are my saviour, Oh God of Gods," we have surrendered and are practising Ananya Bhakthi. This is only oral Ananya Bhakthi. Real Ananya Bhakthi comes from deep inquiry into the reality of the inner Self.

If lost in doubt one cannot achieve success

The experience you have in the waking state and the things you see in the dream and deep sleep states are found to be illusory and transitory when you inquire into them deeply. After such inquiry, the Ananya Bhakthi will come to the conclusion that in all the three states whatever one sees is illusory. He will find that the 'I' which is present in all the three states, is only the Atma and that there is no difference between this Atma and the Paramatma. If the thought of the body is not there, duality too will not be there. Where there is no thought of a second one, it is Ananya. To reach this state of Ananya, you have to go through the stage of Ekantha Bhakthi. You saw in the drama presented by the Bala Vikas children yesterday how a Pandith was describing Krishna, and the jewels that he was wearing and the flute he was playing on. A thief who listened to this was intent on reaping a rich harvest by robbing the boy of the jewels and asked for his address. The Pandith gave him the details of the place on the bank of the Jamuna, with all its scenic beauty. He gave this information only from his book-knowledge. The thief, believed him and went to the address and saw Krishna. He accosted him and got the jewels from him.

Do everything with the awareness of God

The Pandith could not see Krishna, while the thief could see Krishna, because the Pandith had only book-knowledge and no real belief. 'Panda' means viveka or discrimination. One who has viveka is Panditha. This viveka is of two types' One is worldly or Bhouthika, and the other is spiritual or Adhyathmika. The former can be understood by experiments and instruments, but in the

Adhyathmic sphere such viveka will not work. One should have faith and love. Without faith or pure love, whatever arguments you may enter into, whatever inquiry you make, will yield no results. If lost in doubt one .can never achieve success even in many lives. Ananya Bhakthi can be described as 'un-questioning faith.' King Pareekshith had to lay down his life within seven days. At this stage, Shuka, the great rishi, came to teach him about God. Shuka had no attachment to the world. When such a great sage described the devotion of the gopees as the highest state of bhakthi, you can realise how great 'was their devotion. It was Ananya Bhakthi in the highest sense. Pareekshith questioned Shuka Maharishi, how the gopees got Ananya Bhakthi and experienced divinity. Shuka put a counter question to Pareekshith, whether he thought Krishna was a cowherd; if so, there was no use teaching him. He said that he was teaching Vedantha and Bhagavatha only to one who had full faith in God. Only those who are eager to learn, who have the faith that the teaching should be learnt and are having the shraddha to experience divinity, can be taught. Members of the Sathya Sai Organisations should attempt to follow the right path and raise their own spiritual effort to the level of Ananya Bhakthi. The world today is in a very bad state. The situation can improve, only through Asthikas who are believers in divinity. They should become Premaswaruupas or embodiments of Love, and by their sadhana, backed by patience, forbearance and compassion, play their role in serving society and contributing to the betterment of the world. God is present in you and is viewing with thousands of eyes what you do. Even if no one is seeing, God is always watching your actions. Do everything with this awareness.

In what is created,
there is always the principle of Dualism.
There is difference and disparity
between one and another.
If these differences and disparities
are harmonised wisely, the world will have
happiness and peace.
If, on the other hand, living beings behave wrongly,

the world will be sunk in anxiety, misery and confusion.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

41. Singing the Name

Date: 26 January 1982 / Location: Mumbai

The present Age, often condemned as Kali Yuga, is in fact, the age in which one can attain liberation most easily. This is revealed in every scriptural text. The reason according to them, is that one can be liberated now by the sadhana of Nama Sankeerthana - singing the glory of the Lord, and listening to the Name being sung. Among the nine steps of devotion, shravanam (listening to the Name being sung) and keerthanam (singing the Name) are mentioned as the best. Keerthanam is singing the Names which denote the glory of the Lord and samkeerthanam means "singing the Names continuously, aloud, without interruption, and without hesitation." Whereas keerthana can be by one individual and can promote one's own spiritual progress, samkeerthanam is by a group of people. It can help the process of liberation not only for the members of the group, but it will also be beneficial to those who listen and even to those beyond the circle of listeners; the whole world can benefit by the vibrations. Samkeerthanam is generally described as of four types, with distinct characteristics. They are : (1)Guna Samkeerthanam, (2) Leela Samkeerthanam, (3) Bhava Samkeerthanam, (4) Nama Samkeerthanam. Let us examine these types in some detail.

Signs of weakness in the devotees

Guna Samkeerthanam aims at describing and adoring the gunas or attributes and qualities of God, in order to exalt Him and win His Grace. But God is Gunatheetha, beyond Sathwa, Rajas and Thamas; He is really attributeless. Ascribing qualities to Him is lowering His Glory. They exist in the imagination of the devotee and praising God as possessing them can give the devotee only momentary satisfaction.

Leela Samkeerthanam is the second. The entire Creation represents the leela (play) of God. Not only that. Its maintenance (sthithi) and dissolution (laya) are also God's leela. How can anyone describe the manifold leelas of God? They take diverse forms. As leela, one can imagine that the entire Universe

can disappear! His sankalpa (will) is all-powerful. Whatever happens, good or bad, is God's leela! Unless one has cultivated an attitude of equanimity towards good and bad, one cannot claim to have understood God. The sadhakas (spiritual aspirants) of today are happy when something good happens; when something bad comes about, they slide into contrary thoughts. When the entire Creation is the Cosmic leela of God, to demarcate a few and sing in terms of those few reveals only feebleness of vision. The third is Bhava Samkeerthanam. Devotees who are attached to this path of adoration adopt one or the other of six special (bhavas) - approaches, attitudes or relationship to God - and attempt to derive consummation thereby. It must be said that all the six are deficient and based upon limited conception of Godhead. (1) the Shantha Bhava: This emphasises that the devotee endures whatever happens to him gladly as coming from His Grace. In the Mahabharatha, Bheeshma is pictured as the supreme model of this type. But, he on his own volition, postponed the moment of his death in order to acquire the merit of having cast off the body on an auspicious day! He believed that the Uththarayana half of the year was more holy and that death before the Sun crosses the Tropic of Capricorn would result in an evil future! When God is both Time and beyond Time, who is man to divide Time into good and bad? The happiness or misery awaiting one cannot depend on the time of death. Believing so is a sign of weakness in the devotees of God.

Servant-to-master relationship of devotion

(2) Sakhya Bhakthi is devotion to God as a close friend. Arjuna is quoted as the one who was liberated through this type of relationship. But, Arjuna was mostly lost in the human aspects of friendship and kinship and often strayed away from the devotion due to the Divine. He attained closeness to the Lord so easily that he failed to recognise the significance of the proximity that was awarded to him. They were such friends that Arjuna addressed Krishna familiarly using the word. for 'brother-in-law.' This indicated only a human kinship; so, Krishna confirmed that relationship and justified that loose expression of familiarity when He brought about the marriage of Arjuna with His sister Subhadhra! So, even the Sakhya attitude cannot be fully rewarding.

(3) Dhasya Bhakthi is the name for the next type. This highlights the attitude of the servant to the master. Hanuman is the classic example of a devotee embodying this type of devotion. He was at the service of Rama at all times. Though encased in the form of a monkey, he had mastered the sixty-four branches of learning and the meaning of the four Vedas; he could recite the six Shasthras. He was physically, mentally and spiritually a redoubtable hero. Nevertheless, he served Rama with no trace of ego in thought, word and deed. He had achieved purity of all three.

But, the Dhasya Bhakthi of Hanuman was not free from defects. His service was steadfast and total to God as Rama. He was not attached to God as Krishna or as bearing any other name. The Vedas declare that God has a thousand names and He can assume a thousand forms. Hanuman's allegiance was limited to only one name and one form. Dhasya Bhakthi, therefore, leads to a partial vision of the Universal Absolute. (4) Vathsalya Bhakthi, the fourth, advises the sadhaka to adopt the relationship of a mother to her child. The example held before the aspirant is that of Yashoda and her adoration of the child Krishna. She recognised only this one relationship, though others praised Krishna as Madhurapuri-nivasa (He who lives in the city of Madhura) and worshipped Him as Gopeehridaya-vasi (He who is installed in the hearts of the gopees). When Uddhava came from Madhura, Yashoda enquired about her Gopala. "I do not know the Krishna who lives in Madhura or in the hearts of gopees. I am asking you about my child Gopala" she insisted. Thus, the Vathsalya Bhakthi too leads to a certain amount of exclusiveness.

Lack of total awareness of God

(5) The next type of devotion is called Anuraga Bhakthi. The gopees of Brindavan are the best examples of votaries of this path. Many crooked, prejudiced and perverted people do not recognise the purity and value of this path. Many interpret it wrongly according to their own bent of mind and take to wrong paths. Narrow minds and narrow ideas can ruin one's life and the lives of others, like pests destroying the crop. The gopees had the dual feeling of both lover and loved. Duality is caused by ignorance; the mind breeds the duality of likes and dislikes. Janma (birth) is the cause of Karma. Karma

causes sorrow and joy, the dual reactions. (6) Madhura Bhakthi is the last path and Radha is the unique example of Madhura Bhava. The moment the name of Krishna was uttered, she lost herself in indescribable Bliss. In spite of this, even Madhura Bhakthi posits duality. So, Bhava Samkeerthanam, in its various forms, does not confer total awareness of God. Let us consider the fourth form - Nama Samkeerthanam. This can grant full happiness to all people, in all places and at all times. There can be nothing greater or more gratifying. The Names Rama, Hari, Hara, Sai, Baba, Krishna - having each two syllables are all derived from the word Prema, which is the essence and core of the Atma. Prema or Love has to prompt our thoughts, penetrate our words and promote our actions. The word Nama has great significance numerologically. Na is equal to 0. A is equal to two and ma equals five, the total being seven, indicating that the Nama Samkeerthanam needs seven elements for success: Shruti, Laya, Raga, Thala, Bhava, Prema, Samhitha. Seven can-notes the seven swaras, the seven rishis, the seven week days known as the sacred Saptaha. Samkeerthanam must be done with emphasis on tone, tune, and timing, attitude and attachment, and the attainment of the highest good. It is not singing for singing's sake. The melody must emerge from the heart, from genuine Love, which is so ardent that it is thapas itself. Samkeerthanam from such sadhakas will certainly liberate the individual and transform the community and the world. Premaswaruupas (embodiments of love)! Even if you are unable to do dhyana or japa, engage yourself in singing the Name of God, without fear and with faith.

42. The triple purity

Date: 20 May 1982 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Man has three modes or instruments allotted to him by God to develop and demonstrate his uniqueness among animals. They are the Thrikarana or "Three-fold tools". When these are utilised in unison and for beneficial purposes, they promote the progress of man from humanity to Divinity. When they are devalued and damaged and used for fulfilling sensual cravings, humanity is degraded into bestiality.

Mind, Speech and Action are the three instruments assigned to man. The mind is the breeding ground for all thoughts of 'do' and 'do not', all impulses of 'will' and 'wont'. It collects and treasures every impression that the senses inflict on the consciousness and is easily enslaved by glitter and glamour. Though the name manas , by which mind is known, has been derived from its talent for manana (rumination, introspection), the mind has no patience to practise this exercise. It jumps to conclusions. It listens more to the chatter of silent conversation with the ego, and it cannot overcome the confusion caused by it. It seldom weighs the pros and cons. The very first sa dhana one must adopt is the cultivation of inner silence, to put an end to the endless dialogue with the mind. Let the mind rest for a while. Do not project on the mind irrelevant details and pollute it with fumes of envy and greed. Every idea we entertain, either good or bad, gets impressed on the mind, as on carbon paper. An element of weakness and unsteadiness is thus introduced in the mind. Keep the mind calm and clear. Do not agitate it every moment by your non-stop dialogue.

Three ways of calming the restless mind

There are three ways of calming the mercurial mind.

(1) Regulated breathing (Pranayama). Inhale and exhale in a measured manner, watching its symmetry and balance; that will diminish the eagerness of the inner tongue to wander into conversation. Finally it will give up the

tendency, for good.

(2) Engage yourselves in loving service of the diseased and the distressed. Undertake to teach a few children who have no one to guide them. Let your thoughts and activities be self-less and sincere. The itch to communicate to the mind will be healed thereby. You will feel that one's energies are more fruitfully engaged in serving one's fellows than in talking and discussing with one's wavering mind.

(3) The third method of avoiding this type of conversation is sadhana, spiritual exercise, some one or more of them, resorted to in earnest and with regularity. It can be the repetition of Name, recitation of mantras, chanting hymns or practice of yogic postures. The Gayathri Manthra can well be resorted to for this purpose. It is certain to yield quick results.

Today, however, man has not awakened to the seriousness of this problem. He is perpetually engaged in gossip centred on others, winnowing their conduct to discover vices, and dwelling on their faults and failings. His mind gets polluted thereby. He transforms his mind into a newspaper, highlighting hold-ups, crimes and conflicts of the day and giving place for the same, day after day. So, the mind undergoes a series of shocks and knocks, which weaken it. Even trivial incidents agitate it for long. Then how can it be used for the ultimate purpose of liberating us from becoming slaves of the senses?

The mind has to be strong, steady, pure and free. It has to be given rest, so that the waves can subside and serenity established. The sages prescribed manana (meditation, rumination) after shravana (listening to constructive counsel) and nididhyasa (putting the counsel to practise) with just this in view. The mind can become pure, pellucid and powerful thereby. When the fangs are pulled out, the cobra can be handled safely. When hatred, anger and greed are eliminated, the mind obeys our will and can be used for higher purposes.

Need for keeping company with godly people

Next, about the tendency to talk overmuch. Speech is produced cheap, but it

has high value. It can elevate as well as demean man. Listening to a speech, a zero can rise into a hero or a hero can collapse into a zero. It can inspire or plant despair. It must be true and sweet, not false and pleasant.

Man must endeavour to acquire speech untouched by subterfuge, limbs untouched by cruelty, hands free from violence and thoughts free from vengeance.

Frenzy, fanaticism and gusts of anger have to be controlled, for they lead to disasters whose range is beyond calculation. By constant practice, these can also resort to the vow of silence (mouna). The mind too must desist from wandering, when the tongue is desisting from talking. Otherwise, the vow cannot be fruitful. Be conscious that every word we utter or hear will leave an impression on our consciousness, and provoke reactions which may or may not be beneficial. This is the reason why the company of God and godly people is to be sought. The third, karana or instrument, is kriya or deed. Every action has its reaction on oneself and on others. This is the law of nature, as inevitable as the effects of heat and cold. Ever), karma brings with it a series of consequences. Physical illness, mental derangement, economic suffering, domestic miseries are all the fruits of one's own karma. They cannot be ascribed to the hardheartedness of God. One's karma reveals one's bestial propensities or human virtues or god-ward aspirations. The attitudes and preferences built into man's consciousness either by his previous lives or the society into which they have thrust him in this life, are also revealed. Deeds are not in accordance with declarations; this is the basic defect in all facets of life today. How has the world come to the very brink of total collapse today? Why is youth suffering from anxiety and anarchism? Is there a shortage of books from which men can learn the unfolding of human values? Have gurus who teach men the potentiality of human being become scarce? Are there no institutions engaged in awakening men and warning them of the dire consequences of sloth and sleep?

Earn peace, share peace, live in love

The markets are stocked full of books we need; mountains of spiritual texts are offered to readers; gurus throng the streets. But, mankind is still afflicted with fear and hatred, discontent and restlessness. The reason lies in the tragic fact that the writers and purveyors of spiritual knowledge, the gurus and teachers are not demonstrating in their own lives the validity and value of the advice they offer.

People go about lecturing from place to place. Their talks are full of quotations from ancient religious texts chosen and related in order to impress people and parade scholarship. They are exercises in artificial assemblage of portions from the Upanishads, the Geetha, the BrahmaSutras. How can they transform the minds of students? Listeners may admire the verbal gymnastics but they will not be charged with faith and fervour. "Life is a tiny span of time; before it flickers out, fill your hearts with peace", said a sage. Earn peace and share peace. Live in love and induce others to grow love in their hearts. The Indian way of life lays emphasis on this Triple Purity of thought, word and deed, at all times and in all places. **The process of living can be reduced to the formula, "Situation plus effort" or "Challenge plus response."** So too, **"Self multiplied by infinity is God," whereas "mind multiplied by infinity is Hiranyagarbha or Cosmic Will."**

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.

Let your thoughts be concentrated on God, His Name and His Form; you will then find that you are always with the pure and the Permanent; you will then derive pure and permanent joy. That is the reason why I attach so much

importance to Namasmarana (repetition of God's name) as a Sadhana.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

43. The teacher-learner team

Date: 22 May 1982 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Teachers are the path-finders of the nation. They prepare the royal road to a bright future. The skill and efficiency of the people, their reliability and sense of duty depend on the community of teachers. Their virtue is reflected in their pupils; their faith inspires the young. Whether people waste their lives and ruin the lives of others by means of barren pursuits or whether people lead happy lives promoting the happiness of others - the answer lies in the hands of teachers. A life without character is as barren as a temple without a lamp, a coin that is counterfeit, a kite whose string has snapped. A teacher who instructs pupils with his eye fixed on his salary, and a pupil who learns with his eye fixed on a job are both missing their vocation. The teacher has to help the pupil unfold and manifest the skills and qualities inherent in him and encourage him to rise to the fullest height he is capable. The Divine is the core in both teacher and pupil. The educational process is the increasing awareness of this truth, the increasing utilisation of this latent power.

This does not mean that the teacher and the student are on the same level. The teacher has to be so full of compassion and love that he understands and sympathises with the students and their struggle to expand and to blossom. The mother bends low to lift the child and fondle it. She does not lower herself thereby. The teacher too does not demean himself thereby. It only reveals that he has a sense of proportion, an alert attitude towards an inevitable situation. This love has become rare today. The teacher faces the class with a "take it or leave it" attitude. "I have earned my salary for today," he seems to say. The restlessness in the campuses that expresses itself in violence and indiscipline has sprung out of this selfish, loveless attitude of teachers.

Teachers must hold aloft ideals of scholarship

Teachers and students are now suspicious of each other; they are often in hostile camps. What a contrast is this to the Upanishadic ideal of ancient India. Then, both prayed together "May we both be guided and protected.

May we progress together and achieve spiritual splendours together, through our studies. May no trace of displeasure or disturbance pollute our relation." A loving teacher dedicating his life to his profession becomes the model for his admiring students. A teacher can make or mar the future of the student, for he is the hero whom he desires to emulate and imitate in dress, habit and style of living and thinking. When teachers divide themselves into factions or scandalise each other or revel in the game of politics, students are easily infected by the same harmful tendencies. Discipline can become rooted in the atmosphere of the campus only when teachers set the example. "As the leaders, so the led." When teachers form groups in order to gain power and influence, students too do likewise. So, teachers must hold aloft, both by precept and practice, the ideals of scholarship, companionship, mutual love and spiritual progress.

Lack of brotherhood in the teaching community springs from extreme specialisation. This Orientation Course is devised to give every one of you a glimpse of the basic philosophy that feeds every faculty. In other universities, Physics is Physics and Chemistry is Chemistry. Here, they should not be so isolated. Philosophy is the link, the bridge, the sap that sustains all. The boundaries of each subject are not really so sharply drawn, they fade off into a neighbouring subject; they overlap and become kindred. Knowledge of this intimate interdependence is the Higher Learning you have to strive for. Therefore, the syllabi of the various subjects for study have been so enlarged and entwined by this Institute that an Orientation Course has become necessary for the teachers to grasp the pattern.

On the 14th of this month, I was at the Atomic Research Centre, Trombay. I spoke there of the omnipresence of Energy. It is dormant or latent or patent, but it is everywhere at all times. It exists in a piece of cloth or in a sheet of paper. It is the Truth of all that is. Everything that disintegrates loses energy; everything that 'originates' exemplifies energy. This tumbler is a bundle of latent energy. The Upanishads declare it has temporary form and a temporary name. But, its reality is Sath (existence), Chith (knowability), Anandha (capable of contributing to the joy of awe and wonder). Not this tumbler only. Everything in the Universe is vibrant with Sath, Chith and

Anandha. We (Sath) are intelligent (Chith) and blissful (Anandha). These three are attributes of Divinity, which is our dormant but dominant force. Ignorant of this truth, structures are built up and paraded on other bases. Mankind suffers from fear and hatred, on account of this fundamental defect in their search for Knowledge.

44. Love of the Motherland

Date: 25 May 1982 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Orientation Course for University Teachers

To achieve release, man kneels before A million gods, in frantic pain. If he but blasts the ego within, The goal is reached; he is freed indeed/ It is difficult indeed to understand the ego - its depth and devious ways. It is an inert entity, that is to say, it cannot know itself nor can it know others. It has no fear; it will not bend before others. It degrades man from the golden glory, which is his due, to the level of lowly dust. Snakes hiss, pigs grunt, bulls moo! They are asserting their ego, intent on keeping others away. Of the traits of ego, pride is the most poisonous. But, the pride of the scholar, the pride of pandiths is so thick that it is impossible for them to get rid of it. The dog feels proud of its master's home. So, it barks at strangers trying to enter it. Man too is so attached to 'my home,' 'my people,' 'my property,' that he too keeps people away, from the moment he awakes to the moment he sleeps. But, egoism is contrary to genuine human nature. In fact, it is the trait of an animal only. The fully blossomed flower fades and falls apart within hours. Even while a person is proud of his physical strength, mental freshness and intellectual sharpness, old age creeps in, with its debilitating effects. And, wealth? And power over men and things? They are like lightning flashes, illumining only a fraction of a moment. They are here today; they are gone tomorrow! These transient natures and possessions, interestingly, produce lasting impressions! Man's enemies are not outside him; the sins he commits are his greatest foes. They prompt him to act contrary to all codes. Ravana was prompted into sin by his nefarious ego and his crime reduced his splendid kingdom to a heap of ash. Hitler rose to be the Dictator in Germany; victory over sundry neighbouring states boosted his ego and made him power mad. He caused a World War and died amidst the ruins of his own capital city. Egoism is an infection that ruins all chances of expanding and elevating one's consciousness. It can undermine genuine human qualities. So, educators must take special care that the tender hearts of children are not polluted by this virus.

Tripod on which prosperity of a Nation rests

Every nation depends on three sections of its people for its progress - the producers, the protectors and the preceptors. All three are equally important and closely interdependent. This is the tripod on which prosperity rests. Love is a seat placed on the three legs and the nation can be happy and peaceful if all the three sections work together in mutual love for the nation. Today, we parade devotion which has no human sympathy and patriotism which has no morality. Both are barren. Egoism cannot tolerate love for others, nor can it be happy with itself. If the harvested grain is neither consumed nor shared, it will only rot. Egoism reduces man into a demon. At the least provocation, egoism gets irate against one's parents, children or wife or teacher! It thrusts aside everyone who comes in its way. God is the vastest among the vast, the minutest among the minute. Yet, God has no ego. How then can man who has no claim to even the tiniest glory parade himself as great? It is really a ridiculous pose. The egoist ignores the source which can bring respect to him. He loses the chance of developing his skills and talents on right lines.

The country is harmed more by the educated

Education must result in humility. Humility is the best credential one can earn. That yields wealth and through wealth one can promote righteousness and engage in charity. This ensures happiness here and hereafter. Humility cannot grow through poring over books. The educational process prevalent today does not promote humility. It confers degrees which swell the heads of recipients. It does not sanctify the person who is educated. It does not promote the nation's progress. But, education has to encourage the exploration, of the true needs of the country and the methods by which they can be met. Youth must dedicate itself to this work. But, what do we find? Even persons, who have grown old, and who move about with sticks are anxiously trying to squeeze a drop or two of pleasure from life. After having retired from Government service, they still seek jobs and start circumambulating likely patrons! The idea that they should spend at least the remaining years of their lives in serving their fellowmen does not dawn on them. The uneducated may not all be patriotic; but, the country is harmed

more by the educated! As soon as they are awarded the degrees or diplomas entitling them to pose as doctors or engineers, they run after some travel agent, and secure passports and try to bribe their way to Iraq, Iran or Dubai. Of course, money is desirable. But, only as much as is essential. Cannot one earn enough in his country itself and, at the same time, serve one's poor and struggling brothers and sisters in the villages?

Can it ever be a sign of education when one has no love for the land where he was born and where he grew up? Consider for a while the wisdom of disliking one's motherland and becoming fascinated with another land. One must serve one's own people and thereby the people of other countries. But what are we to say of those who hate their own and love others! How can a person who has no respect for the land of his birth be respected by the land he attaches himself to? This distortion is the result of the educational system.

Students should avoid demeaning temptations

The beggar at the door wails "Ma! I am a stranger, a paradeshi. Give me alms." He means that he does not belong to the village, that he has no one to support him or feed him at the place. Paradeshi means a person who has moved into a new place from his own desha or country. The beggar hopes to get a loaf of bread or a rupee. The educated person in the strange land hopes to get a hundred or a thousand or even a lakh. They too belong to the same profession. Students should avoid such demeaning temptations. They should not give up their mother country and proceed overseas. And, they must not commit the mistake of believing that a person becomes great if he goes overseas. Air hostesses do it every day! Have faith and love towards your home, your village, your part of India, your Motherland. But that does not imply hatred of other countries. On no account should hatred or enmity or intolerance pollute your minds. Consider an example from the Ramayana. After the death of Ravana on the battlefield, Lakshmana asked Rama, "Brother! Our brother Bharatha has been ruling the kingdom of Ayodhya very well, for fourteen years. That kingdom, though poor, is happy under his rule. Now, Lanka has come into our hands. I pray that you assume rulership over Lanka and reform the Rakshasas." Rama smiled at this suggestion. He

replied, "Does any son give up his mother because her features are ugly? My motherland may be poor but it is my mother. Can I adopt a woman as mother, if she is more charming than my own? However rich and prosperous this Lanka is, I do not wish to be here." Rama held up the ideal of a patriot eager to serve his native land.

Goodness has totally disappeared in cities

I shall relate an example in which I myself am the subject. Forty years ago, a rich lady named Sakamma (famed as a big planter and manufacturer of "Sakamma Coffee") used to come to Puttaparthi from Bangalore. In those days journey to this isolated hamlet was a difficult venture. Those who came by car had to negotiate mud tracks and park the cars on the right bank of the river and trudge across. On one occasion, Sakamma came with two maternal uncles of the Maharaja of Mysore, and prayed "Swami! This place is very inaccessible. Devotees are undergoing much trouble. We shall purchase a few acres of land in Bangalore City and spend a few lakhs to build a fine spacious Mandhir for you there. Swami must agree and move to that city." I told her, "Sakamma! What is the greatness in promising water to those who come to the River Ganga? The greatness consists in promising water to those who come to the desert. Listen! This is the place where this body was born. You may build the Mandhir you plan, anywhere. I shall come there and be there for some days. However, I shall not forsake this place." Now, this tiny hamlet which was difficult to reach has become the centre of even a University. Can mere man transform it so? Through whom has this village gained every modern convenience needed for a happy life?

Students today are deserting their villages and migrating to cities. They sell off their hereditary lands and homes and live miserable lives in congested towns. And, many prefer city institutions for their studies even though cities do not provide a proper atmosphere for study. They are enticed into the undesirable company of bad people where their minds and bodies are ruined by bad habits. Keeping oneself strong and straight is a difficult process in cities. And reaching the real goal of life is quite impossible.

Cultivate universal heartfelt Love

Traces of goodness, reverence and sympathy still survive in villages but they have totally disappeared in cities. The methods of education are responsible for this sad situation. Confining education to worldly and material knowledge, children are being exiled from their heritage of courage and strength. They grow without either general knowledge or common sense. It is hard to understand how they will pass examinations and administer the country after getting jobs. They concentrate on selfishness every moment; they have no thought for the welfare of others. Technological education has become valuable today but even here, human values have to be emphasised. Technology must be dedicated to the promotion of high ideals, those which are cherished in Bharathiya culture. For, without the background of that culture, educated people are easily turned into slaves of other cultures. Those who belong to a country have to proceed along the special circumstances and resources of that country. Of course, one must love all mankind, all are children of God. One must not emphasise the difference between nations, or between castes and creeds. Cultivate universal heartfelt Love. In the universities of past ages, each one specialised in learning and teaching one subject only. But, in this University, we must teach the importance and meaning of human values. We do not value education which does not uplift man and make him aware of his Divine Reality. Means of Living and the Goal of Living are the two wings; the two wheels are material and spiritual, skill and sadhana.

The Mind, the Reason, the Scholarship The Ego, bawling, brawling - When will these bend low and yield? Then, Shiva is revealed as one's Atma, Truth. The Atma, everyone is, vast and expansive. We fancy that the Atma is in us, in each of us. No. We are in the Atma, we are all in the Atma. The Atma is not in us! All beings are alive and active, moving and resting in the all-pervading Atma. We are all in this hall; the hall is not in us. To say 'the Atma in me and the Atma in you' is to declare your ignorance of the Truth.

Once we establish ourselves in this Truth of Unity, we will not be afflicted by scandalmongering, jealousy and other low traits. Students have to be free

from these shackles, even at this tender age. They can be helped to lead happy, healthy useful lives and promote, by their actions, the prosperity and welfare of the world.

45. Fourteen in one

Date: 28 May 1982 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

The Puranas speak of fourteen Lokas (seven higher and seven lower regions). People have adopted the superficial meaning of the names given to these and they classify them as 'sacred' lokas and 'condemned' lokas - Deva Lokas and Pathala Lokas. But, all these lokas do exist, in our own bodies, (the bodies which we carry about and care for), seven in the upper part and seven in the lower part.

Which is the upper part of the human body? It is the head, the Thrikuuta Peak, the crown, the higher region. Seven lokas are situated therein. They are the Garuda Loka, the Gandharva Loka, the Yaksha Loka, the Kinnara Loka and the Kimpurusha Loka. They are all situated in the head. The Garuda Loka is the nose, the seat of inhalation and exhalation. The Gandharva Loka is in the eye. The Yaksha Loka is in the tongue. Kinnara Loka is the ear and the Kimpurusha, on the skin, seat of the sense of touch. Though the names of the lokas are five, there are seven regions to which the name applies. The nose is the first, the eyes are the second and the third, the tongue is the fourth, the ears are the fifth and the sixth and the skin is the seventh. These are the Upper Lokas.

Those who sanctify these lokas by recognising the respective organs as instruments for higher ideals can be deemed worthy of human existence. That is to say, inhaling unpolluted air, seeing auspicious sights, hearing heartening sounds, etc. These lokas when properly cultivated, can make man divine.

Does thou know why you are given eyes? To see whatever can be seen ? No!
No!

To fill the eyes with the Vision of God Who resides on Mount Kailash.

Both the higher and lower lokas are necessary

We have to cast our looks at sacred sights. We must visualise in every one only the good and the godly. That is the purpose for which God has equipped us with eyes. He has not gifted them to us to observe and judge others, to follow people into the bazaar or to see unsightly films. Dost thou know why you have a tongue? To despatch tasty foods in ? No! No!

The prime purpose is not to enable us to swallow our meals. The object is to utter holy words. Now, when some one is narrating some good incidents, the ears show no inclination to listen. But when one whispers something confidential to another, the ears jointly seek to overhear. Is it for this that God has blessed us with ears? Therefore, the seven higher lokas have to be utilised for Divine ends. When that is done, one becomes divinised, one is liberated. The rest of the lokas are intended for the maintenance of the physical frame in which we are enclosed. The stomach, so to say, is the petrol tank. When that is filled, every limb and cell of the body is supplied with energy and activated, to execute the beneficial duties assigned to each. With the two hands and the two legs, these make five lokas. The two others are the anal and the urinal parts. These seven lower lokas maintain the physical body. Both the higher seven and the lower seven are necessary; they complement each other. The lower lokas are the Pathala lokas according to the Puranas. They form the foundation, the base. Those who long for flowers and fruits have to feed the unseen roots. Pathala too should not be neglected merely because they are described as "low." Joy has to be churned from grief. Pleasure is a product of pain.

The tongue should be used for spelling the name of the Lord, not for hissing like a serpent, or growling or roaring with intention to strike terror. That is not the purpose for which the tongue is granted to man.

Speech indicates one's character, reveals one's personality, educates others, and communicates experience and information. So, be vigilant about words. Slip while talking the injury is irreparable!

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

46. Refrain from asking

Date: 12 August 1982 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Heaven is not on high, beyond your ken. It is very much here, in the world of men: Deny the ego, deep-hid in you; And, you are 'there' in Heaven on Earth. For liberation, O man, why plead before Three crores of Gods is despair? Deny the ego, deep-rooted in you - And you are free, no pleading therefore. The attainment of the Absolute or Brahman is not the end result of a course of spiritual effort. The jeevi (individualised soul) is the Brahman. Jeevo devassanathanah - - " The jeevi is the Eternal Godhead." Even when involved in worldly activities, the individual cannot discard this Reality of his. His belief that he is just a man arises from delusion. The ocean may be known by many names in many areas through many ages, but its nature is unaffected thereby. So too, however many forms and names he assumes and adopts, the Brahman-principle persists in him and remains the goal of awareness. "Mamaivamsho Jeeva loke Jeeva Bhoothas-sanathanah," says Krishna in the Geetha. "The eternal I, a part of Me, has manifested as all individuals." This is what that statement implies. "Shrunvanthu vishwe Amrithasya Puthrah" is what Mother Veda declares to all the worlds. Since a person is limited by a body and entangled in the senses, he is bound by ignorance and led to believe that he is a mere man. He is a child of Immortality.

Mind affected by desire is polluted

Ignorance is caused by attachment. Attachment results in identification of the I with the body, senses, mind, etc. Attachment leads to desire; desire results in anger; anger blinds reason and promotes ignorance; ignorance breeds dualities of mine and thine, good and bad, etc.; these lead to activities to make gains, and avoid losses, etc.; these produce consequences of merit and demerit; they have to be consumed in this life or future lives; so one has to go through suffering. Dukham (suffering) is caused by janma (life) which presupposes suffering. Karma is due to belief in dwaitha (duality). Dwaitha is the result of ajnana (ignorance), the product of krodha (anger). Krodha is the child of raga (affection) and moha (attachment) is the parent of raga. Even

Arjuna, the greatest bowman and warrior of his age, became a victim on the battlefield itself of this insidious, false, and enfeebling attachment. The mind obeys the senses and defiles man. It is well-nigh impossible for man to master the mind and turn it away from the objective world. Arjuna confessed to Lord Krishna that the mind was uncontrollably wayward and could not be stilled. The mind has two phases: the unpolluted and the polluted. The mind affected by desire (kama) is polluted; when it is unaffected by desire, it is unpolluted. For liberation from bondage to desire, the mind is the only instrument available to man. Turn it towards the objective world, you are bound; turn it towards God, you are on the road to liberation. The mind refuses to be calm even for a fraction of a second. When a continuous shower of stones is falling on the waters of a lake, how can the surface be calm and unruffled? So too, man is throwing stone after stone of desire on the Manasa Sarovar, the calm lake of the manas or mind.

Bhakthas - indeed all Vyakthis (those who seek to manifest their inner Reality) - should therefore prevent the stones (desires) from disturbing the equanimity of the mind. The fly rests one moment on the sacred food-offerings on the altar of God and the next moment on filth. The mind seeks refuge in holy thoughts and things; the next moment, it revels in some fearsome foul ideas. The mind is like the elephant. The mahout gives it a nice bath, he scrubs it clean and chains it to a shady tree. But, it gathers dust with its trunk and scatters it all over itself! Man too, urged by the senses, pours into his own mind dust and dirt.

Senses are servants of mind, not master

In fact, the function of the mind is to act as controller of the senses. The role of the senses is to serve the mind, the right relationship is for the servants to obey the master and for the master to rule over the servants. But when the master falls into the hands of his servants, he becomes the victim of all varieties of loss and grief. The Ramayana provides a fine illustration for this danger. Kaikeyi, the queen, was the mistress; Manthara was her servant, her maid, but since the queen was subservient to her maid, a whole series of tragedies happened. Kaikeyi came from a famous Royal dynasty; she was the

favourite consort of a famous emperor; she was the mother of a son, Bharatha, famous for his dutifulness and righteousness; she loved her stepson Rama as dearly as her life-breath; yet, despite her own virtue, learning and authority, since she gave ear to her attendant, Manthara, she drew upon herself eternal infamy from everyone. She landed in a situation where her beloved son came to despise her. Even the names Kaikeyi and Manthara have become obnoxious. The lesson is: we should not allow the senses, who are only servants, to lord over us. If we do so we invite the fate of Kaikeyi. Wherever you are, however rich, learned or powerful, when you advise some one to do wrong, you invite on yourselves the fate of Manthara. Since men yield to the blandishments of the senses, they are becoming Kaikeyis and losing the Divine Nature, the quality of the Master.

Specific role and purpose of mind

The waters of the flowing river are stored by us in reservoirs. But, one has to take care to close the sluices before the water is let into the reservoir. Or else the water will flow out through the sluices and cannot be stored for use. Likewise, the Atma-Shakthi (the Inner Soul Force), has to be let through the buddhi (intellect) channel into the reservoir, manas (mind). But, that force can be utilised by us for our benefit and for promoting world prosperity and peace only when the five sluices, the outward bound senses, are closed tight. The closing of the sluices is the process which the yoga shasthra of Sage Pathanjali describes as Chittha Vritthi Nirodhah - preventing agitations in the mind.

The mind is designed for a specific purpose: achieving the four goals of human existence, dharma, artha, kama and moksha, the attainment of a happy life through righteous means (artha through dharma) and the cultivation of kama (desire) for moksha (liberation). It has not been designed to promote greed and hatred, pride and possessiveness. This truth has to be believed. The wind gathers clouds and equally swiftly, scatters them. The mind can create conditions of bondage or of liberation. So, one must slowly loosen the bonds of attachment to the physical body and its components, the senses. The senses rob us of physical and mental strength. Are all who live in

the body and move about with the body attached to it and to the senses, etc., that go along with it? For, God too comes with a body, as Avathar, and when He moves about, He seems to be only human as far as one can see. But, there is a fundamental inner difference. The incarnate God, the Avathar, is unconcerned. He has upeksha (indifferent to results). The ordinary man with the body has apeksha (yearning for the result). Mamathwa (mineness-principle) is human; Brahmawha (Brahman-principle) is Divine. You cannot discern the distinction, even when you look or listen. You can understand only by experience. The Avathar has no wants. He has no egoism. He is ever alone in the Brahmawham. Look at a record or tape. It is blank, silent, same! Activate it with a sound box. It sings and speaks with fluency.

Avathar with body and the ordinary man

The Avathar appears as any other human being, equipped with body, senses, mind, etc. But, consider the vast difference in thoughts, feelings, emotions, etc. The Avathar is the total, the allcomprehensive, the Poorna (Full). The human is partial, narrow, negative. But, in the human, the Divine exists as the core and can manifest as Bliss. We pay all attention to the external trappings of knowledge; we do not transform the deeper instincts and impulses inherited from animal ancestors.

Place jasmine garlands, around a monkey's neck, Dress it in shiny silken clothes, And seat it on a gem-set throne. Can it forsake its apish tricks? Once it was a vanara (monkey); now, it is a nara (man). And as man through many lives, crookedness and cruelty have struck deep roots. These cannot be destroyed soon. It is a very difficult task indeed.

This is the reason why God assumes the Avathar form and decides to award mankind the power to discriminate between right and wrong, between truth and falsehood. The Avathar does it through precept and example. The scriptures teach that life is unfortunately short. So, the Geetha advises man to appreciate three facts: (1) To be born as a human being is a precious opportunity; (2) To yearn to realise God is another precious piece of good luck; (3) The greatest good fortune is the chance to be in the Presence of

God, to be immersed in the service of God and to be engaged in fulfilling Divine commands.

God responds to unadulterated devotion

Sathyabhama, in her pride, imagined that her Lord Krishna could be appropriated by her if jewels and gems were presented. She piled them on one pan of the balance which was weighing Him. But this was of no avail. Rukmini had effaced herself and knew only the Krishna-principle. So, when she placed a single thulsi leaf with her prayer on the pan, Krishna could be weighed and the pan with Krishna rose up. Unadulterated devotion, total renunciation - these alone can help us to achieve the awareness of our Divinity. Kooresa was the headman of a village in the days of Ramanuja. His other name was Sreevathsanka. He revered Ramanuja, the Acharya of Visishtadwaitha (qualified nondualism), the great Master of Vaishnavism, as his Guru. He renounced his riches, lands and home in the village and proceeded to the holy shrine of Shrirangam on the Kaveri River. His wife Andal accompanied him. They had to walk through a thick jungle when night fell. The wife asked him, her voice tremulous with fear, "Are there robbers around?" He replied, "Why should we fear? We have nothing with us for them to rob." The wife confessed that she had with her a small gold cup, which she had brought along to serve water to her husband. Kooresa did not approve of her action. He asked for the cup and threw it far into the jungle, and they proceeded in peace.

God gives unasked what the devotee need.

They lodged in a choultry, near the temple at Shrirangam. Kooresa was far too exhausted. He had no food throughout the three-day long trek. The wife heard the temple bells ringing to announce the "Presentation of food offerings to Lord Ranganatha." She cried out to the Lord, "Your servant is stricken by starvation. How can you, O Lord, feast on the offerings, knowing how he suffers?" In a few minutes, a procession from the temple reached the choultry. A band of pipers and drummers led the long line of priests and Pandiths. The Lord had commanded them to take the food offerings to his

devotees at the choultry. They brought silver plates and vessels full of a rich variety of dishes.

Kooresa rose and sat up. He protested "I did not pray for food. The Lord should grant me what I need and pray for, He cannot give me what I did not ask for! How can this Atma ask the Paramatma for something to fill the stomach?" Because the temple priests pressed him to partake of the prasada (food offered to idols), he tasted a little and gave a little to the wife. Then he questioned her, "Did you commit the mistake? Did you pray for food?" She replied, "Lord! I did not ask so. I only had a feeling in my mind, How could you, O Krishna, accept those offerings when your servant is starving'?"

God, Giver of All, is the only treasure you need

He who gives when asked and what is asked, is the Prabhu. He who gives unasked, what one needs is the Vibhu. Prabhu means a Lord, Vibhu means the Cosmic Ruler. We should not use the Vibhu to acquire what we feel we need most. This is the reason why the poet has sung 'Refrain from asking, O mind! The more you ask; the deeper it plumbs And the longer it takes for the answer to rise. Did He not, without being asked, Fulfill Shabari's anguished wish ? Did He not bless the bird Jatayu Who died for Him,

Asking for nought instead? Thus, Kooresa instructed his mind and earned peace. Every Avathar seeks to raise humanity to the level of Divinity by laying down such paths of devotion and holding forth such examples of surrender.

"I do not know anything other than you." "You are the one and only." When one has this faith, why allow desire to creep in? Why ask for this or that? Have faith in God, the Giver of All, the only Treasure you need; He will fill you with contentment.

Whenever you get little leisure,
do not spend it in talking about sundries;

but utilise it in meditating on God or
in doing service to others.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

47. Mahaabali

Date: 01 September 1982 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Onam

What does 'incarnating' mean?

It is God appearing on earth Filled with affection and love For mankind, everywhere - Divine Consciousness in human form.

Bharath has gained wide renown through many sons and daughters who have sacrificed their all for the common good. The seed has to renounce its identity and become one with the soil so that the tree might emerge. So too, the ego has to sacrifice itself so that man's divine nature can manifest itself.

Mama ithi mrithyu

"mine" is death; 'not mine' is immortality.

Thyagah shanthih anantaram

Renunciation results in peace.

The golden key of non-attachment opens the lock which keeps the door to heaven shut. "Give up; I shall fill the gap," says Jesus . Today, renunciation has become a means for success and fame! It has become a bargaining point. Renouncing animal and even human failings and earning the awareness of the Divine which is the core, is the most valuable sadhana. Consider the heroes of renunciation in the past; they were mostly rulers and the rich, who could afford power and plenty - Emperor Sibi, Emperor Mahabali, King Karna. Consider also later heroes - Thanaji and Bhagath Singh. These two sacrificed their lives for the sake of the nation and the world. Mahabali, the asura (demon) ruler, renounced everything for the sake of God. His father and grandfather were also very famous for the same reason. The great grandfather, Hiranyakashipu, did not tolerate the very mention of the name Hari.

For he swore that he was himself God! He was a fanatical rationalist. And, he had a son named Prahladha who was devoted to Hari and whose dedication and surrender to God was complete, without any reservation. He came out triumphantly through travails and tortures. The name Hari, was the armour that saved him from the shafts of angry hatred aimed by his father. The persons who tortured him in obedience to his father's command were struck at the calm heroism and the utmost peace he enjoyed as a consequence of his steady repetition of the Lord's name.

Truth of God's incarnation as Vamana

His son was Virochana. He ruled this Kingdom righteously and he became popular and famous on account of his gifts to the poor and the learned. Mahabali was Virochana's son. He celebrated the efficacious and complicated yajna named Vishwajith (Cosmic Victory) and as a result, he became the Lord of Heaven, displacing Indra! While Mahabali ruled over the world, no one suffered from hunger and thirst; no one had fear or anxiety; the earth yielded rich harvests; people had holy thoughts and intentions. God willed at that time to teach the world the valuable lesson - renounce and win. The ocean collects all the rivers and is always receiving offerings. It does not give up pearls and corals of its own free will; it hides them from gaze and gives out only shells. Its waters cannot quench thirst; it only inflames thirst. But the cloud is anxious to - give itself fully as rain; so it rises high while the ocean lies at the lowest level. God decided also to grant salvation to Bali, for he had become worthy of that supreme gift. He had, through his good actions purified his mind; he had through his devotion realised the Divinity in every being and he had achieved the wisdom which could liberate him from illusion.

Meaning of three steps Vamana demanded

It is generally believed that God incarnated as Vamana in order to uproot the ego of Bali. This is not the truth. The incarnation had as its purpose the conferment of the boon of liberation. For, Bali had no inkling of ego in him.

When Vamana asked for "three feet of ground" from him, his Guru tried his

best to prevent him from giving it to Vamana. "My dear fellow! This is no ordinary mendicant. He is God Narayana Himself. If you agree to give Him what he asks for, you are certain to be mined!"

But, Emperor Bali replied, "Whoever it be, he has asked and giving what is asked is my duty. It is my great good fortune that God Narayana has come, with hands extended to receive a gift from me. I shall not listen to your teachings now. The hand that gives is on top of the hand that receives. This is indeed unique luck," he said.

And the mendicant was the Trinity in ONE, requiring THREE feet of ground. The three steps are the physical (Adhibhowthic) the mental (Adhidaivic) and the spiritual (Adhyathmic). The first two steps covered earth and sky and for the third, Emperor Bali's heart was the most appropriate gift! Since the heart was offered to God Narayana, his body sank into pathala (the Nether Regions). The first two steps mean the identification with the body and the mind was eliminated. (Shanthi is uttered thrice at the end of every bhajan (group singing) session or ceremonial rite to invoke peace of body, mind and spirit, all three). Bali had achieved the stage of total surrender. His heart, mind and intelligence were the Lord's. He had dedicated the results of all his actions to God. The 'I' in him had been displaced by 'He'. He had realised the triviality of worldly power and decided to give up every desire except the longing for the Lord. Through his sacrifice, the sins of his great grandfather, Hiranyakashipu, were washed away. The entire dynasty was sanctified. The three flowers of that clan - Prahladha, Virochana and Bali saved him. Bali alone had the resources and the renunciation to give the Lord what he solicited. That is the reason why the Lord approached him. There are many in history who have renounced their wealth and even their lives. There are many who have given away gems, houses and land. But, Bali surrendered all and also himself.

Surrendering one's life is great sadhana

Emperor Shibi saved a dove from being eaten by a vulture but the vulture claimed flesh equal to the weight of the bird. He cut out from his own body an

equal weight of flesh, but, the dove appeared to be too heavy to be weighed against even the biggest slice. So, he sat himself on the pan, and gave himself up as food for the vulture. Thanaji heard the call to fight for his country, even while he was on the floral seat at the wedding ceremony. He plunged into battle clothed as the bridegroom! He died, happy that he had done his duty to his family, his community and his country. Bhagath Singh ascended the gallows, full of joy that he was able to offer his life for the liberation of his motherland. Bharath had millions of such sons and daughters who sacrificed their lives for Her sake.

But, these days, we do not notice spirit of thyaga (sacrifice). We find only raga and bhoga - attachment and enjoyment. Thyaga alone can promote yoga. It is indeed the good fortune of the people of Kerala State that they adore the personality and ideals of Mahabali every year during the ONAM festival. We have to celebrate the festival not only with feast and song but also with acts of sacrifice, charity and renunciation. The sadhana of thyaga involves the elimination of the feelings of I and Mine. The 'I' will persist so long as we are embodied, but one has to minimise its hold on thought, word and deed.

Be like Mahabali to earn God's blessings

So long as man is bound to the body, his God too has to be in a body like his own, It is often said disparagingly that God is conceived as having eyes, nose, tongue and limbs. When the person who worships has these, the worshipped too must have them, in order to make the worship meaningful. Only when one is unaware of his 'form,' can he adore the Formless! It is indeed surprising that those who laugh at God being pictured as having a body, do not laugh at their being enclosed in a body!

When man has to be corrected and liberated, God has to come as Man, as Narayana had to do to save Mahabali. Bali had understood the glory and majesty of God.

He told his Guru, "The Hand that grants boons to countless devotees, that

Hand is stretched to receive what I offer in answer to the Lord's desire. That Hand has all the worlds in its grasp. And, what does the Lord wish to get from me? He is asking only for that which He has given me! He has come to me in this Form to ask from me all that I have because, the same is what He has given me."

Bali had convinced himself that the Lord gives and the Lord takes, that he is but an instrument, that his destiny is to merge in the Lord.

So, on this festival day, when we celebrate his dedication and renunciation, we must strengthen our faith that God's will must prevail and is prevailing over all human effort. And, we must realise that thyaga is the highest sadhana. Be like Prahladha and Bali. Do not be Hiranyakashipus, for these are blinded by egoism. Prahladha and Bali received blessings from God. Hiranyakashipu earned curses. Pray to God; let prayer be your breath. Do not conflict with God and be cursed. Take this as the message on this ONAM Day.

Traits like modesty and devotion to God
are real jewels for womankind.

Women preserve the traditional values of a culture and
keep the nation on an even keel.

A woman is honoured as the Goddess of Wealth in a home,
as the companion in the pilgrimage towards God and Self-realisation and
as the mistress of the home.

If the women of a country are happy, healthy and holy,
the men of the Country will be hardy, honest and happy.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

48. For all mankind

Date: 20 October 1982 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara, Avatar Day

With a few virtues only but with scholarship vast What good can one do?
What honour can one gain? With ten acres of land on which no crop can grow
What can one gain ?

'Tis enough, if one has a fertile patch. Embodiments of Love, The Rig Veda, the first among the four, has come down to us in exactly the same way that it was recited in the past. It is a far-spreading tree, with many branches. Of the 25 that once existed, only two are now available. But, these have been preserved intact by means of an elaborate system of memorisation, by which while one set of pupils recite seriatim, another does so back for forth; a third with alternate syllables omitted, etc. The techniques have distinct names like Jada, Mala, Shikha, Dhandha, Ratha, Dhawaja, Ghana, etc.. The reality in man is laid down as Prana (Vital Energy), in the Rig Veda. But, this is inconsistent with the view also found therein that the Atma which is embodied in man and all living beings is eternal Universal Consciousness having no attributes or characteristics or modes. The Rig Veda speaks of three bonds that encumber man - Adhyathmic, where Atma means the person and adhyathmic bond refers to the illnesses and diseases that affect the person, physically and mentally-Adhibhouthic bonds bring about pain and suffering through involvement with other living beings, especially poisonous insects, scorpions, wild animals, etc. Adhidaivik bonds cause terror and loss by what can be called 'acts of God', against which man is helpless, such as floods and drought, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, avalanches, thunderbolts and meteors. The Rig Veda prescribes means to overcome or modify the consequences of these calamities, by achieving progress in physical, mental and spiritual fields of activity.

Karma is to be regulated by Dharma

The Rig Veda is primarily concerned with karma and is part of the Karma kanda (the path of action, to attain the Absolute). There are three stages in

the soul's journey to its source: Karma, Dharma and Brahma. Karma is the sincere discharge of one's duty, as laid down in the scriptures and as beneficial to our standard and status. Through karma done for some benefit in view, man progresses towards karma with no benefit in view, so that he does it as a rightful obligation, undeterred by defeat or unaffected by success. He does karma, regulated by dharma (virtue).. Then, his consciousness is purified and elevated and can help him to become aware of his Reality as the Self which includes all, Brahman (Omni self). Without bud and bloom, no fruit does emerge Without tiny fruit, may be trite and tender, No taste of sweetness can grow and gratify. The flower is karma, the tender fruit is dharma and the taste which gratifies is Brahman. The bud blossoms through devotion and the fruit emerges into virtue and ripens by the acquisition of the awareness of One. The three are inevitable ingredients. To give you a familiar example, the coconut chutney you make at home has four ingredients: salt, chillies, tamarind and the kernel of the nut. To procure all these, clean and pure, in the required quantities, is karma, the path of action. To put them together and press them into a paste is also karma, part of the Path. Then, you put a little on the tongue to discover whether it tastes aright, as the genuine chutney. This is the Path of dharma. When you find that if a sprinkle of salt would make it authentic, you add it, at this stage. Or, if it is more, you mix with it some more saltless paste, until it is just right. And, you derive delight, as a reward. That is the stage of joy, of contentment, the end of desire, Brahman.

Being born, brought up and grown in age is karma; we realise that to live for oneself is not the way to happiness. We take to the path of dharma or virtue, sacrifice, service. But we discover that involvement with problems does not give lasting joy. So, we turn towards the ever-lasting Source of Peace, Harmony and Delight - Brahman, God.

Vedas have universal validity

The Vedas teach not only karma (rites, rituals, vows, sanctifying observances) but also dharma. In fact, it is said that the Vedas are the roots which feed Dharma and hold it fast - "Vedhokhilo Dharma moolam." Since dharma is the

sustainer of the entire world and Law regulates the Cosmos, Vedas have universal validity. There are latent as well as patent forces that urge every particle or wave in the Cosmos. When they are operating in coordination, all is well. But when they are unbalanced and operate without equilibrium, disorder and disaster are caused. For example, the sun, the moon, the earth, the fire, air, water, all these have to maintain a balance in order that order reigns. When the environment is disturbed or distorted, danger is imminent. Water is contaminated, man suffers physical and mental illnesses thereby. Science and technology boast of their achievements in conquering the five elements - space, air, fire, water and land. They are dealing with them as if they are playthings amenable to their whims. They do not deal with them as means for the peace and prosperity on the earth, for all its inhabitants. Their attempts to analyse and take advantage of the five elements are resulting in fatal pollutions and natural disasters like droughts and even earthquakes. The five elements have to be adored and treated reverentially, as the Rg Veda directs. Worship them in humility. Then, they would reward you with plentiful power. Today, that reverence has disappeared in the greed for exploitation.

Sleep is a short death, death is a long sleep

Things that confer joy can also confer grief, when their real nature is not understood. The counsel of the wise calms our mind and enthuses our hearts. But, sometimes, it may disturb the mind and depress the heart, when we feel it is denying or discouraging our pet plans and pleasures. But, the quality of the counsel is, on both occasions, wisdom. For example, showers of rain are comforting, and therefore, quite welcome. But the drops, sometimes, turn into hailstones and hit hard causing pain. They too are the same material, welcome in another form. Within minutes, the stones run as water on the ground, and become desirable gifts. Peace is inherent in man. When ego becomes egoism, the Aham becomes Ahamkar by enfolding itself in a form. 'I' - pure and simple, maintained pure and simple - is still 'being'; it 'becomes' when the I identifies itself with something other: I am a man, I am a monk, I am a student.

The 'I' has become an 'ism', has put on a form, a vesture, which it is loath to

give up, the akar which has rendered it Aham-kar, egoist! When you are in bed, asleep, dreaming and wandering through varied escapades and experiences, what has happened to the body which you had fostered as you yourself?. And while in deep sleep, where have all the levels of consciousness taken refuge? Sleep is a short death: death is a long sleep. You, the 'I' in you, endow the inert material vehicle called body with consciousness. You are the Cosmic Consciousness, God, temporarily in the role of 'I'. The bodymind-complex is the instrument to be utilised for that role, Use it for furthering God's purpose, executing God's will. This is the message of Rig Veda. Another mistaken idea some people entertain is that they can kill themselves by suicide or Atma-hathya. So, they plan to punish and destroy the body which is inert and incapable of initiative. The mind has to be punished, for the despair which overwhelms the will to live is caused by the erratic mind, not the body. Delve into the vagaries of the mind, learn to direct it along straight paths and emerge as the victor over despair.

Vedhic hymns have great potency

The hymns of the Rig Veda have been used down the ages to sanctify widely different events and experiences of man, spiritual and apparently secular. The distinction is artificial, for all of life has to be spiritualised. When the boy is initiated into Vedhic studies or the recitation of the Gayathri and other manthras, when some one has to be blessed on some happy occasion, when a wedding has to be ceremoniously performed with the invocation of God, and when the body is buried or burnt after the soul has left, the Rig Vedhic hymns are chanted. They have great potency and arouse beneficial thoughts on reciters and listeners. The seers who saw the hymns of the Veda, chanted and communicated them. They were 403 in number. Vashishta is the foremost of them, with 104 hymns which he visualised. There is a story about the sage Bharadhwaja who sought to visualise all that has to be known through the Vedhic Voice of God. He prayed to the Lord of Heaven, Indhra, to give him longer and longer leases of life but Indhra, after obliging him more than once, laughed at his tenacity and said, pointing to a huge mountain range facing him, "All that you have mastered so far is but three handfuls of sand, from these peaks. How can you ever master the Veda fully?" But, the

sage did not wince. He said, "I shall bear the burden gladly". Burden in Sanskrit is Bhara and bearing is Bhara. So, he was known as Bharadhwaja. Vamadeva and Agasthya are the other seers of note, whose visions helped the origination of 56 and 27 hymns or sookthas. Vishwamithra has contributed another 56.

Accept blame as medicine and benefit by it

Vishwamithra was able to hand down the potent Gayathri Manthra to posterity. His name means "Friend for All" "Well-wisher for the world." It was the Gayathri that entitled him to earn that name. Rig Veda is entirely the product of the insight of such sages. Every name you use for God, every illustration we imagine of His Glory, are in the Rig Veda. Rama, Krishna, Sai, Ishwara, are all the very essence of the glory it describes, though you may not recognise the sources. Manthra means "words that save those who meditate on them." So, whatever is uttered with such intention becomes holy, charged with love for fellow-men, for the world, for the elements.

Rig Veda teaches the lesson of serenity. Praise is like rosewater scent; when it is sprinkled on you, suffer it but don't drink it - that is to say, accept it and thrive on it. Blame is like a medicine. Examine yourselves whether you have the illness and if you have, accept the blame and benefit by it. Serenity is a divine virtue. All the Vedas are intent on helping man to become aware of Divinity in him and all around him. Picture for yourselves the peace that seers gained by that awareness, and yearn to learn the lessons the Vedas treasure, for all mankind irrespective of caste, creed, race or nationality.

Gandhi said, 'My India is the India of villages '. The freedom that has been won and the prosperity that is looked forward to can be ensured only when the villagers are free and prosperous. And this depends in its turn on the freedom and prosperity of each family in the village.

Now, there is no unity, no mutual co-operation, no love between the four or

five brothers in the family; everyone is at cross purposes with the rest. How then can the village enjoy freedom and peace and prosperity? And what to speak of the country when the condition of its villages is so bad?

Every person seeks positions of authority, without trying to deserve the authority by means of the qualifications necessary to use it in the right way. Of course if a person has good intentions and full capabilities and the vision of the Divine, he can well seek authority and discharge it well. But, we seldom see any one thinking of one's duty; everywhere people are after the acquisition of positions of authority.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

49. Sacrificial fire

Date: **21 October 1982** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam** / Occasion: **Inauguration of the Veda Purusha Sapthaaha Jnaana Yajna**

One can make scholars study and recite the Vedas and Shasthras, and himself study and recite; One can get experts to perform yajnas and yagas and himself perform them well; One can persuade pilgrims to visit holy places and himself journey to every spot; One can instruct candidates in the eight siddhis and himself demonstrate them all; But, one cannot master his senses five and turn his mind to inward path, And be in steady Samadhi Bliss Steeped in Awareness of Self alone. The Vedas are the foundation of Bharatheeya culture. If in modern society, a trace of spiritual illumination is visible, we can ascribe it to this Vedhic basis and the way of life it demarcated. For, all moral codes (dharma) have emanated from the Vedas. Veda moolam idham jhagath - "All the worlds have dharma as their sustenance." The Yajur Veda elaborates the importance of yajnas. These promote the peace and prosperity of the world, as that is the primary aim of all the Vedas. The Yajur Veda hymns extol the glory of the gods and propitiate the Divine Forces. As a result, gold and grain, wealth and welfare, plenty and progress are secured by mankind. The yajna is centred on the adoration of Fire. Man is bound intimately with Fire all through his life. Man is a warmblooded creature; warmth promotes intellect and intuition. Calling upon God and placing the offerings in the Fire are acts which bring about rain to provide rich harvests. Fire is thus a valuable medium for gaining safety and security, for preserving morality and goodness. The Ocean too has Agni (Fire) latent in its loins.

Fire is present everywhere

Man has in his stomach the latent Fire that digests food. God resides in man as this Fire. "Aham Vaishwanaro Bhoothva Praninam Deham Ashrithah," says Krishna. "Having become the Vaishwanara Fire, I enter the body of living beings." So, it is God that keeps all the limbs 'trim. and makes keenness and knowledge possible. The latent Fire causes eight functions' It hardens and

strengthens the muscles. It develops energy. It ensures healthy progeny. It makes one patient and therefore a better instrument, it increases the duration of life. It sharpens and deepens memory. It confers boldness of thought and action. In order to light the Fire in the sacrificial enclosure, a churning rod of hardwood is used on a block of similar hardness. The timber has to be banyan or peepul. The block is the mother and the churner is the father. Agni or Fire is the child' It consumes the parents - Urvashi the mother and Puruuravas, the father - when it is born! They are reduced to ashes, that is to say, that child becomes one with them and they become one with their progeny. All three are inseparably related. The son of God, Jesus, declared, "I and my Father are One." The religion of the Parsis also considers the highest truth as "I am the Light" and "The Light is in me." The Yajur Veda has a name for Agni, Tiger! When Agni is treated without faith and reverence, it destroys the very person who feeds it, just as the tiger which tears its own cubs with its deadly claws. Another characteristic of Agni is its presence everywhere. Scientists and technologists today are proud that they have grasped the secrets of the five elements - sky, wind, fire, water and earth. But, they are still unaware of the intimate kinship each of them has with man and his daily life. The sages of the past have delved into the mystery and revealed it to the world. Notice, for example, that birds do not rest on the ground at night. They prefer tree tops. Why.? The rishis of Vedhic times explain that they seek to avoid the heat latent in the earth but patent to them. Man is unaware of this fact but the birds know it.

The mystery behind the ritual of Fire

The norms of action and behaviour in this land, of those who are cognisant or not cognisant of the reasons, are all in conformity with the Vedas. They have penetrated the nature of the people so deeply that no one can act in contravention. Every phase of their activity, from dawn to dusk and nightfall, are as dictated by the Vedas. Living is in fact a real Vedhic yajna, whether one knows it or not.

In the yajna that is being performed here, every formula that is uttered and every offering made has to be suffused with renunciatory feelings and the

awareness of the Divine. We have here Suuryanamaskar (salutation to Sun God) on one side, Rudhrahoma (Fire offering to God Rudhra) on another, Vedaparayana in another place, Sahasra-lingarchana (worship of thousand Shiva Lingas) nearby, worship of Shakthi (Divine Mother) at the end, and Pandiths reciting Devi Bhagavatham, Ramayana, etc. Why are these varied items gone through? Among these priests, the chief is termed Brahma. One of them will be reciting the Rig Veda, another will be reciting musically the Sama Veda, and the third person will be reciting the Yajur Veda. The Atharva Veda includes the very essence of the three Vedas and it is recited by the person designated as Brahma. The deities extolled in the Vedas are here invoked and invited to shower Grace on all mankind. The Chief priest, designated as Adhwaryu, watches the activity and sets right any fault or failing. His is the overall supervision of the Sacrificial Fire, its upkeep and worship and his is the responsibility for meticulous performance.

Whatever offered to God can never be lost

Behind this ritual of Fire, there lies a small mystery, which has to be cleared, so that you can understand how the offering, addressed to the deity which is invoked by the manthra uttered while placing it in the Fire, can reach that very deity. Well, the Yajur Veda describes the Flames of the Sacred Fire as the Tongues of God. When the offering is dropped into Fire, in the name of the God, the proper name and address have to be uttered at the same time. It is like the post box. When a letter is properly addressed and dropped into the box at Prasanthi Nilayam, it will reach any place, even as far as Japan or Russia. If the address indicates Prasanthi Nilayam, it will be delivered to the person at Prasanthi Nilayam. The address has to be full and correct, that is all. And, the stamp has to be of the correct value. There are people who observe only the outer acts of the yajna and blame Brahmins for "wastefully pouring ghee into the fire, while men are underfed and starving," and accuse that "they are foolishly spending money over profitless pursuits." Even educated persons join in this ignorant condemnation.

The ryot ploughs the field, prepares the plots, lets water into them, and makes them fit to receive the seeds. Then, he scatters four bags of paddy on

the land. An ignoramus who does not know agriculture laughs at him. "You have gone mad. When people are starving, 'you throw the paddy they would gladly eat into the soil!" But, in return for the four bags lost, the 'mad man' will bring home forty bags after harvest. When two tins of ghee are poured ritually into the sanctified Fire the world will gain two hundred tins of ghee. Whatever is dedicated and offered to God can never be lost. People can gain enormous benefit by offering even a little to God. "A leaf or a flower, a fruit or a little water" - that is enough, if offered with devotion. Dhroupadhi gave Shri Krishna the fraction of a leaf sticking to the side of a vessel and God granted her endless good fortune. Kuchela gave a handful of parched rice and received from the Lord awareness of His endless Glory. The yajna bears witness to this inner significance.

Utterance of mantras must emerge from the heart

Offer love and receive love. Give and take. But, the educational system today lays stress only on taking, a one-way traffic! Giving is taboo, totally absent. As a result, when you do not look at God, God too does not look at you. When you look towards Me, your form appears in My eye and My form appears in your eye at the same time. If you do not look towards Me, your form cannot appear in Mine. One-way traffic will not help. The Rig Veda that is recited here by the Hotha priest is fully hymnal, adoration of the Divine; the Udgatha sets the same hymns to music and recites them musically. The Adhwaryu repeats the Yajur Veda. All three are propitiating the only One. Governor Govind Narain quoted in his speech the Vedhic declaration, "Ekam Sath; viprah bahudha vadhanti" - "Only ONE is; the wise describe it in different ways." It is like the head of the family, being addressed as Father by the son, Father-in-law by the daughter-in-law, Grandpa by the grandson, and Lord by the wife. Though four persons use four different names, he remains the same. Similarly, Yogis, Bhogis, and Thyagis, the Artha, the Artharthi, the Jijnasu and the Jnani (The ascetics, materialists, renouncers, the suffering, the wealth-seeker, the spiritual seeker and the realised) use different names for the ONE, without a second. Whether you offer to Agni (Fire God) or Adhithya (Sun God), it reaches the same ONE.

Sacrifice the wayward mind, dedicating it to God

Theists, atheists, agnostics, polytheists, henotheists, all accost God by various names but they all refer only to the ONE. In this yajna (sacrificial rite), offerings are addressed as Rudhraya namah, Varunaya namah, Indhraya namah, Vayave Namah and placed in the Fire for Rudhra, Varuna, Indra and Vayu (Cosmic destroyer, Rain God, God of senses and Wind God). The sages visualised God in those forms and with those forms. After the fields are ploughed and the seeds are sown, we want rains to help in getting a rich harvest. So, prayer is directed to Varuna, to the address of Varuna. When you desire Kasturi to come but call 'Kutumba Rao', how can you succeed? For rains, you have to call on Varuna, and not on Agni! That is to say, the proper manthras have to be uttered and the utterance must emerge from the heart. The sages of the past were not ignorant fools and the manthras and rites they framed and prescribed were not born of amateur enthusiasm. They are the results of wisdom and actual experience. Reciters who are not aware of this truth will mouth the hymns and manthras in a casual manner. Others who ruminate over the meaning and feel the emotions of exaltation and supplication are able to derive delight. Recitation without understanding the meaning might grant a little superficial satisfaction but the hymn can pour from the heart only when the meaning is sensed.

The inner meaning of yajna is 'renunciation,' "sacrifice or giving up." For whom? For the Divine. "Lord! The heart that you gave me, I am offering it in return," is the spirit of that renunciation. The heart He has given, the feelings He evokes, the wealth He has conferred, the fame He has awarded - these have to be gladly offered back. As part of these yajnas, it is laid down that an animal, a goat, or a horse has to be 'sacrificed' that is to say, 'given up.' People ask whether it is not a cruel act.

Scriptures dealing with rituals are comparable, it is said, to Aranya, the jungle. They are called Aranyakas. The terms used in the scriptures have many meanings and it is hard to trace the straight meaning and prefer it to the crooked and deceptive one. For example, the Ashwamedha or Horse Sacrifice, does not mean the ritual killing of horse. The name Ashwa given to

the horse describes it as an animal which is restless all the time - symboling the mind which is agitated, both while awake and while dreaming. The horse can never be calm and quiet. Its legs, tail, or ears will be quivering or shaking always. The banyan tree is called Ashwattha, since its leaves will ever be shaking, wind or no wind. What is recommended is 'sacrifice' of the wayward mind, dedicating it to God so that it becomes stable and calm and not bringing a living animal and killing it. That is adherence to the outer literal meaning of the injunction, not to the inner and valid import. Listen to the significances of Vedhic aphorisms and rituals and scriptural injunctions with selfless, pure and joyful concentration. Treasure them in the heart for practice in daily life and for sharing with other earnest souls.

50. Significance of Yajnas

Date: **21 October 1982** / Location: **Prasanthi Nilayam** / Occasion: **First day of the Vedhapurusha Saptaaha Yajna**

Thought, word and deed, when man keeps as one, He is-acclaimed on earth as truly great. Wedded to Truth, the presence of God is gained, Liars, like pebbles, abound, true men, like diamonds, are rare.

Embodiments of Love! The presence of God, the vision of the Absolute, is not a state to be attained or newly achieved. God or the Absolute is the very nature of the Self. The individual is the indivisible God. Even when enmeshed in this world of conflict and confrontation, the Self is God, in reality. Deluding himself as the body in which he lives and attaching himself to the charm and challenge of Nature, he imposes self-hood on himself and suffers from that limitation. The raindrops clear and pure from the clouds, but on earth the water is rendered turbid and polluted by its contact with the ground. That does not affect its real nature. The water that rose as cloud and fell as rain is clear and pure. The salt of the sea is discarded in the sea itself. All the rivers of all the continents end in the sea; they lose, on merging with the sea from which they started their long journey, their forms and their taste or characteristic qualities. Similarly, the selves that have assumed human forms and that are designated by separate names, emerge from the same source and merge in the Universal form which they particularised. In the Bhagavad Geetha, Krishna declares, *Mamaiva amsho jeevaloke, Jeevabhuthah sanathanah* 'The multiplicity of individual selves has happened from a part of Me.' They may appear different but their reality is the ONE. The Vedas therefore accost all selves as "children of Immortality," "amruthasya puthrah." They remind every living being of its being the undying Divine.

Every role and action has a method

A millionaire may take on the role of a down-and-out in a play and act the part remarkably well on the stage, but that impersonation does not make him a down-and-out. Even while on the stage, he knows that he is a millionaire,

pretending to be poor. He will indeed be a fool if he forgets his reality. The individual self is the role; the reality is God. Every role and action has a method, a mode, a way. The engineer, for example, works according to certain norms, certain principles and processes. These have to be decided upon with reference to the nature of the sub-soil, the type of foundation, the height of the structure, etc. A painter has to calculate the area, the base, the background, the culture, etc. If they do not pay attention to these, the structure won't be strong, the picture won't be liked. The same holds good for the yajna (sacrificial rite) that was inaugurated this morning. First, the fire-altar, where offerings are poured into the sacred fire. It has to be made to measure, as laid down in the ancient past. If the prescribed rules are broken or by-passed, the result promised cannot be secured. The fire that is lit in the altar has, according to the texts which recommended the yajna, to be churned out of the hard wood which was used this morning. After it is lit, tongues of flame have to be raised in order to receive the articles that are offered to the deities that are invoked by the sacred incantations.

Ritual fire of yajna is venerated as Vishnu

There are three fires, lit in correctly prepared sacrificial pits - the Dakshina Agni, Garhapathya Agni and the Ahavaniya Agni. The question may arise, what need is there to distinguish three types of fire, when fire is only one in reality. But, consider this illustration. We light a fire to cook the meal. The fire softens and makes the food palatable and digestible. The fire that reduces the human corpse on the pyre into ashes is another. Though it is as much fire as the fire in the kitchen, no one bakes a roti over it in order to make it eatable. It is treated as profane and unholy. As distinct from these two, consider this ritual fire. This fire is venerated as the central deity of the Vedhic Yajna, as Vishnu Himself, the sustenance and support of the worlds. We prostrate before this fire, an act of adoration which we refuse to the fire that cooks or the fire that consumes the body; neither do we offer oblations in the kitchen fire nor do we utter invocatory hymns and formulae. We do that only for this ritual Fire. This fire is like the post box of the Department of Posts and Telegraphs. When you drop your letter, duly stamped and addressed, into that box, the department ensures that it will be carried over to the person

whose address it bears. You cannot accomplish the same assignment - communicating with the addressee - if you drop the letter into an identical box hung on your own wall, on your own initiative, to fulfil your will. That box cannot serve the purpose. The purpose of contacting the Supreme Consciousness in its various manifestations named deities, can be realised only when the altar is laid down as prescribed, when the fire is evoked as recommended and when oblations are offered with the correct recitation of propitiatory formulae.

Offerings made to Gods in the sacred fire

The Garhapathya fire is the fire in the household - lit in the oven for cooking or boiling, in the fire-place for warming or in lamps for providing light or on sticks of incense. Ahavaniya fire is the ritual fire kept alive in the household of the higher castes wherein is invoked the guardian deities of health, harmony and prosperity, with preliminary recitals of Pranava (OM). Then, there is the Dakshina Agni, the Southern Fire, lit ceremonially on occasions of need for use in rites for the dead. Since the God of Death, Yama, is the Deity of the Southern Region, this fire is called Dakshina or Southern. This is the reason why people are warned not to sleep with their heads towards the South, the direction of decay and disintegration. Of these three, the Ahavaniya is, as can be seen, holy and adorable. The Yajur Veda deals with Yajna or Ritual Adoration of fire, as the medium of communication with the Gods. It has two recensions: Shukla (Bright) and Krishna (Dark), associated with Aditya (Sun) and Brahma (the Creator). Yajur Veda has as subsidiary many complementary bodies of lessons on special skills. Archery (Dhanur Vidhya) is one such, with its four compartments' Release, Retraction, Replacement and Ritualistic Potency (Mukthaka, Amukthaka, Muktha- Amukthaka and Manthra Mukthaka). Arrows on which Brahma, Agni, Vishnu and other Gods with their Divine Energies were invoked, were used against the foes. These subsidiary sections of the Vedas have mostly been lost and so knowledge of such skills has become inaccessible. The Veda mentions many specific items that are to be used as offerings to Gods, conveyable through the emissary, fire. They are milk, curds, ghee, grains, the juice of the plant named Soma and what is designated as 'Vapa', a term wrongly taken as meaning the diaphragm of a

lamb or other sacrificial animal. It is necessary to clarify the real meaning and significance of offering the Vapa. The Vapa of a young lamb is preferable, it is said. The mind, the heart of the human child, is pure, tender, unsoiled by greed or pride. And the lamb is much more so. The Vedhic texts describe such a heart as nirgunam (serene), niranjanam (unattached), nicketanam (abode of good), sanathanam (eternal), nithya (stable), suddha (unblemished), buddha (alert), mukta (free), nischala (unaffected), nirmala (pure). Offering the 'vapa' of the lamb means, therefore, dedicating one's heart, after rendering it soft and sweet, and not casting into the flames the diaphragm of a slaughtered kid!

Yajnas help to cleanse consciousness

For the Vedas invite us to realise that everything - living and non-living-, every quality and characteristic of everything, is only an aspect of the one Atma, the Source and Substance of all. The Aham or the Ego is an appearance on the Atma as the foam on the edge of the wave, which is but the ocean itself. The Atma can well be devoid of Ego, but the Ego cannot exist without the Atma as the reality underneath. However, man validates the Ego (Aham), giving it a form (akaram) full of attributes and so, it gets polluted as Egoism (Aham-karam). When the Ego is free from the status of 'ism,' it is a facet or factor of the Atma. Attributes, modes, gunas drag it into the tangle of dualities and so, it gets malefic and sheds its positive, purifying role. The oblation that is done here in the sacred fire is symbolic of the evil adhering to the Ego, the animal urges that still animate it. The 'ism' or mould in which the Ego has hardened tantalises man and blinds him to the Truth. Shankaracharya has described the harm it inflicts and prescribes the recitation of the name of God to defuse the consequence. The pure ego will then merge and lose its identity in the Atma, which has no birth and no death. These Yajnas serve one purpose more than all else - the cleansing of all levels of consciousness (chittha-shuddhi), for they involve renunciation, invocation of Divinity and ascetic practices. This achievement alone cannot ensure liberation (moksha). That can be won only by the awareness of the reality leading to discarding (kshaya) the attachment (moha) to the unreal. But, this ultimate objective is seldom kept in view. Vedhic rites were gone through in

order to win the boon of sorrow-free worldly life and blissful heavenly sojourn, and only as a stage in realising the freedom from birth and death, and merging in the Truth.

Man has to give up the animalist ego

With a cleansed mind, one has to pursue the inquiry into the Reality, until no trace of fascination for the unreal persists. Yajna involves renunciation. It means 'giving up.' What is it that we have to give up? Riches? That is quite easy. The home? That too is not difficult. Giving up one's wife and children, one's lands and houses and removing oneself into the forest? That too has been done by many. But though one's body and mind are in the recesses of the jungle, the wife and children, the lands and houses might still occupy the thoughts and emotions of the person who has come away. What have to be given up, therefore, are one's evil tendencies, harmful thoughts, selfish feelings and longing for sensual pleasures. One has to get rid of envy, of the love for parading oneself. When these have been renounced, hearth and home cannot harm us. The Vedas desire man to give up the animalist ego, and its complement, anger. The evils of envy, pride and spite belong to the same brood. These are all 'bestial' though human in appearance. They declare that love, tolerance, compassion, non-attachment, and adherence to truth are the genuine human traits. Jesus Christ said, "Ask, it shall be given; Call, it will be answered; Knock, it shall be opened." But, are we asking, calling and knocking? Yes. We are asking, we are calling, we are knocking at the door. But, whom are we asking? Whom are we calling? At whose door are we knocking?

You do not ask God for the indispensable

We are not asking for everlasting bliss; we ask only for short-lived material pleasures. So, we do not get all that we ask for. What is the reason? Has He no compassion? The child is sick but it asks for many varieties of sweets which the mother refuses to give. Does it mean that she hates the child? Or, is she hard-hearted? Has she lost her affection? The refusal is itself a sign of compassion. For, each person is an invalid, suffering from recurrent birth and

death. Granting whatever is asked can only lengthen the suffering. Hence arises the withholding and the denial. And, you too do not ask for the indispensable! You do not pray for the peace that knows no break. If you do, the boon will be granted. Of course, you do call. But, do you call on God, or on some one ungodly? God will respond when the call arises from the heart. Your call is fouled by greed, by hatred against others, by the desire for vengeance, by the hiss of envy and intolerance. I know you knock at the door. But, at which door? Keeping the door of your own heart closed, how can your clamour succeed in getting other door opened? Knock at the door of your own heart. God, the resident, will come into view. Prahladha had the faith that God resides in every heart and everywhere. So, when a pillar in the palace was knocked at, the Lord manifested therefrom. Believe that He resides in you and turn your eyes inward. You complain that God is merciless, hard to please, etc., only because you do not wish to give Him what ought to or ask from Him what He would gladly give. Tender hearts, holy thoughts, loving speech - these can invoke the Divine Atma to manifest into awareness. For, these personify Sathya, embody God as Sathya or the Truth of Truths. Sath-thya are the three syllables of Sathya. Sath means, the Sun, Surya. Thya means the glory, the splendour. The Sathya - the glory of the Sun - nourishes and ripens the grain, which is man's food. Food sustains the vitality, the vital breath. Therefore, Sathya has to be adored and propitiated. The Homa or offering of oblations in this ceremonially lit and ceremonially fed fire is the symbolic adoration of the Truth of Truths, the Sathya.

The present socialist ideal is a Vedhic concept

Philosophy is interpreted as the search for Truth. But, Truth is not something to be sought for. You have only to be aware of it, to experience it, to be it. Without it, Philosophy is but full-lossophy! These Yajnas which encourage you to sublimate your emotions are all designed to direct you towards the goal.

Truth is totality, the One which integrates and includes the many. The sages of yore were not satisfied with one facet of the Truth or one view, not of one God but of That where all streams merge. As Bairagi Shastry told you now that it is Kesava, to whom adoration addressed to all Gods reaches: "Sarva

deva namaskarah Kesavam pratigachchathi". One house cannot become a village, nor one individual, a society, nor one tree, a forest! To be conscious of the totality, one has to fill oneself with the sublime grandeur of the forest, not squat under a single tree. This is the inner purpose which led aspirants and seekers after Truth to the core the Himalyan forests. Keeping away from the din of the populace was only an excuse. In the sylvan hermitage, the prayer resonant with Yajur Veda, "Let all be of one mind, of one heart, towards one goal, sustained by one strength" rose more meaningful and more effectively. The present socialist ideal of the unity of mankind is a Vedhic concept; in fact, the Vedhic ideal was even wider and more comprehensive. "Let all the worlds be happy and prosperous," "The world is one family," the Vedas proclaimed.

Vedhic rituals are for the welfare of the world

It is wrongly assumed that the Vedas had only the one section of the population, one caste, one race, one community in view. This is the result of misreading and mistaken inference. They are concerned, it was said, only with Brahmins and with the Pandiths among them. This too is a wrong conclusion Every Vedhic ritual had as its goal the prosperity and peace of the world. The Vedas yearn to establish the welfare of the three worlds - the nether regions, the earth and heaven. It is a pity that a narrow outlook is foisted by short-sighted people on such profound texts. The Vedas do not allow scope for distinctions on the basis of caste or creed. They assert, "I shall save who-ever keeps me in memory." "I shall be beside whoever is beside me." "Whoever adores me in whatever form and through whichever name, I shall manifest myself before them with that form, bearing that name."

Every manthra in the Vedas connotes only the One

Oblations are offered in this sacred fire to the One, but the One is invoked through many names: "OM! Prostrations to Rudhra! OM! Prostrations to Adithya! OM! Prostrations to Varuna" etc. The Rishis or sages had each a favourite form and name and, as a result, the one Lord acquired many names. Many among you perform the worship, named "The hundred thousand" (Lakshaharchana) or "The Week-long" (Saptaham). What is done then is

repeating the names a hundred thousand times, or for full seven days and nights. A flower is placed before the picture or idol, with the pronunciation of a name - Madhava, Kesava, Narayana, etc. The idol is the same throughout. When we name Him, Madhava, we are conscious that He is also Kesava and Narayana, and we derive delight from that knowledge. Each hymn of the Vedas is called a Rig which means 'praise'. And the word Veda is derived from the root, Vidh, 'to know'. And what exactly should we strive to know? We must know the One, which has no second, no another, no other. So, every word, every statement in the Vedas, every manthra or Rig in them, connotes only the One, though out of insufficient or wrong understanding people mistake the lesson and ascribe the words to indicate the Many. It is essential that the true import be grasped by all. Since the opportunities to learn it have declined, mistaken interpretations gain currency. In the course of this week-long Vedhic Yajna, we shall delve into the deeper significance of the Vedhic teachings.

51. The lamb

Date: 21 October 1982 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam

Mergence in the Cosmic Consciousness (Brahman), of which each one is an expression, is not a novel achievement gained by effort. It is only the awareness, in a flash, of an existing fact. One is Brahman already, inherently, inseparably so. Salt, which is an expression of the nature of the ocean, might be noticed in many lands, on many occasions, in many forms and many compounds. But, it retains its truth which is cognisable in its taste. Originating from the sea, salt lends the quality of the sea to every article with which it is associated, whether it be milk or syrup or clear tasteless water. So too, though the individualised spark of consciousness has woven a cocoon around itself and assumed a form and a name, it - that is to say, man - can never give up its essential Atmic nature. The Upanishads emphasise this duty and warn man of the danger that must follow when this responsibility is neglected or evaded. As the ocean announces that the salt crystal is its own, itself, so the Lord announces in the Geetha 'Mamaiva amsho jeevaloke jeeva bhoothas sanathanah - "A unit of mine, which is eternal, has become life, in this world of Life." No wonder, the Veda addresses living beings as, "Children of the immortal One" and "Inheritors of immortal Bliss." Some years ago, a rich zamindar played the role of a washerman in a village drama and won the appreciation of the vast gathering. He spoke and gesticulated, argued and bargained as vociferously as any washerman. But, that did not affect or tarnish his genuine Zamindar-hood in any way. So too, the body-mind-complex may have many forms and names or roles, but the Atma, the Witness, has none. Names and forms have temporary validity for daily living, as we noticed in the case of the washerman on the stage during the play. The washerman has to use a special dialect and conform to certain customs and conventions. Or else, the play cannot impress. As a matter of fact, every activity of man is a scene in the Divine Play and therefore subject to limits and bounds, relevant to the plan and purpose.

The Vedhic yajna and meaning of the rituals

Art engineer, for example, has been trained to respect and follow certain accepted practices and obligatory rules. The depth of the foundation has to be in proportion to the height of the structure. The space on the ground has to determine the area and height of the building erected on it. The painter too has to pay attention to proportion and balance, symmetry and harmony. We are now watching a Vedhic ritual, a yajna, being performed by these pandiths well versed in the science of invoking Grace through manthra. They have to prepare the sacrificial altar according to the rules laid down thousands of years ago. The ceremonial fire which has to be lit and fed in the duly constructed altar has to be produced by churning to the accompaniment of Vedhic hymns in praise of the all-pervasive Fire-principle. Fire so sanctified becomes divine and can act as a messenger between man and God. The altar becomes a post-box, authorised by the highest, to receive prayers (letters) correctly stamped (with sincerity) addressed to the various facets of the Omnipresent Almighty. The fire in the domestic hearth kept alive for cooking food and kept in other forms to benefit from its heat and light are secular and not sacred. The fire that consumes the corpse is taboo. These fires too have some bounds and limits, but, this sacrificial fire has the largest number of restrictions and prescriptions and the most meaningful modes of feeding and fostering.

The myth about the sacrificial offering

For example, in Vedhic yajnas patronised by those who consider the letter to be sacrosanct, a lamb is sacrificed and its diaphragm offered as an oblation. But, the karma has to be examined in the light of the jnana that is derivable from it. The Vedhic myth or concept is clothed in symbols. A symbol, like the word 'diaphragm' is capable of a wide range of interpretations, both allegoric and metaphoric.

Let us analyse this further. The young of the sheep is as tender as the human baby. It is innocence personified, full of charming playfulness. Sheep are docile and harmless, incapable of injuring others. The lamb is as holy as the purest of angels. The diaphragm which separates the thoracic from the abdominal cavities is only a symbol of the layer of jnana which separates the

worldly from the spiritual. It represents the casket in which the pure sathwik heart is enshrined. God will accept such an offering, and not inferior oblations. What is therefore meant by the text is that one has to maintain the heart as the source and repository of pure love and offer it to God. There was no intention to slaughter the dear little lamb. Be a lamb; offer the innocent heart encased in Love - that is the message. What can mortal man gain by killing another mortal being?

Karma Kanda of the Veda must purify the mind so that it may succeed in upasana (worship, adoration of the Presence) and achieve the jnana which releases one from bondage. This Vedhic karma or ritual is called yajna. Yajna means "giving up," "renunciation," thyaga. What exactly has to be given up? Riches? That is easy enough One's home? That too is not hard. Does it mean retiring into a forest, breaking away from kith and kin? Many have done so and become proud of it. The thyaga that the yajna demands is the casting off of pomp, pride, envy, greed, in short, the ego itself.

Every rite laid down in the Veda has this aim only - to promote selflessness and universal love. Concentration on sensual gratification, anger, fury, hatred - these are bestial characteristics. Man must be ashamed to have even a trace of such traits. The characteristics of human nature are, and ought to be, love, forbearance, detachment, renunciation and truth.

Do not ask God for trivial glittering trash

Jesus announced, "Ask; it shall be given, Call; I shall answer. Knock; the door will be opened." Of course you are asking, calling and knocking. But, what are you asking for? Trivial glittering trash is what you prefer; not everlasting delight. When what you ask for is not given, do not condemn the mother as cruel. She does not feed a sick child the delicacies it demands. Her affection dictates that apparent cruelty. So, too, God's mercy is patent in His refusal to give what you ask for.

You are calling out but you are not answered often. Why? You address someone other than God. The call does not arise from your heart. The

yearning is not total. The motive is selfish and impure. You are knocking at the door and complaining that it is not opened. God is residing in your own heart but you have locked that heart so that love cannot enter. So, He is silent and unresponsive. The door need not be opened, for you to become aware of the God within. It is ever open for Love; knocking is unnecessary. Love will automatically make the heart bright with light and delight. When the One is known, there is no more asking. The consummation of this Vedhic Yajna lies in the giving up of desire, in the awareness of the One without a Second.

Truth or God can flash only in a mind clear of blemish. Envy is the foulest of blemishes. Vanity, envy, egoism - these three are kin. They cut at the root of man's progress. To feel proud that you are a bhaktha, that you are nearing God, is also a blot, Though you may be a mountain, you must feel you are a mound; you should not pretend to be a mountain.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

52. The voice of God

Date: 22 October 1982

Heaven does not lie up above; Here it is in the world of men. When men lead the good life The world itself becomes Paradise. Embodiments of love! The Vedas are known as the voice of the rishis. The rishis intuitively perceive the truth. They can see the past, the present and the future. They are free from attachments. It is because of such high souled seers that the voice of God was revealed to the world. This revelation demonstrates the truth about the divine. Although it consists of the four Vedas, they have been divided into seven Samhithas. Among these, three are important - Rig, Sama and Atharvana. Samhitha means a collection of manthras. Among these, three types of branches have arisen. These are the Brahmanas, Aranyakas and the Upanishads. The Brahmanas embody the science of Reality in the form of manthras. The manthras are related to yagnas and yagas. The primary purpose of the Brahmanas is to teach the rules relating to yagnas and describe their performance. Among the Brahmanas the better known are the Aithareya Brahmana, the Taittiriya Brahmana, the Shathapatha Brahmana and the Shadvimsha Brahmana. There is a close connection between the Brahmanas and the Samhithas. The Brahmanas are intended to enable people to realise their desires by reciting manthras relating to God and thereby securing God's grace. They are concerned with worldly and otherworldly objectives and are not devoted to the realisation of Brahman. All human desires are concerned with the world and are associated with desires and hatreds.

Four stages to achieve oneness with the Divine

Next come the Aranyakas. Although these contain primarily the manthras from the Brahmanas, they contain also poetic and prose passages. As these manthras were intended to be studied by those who gave up family life and entered on the Vanaprastha Ashrama as a recluse and lived in forests, they came to be known as Aranyakas. In ancient times, rishis used to live in the forests and devoted themselves to the continuous recitation of manthras

relating to God. Hence, these manthras came to be known as Aranyakas. The Aithareya and Taittiriya Upanishadhs belong to the Aranyaka group. The third group consists of the Upanishadhs. The full life of a human being is indicated by one conforming to the four goals (Purusharthas): dharma, artha, kama and moksha. Education is of two kinds - one is worldly knowledge (apara vidhya) and the other is knowledge of the Eternal (Para Vidhya). The Rig, Yajur and Sama Vedas relate to the Apra vidhya. These Vedas are helpful for the understanding of the four Purusharthas. The Vedas may help one to understand the divine nature of the Brahman, but they cannot lead one to the Brahman. In the realisation of the divine, there are four stages - Salokyam (seeing the divine), Saruupyam (enjoying the form of the divine), Sameepyam (nearness to the divine) and Sayujyam (merging in the divine). When one reaches the stage of nearness (Sameepyam), the stage of merging (sayujyam) is not far off. Just as the Ganga, when it reaches the sea, will not turn back, similarly one who has experienced nearness to God will not turn back. The four Vedas enable one to approach the divine, but it is the Upanishadhs that enable one to achieve oneness with the divine. The Upanishadhs embody the experiences and ecstatic realisations of rishis who perceived the Reality and enjoyed it. The Upanishadhs also lay down the manner in which they should be recited. It is only when they are recited with due regard to the sound and the meter will they yield the desired results.

Aids for the control of the senses

There are eight ways of reciting the Upanishadhic manthras, - Jata, Ghana, Mala, Shikha, Rekha, Dhawaja, Dhanda and Radhwa. Of these Jata and Dhanda are the most important. The others are variations of these two. The Jata method of recitation is essential for the performance of the seven Paka-yagnas, the seven Havis-yagnas and the seven Soma-yagnas. The 21 yagnas are associated with the 5 senses of action Karmendhriyas, the 5 Gnanendhriyas (the Cognitive senses) , the 5 7hahmanthras (the subtle elements), the 5 Pranas (life-breaths) and the Principle of the Ego. Consequently every yagna is related to one Indhriya. The Brahmanas, the Aranyakas and the Upanishadhs are aids for the control of the senses. Although different deities are mentioned in the manthras, it is the one

Supreme that is invoked under different names for different purposes. When the Divine is invoked for giving rain, the name of Indhra is called; Varuna is invoked for another purpose. When the Mruthyunjaya Manthra is recited, it is not for conquering death (as it is commonly believed), but for avoiding unnatural or premature death.

Regard every day in your life as a yagna

It should be noted that every Veda is intended to enable man to make his daily life holy and good. Although human life is transient, the allotted span must be used for sacred purposes and to realise the Divine. The Vedas have the power to enable man to transmute his life and make it sublime. Whether consciously or otherwise, from morning till night, man carries out the duties laid down by the Vedas. Every act is governed by the dictates of the Vedas, but it is only when these acts are done with an understanding of their purpose will their true character be known. Similarly, every sacrificial act, yagna is intended to propitiate the Divine. In yagna, ghee is offered to the fire. To obtain ghee, you have to secure milk, which can only be provided by a cow. The word "Go" in Sanskrit refers not only to the cow, but also to the Vedas. It also refers to the earth. It also refers to the region of the heart. The ancient rishis demonstrated that the "Go" which is represented by the Vedas is the same as the "Go" represented in the physical world as the cow.

The Yajurveda has enjoined protection of the cow as a supreme duty, as it is an animal which lives on sathwik food and has virtuous qualities. The inner significance of Vedhic manthras should be understood by every Bharatheeya. Having been born in the land of the Vedas, to fail to understand the meaning and significance of the Vedas will mean lowering ourselves in the estimation of foreigners. Our whole life is bound up with the Vedas. We must regard every day in our life as a yagna. Every word that we utter must become a manthra.

53. The ultimate attainment

Date: 27 October 1982 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Dasara, Vijayadasami

When man acts on earth the way he speaks He is no longer man, he is a noble soul When man doesn't act the way he speaks He is no longer man, he is only a beast. Bharath has sought to ensure the peace and security of nations for generations through instruction on spiritual development. She herself has been an example to others for spiritual virtues. 'May all the worlds be happy' is the prayer echoing from the Vedas through centuries and over the globe. The sages, monarchs, scholars, and women of past ages dedicated their lives, in order to solve the fundamental problems of the human situation and promote world prosperity. They accepted sacrifice as their duty and destiny. Due to the degenerated time-spirit of today, self-interest has polluted the thoughts, words and deeds of man! He acts as if things and persons have to be sought and loved, because they are useful for him. This is only another instance of selfish love. Man is activated by desire; he plans and designs to win what he desires. Human life is a process where man awaits the harvest of the desires he sows. The desire has to be not for self-advancement but for peace, happiness and prosperity for all. Only then can the Vedhic prayer mentioned above be realised. Time is but a mirror that reveals to us our fancies or our fantasies. It has no preferences or originality. It has no ideas of its own or sympathy with others. The joy or grief that time presents to us is only the reflection of our own deeds, good or bad. The reflection may appear in the mirror quickly or late. The seed turns into a tree only after years, and the fruit takes a few more. Every deed is a seed that inevitably yields fruits, either sweet or bitter, which one has to eat in joy or grief. So, man has to resolve to do good, see good, hear good and be good.

Nothing is outside or beyond Brahman

For, goodness is the real nature of man. Bad tendencies are unnatural; they are imposed by circumstances. Through sheer bad luck, man is welcoming the accretions and ignoring the core. One has to place his faith on the Divinity that is in everything, always and everywhere. The Vedas declare: "Poornam

adhah Poornam idham Poornath Poornam udhachyathe Poornasya Poornam Adhaya Poornam eva avashishyathe." 'That is wholly Divine. This is wholly Divine. From the totally Divine arose the totally Divine. When the totally Divine is taken from the totally Divine, the total Divine remains.' 'That' means "the thing afar, apart", "the entity that is beyond the reach of the human instruments of perception." "This" means the visible world, the objective world, cognisable with the senses and amenable to experience. This too is as divine as the rest. Asthi (Existence, Is-ness), bhathi (shining) and priyam (endearing), (Sath, Chith and Anandha). are the characteristics of Divinity and these three are found in everything. Only the form and the name are transitory, subject to change.

This silver tumbler can be converted by the smith into a cup or plate or just a lump of metal. But, silver is, is knowable, is likeable. It is Asthi-Bhathi-Priyam. A lump of jaggery is sweet; a bit or a pinch of jaggery taken out of it is also as sweet as the lump. They are all 'totally sweet' and 'totally jaggery,' Similarly the Cosmos which the Divine projected is Divine; the Jagath is Brahman; nothing is outside it or beyond it. This is Truth because That is Truth. This is as true as That. No one can assert that This cannot change and That has to change. A person decides out of his own limited experience that This is bad and That is good, but since all is equally divine, the distinction is not real.

Divinity is inscrutable

What exactly is the Divine? What are its characteristics? How can it be defined? No person can claim authority to announce the attributes which mark out Divinity, the activities through which Divinity can be identified, and the Form in which Divinity can be recognised. And no one has the power to assert that no other attributes or activities or forms can be divine. It is sheer effrontery and foolishness to make pronouncements on the nature and work of God. When Divinity is immanent in everything, conscious and unconscious, in every form of being and becoming, how can a thing be condemned as bad or commended as good? Water quenches thirst and also drowns people. Fire gives light and warmth but also burns and reduces things to ash. Sound terrifies and also thrills. They are all three Divine; Divinity is inscrutable. The

Divine will is ever free and fresh. The divine has no selfishness or pride or greed or envy. But, you suffer from all these illnesses. So, your judgement is narrow and crooked. The Divine can function as It pleases and wills, for, It has no wants. Every object maintains its inner genuineness. When it does not, it degenerates. When fire loses its capacity to burn, it reduces itself to cold coal. Sugar can no longer be sugar if it loses its sweetness. God is identified with heat in fire and sweetness in sugar. You may deny God or affirm God - that is dependent on your predominant mood. But, God is in all. God is all. You may accept or reject but Divinity will adopt any means it wills in order to revive reverence for scriptures and observance of morality. You cannot gain by discussing about the means and pronouncing your opinions on them. You have only to cultivate Faith and exult.

God is described as the farthest and closest

Vishnu, the name of the Lord, means "Present everywhere." The question is asked. "Why then is He not seen?" But, do we see the air which is all around us? Can we say then that there is no air at all? God is also said to be minuter than the minutest and vaster than the vastest. The Taithireeya Upanishadh describes God as: "that which has nothing bigger, and that which has nothing smaller." It is in accordance with this statement that Thyagaraja sang: "Thou art in that, as in Brahma, Shiva and Keshava, O Rama." The Vedas also describe Him as the farthest and the closest. Some one dear to you may be in America but your love keeps him close to you. When your neighbour is an enemy or a stranger to you he is 'far' away. It is the mind that pushes and pulls, hates and loves. You are what you feel. Take me as an example. I am 'yes' to those who say 'yes'; I am 'no' to those who say 'no', 'No' and 'Yes' are words you speak. From Sai it is always 'yes', 'yes', 'yes'. Due to one's attachment to the body in which one is enclosed, egoism grows deep and the Atma is not believed in. The Telugu proverb says, "When boiling milk rises, it falls into the fire." The lesson it enshrines is: "Pride reduces one to ashes." Humility can be built only on a foundation of charity, detachment. Thyaga (sacrifice) gives man the greatest joy. He who is ever ready to sacrifice his comfort for helping another, is the genuine devotee. People cling to comfort and luxury and high life. But, for how long can they so cling? You cannot run a

race, when a mountain faces you. The world is bound by time and space and your stay too is for a limited period. To seek joy in the world of objects is as foolish as gathering dewdrops from lotus leaves mistaking them for diamonds or wading through mirages hoping to collect water in pails. Joy, pure and plentiful, can be earned only from God and through obedience to Divine laws and directions.

One has to discharge his duty fully and correctly

While they were in exile living in the forest, one day Seetha noticed a golden deer. She was fascinated by it and she prayed to Rama to go after it, catch it and bring it for her. Rama set out from the hermitage, directing Lakshmana to be on guard and not to leave Seetha alone on any account. The golden deer was the decoy employed by Ravana to draw Rama away from the hermitage, so that he might kidnap her. The deer (Mareecha, the demon) cried out, imitating Rama's voice asking Lakshmana to go to his rescue. Seetha concluded that Rama was hurt and appealed to Lakshmana to go to his rescue. Lakshmana knew Rama too well to be scared. He was a true servant of the Lord. So, he stuck to his duty. When the call was heard again, Seetha could not contain her anger at Lakshmana's intransigence. She used unspeakable words to persuade Lakshmana to disobey Rama. "Are you plotting to possess me on Rama's death?" she asked. Lakshmana could not bear the imputation; he left her alone and moved towards the place where the voice came from. Therefore, what was to happen, happened. When the brothers returned, the hermitage was empty, and Seetha has been kidnapped. Rama told Lakshmana, "You disobeyed me, acted against my order and this calamity was caused." Whatever happens, however critical the situation, one has to discharge fully and correctly the duty laid upon one. Whatever the enormity of the calamity that threatens, one should not budge. Lakshmana repented all his life for the lapse.

Acts of God are for the world's good

A question may be raised here about the golden deer. Did not Rama know that it was a decoy, a demon in that form, sent by Ravana to help him in his

evil design? Of course, he knew it all. He knew that the episode was but the prologue to the completion of the task on which he had come. He could bring Seetha back from Lanka and, in a moment, he could turn it into a heap of ash. But, he got Sugreeva as his ally and did various other things to retrieve her and punish Ravana. Why? In order to accomplish the welfare of the world, foster righteousness among men, and cause destruction of the wicked, the Lord can freely choose. Persons who are unaware of the ways of God cannot understand this. God can on His own involve Himself in activities which serve as ideals and guides for mankind. If Rama had not devised the drama of the golden deer and Seetha's abduction, how could the devotion of Hanuman be immortalised?

Take the Krishna Avathar. Are there grounds to doubt His divinity and suspect Him to have been a thief, a liar or a gallant? God has no prejudice or partiality, no preference or aversion. When He is All, what can He steal? Whom can He desire to have? Imputations such as these emanate from individuals suffering from greed, envy and lust. One moment you declare "God is One. God is Truth, Purity, Stability, All-knowing, the Witness, Beyond Feelings and Thoughts, Devoid of the Three Gunas" and the next moment, you impose feelings and faults on the same God? How, then, can you understand the acts of God? We must welcome them gratefully and gladly, for whatever is done, or whatever is not done, is for the world's good. People who picture God as partial and unjust are only describing themselves. People assert that God is in the ant, as much as He is in the Cosmos. They adore ants and feed them, place rice grains around ant-holes on the ground. But, let an ant be bold enough to sting, it is killed that very moment. The animal in man overpowers him and he cannot restrain himself. He does not act in conformity with his words. Love alone can reveal that there is a spark of Divine in him.

All our acts must be offerings to God

You should not construct a picture of God according to your needs and norms and then complain that God does not conform. God is all-powerful, all-knowing and all-pervading. How then can limits be prescribed for Him? It would be foolish to judge Him, it would be sinful to impute blemishes. The evil

tendencies, attitudes and habits that have persisted through many lives and continue in this life also prompt people to hold such conclusions. No one has the authority to lay down rules regulating God's deeds. God is inherent in every living being, in every non-living thing. No distinction can be posited, for all are God. In order to grant joy or enable man to derive joy, God plays pranks, designs and directs dramas. He causes tears and quenches tears; he cures madness and inflicts madness. He exorcises the mania for fame and fortune; He inflames the mania for God and Grace. This day is Poornahuthi Day when the valedictory offering in the sacred Fire concludes the seven-day-long yajna, or what may be called also thapas or sadhana. Samapthi is the word used for 'conclusion.' But that word has a more significant meaning: Apthi or attainment of Sama or equanimity or balance, as when the river merges in the sea or the self merges in the Self, the jeevi merges in Brahmam. The river loses its name and form, the water loses its taste and flow, when the sea is reached. All acts of ours must be elevated to the level of yajna, offering to the Lord, That is to be the goal, the consummation. Nothing else is to be desired or expected. When the offering reaches God, the person is most happy because the God is in Him.

Sacrifice is sweeter than enjoyment. Sacrifice should become the aim of life. Only through sacrifice can one attain peace. Sorrows do not flee from us as long as the mind is not at peace with itself. Agonies dwell forever within us. Without the tranquillity of the soul any amount of wealth cannot be of any use. Surrendering the fruits of action with a dispassionate mind is eligible to be termed sacrifice. Purity of mind alone can confer upon it tranquillity.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

54. The jewel in the iron safe

Date: 20 November 1982 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Discourse the Annual Day of Sri Sathya Sai Hospital

Good thoughts, good words, good deeds, Listening good, seeing good, being good, These confer good health on human folk. This body is an iron box of paltry worth. But, as in an iron box are kept jewels and gems, Note I, in this paltry box, is kept the Atma Divine, This is the Truth, the Word of Sai. Health is the greatest blessing. Without it, man cannot do even the lightest work. Health is an indispensable requisite for progress in material, moral, political, economic, artistic and spiritual fields of life.

Food habits are of primary importance when health has to be secured and maintained. When these are not regulated, health suffers. 'No restraint, no success' is the axiom. Restraint, controls, limits have to be observed at every step. One should restrain the wild adventuresomeness of the tongue. Among the eight million four hundred thousand species of living beings, all except humans live on food as provided by Mother Nature. Man alone strives to make such food more palatable, more attractive to the senses of sight, touch and smell by boiling, frying and freezing and mixing, grinding and soaking. The consequence of this greed is ill-health and debility. One should realise that food materials,, as offered by nature, are really more beneficial. When heat is applied, they lose the vitality yielding components and cannot come strength and efficiency. The person ages fast and loses the sprightliness of youth. Catering to the cravings of the tongue and swallowing heavy foods three or four times a day can only add to the heap. Regular and limited intakes alone can enable a person to discharge one's duties.

Each one is a pilgrim, body is the rest-house

A restless mind is another important source of ill-health. Man is constantly afflicted with some source of worry or other. He is never free from anxiety. Why? Because he is identifying himself with the body. How did he acquire this body? Through his past activities and deeds. What were they caused by? By

the twin pulls of love and hate. How did they originate? They were born out of the entanglement in duality, in the opposites. And, why does he get snared by them? Ignorance of the Truth, the ONE. You must know that each one is a pilgrim and each life is but a stage in the journey towards the city of liberation. This body is a rest-house, in which we stay for a short time, during the pilgrimage. The mind is the caretaker, the watchman in the choultry where we rest. We are not to treat him as if he is master or owner. But, we ought to take care that the house we are privileged to occupy is not damaged or polluted. We have to take good care of it and its furnishings, and treat the watchman politely.

The pilgrim is either helped or handicapped by the antics of the mind. The mind has as its warp and woof, desire or thirst for some thing or other, getting some gain or avoiding some loss. Desire arises from attachment, often the consequence of delusion. Desire distorts and denigrates the mind. It keeps the mind incessantly agitated. No sheet of water can be calm when stones are dropping on it and if there is a perpetual shower of desires, the mind too will be pitifully restless. The anandha (bliss) which emanates from the Atma in man has, in fact, to be stored, with the help of the buddhi as channel, in the reservoir, the mind. That is its genuine function. But, if the reservoir has many cracks and crevices, namely the senses, the anandha will be frittered away, and the reservoir will be rendered dry. When the hunger of the senses is sought to be appeased, the mind becomes vacillating and wayward. The mind is the master of the senses. That is its legitimate role. The senses are the servants. When the master serves the servants, he loses his self-respect and falls in the esteem of all.

Good health depends on good thoughts

In the Ramayana story, the Queen yields to the selfish wiles of her maid and as a consequence, her lord King Dasaratha lost his life. Rama who was as her very life-breath was exiled into the forest, her son disowned her and drew on herself the condemnation of the Kingdom of Ayodhya. The story is an allegory. Dasaratha is the human body with the five senses of perception and the five senses of action - the ten chariots or dasha-ratha. He wedded the

Queen, the Mind, and the mind yielded to the servant and caused the downfall. The one effective way to conquer all sources of physical and mental disease and debility is awareness of one's Athmic Reality. That will bring about an upsurge of Love and Light, for, when one recognises that he is the Atma, he cognises the same Atma in all, he shares the joy and grief of all, he partakes of the strength and weakness of all. When one yearns for the happiness and prosperity of all mankind, one is blessed with the wisdom and strength to mark out the way and lead men towards it. In every one, the person sees his God. Every act of his will be as pure, as sincere and as sacred as an offering to God. Health does not depend on medicine. Good words, good manners, good sight, good thoughts - these are essential. What can even powerful or costly medicines do if one is ill with bad thoughts and bad feelings? On the other hand, virtuous living, beneficial thoughts, elevating ideals and righteous conduct can confer not only health, but what is even more precious, Atmanandha, the Ecstatic Awareness of the Reality itself.

When Tukaram was asked how man can keep the monkey mind from running after sensuous pleasures, he replied to the enquirer, "Let the monkey run; you keep quiet where you are; do not let the body go along with the monkey-mind." Tell the mind, "I shall not give you the body as your servant." Then, the mind will desist and it can be defeated.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

55. Your birthday gift

Date: 23 November 1982 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Birthday - 57

You must be thinking about the gift you have to offer Swami on this Birthday. You can be happy that you have given Swami a proper gift only when you love your fellowmen, share their sufferings, and engage yourselves in serving them. That is the only gift I wish for. The present given to God has to be pure, steady and selfless Love. On this birthday I have only one desire. I am desiring this only to promote your anandha. You are planning programmes for the coming 60th Birthday. Even before the 60th Birthday, you must adopt at least 6000 villages and improve them through proper means into ideal villages. Rich people and people in power have plentiful servants. But the distressed, the poverty-stricken, and those who suffer have no one to serve them. Go to such people and be their friends, their kith and kin, their closest well-wishers. Let them welcome you as such. If you pour spirituality into the ears of those who are tortured by hunger, it will not be assimilated. First, quench the hunger. Give them God in the form of food. Give them God in the form of clothes. Give God in the form of peace to those who are afflicted with anxiety. Give God in the form of medicine to those who are suffering from illhealth. Give God in whatever form which will assuage fear, pain and sorrow. It is only when this is done that spirituality can soak into the heart. If you act contrariwise, instead of spiritual feelings you will be promoting atheism itself.

The Sai-principle has no egoistic urge

Therefore, units of our Organisation have to provide and increase in these 6000 villages, education, medical service, communication facilities. There are villages where people struggle for want of water to drink. The Government cannot by itself provide all these conveniences. Without the cooperation of the people the Government cannot do anything. Government is not a free entity. It is based on people's support. It can work only when the people cooperate actively. Without depending on Government, you must carry on the development of society through your own strength. That is real sadhana, real seva. Strive to become embodiments of prema. Be ready to offer all your

capabilities and skills to the Lord of All. It is God's Love that rewards you when you engage yourselves in japa, thapa or yaga (Repetition of God's name, penance, ritual of sacrifice). What greater achievement can you strive for than receiving Love Divine from God? However, you must understand well the nature and significance of this Love. You are now experiencing and sharing this Love at the level of your awareness of the Principle. This is a mistake. It is too literal an interpretation. The Principle of Love has no trace of ego or blemish. It is fully free from selfish attachments. Whatever Sai does, whatever Sai thinks, whatever Sai says, whatever Sai observes, it is all for your sake, not for Sai's sake. My only desire is your joy, anandha. Your anandha is My anandha. I have no anandha apart from yours. You might infer, "Swami is doing this - is doing that." But it is not for my sake; it is for your sake. Last year on the Birthday, I spoke on this point. For my sake (believe it or not) I do not spend even a naya paisa. Whatever I do, I do for the society only. Though 56 years have passed, I have not got even one shirt or gown stitched for Me. I am now wearing what is given by a student, Radhakrishna of the Kingdom of Sathya Sai. Not today, but since the beginning, the thought that "I must have this or that" has never arisen in Me. It is not arising now. It will not arise at any time. Whatever thoughts arise in Me are only for the peace and welfare of the world, for the progress of youth, and for transforming ideal boys and girls who will lead others along the path. You must dedicate yourselves for rendering enthusiastic service to the people of the world, recognising that the Sai-principle has no egoistic urge.

The days of victory are coming

When this month is over, I will be journeying all over Bharath, blessing those who are unable to come here because they have neither the strength nor the resources to do so. I wish to afford them the chance and give them joy. An important point Instead of arranging programmes for Swami in towns and cities, have them in villages. Reduce expenses and save money in order to provide facilities in the villages. I desire to move about in every village. But, you have to make proper preparatory arrangements. I can even come on foot but hundreds of thousands of people are bound to gather and you must see that they are well looked after. When you undertake to fulfil this need in a

village, I will be coming and spreading the principles and practice of Bharatheeya culture.

I am resolved to foster anandha through the revival and re-establishment of the Bharatheeya way of life. This will happen without fail. Bharatheeya dharma can certainly be offered to other countries. There is no need to despair or indulge in self condemnation. The days of victory are coming. We can sound the drum of triumph. Embodiments of the Divine Atma, you may not be able to see it, but it is clear before My eyes. As days pass, even those who are now not able to recognise the truth of Swami will have to approach with tears of repentance and experience Me. Very soon, this will be worldwide. Swami is now restraining this development. When once it is allowed to manifest, the whole world will be transformed into Prasanthi Nilayam. 'So, come forward, all of you, determined to practise in daily living the ideals laid before you. In the coming years, you may not get the chances you are having now. You will not have the opportunity to be so near. Millions will rush to this place and gather here. This will happen soon and so, earn the compassion of Swami and his Love through seva activities and fill your lives with meaning.

Sai movement will advance more triumphantly

The diamond is cut into various facets. Its price increases with each facet added unto it by the cutting, for its beauty shines better and better. Those who cannot tolerate the progress of the Organisation of the Sai-Principle it embodies and unfolds, might decry or defame, ridicule or obstruct; the movement will not falter. It will advance more triumphantly, the greater the obstruction. These will only foster and help the spread and the splendour. Hate springs from an evil nature, from asuuya (envy). But the movement is based on the absence of anasuuya (envy). Do not pay attention to such things. Vow among yourselves to follow the ideals and the duties that have been laid down and devote yourselves to the Organisation, and its programmes. Having come to this place and availed yourselves of this opportunity, treasure in your hearts the things you have seen and heard and resolve to plunge into practising them. Your resolution and your practice must

happen simultaneously. Have a master plan and start from tomorrow the execution of the programme, drawn in consultation with others. This must happen to all countries. Do not think that only the Andhra State is Sai's. All are Sai's. All are one. We must endeavour by all means to realise and establish this truth in this Kali Yuga. This is the message I am giving you today. I am fulfilling all your desires. So you must fulfil this one desire of mine.

I bless that you have long life, good health, anandha, Peace and Prosperity and that you will devote your physical, mental, intellectual and spiritual strength and skills for the services of the country and of all mankind.

The Lord is approachable by all; do not have envy towards others or feel that they are your rivals or your inferiors or even superiors; each has a place in His mansion.

Give your heart over to the Lord and move in society as a dedicated being; then, no harm can come to you. As a jeeva, you may be an individual; but, as Atma, you are Vasudeva, the Samashti, Universal.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

56. The purpose of education

Date: 23 November 1982 / Occasion: Birthday - 57

The holy lessons the Vedas teach
Do fade when master and pupil
Do twist and torture eternal truth
And, seeking riches, distort holy aims.
Embodiments of Love!

When pupils completed mastery, of all branches of knowledge at the Gurukuls in ancient India, they were exhorted, on the day they left the sacred precincts of the hermitage, by the loving preceptor who showered blessings on them, to observe certain ideals and adhere to certain practices and attitudes in life. The convocation address, delivered on the occasion of conferring degrees to those who have passed the examinations and who are venturing into the world beyond, is but a poor counterpart of that benediction and that encouraging counsel. The message communicated then was most elevating and was worthy of practical application in daily life and each axiom was nectarine in content. Every advice was clothed in inspiration. The tone and tonic effect of the message has become erased in the womb of Time and reduced to a forgotten dream. While the immortal words of the Siksha Valli (the section on education) of the Taithiriya Upanishath are being repeated for their benefit, the pupils of those days were thrilled and transformed by them. The response of the students of today to the same message will only be a mixture of strangeness and surprise. But that same message can serve as a beacon-light to guide present day students, who are tossed about on endless waves of worry and anxiety caused by in-ordinate desire and vain pursuit of tantalising goals. The characteristic result of the modern educational process is the bloating of conceit into the size of a pumpkin when only a mustard seed size of learning has been acquired! And, the students aspire for unlimited rewards. As the proverb says, they pay for an onion and demand a melon as extra. The bond between jobs, degrees has to be cut asunder. Education should foster moral and spiritual excellence. Students should cultivate the intelligence needed to cleanse the mind to stand on one's own feet and to tender service to fellowmen. Napoleon used to tell his people: "Be clear. The rest will follow." Minds clear and strong can achieve the hardest tasks with

ease.

Share the wealth of knowledge with others

Students in the past practised "simple living and high thinking" but today, they, are engaged in "High living and low thinking". High living urges them to earn and amass money, which is subject to devaluation and diminution. But the wealth of knowledge and character is free of both these. "Fire cannot burn, nor rulers confiscate. Floods cannot dampen, nor thieves decamp with it," as the saying goes. Kith and kin can lay no claim on it. Share this special wealth with others; it does not become less; it grows with each gift. Accumulate wealth and you will be bled dry by sycophants pretending to be friends. Atheism is growing wildly among students these days. They forget and ignore even elementary human qualities as a result of the cursory and perfunctory study of natural, physical and spiritual sciences. Scientists declare "seeing is believing." But, can the eye be trusted? Can the mind, delight, sorrow, the soul be seen by the eye in order to induce belief? Experience is believing, not seeing. The milky way, according to scientists, has billions of clusters of stars. How few have seen them! Yet, how many believe in them? Has each person who believes, seen them? So, too, a few have experienced God after arduous processes of denials and assertions and many take their words as genuine and valid truth.

Physical and Spiritual sciences can never clash

The seers of God proclaim what they have visualised, and when people put their faith in it, it is condemned as blind faith as if belief of people in the number of star clusters in the Milky Way as proclaimed by those who have seen them is not blind! Have faith in the Divine and one can experience the Divine. Have faith in oneself and one can have faith in the Divine. Scientists announce that the Cosmos is' composed of atoms. Spiritual seers announce that God is the minutest of atoms and the vastest among the vast. Sea water yields salt crystals. Similarly, the all-prevading Divinity crystallises as Avathars (incarnations). The crystal is the build-up of many atoms; the Avathar principle is the build up of many divine attributes. The two sciences -

physical and spiritual - can never clash; one complements the other, for the sciences related to nature have bounds which they cannot cross. They can study only the created; the Creator is the special field of study for religion. One is a scientist; the other is a saint. The saint probes the root; the scientist peers into the tree above ground. One cannot succeed in spiritual search unless one has attained a pure, untainted consciousness or chittha. This is possible when one becomes aware of one's reality, God. No attempt is made to impart this knowledge to the tender minds of youths. Men are more valuable than all the precious wealth of the world. For, every human body is the temple of God, the Almighty! The individual has to be strengthened and sanctified so that the country or mankind can prosper. Knowledge without action is useless, while action without knowledge is foolishness! Education must be brightened by means of discrimination and spiritualisation. Instead, the educational process fosters merely greed for selfish aggrandizement, without using one's attainments for social service and beneficial sharing.

The duties marked out for the pupils

The touchstone for virtue in a person is his keenness to give up, to sacrifice, to develop detachment. I exhort students on many occasions to associate with good and godly people only so that the precious aspect of divinity in them can manifest. Many of them are humble and subdued and disciplined as long as they are in hostel and college, but once they enter the outer world, they resume the routine and ruin themselves. This should not happen. Once Truth is accepted as an article of faith, one should sacrifice one's entire life to its practice. Or else, man degrades himself below the level of birds and beasts. "Speak the truth. Follow dharma (righteousness). Treat thy mother as God. Treat thy father as God. Treat thy teacher as God. Treat thy guest as God." These were the duties marked out for the pupils. The baby is borne and bred by the mother, the child is fostered and fed by the father, the boy is directed and divinised by the guru, and the adult is afforded the chance to serve and sacrifice for the guest. Man is moulded and made to shine and spread light, by these four - mother, father, teacher and guest. Students might fail to revere the guest or adore the teacher as God. But, it will be a great pity if they fall into the sin of dishonouring the father and the mother.

Students! Learn effective means to smother the anxiety, the tears, the cruelties and the lies that afflict the world today. Revive the ancient ideals of learning and of high living in the awareness of divinity. Shine forth in the splendour of eternal truth, in the practice of time tested values and in ways of holy living adjusted to the times. Be ready to renounce that which leads you as precious. Be heroes for adventure. The world needs today youths full of universal love, enthusiasm to serve, and disciplined emotions.

Students must develop extensive interests

When we survey the career of this country we can discover clearly why this great country has come to the present pass. There was no lack of powerful rulers in the past; there was no lack of skilled administration and brave generals. There were many scientists and learned pandits and profound teachers. But, there was one defect which ruined the land, want of unity. There was no spirit of accommodation and social friendship. We may have vast resources but we have some wrong traits which weaken us. We cling to trivialities and mechanical acts and thoughts. We pay no attention to the divine exhortation and instruction that inhalation and exhalation of breath, kills moment by moment, "Soham" "Soham" 21,600 times a day! "That is myself" "I am That" "I am God". Teachers have to discharge this responsibility. Since the students are the roots of a prosperous nation, the basis for a strong structure, they have to be moulded into citizens we have to depend upon in the future. Students must develop extensive interests. They must visualise wide horizon.

Be grateful to the Institute that is fostering you. The Sai that is loving you as the mother, protecting you like the father, counselling you as the guru and saving you like God should ever be in your memory. Live, wherever your future lay, in accordance to the ideals you have imbibed here. Do not fall into the temptations of imitating wild and vulgar fashions in dress, dimensions and thinking.

The educational institutions must endeavour to produce students with integrity, character and self-confidence. Cultivation of knowledge is

secondary. We can assure that colleges of Kamsa or Hiranyakashipu might have produced knowledgeable pupils but would not have produced a Prahladha or Krishna! Maintain purity of speech, of sight, of learning and of action. Awarding a university degree on a person of low character and vicious habits can be condemned as sin, for the degree has to be justified to the recipient by his exemplarily noble living. I am speaking to you in this strain, students, for your own good, for your happiness, for making your lives meaningful, not because I dislike you. Each of you has a living mother though you may not be aware of the depth of that love. Know that Sai Love is the Love of a thousand mothers. Naturally you will find it impossible to gauge the intensity of my Love. And understand this. If you place yourselves outside that Love, you place yourselves outside the love of all mankind. Mine is Love that is pure, free, selfless and unconditional. It is a great good fortune to receive such love.

Do not barter away this priceless human embodiment of the Divine for a handful of trash. Gold can never make a man genuinely human nor can diamonds achieve that goal. It has to be reached through your own sincerity and tireless effort.

57. Three in one

Date: 01 December 1982 / Location: Anantapur

Talk, brave talk; has grown so wild; Work, brave work; has dried and died; Living is burdened with hollow pomp, Love is lost while hatred lasts. The world today is caught up in political stratagems and atheistic anarchy. Respect for Truth has declined. Mankind is sick, afflicted with wickedness and hatred. The most effective cure for this illness is spiritual sadhana and progress, which can restore the genuine virtues of humanity. Man can be truly human only when he understands himself and others, realise the bond that binds him with society and works with others for the good of all. The word sthree (woman) indicates that she is a composite of the three modes, the three facets of human nature' Sathwik (serene), Rajasik (active) and Thamasik (inactive, ignorant) for it has the three sounds of sa, ra and tha. As a consequence of the Sathwik component, woman has fortitude, equanimity, rectitude, goodliness and godliness. The Rajasik component has endowed her with courage, adventurousness and willfulness. The Thamasik nature in her has resulted in modesty and hesitancy. Of these three, the Sathwik is the predominant feature in her. But, it is being suppressed by contrary influences and the Rajasik has been encouraged to prevail. A woman earns renown from what she does; man earns renown from what he desists from doing. Based on what they do, women acquire name and fame. They sustain the home; they mould the nation's fate. That is the reason why their names are mentioned even before the name of their spouses, in the epics, puranas and scriptural texts - Seetha-Rama, Lakshmi-Narayana, Parvathi-Parameshwara.

Character, virtue, charity are the real riches

You are all here as students of this College. How can any study be worthy, if it does not confer good knowledge and prompt one to do good work? An education that helps you merely to keep alive is no education at all. The wheels of the chariot of life are good knowledge and good deeds. This alone is true spirituality - virtue and humanitarian deeds. Charity is spiritual; good behaviour is spiritual; keeping away from evil is spiritual. Today, science has

overwhelmed the world. The power of the atom has overshadowed the entire world. Marvels unseen, unheard and unknown to man in previous centuries are astounding mankind one after the other. But, contemporaneously with them, fanaticism based on the language one speaks, the region in which one is born and narrow loyalties to social and economic isms are spreading fast. Imagine! In the 5000 years of human history, fifteen thousand wars have soaked its pages in blood. That is the measure of the brutality inherent in man. Man feels that riches are paramount, but what he fancies as wealth are but material, momentary, trivial things. Character, virtue, brotherhood, charity - these are the real riches. The company of the good and godly is wealth most worthy. Wisdom is the most precious wealth. The educated person must live with this conviction. Search for mere riches can never confer contentment and peace of mind.

Each one yearns for lasting joy but does not stop to discover from where it can be got. It is not available anywhere outside him. Instead, searching in the outer world, he might hit upon many objects and experiences which mislead him, but he does not hit upon himself. When he sees his Self, he does not notice the objective world. When he pays attention to the outer world, he cannot notice his inner Self.

The purpose of existence is not fulfilled by getting born, managing to grow and quietly quitting through the doors of death. To become aware of its significance, Vidhya (the Higher Learning) is needed. This Vidhya can never be out-dated. It can never desert us.

Higher learning must confer intuitive light

This Institution of Higher Learning is established with high ideals before it. You must be aware of this purpose and prove that you stand by them. The nation can progress only when the students progress. In every field, students must strive to become ideal leaders and guides. The students of today, are the experts on which the nation will rely, the citizens who will shape its destiny. When you grow straight and strong, every department of public and governmental activity will become efficient and beneficent. When education

degenerates, all social, economic and political activities start rotting. So, the educational process and system must be allotted a crucial role. But, at present, they involve high expense and low income. Women after spending years in school and college marry and shut themselves in. Of course, it is good that they enter married life and establish ideal homes. But, that does not utilise all that they have studied so meticulously, at such cost. Education should not end with the winning of a degree or diploma. That is no real evidence of one's learning. Learning is not as mechanical as all that. It must inspire even the most inert individuals. It has no place for pride, pomp or jealousy. It shares its illumination with all. The magnet activates the inert piece of iron. Vidhya or the Higher Learning that you acquire here, should move all into higher levels of activity and thought. It must confer intuitive light. It must delight the parents, render fellowmen happy and make one's own life an example. Know that you are engaged in studies here for achieving this goal.

Students must welcome light from all quarters

Einstein, the great philosopher and scientist, met a famous poet once and wanted to know from him the secret of his popularity and fame. He led Einstein into his library and drew his attention to the Bhagavad Geetha, the Rig Veda, the Brahma Suuthra, the Upanishads and commentaries of Shankara and confessed that they had granted him the wisdom that shone in his poetry. But, many scientists still deny spiritual values and are immersed in mere materialism, holding fast to the belief that seeing is believing. People have faith in the results given by scientists of the calculation of planetary distances and sizes. But, they hesitate when confronted with conclusions arrived at by investigators into the inner space, into the inner regions of the Spirit - those who have seen and shown, experienced and enjoyed the Truths they proclaim. It is unreasonable willfulness that makes people stick to the beliefs they have accepted, as unchallengeable. As the statement goes, The subterranean fire can be grasped in the palm; the sky can be contacted as a concrete entity; but, one can never refine the mind of an obtuse obstinate person." For, one can awaken a person who sleeps; one can make a person who is not asleep to rise and move; but, one can never awaken a fellow who

pretends to be asleep. Willfully avoiding the illumination of knowledge is a sin against spirituality. Our students must welcome light at all times, from all quarters.

This attitude should not be dropped as you leave the Institute. Some people drop even human qualities when they step out of the College, after finishing their studies. Of what avail is all the teaching they receive? And the expense? If only all that money was deposited in a bank, they could have lived on the interest. Instead, what has been achieved from this holy place is "an empty head and an empty purse." What does the world gain from such failures?

Don't be ashamed to be good, to do seva

One must take up work, that is of some use to the world. Move into the villages and help to keep them clean. Instruct the women of the village in the basic principles of child-health, child-care and child-training. When health fails, people become despondent and even desperate. When health prevails, vitality pervades both mind and body. By the process of loving service, you can become the promoters of much joy. Do not consider any act of service as demeaning. Sweeping the streets, for example, is not below your dignity. Do you not sweep the floor of your home? Do you not scrub and wash off dirt? When you undertake such tasks, the villagers will also gladly share in them. Why be ashamed to be good? The ridicule that may be cast on you has been the reward of many saints. It will soon fade away. Mohammed was driven out of Mecca by those who could not appreciate his teachings. Jesus was crucified. But, their names resound in reverence in the hearts of millions. So, boldly face ridicule and plunge into selfless, intelligent service. This institution is the Ganga of seva. Yamuna, the Bangalore Campus of this Institute, joins it. And both take in Saraswathi, the Prasanthi Nilayam Vidhyagiri Campus. I am now proceeding to Yamuna and later, I reach Saraswathi. The teachers and students of these campuses have to live harmoniously and cordially, sharing and caring in loving co-operation. I am confident you will act thus and I bless you for success in this endeavour.

This is Full, That is Full.
When the Full is taken from Full, Full remains.
That is Upanishadhic axiom.
The Divine is Full, Creation is Full.
Even when creation occurred,
and the Cosmos appeared, produced by the Divine,
there was no diminution
in the fullness of the Full.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

58. The three levels

Date: 30 December 1982 / Location: Brindavan

The Love of God, evident as Grace, is the greatest achievement of man. This is referred to as *Bhakthi*. The practice of Bhakthi needs, as every other laudable adventure, a mind free from lust, anger, envy, greed, pride and false attachment. A room that is dark becomes the resort of scorpions, snakes and other pests. A heart that has no illumination derived from the Atmic reality will be infested by the vices mentioned above. Not being aware of the Atma is the source of darkness, the thickest of ignorances. The thought of God, the contemplation of God, the grace of God - these alone can confer the purity we need. Some one praised a young man profusely but added that he had only two tiny defects. So, he was chosen as the groom for the wedding and after the ceremony was duly accomplished, it was discovered that the two defects were: (1) he does not know anything; (2) he does not heed any one's advice. Most people suffer from this predicament. There is no independent thinking; there is no desire to learn. For, they are reluctant to put into practice what they learn as good and honourable. Creation is another name for the projection of the Divine Will. Man's main purpose in life is to exemplify and stand witness to this Will. What the Divine Will has endowed us with has to be devoted and dedicated to the same Will. Whatever you do, do as an offering to Him; then, it will reach Him for certain.

At the present time, people hanker after quick material profits and not after Divine Grace and simple sincere lives. If God resides at one place or can be discovered at one spot, He can be realised and reached. But, He is everywhere at the same time. So, instead of man seeking God, what is happening is God is seeking men, who are ready to reach Him and renounce their egoistic impulses in order to do His will.

Life must be heightened by self-sacrifice

Knowledge progresses from doubt and discovery. Yesterday's doubt is today's knowledge. And today's knowledge becomes tomorrow's wisdom. Discover

unity in multiplicity and know that it is Divinity. At the base of things, in the lowest level, is Matter. Humanity is the higher, the upper, and Divinity is the highest, the uppermost level. Humans must dread the descent into the material level. Life must be heightened and lightened by self-sacrifice. How can a cup full of water take on milk? The water has to be poured out. When the cup of the heart is full of evil, no virtue can be stored therein. You need not renounce action; you can renounce the idea of aggrandizement or ownership when the action results in victory or defeat. Limit your greed, your superfluous desires and try to be simple in dress, speech and behaviour with others. When a man was offered free all the land he could walk around from sunrise to sunset, the poor fellow walked so fast and so long that he died before he could reach the starting point. That is the fate of the greedy. Students are haunted today by a host of desires. Confine your desires to those that promote your studies and make you more helpful and self-reliant. Be enthusiastic to do good, to be godly.

Ignore the evil that others do to you and forget the good that you do to them.

Be good, do good, see good.

Like underground water, the Divine is there, in every one, remember. The Lord is *Sarvabhutantaratma*, *Sarvyapi*. He is the Atma of every being. He is in you as much as in every one else. He is not more in a rich being or bigger in a fat being; His spark illumines the cave of the heart of every one.

The Sun shines equally on all; His Grace is falling equally on all. It is only you that erect obstacles that prevent the rays of His Grace from warming you. Do not blame the Lord for your ignorance or foolishness or perversity.

Just as underground water wells up in a gushy spring when a bore is sunk down to that depth, by constant Ram Ram Ram Ram, touch the spring of Divinity and one day it will gush out in cool plenty and bring unending joy.

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

59. Everyone is a son of God

Date: 25 December 1982 / Location: Prasanthi Nilayam / Occasion: Christmas

He who is known as Allah by Muslims, As Jeovohah by Christian aspirants, As the Lotus-eyed Lord by the worshippers of Vishnu, As Sambhu, by those who revere Shiva, Howsoever He is worshipped, He gladly responds, Grants the grace of fame and fortune, And showers happiness and joy. He is the One, The Supreme Self. Know Him as Param-Atma. Embodiments of Love! Nature confers, like heat and cold, joy and grief. In one seaSOon, cold is most welcome as a source of comfort. Another season, warmth is equally welcomed. Both give comfort to man when he needs it. Hence both heat and cold have to be welcomed by man. Both contribute to man's comfort and contentment. Time, space and circumstance decide their use and their value. This attitude of accepting the inescapable fact is what is proclaimed and praised as serenity, equanimity Samathwam in the Geetha. The Geetha says: Samathwam Yogam uchyathe. (Equanimity, equal-mindedness, steadiness, is known as yoga). The Geetha also declares, Yogah Karmasu Kousalam, "Yoga is the quality of excellence that has to characterise every act." Happiness and misery, success and failure, obstacles and obstruction, defaming and denigration, praise and criticism, are intertwined; they can never be experienced singly. But man is elated by gain and depressed by loss. When praised, he is elated.; when blamed, he droops. But man has to keep in mind that these are only phenomena like heat and cold.

Discrimination is the distinct feature of man

That is the prescription for mental peace and social serenity. Consider the reality of things - mountain peaks are only heaps of rocks; the ground on which we dwell is only a mound of soil; the body we carry about with us is but flesh and bone, composites of the five main elements - space, air, fire, water and earth. New forms and names are assigned to distinct patterns of the same forces and things which demonstrate distinct characteristics. Over millennia, Bharath has been proclaiming and propagating this holistic spiritual truth, and the consequential outlook of renunciation and serenity. "Through

renunciation alone, can you attain immortality", declare the Veda! This truth must be implanted in the mind by discriminating reason. That is why Shri Krishna says, "I am discrimination in the human being." That is the distinct feature of man. In the Bhagavatha Purana it is said each living being has to journey back to the source from where it sprang. Real joy is available only there. A man may travel on business through many lands and stay in several towns in great comfort, but he does get rest and peace only when he reaches home. The earthly career is but a stage in his long journey, where he has camped for a while. The camp is not to be confused with the home, but many do and refuse to remember the home. All that concerns the Atma is delight; all that concerns the self is misery. This is the Upanishadic declaration. Man loses himself in fights and factions, greed and gain, and ignores the source, the substance which He is.

Be ever watchful of mind's machinations

The trouble starts with his habit of fixing his thoughts on some thing or person. The thought becomes a thorn, a theme, a trap and finally an enslaving desire. When the desire meets with obstacles, anger wells up and emotions are aroused, which might even overwhelm the humanness of the individual. The person loses the capacity to distinguish between right and wrong and slides into sin itself.

How can the mind that leads us along the path of desire, anger, passion, prejudice and sin be kept under control? The senses which tempt and tarnish the mind have first to be monitored and mastered. Cultivate the style of speech uncontaminated by falsehood, the bodily activity unpolluted by violence, and the mental process unsullied by attachment or hatred. Also, direct the senses along the path towards God. The mind robs you of the precious treasure of spiritual wealth. Be ever watchful of its machinations. In the Bible, it is said that God seeks His own. Ponder over this. God is every where at all times. He need not be sought anywhere, any time. But, God has to seek those who seek Him and struggle to become aware of Him. Whom does God seek? He looks for a sincere, genuine, selfless, steady devotee. Besides, He seeks an ideal son who can be held before mankind as an

example and an inspiration. Such persons have become extremely rare nowadays. They style themselves devotees but they weep and wail, when they ought to be really exulting; they exult when they have every reason to weep and wail! So, the Lord says, I am searching, I am searching, still searching. I searched in the past, I search, and search now, For the man knowing and observing his Dharmatrue. Christ announced Himself as the Messenger of God. He identified His body as having been given to Him for alleviating human misery and serving the helpless and the homeless. He denied the demand of the flesh and devoted His skills and strength to relieve agony and pain. Then when the consciousness rose to the level of the mind, He became aware that He was the Son of God. He strove hard to discover the distinction between Appearance and Reality, between Truth and Mental Image, and He became aware of the higher level of consciousness which transcends the vagaries of the mind. From that peak of intelligence, He became aware that "I and My Father are one." And both are one single manifestation Of the Divine Essence, the Holy Spirit.

Lessons that Jesus taught and symbolised

The birthday of every great person is celebrated by those who adore and follow him. This day being the birthday of Jesus is a holiday when offices and factories do not work. It is not sanctified as a holy day. People attend the church and join the rituals but return home to revel, drink and dance. The Cross is forgotten when the Christmas season is on. The day must be dedicated to the purification of one's passions and emotions through meditation on the virtues and values that Jesus held forth. Today, man runs after desires; he does not pursue ideals. He yearns for long life, not for a life lived in God. He does not recognise or follow the footprints of the great. Man has reduced himself to the position of a servant of the household who has no means of knowing where the master has treasured his most precious gems. If he is the master, he ought to know. But having failed to rise to that status, he is unaware of the treasure he can command. Each one has to examine for himself whether he is clinging to trinkets or conserving gems. A lamp kept on mound illumines the area; if kept in a pit, it is as if it were not. A virtue that is practised is a lamp that shines for all; good thoughts and good deeds have a

way of influencing others. The gems of wisdom, the light of intuitive experience should not be kept away from fellow-men. They have to be shared, even at the cost of one's life. That was the lesson Jesus taught and symbolised.

Love binds one heart to another

Derision and denunciation follow the footsteps of the great in all ages. They haunt them like the shadow which cannot be avoided. His own disciples turned against Jesus, even those who adored him and hung on his words. They did evil to him who did them good. But, Jesus wished well for those who insulted and injured him. This is a lesson badly needed today. No one should count the harm inflicted on him and plan revenge. He must on the other hand return love for hatred, fraternity for enmity. To behave otherwise is a sign of weakness, of want of courage, of lack of faith in human goodness. Jesus won in this holy struggle. On this day, we must cultivate in ourselves that conviction and that courage. Far more beneficial than honouring the great is the practice of loving them. Praise, glorification and eulogy raise them on to an unreachable pedestal. Love binds one heart to another. Gratitude for the inspiration and instruction received must bind the hearts in love. The celebration of Christmas should not conclude with some carols, tableaux and made-up trees and Santa Claus. It must be soaked in the resolution to practise at least a few of the lessons Jesus taught us. The very first need is faith in God and in our own Divine Nature. Where there is Faith, there is Love, Where there is Love, there is Peace, Where there is Peace, there is Truth, Where there is Truth, there is Bliss, Where there is Bliss, there is God. The yearning for Bliss is the best proof of our holy nature. Man is Bliss; he seeks Bliss; Bliss is. Blessedness for him. Since God is Bliss, happiness is union with' God. Nothing else can award that joy, which is unaffected by whatever happens or does not happen. The heart of Jesus was pure and calm. Hence, it is honoured as sacred. We must make our hearts sacred so that either we merge in Jesus or Jesus merges in. us. When we merge, it is called Bhakthi; to have Jesus awakened in us is the path of Jnana. Jesus was a messenger of God; but note this also' all of you are messengers of God. Jesus was not the only Son of God; you are all His children. Jesus and His Father are one. You

and God are also one and you can be aware of it.

You are with God, but not aware of the fortune

Today, people from many lands have gathered at Prasanthi Nilayam. Having come from such long distances, undergone so much troubles on the way, and stayed here, you have to take with you from here at least a few sublime, sustaining lessons for spiritual progress. Instead of going round India, as tourists do, and collecting impressions of places as thus and thus, imbibe the sacred and the holy and transform your lives on more worthwhile lines. You must pay attention to one slight fact. Indians are not eager to identify and benefit from the lessons of their divine culture! Right under the lamp that is lit there is bound to be a patch of darkness. If one spends all the twenty four hours in an air-conditioned room, he cannot appreciate or evaluate its blessing. But if he has to walk through the hot sun for an hour, he will surely be grateful and gratified. There are thousands in this Nilayam who keep on exclaiming, "Swami! Swami !" but who have not recognised the immense boon they have secured. When a baby gulps down the first morsel of cooked rice that is ceremonially placed in its mouth, every one is happy; the parents are pleased and the child is admired. When the child grows and consumes plates of rice, no one expresses wonder, pride or admiration. Why? The person is the same, the thing eaten is the same. The eating has become routine, repetitive, mechanical, a kind of compulsive habit.

You too, like every one else, are with God, in God. But, you are not aware of that fortune. You are struck with strange wonder and joy when you see God during meditation; you are overcome with ecstasy. You have been looking at me for such a long time now here in front of you. Yet, believe me, when you go back to your rooms and when I give you Darshan (audience) even for a second while you sit for Dhyana, you are beside yourself with joy: "O! Swami gave me Darshan !" The fact is that it is only something beyond the natural, above the ordinary, that arouses interest. So, one must overcome this failing. Spiritual joy, wonder, appreciation, the Darshan of God must become the life, the natural breath of life, the very *raison d'etre* of existence in the body. This is what Jesus taught by precept and example to mankind, the Athmic principle

which is the eternal source of Bliss. Embodiments of Love! whatever activity you may be engaged in, wherever you may be, however you may fare, be convinced that you are ever in God, that all is Divine, that all acts are offerings to the glory of God and thus make your lives full and fruitful.